

EXTRACT

From

NOTEBOOK NO. 1

DIARY OF MAJOR WM. J. PRIESTLY

(History of 41st Div. (PA))

No. 53

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Authority *1002582302*

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EXTRACT FROM NOTEBOOK #1 - DIARY OF MAJOR Wm J. PRIESTLEY

South Luzon Force - Davao Force - II Philippine Corps

Brief Outline of Activities Prior to and During War

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities on about Sept 1 a SLF Hq in skeleton form was created and functioned briefly. This Hq consisted of Brig Gen. Geo Parker, Lt. Col. C O Wilson, Lt. Col. H. D. Johnston, Capt. Arthur Christensen and Capt. Homer Uglow. Units to be included under this command were not inducted until somewhat later and the troops thus received practically no training before the war started. Only two regiments the 42nd & 52d Infs. were inducted on Sept 1 and no others immediately thereafter.

The elements of the command were drawn up as follows:  
Nov 1 - 41st & 51st Infs. mobilized and started training, Nov. 24th - 43rd & 53rd Infs, 41st P. A and 41st & 51st Engrs. On Dec 1 the 41st and 51st Med. Ens. Signal Cos, Hq & Hq Cos, & QM Service Co. so that on Dec 8 the state of the SLF was: 41st Div complete less 1 Anti Tank Bn 51st Div complete less 1 Anti Tank Bn & 51st P. A. and 1st & 2d P. C. (inducted in Mid. Nov and assigned for training only) released at beginning of war.

The 41st & 51st Divs. were inducted and trained in S. Luzon what little training they did have and at the outbreak they were sent to their defensive positions on the beaches. The boundary between division running along a general line thru Lemery & Pancipit Rs, - Id. in Lake Taal - Tagaytay and Las Pinas inclusive to the 41st Div. The rest of the coastline was defended by the 51st Div with the Manila sector unoccupied due to location of the fortified Ids. On Dec 29th the 1st Reg Div was assigned to the beaches between Infanta & Mauban inclusive and was given the road net in rear of it.

On about Dec 12 the Japanese landed at Legaspi after previously bombing Davao, Legaspi, Nichols Field Cavite and sections in the HLF territory and started to move N towards the main part of Luzon by rail & by road. Units of the 52nd Inf were sent S to meet them - one Co. along the road and one Bn was split up - its elements being drawn and given different missions - to contact and delay the enemy as long as possible, destroy bridges and military equipment and impede the progress of the enemy as much as they were able.

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The Second Phase of SLF activities began on Dec 24 when the enemy landed in force at Atimonan and Mauban. The units of the 52d sent S encountered many adventures of war not covered here, some being cut off and breaking thru - others making their way N to

join their organization later. On the afternoon of Dec. 24 Gen Parker's Hq. was moved to Bataan and the Bataan Force consisting of the 31st Div, 41st Div, parts of the Phil Div., Hq and other misc. units. Gen Jones took command of the SIF upon Gen Parker's departure (his Div. the 41st having reverted to the Bataan Force).

By the night of Dec 24th the "Js" had crossed the Mts. at Atimonan to Malibay and at Mauban had reached the zig-zag at Sampaloc. The enemy from Atimonan advanced in successive states and by nightfall of the 25th were at Lucena, Tayabas, 26th Canda-leria, 27th Tinong and on the night of 27-28 contact was broken in that area as the troops were ordered to Bataan. At Mauban the 1st Inf less 1 Bn retreated to positions on the Laguna-Tayabas boundary night of Dec. 25, Louisiana 26th broke contact on the 27th and withdrew to Bataan via Pagsanjan, Sta. Cruz, Los Banos, and Manila. One Bn at Tignauan remained there until the 28th with no contact and withdraw on the 28th. The regiments in the SIF were reshuffled on the night of the 27th and were shuttled into Bataan - no contact being made with the enemy. By Dec 31st Gen. Jones and his Hq. had arrived at Plaridel & contacted Gen. Wainwright. By order of USAFFE Gen Jones was put in command of remains of the 71st & 91st Divs, then at Baliuag and stayed there to cover the withdrawal of the SIF thru them Dec 31st - Jan 1. By morning of the 1st those units and Gen Jones arrived in Bataan and the SIF ceased to exist. (Note: Assg'd to SIF prior to this date and moved to Tagaytay pos. was the Prov. Constab. Brigade. Three days were absorbed moving in and thru more out -no contact being made with the enemy.)

As part of the 3d Phase of the SIF the Bataan Force existed from Dec. 24-Jan 6 its function having been to organize the position in Bataan and assist in their occupancy.

By the night of Jan 5-6 the last elements of the NLF had withdrawn into Bataan leaving the covering force at Layac Jct. exposed to the enemy. Organized from right to left in line the pos. contained the 71st Div, 31st Inf (US), and 26th Cav. At 8:00 A Jan 6 our art'y sighted the enemy and began to register on them and at 9:00 A.J. art'y appeared on the road to be reinforced by other art'y units soon thereafter and a fierce art'y dual ensued. The "Js" also bombarded portion of the 31st Inf with superior fire and by nightfall the right of the 31st and part of the 71st Div had pulled back. At about 10 P. the entire line was ordered withdrawal behind the Abucay position which movement was executed in great confusion. The 26th Cav, not receiving the order was cut off and withdraw through the Mts. One Bn of the (23d) F.A. was badly shot up and lost all but one gun. The 1st Bn of the 88th FA retreated in order saving all guns.

The Main Battle Position previously organized, was occupied

originally by the II Philippine units from right to left 57th Inf, 41st Division and 51st Div. the 57th turning its flank on the beach at Matabang and the 51st Div tying in with the I Corps at Mt. Natib. This position was shelled almost constantly daily particularly on the left flank of the 41st Div. and the right of the 51st Div. The Js effected a penetration in that sector and between the 41st Div, and 57th Inf left and the 31st Inf (US) and 45th Inf (PS) were sent in to counter attack at Abucay hacienda, the 21st Div being sent in to reinforce the MLR on the front of the 41st Div. The counter attack was successful, heavy casualties being inflicted on the enemy and mopping up operation were in progress when the retreat in the I Corps Sector made a withdrawal from the Main Battle Position to the Reserve Orion-Barac pos. necessary. Some Js had infiltrated thru the I Corps, however, and it is probable that they might have cut thru the reserve Orion-Barac pos. had the withdrawal not been made.

The withdrawal was accomplished with a considerable confusion during which aggressive action by "J" art'y, air corps and ground troops might have ended the war before the end of January. The position was occupied and divided into subsectors as follows from the beach near Limay- North to Orion - to the Pantingan: SS-A under Col. Irwin - 31st Inf. PA, PA Air Corps Bn, and PA Training Cadre; SS-B - Col Doanes - Prov. Regt. U. S. A. Air Corps, SS-C-Gen Bluemel - 41st Inf (to March 1), 31st Div less 31st & 33rd Infs, 51st Combat team, SS-D- Gen Lough - 21st Div on Right - 41st Div. on left and 33rd Inf on extreme left flank prior to Mar. 1 after which it become Corps reserve and the 41st Inf went from SS-C to SS-D. The Philippine Division, part of which was to have occupied the front line was broken up as Corps and Army Reserve and was employed piecemeal wherever necessity dictated. Its Hq continued to exist under Gen. Lough but never until the final futile effort was it brought together in any attempt at concerted effort.

The Reserve Battle Position was further prepared and fortified after occupancy - lowlands flooded, trenches dug, camouflage created barbed wire strung etc & patrol action was constant but not pressure was exerted until the first of April. Here as in the I Corps the "Js" entrenched and awaited reinforcements.

Toward the latter part of March enemy truck, tank and artillery columns were sighted on the roads and near areas and it was obvious that an offensive had been planned. This push came beginning April 3 at about 8 A with intensive shelling, dive bombing, high level bombing and a general attack in the 42d Inf areas and by hightfall these units had retreated in confusion down trails #6 and #29 to trail #8, the 42d Inf completely disintegrating and disappearing. The 43d Inf was contacted by Gen Lough and ordered to reorg. and moved back up #6 on April 4. However, it was again hit by mass artillery, broke up and disappeared. The 41st Inf. not so hard hit moved N along the road and was not attacked in force. On the night of April 4, the 33d Inf in Corps Res. Along Tr

#44, about 1 Km N of #6 & 44 was order N to reinforce the line, but was not heard from thereafter. On April 4th "J" tanks appeared along the Pilar-Bagac road, some started down trail #28 and went back, and a number worked down the Pilar-Bagac Road behind the MIR of the 21st Div along the Talisay R. The 21st Div then withdrew under pressure to the FLD on the slopes of Mt. Samat. In the face of these attacks and withdrawal by the night of Apr 4 the line existed with a large salient in SS-D and units were located as follows: 41st Inf on extreme left astride trail #29, a large Jap on its right to the 21st Div on the forward slopes of Mt. Samat, 51st CT, 32d Inf, Prov. AC Regt; 31st Inf PA AC Bn and the PATC. The 31st Inf US had been ordered from its bivouac area to Jct of trs #2 & #10 on April 4 and was in that area that night.

On April 5 the enemy moved down tr #6 and across the face of Samat and by night they had control of trail #64 to the CP of the 21st Div, and were working up the E slope of Mt. Samat. The extent of the penetration by the "Js" was not known exactly and a counter attack involving the 45th Inf (PS) up Trail #29 with tank support and the 31st Inf (US) up astride #44, thence up #64 to #44 - then up #4 to reinforce and establish the line. Before this could be accomplished in April 6 remnants of the 21st Div came thru the 31st Inf pos. and heavy fire was received from the enemy on Mt. Samat, Heavy pressure on the front and left of the 31st Inf forced its withdrawal to the S. bank of the San Vicente by nightfall of the 6th. The enemy also forced his way up trails #6 & #44 in April 6, the 1st Bn 57th Inf having been order to Jct #8 & #46 to be at disposal of Gen. Lough. Before the 57th Bn could reach Gen Lough, however, his Hq was cut off by the enemy on Trail 8 and the Bn of the 57th was forced to take up a defensive position behind the San Vicente R. at the Jct #8 & #46. The tank support of the 45th Inf arrived late and that unit was forced S on trail #29 and into the I Corps sector.

Thus by nightfall of April 6th situation was almost hopeless. On the extreme left the 45th Inf counter offensive up tr #29 was nipped and it, with Gen Lough's Hq. was cut off from II Corps. The "Js" had routed the 41st Div and followed it up trails #6 & #44 where the 1st Bn 57th encountered the enemy and held them N. of the San Vicente at Trail Jct #8 & #46. On the San Vicente a large gap existed and then the 31st Inf (US) had gone into pos. connecting with the 51st CT of Gen Bluemel on its right flank. Our art'y had been overwhelmed and silenced and the 41st FA guns had all been captured.

On April 7 and attempt was made to organize a defensive line along the Patec trail (#46) with 201st and 202d Engrs filling the gap between the 57th (2d Bn) in pos. with 1st Bn night of April 6) and 31st Inf

(US) and SS-C units. The 26th Cav and 14th Engrs also moved up, the 26th at Jct. #2 & #10 being turned over to Gen. Blunel & the Engrs. to Col. Tilly who was with the 57th Inf CP and its 3d Bn. attached to SS-C and Gen. Blumel. The "Js" followed up their aggressive move of the 6th and not only cut trail #46 but staged a separate attack in the 32d Inf area in the right half of SS-C forcing the withdrawal of the 51st CT, along with the 31st (US) to the S bank of the San Vicente and extend a line with the 3d Bn 57th Inf, & 21st & 31st Engrs. The 201st & 301st Engrs, had failed to arrive at their position on the Patoc Trail before the enemy cut it and those units were scattered & disintegrated. Thus Gen. Blumel decided to continue the withdrawal to the S bank of the Mamala R where, after consultation with commanders of the 26th Cav, 57th Inf, 31st Inf (US) and Engrs, he decided to withdraw all elements to the Alangan R. which long retreat was affected before dawn of the 8th.

April 8th found the line held behind the Alangan R. in a confused state due to hasty retreat and mistaken routes of withdrawal. It was obvious from the outset that this position was untenable. All 37 mm guns and automatic weapons had been lost, nearly all 155 mm. were of ammunitions. In addition the men were almost completely exhausted by the long marches and days without food. The 26th Cav, which had moved from #2 & "10 to #2 & #46 covered the withdrawal of other units & then withdrew to the above pos. itself.

It was intended that new position would be occupied with the 26th Cav, 57th Inf and 31st Inf in line & the 14th Engrs in reserve, but due to a mistake in retiring between new and old trails #20 a scramble ensued and the line was established with the 26th Cav and 14th Engrs. astride Trail #20, 31st & 57th to E of old #20 - a big gap to the 803d Engrs, PAC, 31st Inf PA and the 4th PC, (the 4th PC and 803d Engrs having been brought up during the night)

During the morning of the 8th Js bombed the line heavily and the 4th PC and the 31st Inf PA pulled out. Enemy tanks & Inf followed up quickly down trail #20 and soon surrounded the position set that by the night of the 8th the entire line was untenable and further withdrawal became necessary. Orders were confused as were the troops who scattered badly. The bulk of them escaped down new #20- others cross country. Col. Tilly, Col Brady & Col. Saint of the 57th Inf 31st Inf & 14th Engrs respectively managed to gather parts of their commands by the morning of the 9th. At 3 A, Maj. Christenson Ass't G-3 for II Corps met Gen. Blumel at Jet #12 & #20 received order to surrender. Gen. Blumel was ordered to take up a position behind the Lamac R. but instead he left a screen and moved troops the rear where surrender came later that day.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

s/ Ruth H. Essary  
t/ RUTH H. ESSARY  
Captain WAC

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Authority: AWD 883025



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The Second Phase of SLF activities began on Dec 21 when the enemy landed in force at Atimonan and Mauban. The units of the 52d sent S encountered many adventures of war not covered here, some being out off and breaking through making their way N to join their

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CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

s/ Ruth H. Essary  
t/ RUTH H. ESSARY  
Captain WAC

A TRUE COPY: *arm/*

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Authority *AWD 88302*

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Authority *AW 100 283028*