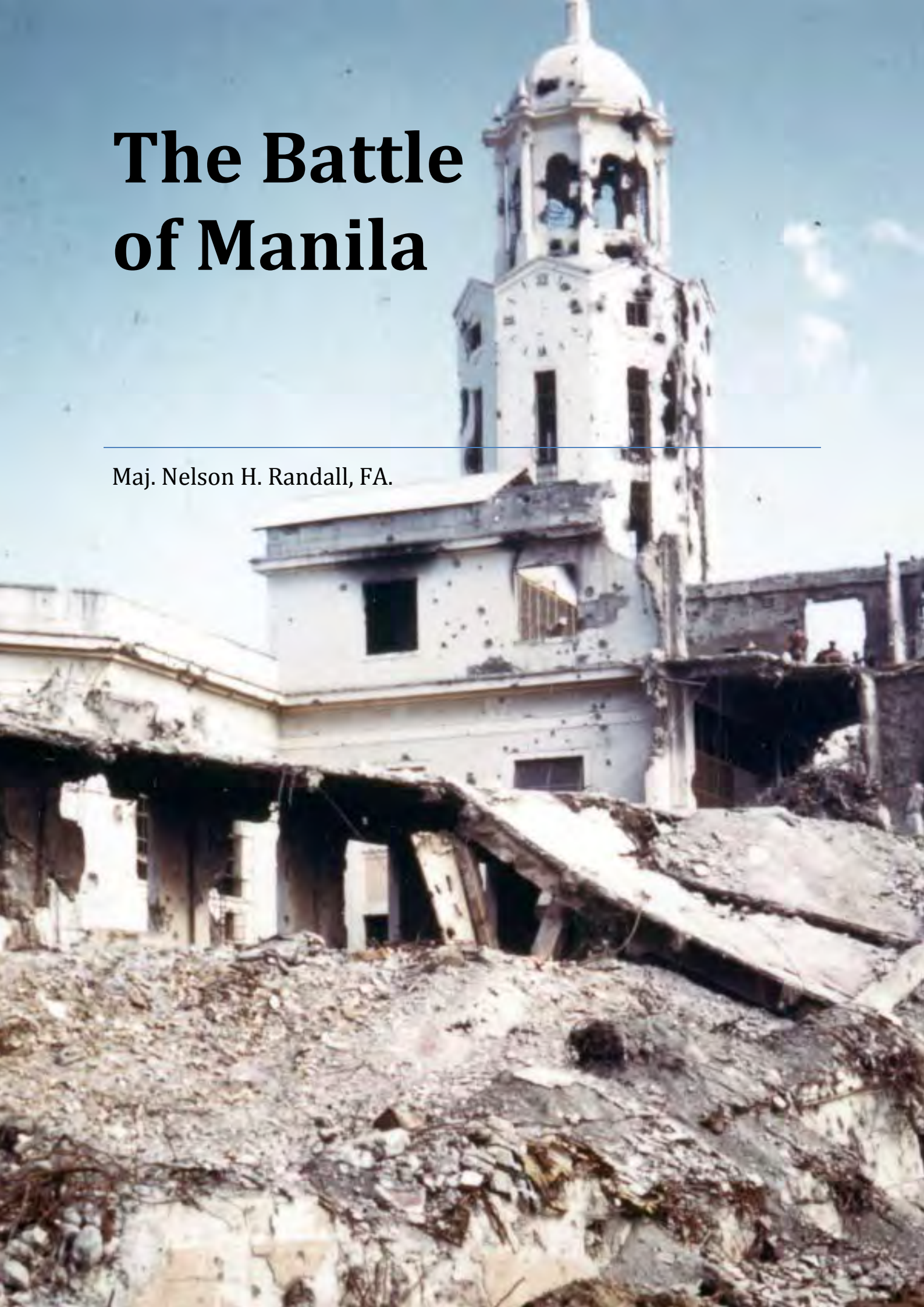
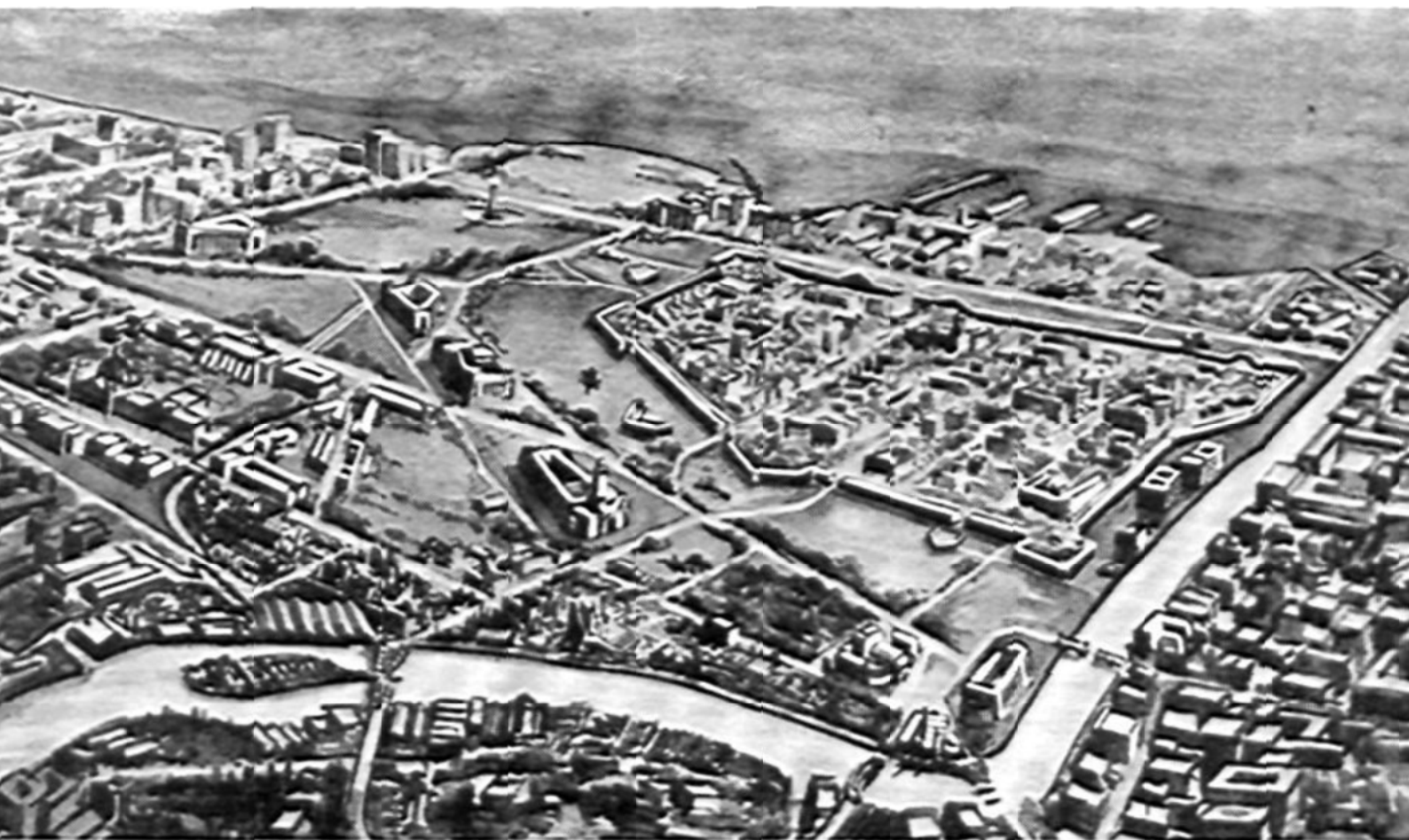


The Battle of Manila

Maj. Nelson H. Randall, FA.





*Ancient Intramuros in the heart of Manila
(Field Artillery Journal)*

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*(Cover)Manila's City Hall shows the results of direct
artillery fire. The Japs held this place in strength,
refused to surrender. At one time they had a 15-cm
gun mounted on the third floor, used tower for an
OP.*

The BATTLE of MANILA

By Maj. Nelson H. Randall, FA

Manila, "Pearl of the Orient," nestled in the bosom of the sick oyster that is the Imperial Japanese Army.

Three festering years had passed since Gen. Douglas MacArthur declared it an open city and left, vowing to return.

Now the pearl was ready to come forth into the light of a new day.

As the shucker's knife probes to unhinge the reluctant bivalve, the 37th Infantry Division made its stab. A quick twist of the wrist and we were in.

It had been a long haul to Manila, thirty-two months and eight days from San Francisco. The journey led us through New Zealand, Fiji, and all the Solomons to the Lingayen Gulf beachhead.

Spearheading an advance of 120 miles down the Central Luzon Plain, Maj. Gen. Robert S. Beightler's men were driven by a burning desire to reach Manila before the no-longer-dismounted 1st Cavalry Division. Far ahead of their trains jammed up behind blown bridges, infantry swam and artillery ferried in amtracks to keep their momentum, overrunning the Jap rear guard almost without a halt.

Brig. Gen. Leo M. Kreber's artillerymen met the difficulties of the 240-mile round trip from ammunition dumps stymied on White Beach 2 at San Fabian. Battalions were stripped of transport as never before to make up the 54-vehicle convoys.

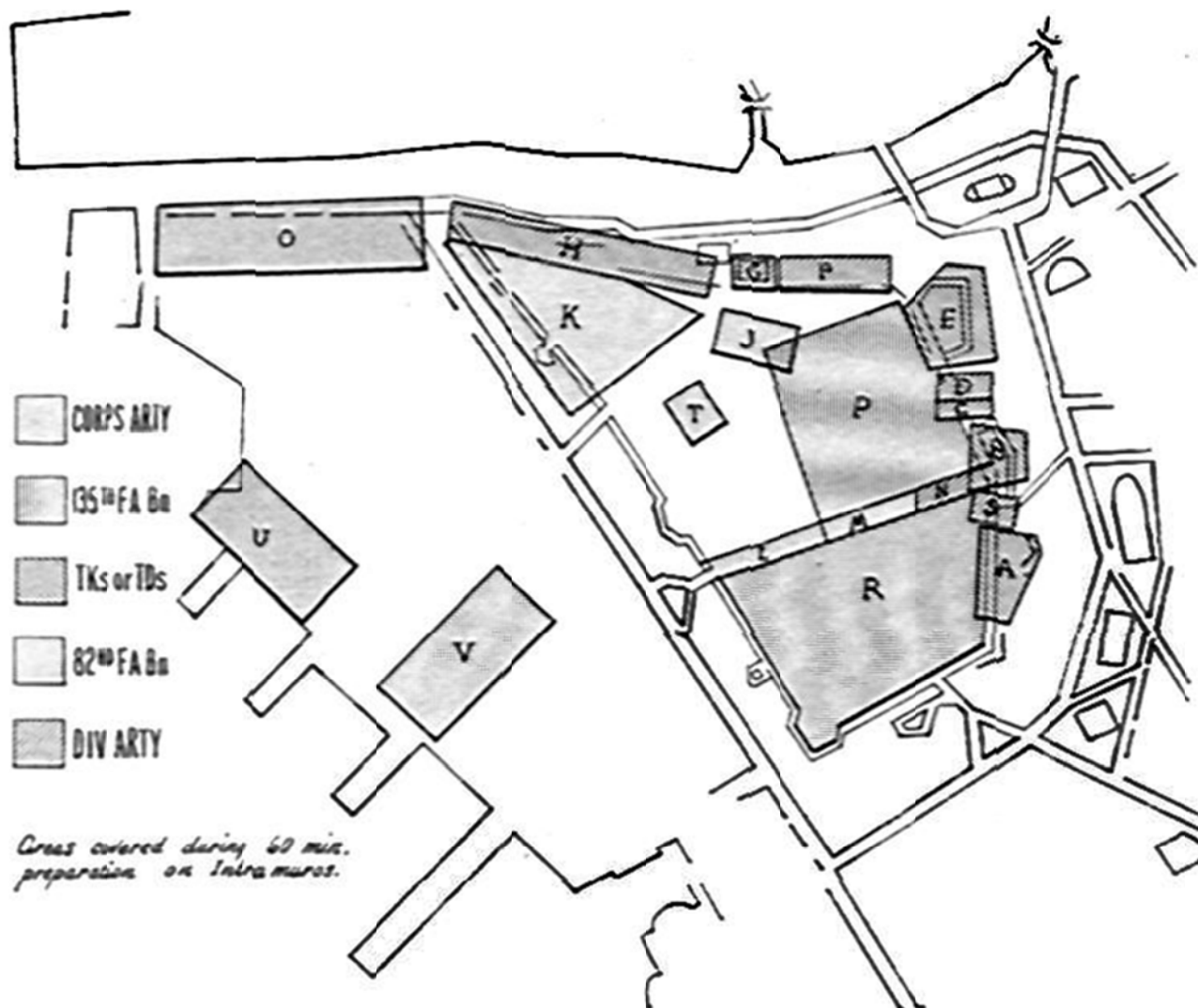
We were in. Past the Bonafacio monument at Grace Park where Japanese infantry made less heroic figures, sprawled in death about the base, than those of the

Filipino patriots deathless in stone above. Past the cemetery where two 120-mm dual purpose guns, their ammunition neatly stored in marble tombs, covered all northern approaches to the city, and straight down Rizal Avenue. Cheering Filipinos lined the streets, scarcely bothering to duck when a spate of sniper fire drove GI's to cover.



A corner of the Philippine Legislature Building. Within the basements of such buildings the Japs built pillboxes which could not be touched except by demolishing the structure with direct fire.

Hard pressed, the Nips made it plain that we would have to fight for Manila. There would be no open city policy on their part. As we pushed them toward the banks of the Pasig River which cuts the city in half, they put the torch to stocks of fuel and explosives stored in



PREPARATION FOR ASSAULT ON INTRAMUROS

1. H Hour is 0830.
2. The following areas will be fired from H — 60 to H Hour:

AREA A:	754th Tank Bn, B Co. Maximum rate for prolonged fire.
B:	637th TD Bn. Maximum rate for prolonged fire.
C:	1 platoon 136th FA Bn direct fire at rate 100 rds per gun per hour. Total ammo ex: 200 155-mm.
D:	1 Btry 140th FA Bn direct fire. Fire at rate 2 rds per gun per minute.
E:	Same as B.
F:	1 Btry 6th FA Bn direct fire. Fire at rate 2 rds per gun per minute.
G:	1 Btry 136th FA Bn direct fire. Rate of 100 rds per gun per hour. Total ammo ex: 400 155-mm.
H:	2 Btrys 6th FA Bn direct fire. Fire at rate 2 rds per gun per minute.
J:	1 Btry Corps Arty. Total ammo ex: 200 155-mm.
K:	Corps Arty. Total ammo ex: 400 155-mm.
O:	Corps Arty. Total ammo ex: 100 155-mm.
P:	135th FA Bn. 2 rds per gun per minute.
R:	82nd FA Bn. 2 rds per gun per minute.
S:	1 platoon 136th FA Bn direct fire. Total ammo ex: 200 155-mm.
T:	Corps Arty. Total ammo ex: 50 155-mm.
U:	Corps Arty. 240-mm Howitzers. Ammo ex at CAC's discretion.
V:	Corps Arty. 8" Howitzers. Ammo ex as directed by Corps Arty Commander.
3. The following areas will be fired from H+15 to H+45:

L:	L: Corps Arty, H+15 to H+45, 50 rds.
M:	Corps Arty. H+15 to H+45, 50 rds.
N:	135th FA Bn. H+15 to H+45.

banks, theaters, hotels, and office buildings, blowing the newer business section sky high. Pulling south across the Pasig, they demolished Jones, Ayala, Quezon, and Santa Cruz bridges behind them.

Just one detail must be attended to before we could go over the river after them. In Old Bilibid Prison 800 military prisoners were cringing from the roaring flames of the burning city. Inured to privation under the Mikado's minions, our comrades broke down only when they saw the pot-helmeted, HBT clad strangers of the 148th Infantry who came to rescue them.

As artillerymen labored against time to clear the Ang Tibay shoe factory of Jap machinery and filth so that these pitiful creatures could be sheltered, the first loads came off the trucks. Dazed men, wearing fixed grins, fondled the strange carbines,

Thus the stage was set to annihilate the remaining 12,000 Nipponese in Manila. Caught on the prongs of three converging columns, their backs to Manila Bay with no avenue of escape left open, they could only stare moodily at Bataan, hazy in the distance—and fight.

Fight they did. Allowing themselves to be distracted only to wantonly butcher the helpless civilians trapped with them, they made the utmost use of their skillfully contrived defenses.

It is virtually impossible to separate the artillery story from that of the infantry in this battle, so closely were the two arms associated. Every street corner was a strong point. Streets were mined and barricaded with steel rails. Forted up in modern earthquake-proof apartments, hospitals, university buildings, and residences, the Japs had to be driven from building to building, ever inward, by extremely close supporting fires. Forward

hefted the helmets, asked questions, said over and over, "God, it's good to see you!" It must have come as a shock to the young soldiers, viewing for the first time officers with insignia on the shoulders of their shirts and enlisted men in campaign hats, that these men were already prisoners before many of the rescuers were inducted.

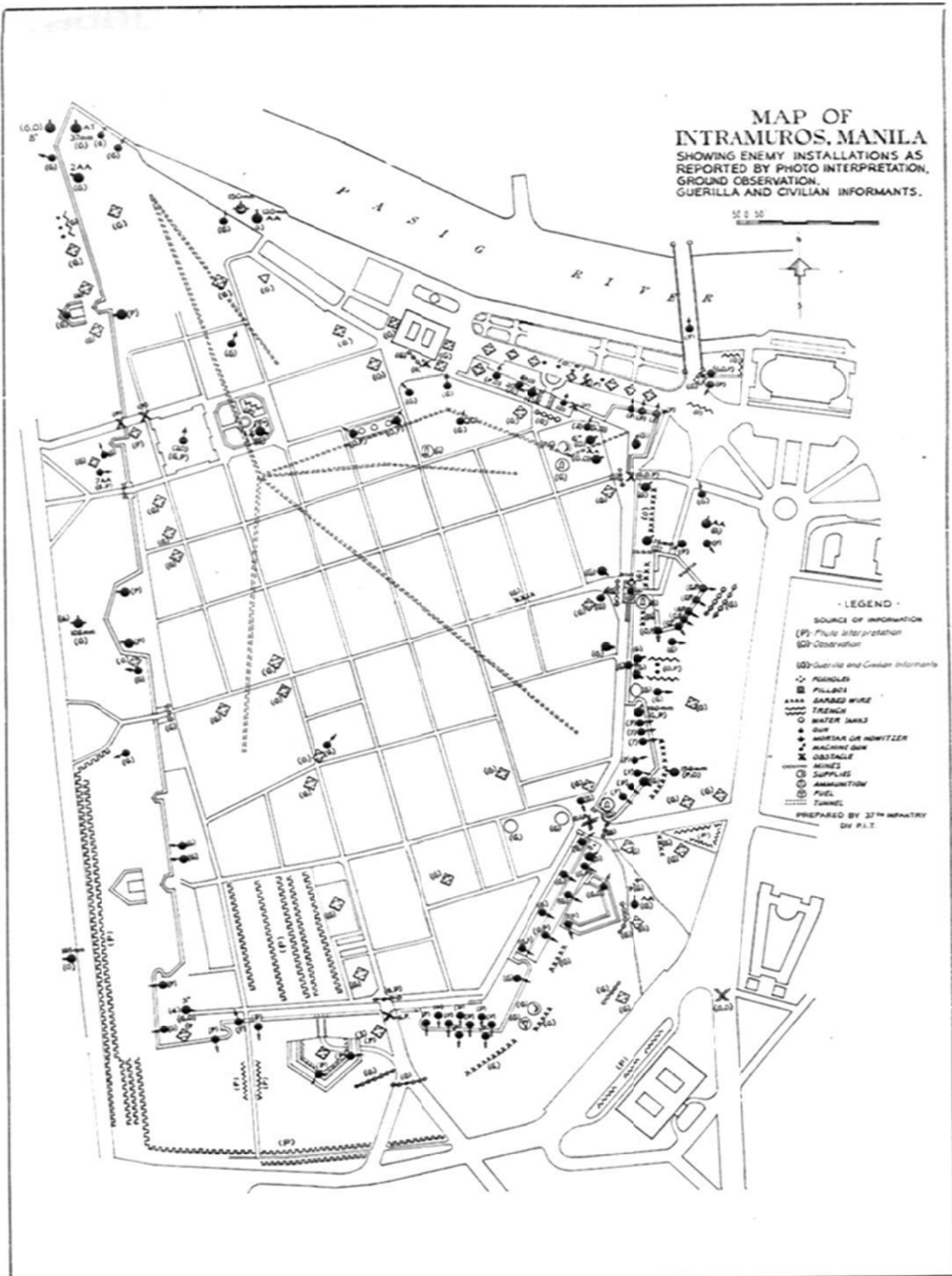
Much the same scene was being enacted at Santo Tomas University, where elements of the 1st Cavalry were releasing civilian internees by the thousands.

Maj. Gen. O. W. Griswold, commanding the XIV Corps, had planned well. While his 37th Division slashed to the heart of Manila, the rest of his 1st Cavalry sweeping around the eastern outskirts secured the city water supply and his 11th Airborne Division approached from the south to secure Nichols Field and Fort McKinley.

observers were calling for fires by giving the names of buildings and street intersections.

Affecting our every decision was the desire not to harm the civilian hostages and the property of our Filipino compatriots. The Japs would not have it thus, however. In the end, it was necessary to blast apart with all the fire power at our command every pocket of the suicidal defenders.

At the end of two bitter weeks, attacking troops had fought their way house-to-house through the fashionable Ermita district, through Paco and Pasay, up through the University of the Philippines, along the south bank of the Pasig, and were looking out upon the seat of the government and the ancient Intramuros, walled city of the Spaniards, the very heart of the Philippines. In forcing our way to the edge of the park-like area surrounding Intramuros, three hard cores of resistance had been by-passed and were being contained in the Legislative,



Map of Intramuros showing enemy installations as reported by photo interpretation, ground observation, guerrilla and civilian informants

Finance, and Agriculture buildings. For the moment, they could be ignored.

The story of the wicked fights for such places as Paco RR station, Provisor Island, the New Police Station, the Metropolitan Water District Building, the City Hall are for another time and place. Taken singly, they rank with any engagement in the Pacific, considering the number of troops involved. They were behind us now. We turned our whole attention to the harder fight to come.

The artist's drawing of Intramuros and the port area, with the government buildings on the east, Burnham Green on the south, the Pasig River on the north, and the Bay on the west, shows clearly how difficult any approach to the walled city can be made. There is no covered route.

Intramuros itself is the old Spanish fort around which the city grew. Built to withstand the assault of marauding tribesmen and Chinese pirates, it is still a formidable obstacle. Its walls are forty feet thick at the base. Their tops are wide enough to mount field guns. The gates are guarded by bastions barring the approaches. Some of the walls are tunnelled, providing covered routes for reinforcing troops. New and modern buildings tower over the walls, crowding the twisted narrow streets within. Surrounding the whole is the golf course and playground, built over the old moat.

On the north bank of the river, held by us, tall office buildings overlook the whole area and provide excellent OPs. Gutted in the fire set by the retreating Japs, the upper floors nevertheless yielded sufficient office furniture to establish very business-like offices for the observers, including several swivel chairs, desks for their feet, and lounging chairs for the guests—of whom there were many. General officers vied with cameramen for choice vantage points until the inevitable

sniper reminded them to stand back from those windows.

To reach assault positions, four more buildings had to be occupied, in this order: the Metropolitan Water District Building; the cold storage plant, at the bend of the Pasig and covering the river in both directions; the Metropolitan Theater, flanking the Botanical Garden; and the General Post Office.

A tank-infantry team took the Water District Building, with tanks firing at less than 100 yards. Artillery observers in the Great Eastern Hotel watched our infantry get up to the foundation of the building time after time. Just at dusk, three platoons of Japanese Infantry came out of the building and started north in a straggling column. Artillery killed at least fifty, and machine guns at the OP got the rest.

A battery of the 135th Field Artillery Battalion (105 how) was brought up to direct fire positions across the river to take the "ice house" under fire. Twice the lights tried to neutralize this thick-walled, windowless structure—and failed. A battalion of mediums was then used, one battery direct fire and another indirect. They set it afire, forcing the Japs out, leaving behind their huge stocks of fancy groceries and meats bearing U. S. trade names and Red Cross markings.

From the OPs in the Great Eastern Hotel and the Ayala Building, Nips in their own OPs in the Manila Hotel, the Customs House Tower, and the Marsman building could be observed bowing, scraping, and gesturing. We were using captured Jap 20-power observing instruments, which brought the enemy right up into our laps. His OPs were destroyed.

After we occupied the ice house, both the Theater and the Post Office were subjected to terrific artillery pressure. Concrete piercing ammunition was used



Jap 120-mm dual purpose gun, with camouflage knocked off and recoil cylinders holed by counterbattery. This was their principal weapon in defense of Manila. (Field Artillery Journal photo)



Inside old Intramuros, last stronghold of any large Jap force in Manila. This shows proportions of the wall, and its construction. (Field Artillery Journal photo)

with telling effect. These buildings were taken, not without casualties. Some 70 Japs were still alive and fighting in the basement of the Post Office when our people entered.

With the occupation of these buildings we were as close as we could possibly get to Intramuros. The next three days were spent in reconnaissance for direct fire positions and the preparation of positions.

The infantry plan was to attack Intramuros with two battalions, one jumping off from the Post Office and the Theater, and the other crossing the Pasig River in assault boats to hit the north side of the walled city.

The artillery plan conceived by Gen. Kreber and Col. Kenneth Cooper, his executive officer, called for emplacing 36 guns in direct fire positions. Reference to the plan of fires, which was superimposed on a sketch map by Col. Cooper, shows the approximate location of the guns and the areas covered. All told, eleven battalions of artillery, tank destroyers, and tank weapons were employed. Corps assistance was requested, and their 240-mm and 8-inch howitzers brought into the scheme.

A battery of the 6th Field Artillery Battalion (105 how) was given the task of reducing the stone embankment of the river to provide a gentle slope where the infantry could easily get out of their boats. This was accomplished the day before the assault. The 240s pounded the wall on the east, creating a breach which, as it turned out, was unnecessary.

Which brings this narrative up to the morning of February 23, 1945, the day of the attack. H-hour was 0830. At H minus 60 we shot the works, literally as well as figuratively.

Using all our organic battalions (the 6th, 135th, 136th (155 how), and the 140th

and the attached 82nd), with the Corps 155 Hows of the 756th and 757th Bns, the 465th FA with their 8-inchers, and the 544th with their 240s, plus the 637th TD Bn and the 754th Tank Bn, the huge concentration landed TOT at 0730.

High above the river in their grandstand seats, observers rocked with the concussion of the bursts.

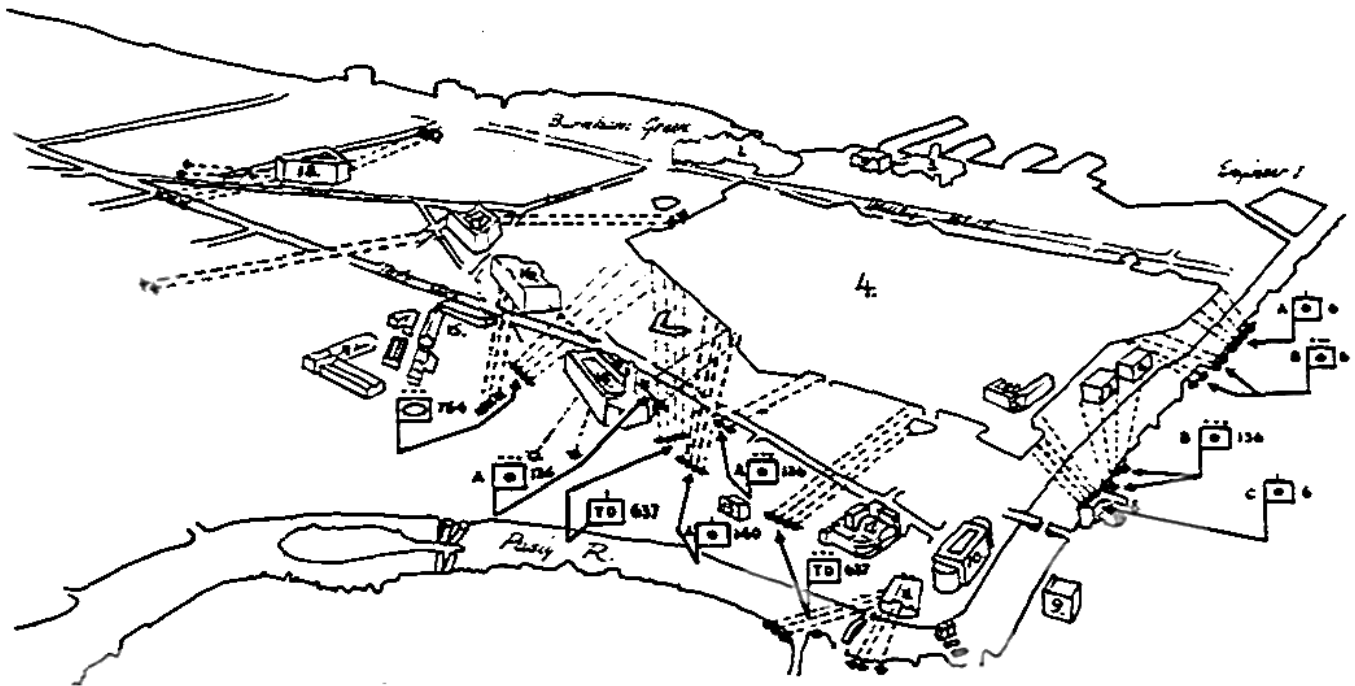
Direct fire guns, employed in the same building eight floors below, jarred the floors. Heavy MGs in the windows added to the din.

Jap machine guns could be heard firing from the Letran Building, just inside the north wall, near where the 129th Infantry was to land. It was reckless, ill-advised defiance. A battery of the 136th FA Battalion, held out for just such emergency, blasted the already riddled building. No more Jap firing was heard.

At exactly 0830 a red smoke round blossomed, the barrage shuddered into silence, the infantry moved out of the Post Office and their holes along Taft Avenue and launched their assault boats from the estuary where they had been hiding. It was a perfectly executed maneuver right out of the book. They entered the walls without a casualty and 24 hours later had complete control of Intramuros, despite determined resistance from deeply entrenched enemy in St. Augustine Church.

During that hour of hell the 11 battalions fired 7,896 rounds, totalling 185 tons of ammunition. As the assault moved off, fires were shifted to block off the southern half of the walled city, as shown by the fire plan.

Following the fall of Intramuros, there remained the three by-passed buildings to be cleared before the battle of Manila could be officially closed. The attack of these buildings may appear to have been an anti-climax after Intramuros. However, the caliber of their resistance



DIRECT FIRE POSITIONS AND KEY TO IMPORTANT BUILDINGS

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Manila Hotel | 7. Macondry & Co. | 13. Metropolitan Water District |
| 2. Marsman Building | 8. Ayala Building | 14. City Hall |
| 3. Customs House | 9. Great Eastern Hotel | 15. University of the Philippines Buildings |
| 4. Intramuros (Walled City) | 10. General Post Office | 16. Legislative Building |
| 5. Letran Building | 11. Cold Storage Plant | 17. Finance Building |
| 6. Mint | 12. Metropolitan Theater | 18. Agriculture Building |

ARTILLERY AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES
FOR PREPARATION FOR ATTACK ON INTRAMUROS
0730-0930 23 FEBRUARY 1945

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Total Ammo Exp.</i>	<i>Wgt per Projectile (lbs)</i>	<i>Total wgt Projectile (lbs)</i>
				<hr/>
6th FA Bn	105-mm How	1,431 HE	33.00	47,223.00
		12 HC	32.87	394.44
135th FA Bn	105-mm How	1,630 HE	33.00	53,790.00
140th FA Bn	105-mm How	478 HE	33.00	15,774.00
		1 HC (red)	29.27	29.27
136th FA Bn	155-mm How	830 HE	95.00	78,850.00
		23 WP	98.40	2,263.20
82nd FA Bn	105-mm How	1,213 HE	33.00	40,029.00
		93 WP	34.31	3,190.83
754th Tank Bn	75-mm Gun	450 HE	14.70	6,615.00
		150 APC	14.96	2,244.00
637th TD Bn	76-mm Gun	450 HE	12.87	5,791.50
		150 APC	15.44	2,316.00
<i>Corps Arty</i>				
756th FA Bn	155-mm How	413 HE		39,235.00
757th FA Bn	155-mm How	461 HE		43,795.00
465th FA Bn	8" How	72 HE		14,400.00
544th FA Bn	240-mm How	39 HE		14,040.00
<i>All Units</i>	75-mm Gun	600 rds		
	76-mm Gun	600 rds		
	105-mm How	4,858 rds		
	155-mm How	1,727 rds		
	8" How	72 rds		
	240-mm How	39 rds		
	TOTAL	7,896 rds	TOTAL WGT	
			369,980.24 lbs	
			185 Tons	

can be seen in the fact that it took nine more days to finish them off.

Once again the solution was direct fire. Taking one building at a time, 155s were placed in a semi-circle around each building and hundreds of rounds of concrete-piercing and unfuzed shell were poured in. We are convinced that the unfuzed shell punches the best hole for demolishing a building.

Many times our infantry crept up close to the buildings, only to be driven back by machine gun fire. The fanatics inside were selling out for the highest price possible. Not until piles of rubble had been

built high enough to block the firing ports (see picture of Legislative Building) were our troops able to get into the first floors of the buildings, and with demolitions and flame throwers overcome the pillboxes-within-pillboxes dug into the basement floors. The last building fell on March 3, ending the battle for Manila.

There was once another assault on a walled city which went down in artillery history. Summerall, O'Reilly's executive officer, chalked his aiming point on the gates of Peking. We placed ours with colored pencil on a 1:3,000 map of Intramuros. Both acts spelled the doom of our enemies.



Battered by shell fire, wall-top pillboxes were neutralized before the infantry assault. Here appears south side of the Walled City. (Field Artillery Journal photo)



Typical section of wall of Intramuros, showing firing slit, 40 feet thick at the base, tunnelled walls were excellent for defense. (Field Artillery Journal photo)



Spanish soldiers on the gate look askance at a Sherman tank entering their once impregnable Intramuros (Field Artillery Journal photo)