

# Paratroopers Vs Paratroopers:

## *The 11th Airborne Division Repels a Japanese Parachute Assault — Leyte, 1944*

MAJ JAMES VILLANUEVA

*"[We] saw many aircraft flying overhead — at their altitude and in the subdued lighting conditions — we assumed they were C-47s and recall that we thought some unit of the 11th [Airborne Division] was making a night jump... We set up arrangements for guard duty and I suddenly awoke, resultant of hearing a burst of automatic weapon fire, and almost simultaneously felt sharp pain in my lower legs — and figured that I had been hit (correctly)... It was pitch black out — and raining hard — and like a damned fool, unable to locate my M-1 rifle which had been next to me while sleeping. I crawled under the bridge and pulled out my trench knife — at that moment I figured it was the end of the end..."*



On the evening of 6 December 1944, PFC Mort Ammerman of the U.S. 11th Airborne Division's 188th Glider Infantry Regiment (GIR) found himself and three other troopers guarding a bridge in the Burauen area of Leyte Island in the Philippines. Unbeknownst to Ammerman and his comrades, the Japanese forces in the Philippines were about to execute a parachute assault against several American-held airfields on Leyte in an attempt to delay or halt Allied air attacks on Japanese installations and troop formations. In a relatively rare case in military history, the Japanese paratroopers would find themselves fighting their opposite numbers on the Allied side, American parachute and glider troops like Ammerman. The American paratroopers would overcome their initial shock to display the adaptability and initiative of American airborne troops that characterized many of their wartime exploits.

On 20 October 1944, Allied forces landed on Leyte Island in the Philippines, fulfilling GEN Douglas MacArthur's promise to return to the islands after their conquest by the Japanese almost three years earlier. The island would serve as a stepping stone to Luzon, the northernmost of the Philippines' major islands and home to the capital, Manila, as well as some 180,000 Japanese troops in the Fourteenth Area Army under General Tomoyuki Yamashita. Leyte, stretching some 110 miles from north to south and ranging from 15 and 50 miles in width, presented good terrain for an amphibious assault on its eastern shore, and it was there that the Americans landed. Initially, American forces landing on the island consisted of LTG Walter Krueger's U.S. Sixth Army, including two corps

(X and XXIV) with two divisions each, plus another two in reserve.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, on the eve of the Allied invasion, Japanese forces on the island centered around the 16th Division under Lieutenant General Shiro Makino and totaled some 20,000 troops.<sup>3</sup> Over the course of the campaign, Allied ground forces would advance westward across Leyte, supported by Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid's U.S. Seventh Fleet and Allied Air Forces under Lieutenant General George C. Kenney. Eventually, both the Americans and Japanese would see the need to employ airborne forces in the fight for Leyte, although in very different ways.

In one of the more obscure facts of World War II, both the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) and Navy (IJN) had elite parachute troops. Initially raised in 1940 after the Japanese saw the success of German paratroopers in Western Europe, these paratroopers participated in three successful parachute jumps to seize airfields during the Japanese conquest of the Dutch East Indies (modern Indonesia) in 1942 — two by the IJN and one by the IJA.<sup>4</sup> By 1944, the Japanese airborne forces had swelled to more than 13,000 troops, organized into the IJA's 1st Raiding Group (a division-sized equivalent with 12,000 men) and the two 750-man IJN Yokosuka Special Naval Landing forces.<sup>5</sup> Unique among World War II airborne forces for possessing their own organic transports, in practice Japanese paratroopers were rarely deployed with their organic aircraft and had to rely on outside units to fly them into battle. Considered elite formations by the Japanese high command, these units had many automatic weapons but nevertheless lacked artillery and needed extensive external logistical support.

The American paratroopers opposing the Japanese on Leyte were also elite. Activated at Camp Mackall, NC, on 25 February 1943, the 11th Airborne Division was the first American airborne division to be created entirely with recruits and trained as a division.<sup>6</sup> Commanded by MG Joseph M. Swing, who had observed the 82nd Airborne Division's parachute assaults on Sicily as an artillery commander, the division departed for overseas duty from San Francisco on 8 May 1944 and conducted jungle training and acclimatization in New Guinea.<sup>7</sup> With approximately 8,000 men in the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR — an all-volunteer unit

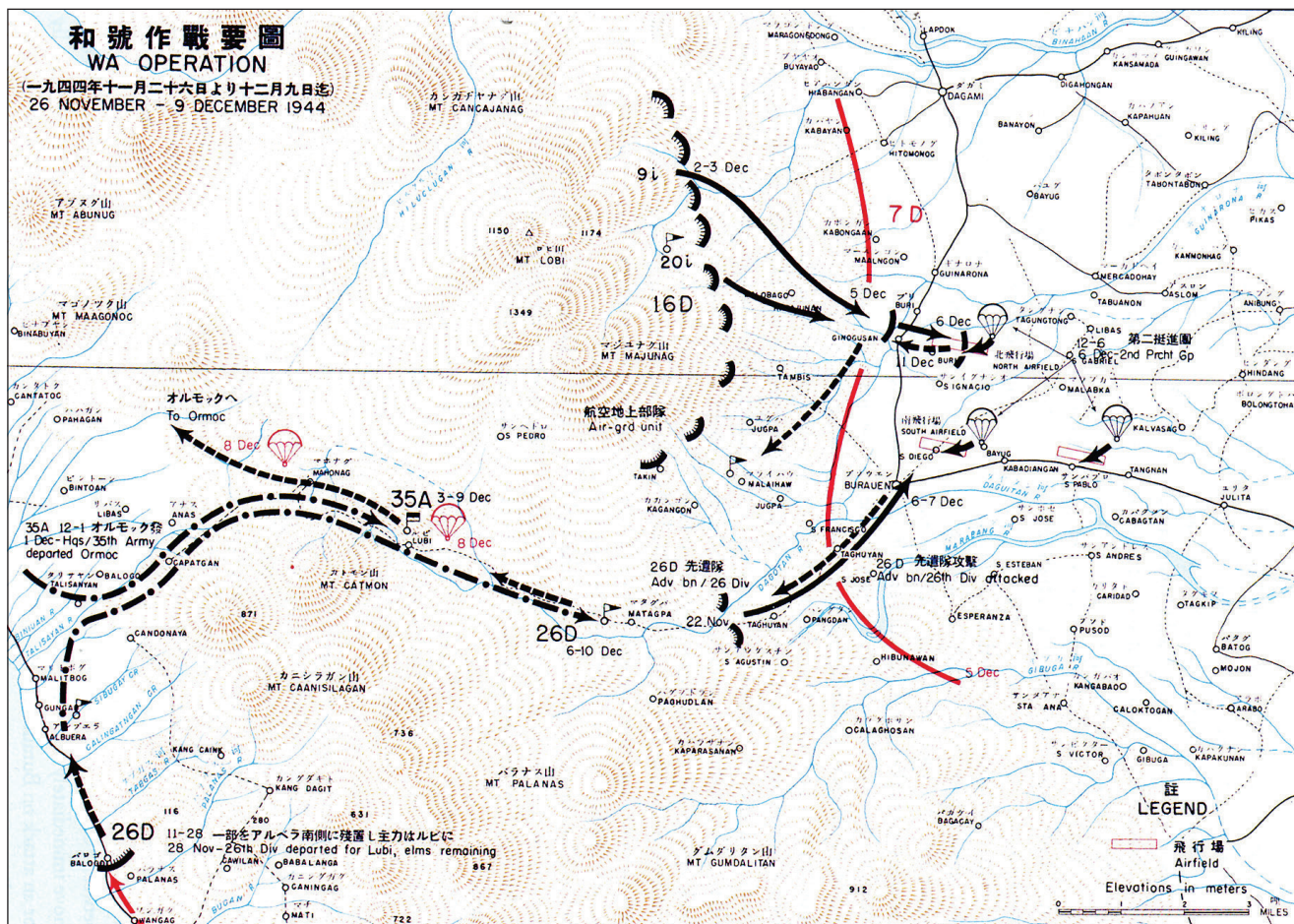
with a 65-percent attrition rate in training), 187th and 188th GIRs, two parachute field artillery battalions, and a number of service and support companies, the 11th Airborne Division first entered combat on Leyte on 18 November 1944 and began its "brief but impressive combat record."<sup>8</sup> Operating as a regular infantry unit to free the 7th Infantry Division for an offensive drive elsewhere, the division landed approximately 40 miles south of Tacloban, Leyte's capital, to continue the westward advance into the mountains west of Burauen and seize all mountain passes into the Leyte Valley.<sup>9</sup>

Chief among the 11th Airborne Division's missions in the westward advance was to clear a crucial Japanese supply route along the Ormoc-Burauen Trail, a task which it completed largely "through the surprise and effectiveness of its night attacks."<sup>10</sup> Despite the division's success, on the evening of 6 December 1944 as the 11th Airborne Division bivouacked for the evening, the Japanese launched their 250-man parachute assault at the San Pablo airstrip, part of what the Japanese called Operation Wa.<sup>11</sup> Due to the threat American aircraft operating from Leyte airfields posed to their lines of communication between the Home Islands and Japanese-held territories in the South Pacific, the Japanese intended the Wa operation to regain control of these airfields and prevent American air force units from being able to mass there.<sup>12</sup>

Besides the Japanese elements attacking the San Pablo strip, other elements of the IJA's Second Parachute Group, including the 3rd and 4th Parachute Regiments supported by fighters and bombers to suppress the airfields' defenses, assaulted the Buri Airstrip to the northwest of the San Pablo Strip and the Bayug Airstrip to the west.<sup>13</sup> In attempting to regain control of the eastern airfields on Leyte and reduce the Americans' air superiority, Operation Wa also envisioned the Japanese 16th and 26th Infantry Divisions, then in the hills west of Burauen, launching a ground assault which coincided with the attack of the Second Parachute Group's paratroopers.<sup>14</sup> While the parachute assault had to be postponed from the night of 5 December to the night of 6 December due to bad weather, the 16th Division never received word of the postponement as a result of poor communications and still attacked on 5 December, initially seizing part of the Buri Airstrip and then joining with the paratroopers jumping that evening to secure the rest of the field.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, due to poor reconnaissance, the 26th Division had difficulty moving along its narrow axis of advance, which was nothing more than a small local trail. Although it postponed its attack until 6 December, the 16th Division and its paratroopers had already taken heavy losses and the 26th had made few appreciable gains.

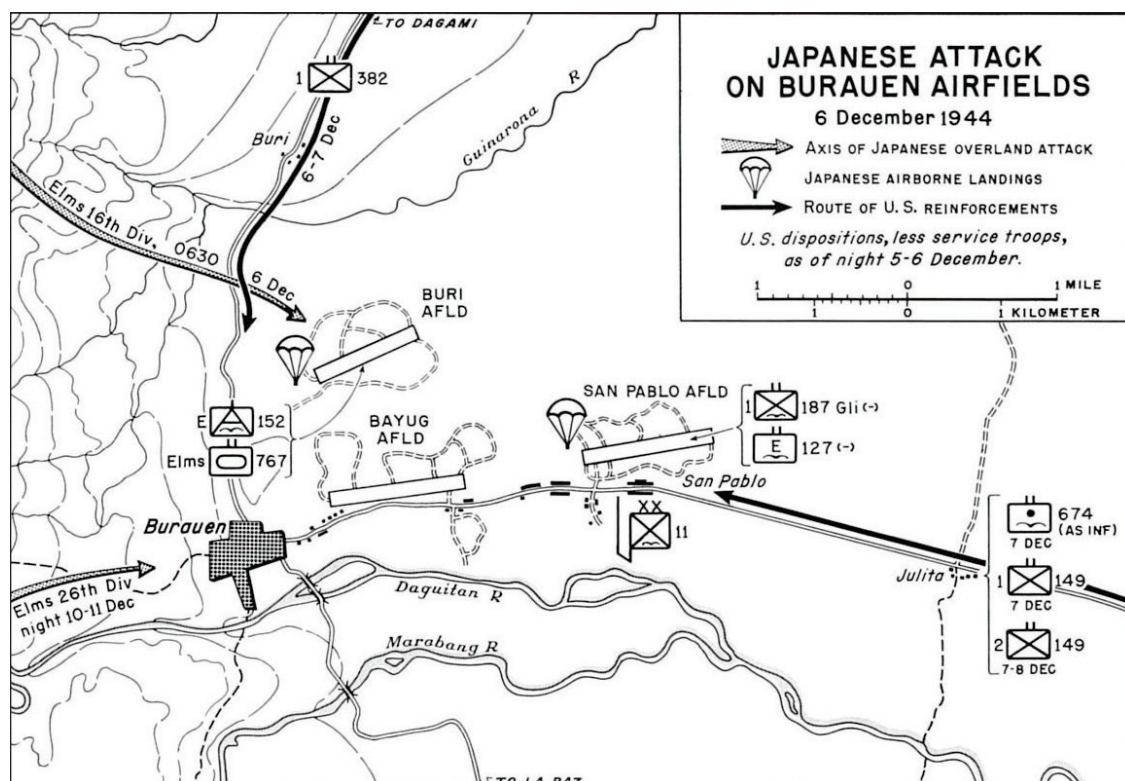
On the American side, intelligence gathered from captured

Map 1 — The Japanese Wa Operation to Retake the Burauen Airfields



Reports of General MacArthur: Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, Vol II, Part I, U.S. Army Center of Military History





M. Hamlin Cannon, *United States Army in World War II: The War in The Pacific - Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, U.S. Army Center of Military History

**Map 2 — Japanese Attack on the Burauen Airfields and U.S. Reinforcements**

documents and prisoner interrogations at the end of November indicated Japanese plans for a coordinated ground-airborne attack to seize the airfields around Burauen. While the XXIV Corps intelligence officers deemed the Japanese incapable of conducting such a plan, the corps commander, MG John R. Hodge, alerted his subordinate units to the possibility of a Japanese parachute assault and ordered precautionary measures put in place such as having all Soldiers keep their weapons and helmets within arms' reach.<sup>16</sup> The Americans also set blocking positions on all of the trails leading east from the mountains to the airfields, although unbeknownst to them elements of the Japanese 16th Division were still able to infiltrate from the mountains to the Buri airstrip.

While the leadership of the 11th Airborne Division had received warning of a possible Japanese airborne assault from the XXIV Corps on 4 December and had received a company from the 77th Infantry Division to reinforce the airfield at Dulag, some were skeptical and the information did not get down to the lowest Soldiers. Therefore, many Americans were shocked by the Japanese attack when it occurred on 6 December.<sup>17</sup> The headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Air Force was in the area of the Japanese attack, and LTG Krueger received frantic calls from MG Ennis Whitehead, the Fifth Air Force's commander, requesting aid.<sup>18</sup> Krueger directed the commander of the XXIV Corps to have the 11th Airborne Division clear the Burauen area of Japanese attackers. Despite the surprise created by the assault, the 11th Airborne's leaders quickly moved to defeat the Japanese. Although the attackers were able to destroy 11 small liaison planes, several ground vehicles, and a fuel dump on the San

Pablo strip, elements of the 11th Airborne's division artillery along with engineers, signal, ordnance, quartermaster, and Air Corps troops worked to defend the field in a somewhat uncoordinated manner.<sup>19</sup> LTC James Farren, the commander of the 11th Airborne Division's 152nd Airborne Anti-Aircraft (AA) Battalion, received and carried out orders to establish a perimeter defense around the division headquarters using the division headquarters company and signal company.<sup>20</sup> By the morning of 7 December, LTC Douglas C. Davis, commander of the 11th Airborne Division's 127th Airborne Engineer

Battalion, had cobbled together his engineers and support troops, including the division's Military Police platoon, into a more coherent composite force with the mission of retaking the San Pablo strip along with other troops that MG Swing had ordered to the airfield.<sup>21</sup>

Over the course of the previous evening, MG Swing had determined the Japanese parachute assault was an attack in strength and, with the 511th PIR and much of the 188th GIR fighting Japanese forces to the west and unable to reinforce the airfields, directed LTC Lukas E. Hoska Jr.'s 674th Glider Field Artillery Battalion to leave its guns on nearby Bito Beach and assist in the effort to retake the fields as infantry.<sup>22</sup> On the morning of 7 December, Swing personally directed a provisional regiment, consisting of Hoska's artillery battalion and Davis's composite battalion, in the westward attack to retake the San Pablo Airstrip.<sup>23</sup> Although the engineer battalion, moving on the left side of the attack, managed to envelop Japanese forces from the west with one of its engineer companies, it had to halt its advance due to a lack of ammunition and water, and LTC Davis ordered the engineers to secure the gains on the west side of the field and the artillerymen to secure the gains on the east side.<sup>24</sup> At 0900 the commander of the 187th GIR, COL Harry Hildebrand, assumed command of the provisional force and directed an attack but then rescinded the order on advice from LTC Davis due to the lack of supplies. The provisional regiment consolidated its gains, with the engineers being relieved in the morning and the artilleryman regaining control of the entire airstrip later on 7 December.

In addition to the counterattack at the San Pablo Airstrip, Swing also directed the 1st Battalion of the 187th GIR to retake the Buri Airstrip along with other reinforcements. Medium tanks from the attached 767th Tank Battalion also assisted in the efforts to retake the airfields, with two tank platoons supporting service units that had taken a "considerable number of casualties" and had "no organized resistance or established defense."<sup>25</sup> Combined with the recently arrived infantry battalions that LTG Krueger detached to the 11th Airborne, the Americans continued to take the initiative and advance against the remaining Japanese paratroopers despite heavy automatic weapons fire from Japanese positions.<sup>26</sup>

With many of the support units of the 11th Airborne Division engaged, the inexperienced 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, having been attached to the 11th Airborne Division, was alerted to move to the San Pablo airstrip at 0200 on 7 December and left its mess, supply, and administrative personnel on Bito Beach to link up with MG Swing. Swing gave a brief order to the men of the 149th to attack the Buri airstrip, 1,500 yards away, along a westward axis, and the battalion commander immediately drew up plans to have two infantry companies advance abreast with another company and the 81mm mortar platoon in support.<sup>27</sup> Lacking time for a reconnaissance, the two attacking companies lost contact with one another when they encountered a swamp, and with evening approaching the battalion commander decided to postpone the attack and set up a perimeter defense. Despite the lack of success, the troops of the 149th Infantry made contact with the 11th Airborne Division's 1st Battalion, 187th GIR around 1630 and prepared to attack the next morning.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion, 382nd Infantry, 96th Division, also under the operational control of the 11th Airborne Division, took positions near the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry.<sup>29</sup>

The 149th Infantry's new attack plan had its two attacking companies advancing at 0800 on 8 December. Beginning as scheduled, this attack managed to cross the airfield despite taking some friendly artillery fire but encountered heavy Japanese resistance on the far side of the airstrip and was repulsed. Although Swing was displeased by the lack of progress, he approved the recommendation of the 149th's regimental commander that the 2nd Battalion be brought to secure the area and conduct patrolling to allow the 1st Battalion to concentrate on another attack.<sup>30</sup> The rest of 8 December saw the American battalions consolidating their positions on the edge of Buri Airstrip, with the 382nd Infantry having come under heavy Japanese machine-gun fire during the morning until mortar support and the heroic actions of PVT Ova A. Kelley silenced the Japanese guns.<sup>31</sup> The following day, advancing in similar fashion to its attack on 8 December, the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry was again repulsed on the far side of the airfield by withering Japanese fire from positions concealed in the dense jungle.<sup>32</sup>

Unable to attack again on 9 December due to a lack of ammunition and under orders from the regimental commander, the 1st Battalion changed its scheme of maneuver for an offensive on 10 December, with two companies conducting an envelopment to the west with a third in support.<sup>33</sup> Despite the fact that two of the advancing companies mistakenly got into a firefight with each other, fortunately producing minimal casualties, the new maneuver allowed the advancing infantry to systematically reduce the Japanese strongpoints until nightfall halted operations. The following day saw the 1st Battalion complete its clearance of the airstrip, with the battalion claiming 300 Japanese dead and forcing the withdrawal of 200 more at the cost of 40 killed and 100 wounded.<sup>34</sup> Although it took some adjustment, even the 149th Infantry demonstrated adaptability in counterattacking the Japanese.



M. Hamlin Cannon, *United States Army in World War II: The War in The Pacific - Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*

**Operational losses at the Burauen Airfields forced their abandonment and the construction of the field at Tanauan.**

Besides ground combat units, American anti-aircraft units like the 152nd Airborne AA Battalion were crucial to the defense of the airfields around San Pablo and Burauen. These units destroyed upwards of a dozen aircraft, including all six of the Japanese aircraft transporting paratroopers to attack airfields beyond the Burauen area.<sup>35</sup> Further demonstrating flexibility, the Americans also used anti-aircraft units in a direct fire role engaging Japanese ground forces, and ground patrols of the 152nd Airborne AA Battalion killed some 40 Japanese troops of the 16th Division on the morning of 6 December prior to the parachute drops.<sup>36</sup> All told, American antiaircraft units accounted for an estimated 400 enemy paratroopers and aircrew killed. The losses sustained by



the Japanese demonstrate the risks of a parachute assault even when the attackers have local air superiority.

Beyond the actions of senior leaders like the division, regimental, and battalion commanders, there were numerous examples of more junior paratroopers and other Soldiers taking the initiative to defeat the Japanese and retake the airfields. Airborne engineers of the 127th Engineer Battalion received eight Silver Star medals in aggressively counterattacking the Japanese, boldly charging across the Buri airfield to destroy the Japanese paratroopers dug-in on elevated terrain.<sup>37</sup> Two lieutenants who were awarded Silver Stars were both cited for taking the initiative in leading counterattacks across the airstrips in the face of heavy fire. Other Soldiers were cited for manning crew-served weapons that enabled their platoons and companies to advance on the Japanese positions, demonstrating initiative by taking the place of machine gunners who had been killed or wounded. The aforementioned actions of the 149th Infantry Regiment's PVT Kelley also demonstrated that actions to take the initiative were not restricted to the 11th Airborne Division.

Ultimately, the Japanese paratroopers on the San Pablo and southern Burauen airfields were isolated and annihilated, while the Japanese on the northern Burauen field withdrew to the hills to the west on 11 December.<sup>38</sup> The retreating Japanese 16th and 26th Divisions found their withdrawal was difficult because elements from the 11th Airborne Division were blocking their line of march, and the headquarters staff of the 35th Army overseeing Operation Wa disbanded and scattered.<sup>39</sup> After its successful operations on Leyte, the 11th Airborne Division was pulled off the front line in early January 1945 and allowed to rest on the beach at Abuyog. The rest was short lived, however, as the division embarked on U.S. Navy transports on 26 January to support the invasion of Luzon. While the 187th and 188th GIs conducted an amphibious landing at Nasugbu, 60 miles south of Manila by road, the 511th PIR conducted its first combat jump, landing along Tagaytay Ridge on 3 February.<sup>40</sup> Remaining Japanese forces on Leyte would continue to fight into May of the following year, although the focus of Allied operations in the Philippines shifted to the liberation of the main Philippine island of Luzon on 9 January 1945. The Japanese planned several more airborne operations targeting Allied airfields on Okinawa and Iwo Jima but did not launch any more before the end of the war.

In a period where the U.S. has again begun focusing on large-scale combat operations, this case study provides some insight on how American forces can repel an enemy airborne assault, while illuminating the problems that executing an airborne assault can pose for attacking forces. The operation demonstrated the importance of air defense units and the strengths of an organizational culture that values low-level initiative in repelling an airborne assault. If an enemy force possesses an airborne capability, rear-area troops, like those in the 11th Airborne Division's Headquarters, can quickly find themselves acting in the role of infantry, firing and maneuvering on enemy paratroopers with the help of

armor or artillery. Therefore, if an enemy possesses such a capability, all American Soldiers must be prepared to deal with paratroopers in their midst. From the perspective of the attackers, airborne forces, often possessing only light weapons and limited supplies, must be relieved by other ground forces soon after their landings. The Japanese attack on Burauen is a cautionary tale for any force attempting to conduct a parachute assault in conjunction with a ground attack in the face of strong air defenses. In the final analysis, despite Japanese failures, one must credit the ability of the American Soldier to adapt and win under adverse conditions with carrying the day on Leyte in December 1945.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> PFC Mort Ammerman, B Company, 188th Glider Infantry Regiment, quoted in E.M. Flanagan Jr.'s *The Angels: A History of the 11th Airborne Division* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1989), 151.

<sup>2</sup> Charles R. Anderson, *The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II, CMH Pub 72-27: Leyte* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1994), 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Merglen, "Japanese Airborne Operations in World War II," *Military Review* (July 1960): 46-49.

<sup>5</sup> G. Rottman and A. Takizawa, *Japanese Paratroop Forces of World War II* (Long Island City, NY: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2005), 10-13.

<sup>6</sup> Press Relations, 11th Airborne Division, "History of the 11th Airborne Division," May 1945, Record Group 407, Box 6545, Entry 427, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD [hereafter referred to as NARA II], 1. In comparison, the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions had been formed from fully trained units.

<sup>7</sup> The Information Section, Analysis Branch, Headquarters Army Ground Forces, "Fact Sheet of the 11th Airborne Division," dated 1 March 1947, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 6545, NARA II, 1.

<sup>8</sup> "History of the 11th Airborne Division," 1; "Fact Sheet of the 11th Airborne Division," 2.

<sup>9</sup> Initially, the 11th Airborne Division was only slated to stage on Leyte and not participate in combat operations, but the need to employ the 7th Infantry Division to clear the eastern shore of Ormoc Bay caused the XXIV Corps commander to relieve the 7th Division with the 11th Airborne Division to continue the drive to the west. M. Hamlin Cannon, *United States Army in World War II: The War in The Pacific - Leyte: The Return to the Philippines* (1953; repr., Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1993), 296.

<sup>10</sup> "Fact Sheet of the 11th Airborne Division," 2.

<sup>11</sup> Flanagan Jr., *The Angels*, 152-153; "Fact Sheet of the 11th Airborne Division," 2.

<sup>12</sup> Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, 294. Unbeknownst to the Japanese, LTG Krueger had all work on these airfields cease on 25 November.

<sup>13</sup> Major General Yoshiharu Tomochika, "The True Facts of the Leyte Operation," trans. 166th Language Detachment, dated 5 November 1946, Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library, retrieved from <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4013coll8/id/4642/rec/1>, accessed 23 May 2019, 23.

<sup>14</sup> General Headquarters, Far East Command, *Reports of General MacArthur: Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, Vol II, Part I* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1966), 424.

<sup>15</sup> Tomochika, "The True Facts of the Leyte Operation," 23.

<sup>16</sup> Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, 296-297.

<sup>17</sup> Flanagan Jr., *The Angels*, 146.

<sup>18</sup> Walter Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon: The Story of Sixth Army in World War II* (1953; repr., Pickle Partners Publishing, 2015), Kindle Location 3951.

<sup>19</sup> Rottman and Takizawa, *Japanese Paratroop Forces*, 47.

<sup>20</sup> Headquarters, 152nd Airborne AA Battalion, "Historical Report of 152 AB AA Bn in Leyte Campaign," dated 10 January 1945, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 6554, NARA II, 3.

<sup>21</sup> HQ, 127th Airborne Engineer Battalion, "Subject: K-2 Operation (20

October 1944 to 25 December 1944) 127th Airborne Engineer Battalion," dated 12 January 1945, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 6555, NARA II, 2.

<sup>22</sup> COL Edward H. Lahti, *Memoirs of an Angel* (Herndon, VA: self-pub., 1994), 56-58; Flanagan Jr., *The Angels*, 155.

<sup>23</sup> Flanagan Jr., *The Angels*, 155.

<sup>24</sup> HQ, 127th Airborne Engineer Battalion, "Subject: K-2 Operation," 3.

<sup>25</sup> "After Action Report, 767th Tank Battalion: 23 October 44 thru 30 October 44," undated, 75-76, Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library, retrieved from <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll8/id/3463>, accessed 23 May 2019. This source included the unit journal from 1 January to 31 December 1944. Gene Eric Salecker, *Rolling Thunder Against the Rising Sun: The Combat History of U.S. Army Tank Battalions in the Pacific in World War II* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2008), 252. The 767th Tank Battalion had previously participated in the seizure of Buraen in October.

<sup>26</sup> Sixth United States Army, "Report of the Leyte Operation, 17 October 1944 to 25 December 1944," undated, 71-72, retrieved from <http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p4013coll8/id/3170/rec/13>, accessed 13 February 2019; Flanagan Jr., *The Angels*, 157.

<sup>27</sup> Martin C. Grigg, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry (38th Infantry Division) in the Battle for the Buri Airstrip, Leyte, P.I., 7-11 December 1944," (Personal Experience of a Company Commander) (Fort Benning, GA: Academic Department, The Infantry School, 1949), 6-7, retrieved from <https://mcoepublic.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/library/DonovanPapers/wwii/STUP2/G-L/GriggMartinC%20%20MAJ.pdf>, accessed 24 June 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, 303-304.

<sup>29</sup> Orlando R. Davidson, J. Carl Williams, and Joseph A. Kahl, *The Deadeyes: The Story of the 96th Infantry Division* (Nashville, TN: The Battery Press, 1947), 67.

<sup>30</sup> Grigg, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry," 10.

<sup>31</sup> Armed with an M1 carbine, Kelley would be awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor for charging the Japanese and killing eight enemy soldiers before he himself was killed. Davidson, et al., *The Deadeyes*, 69.

<sup>32</sup> Grigg, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry," 12.

<sup>33</sup> The Japanese had infiltrated troops along the lines of communication between the San Pablo and Buri Airstrips, hindering resupply to the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry; Grigg, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry," 12.

<sup>34</sup> Grigg, "The Operations of the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry," 14.

<sup>35</sup> Rottman and Takizawa, *Japanese Paratroop Forces*, 47; Records claimed 47 Japanese planes while claiming another 11 probably destroyed and 15 damaged, but as the total attacking force was only 40 planes these numbers are obviously exaggerated. General Headquarters, United States Army Forces, Pacific, "Antiaircraft Artillery Activities in the Pacific War - Section XII: Southern Philippines Campaign," dated October 1946, 78 retrieved from <http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll8/id/1997>, accessed 13 February 2019. The even more optimistic Sixth Army report claimed 49 aircraft destroyed across Leyte.

<sup>36</sup> 152nd AB AA Battalion, "Historical Report of 152 AB AA Bn," 3.

<sup>37</sup> "History of the 127th Airborne Engineer Battalion - Section VI: Awards," dated 28 January 1946, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 6555, NARA II.

<sup>38</sup> *Reports of General MacArthur*, 427. Due to the landing of the American 77th Infantry Division near the important Ormoc Valley, the commander of the Japanese 35th Army ordered the attacks around Buraen to cease and had his forces withdraw in order to hold the Ormoc area. Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, 305.

<sup>39</sup> Tomochika, "The True Facts of the Leyte Operation," 23.

<sup>40</sup> Although the lead 18 transports dropped their paratroops on target, the rest of the regiment was scattered by poorly timed drops. Robert Ross Smith, *The U.S. Army in World War II: Triumph in the Philippines, The War in the Pacific* (1963; repr., Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2005), 227-228; Flanagan Jr., *The Angels*, 247. Isolating Japanese forces in Manila from the south while the U.S. Sixth Army's 37th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions advanced on the city from the north, the 11th Airborne Division encountered strong Japanese resistance around the suburb of Bacoor, including minefields, concrete, and even buried aerial bombs rigged with pressure fuses. "History of the 11th Airborne Division," 17-19.

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