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By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

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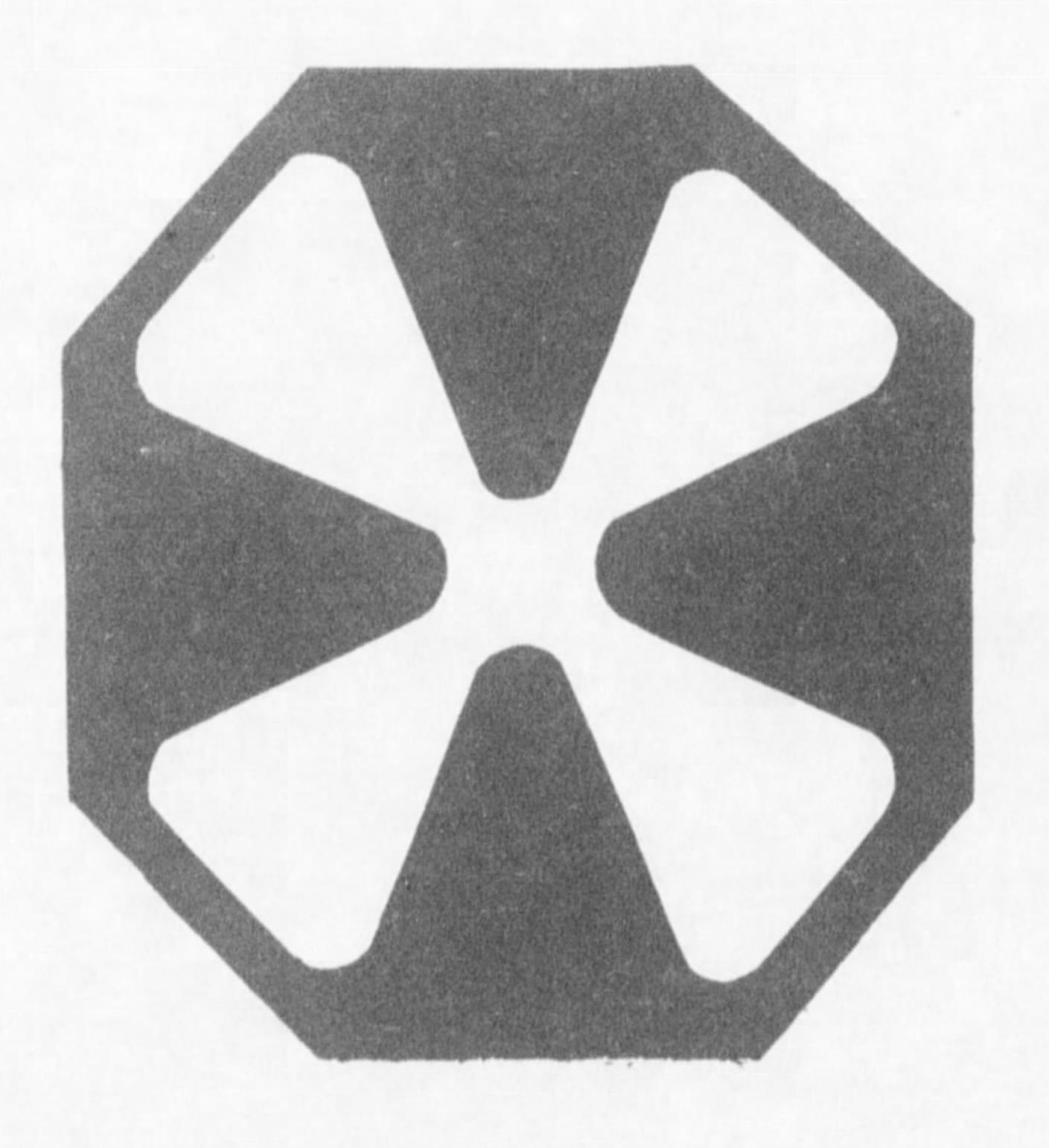
REPORT 1998

of the

COMMANDING GENERAL EIGHTH ARMY

on the

PALAWAN and ZAMBOANGA OPERATIONS



VICTOR III and IV

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On 8 April 1945, Company F, reinforced of the 186th Infantry, departed from PALAWAN and at 0850 the following day landed unopposed at CORON, BUSUANGA ISLAND. By 1045 the assault force had reached the road junction 1,000 yards northeast of CORON. Patrols during the day and night of 9 April continued without making contact. On the tenth, three Japanese were killed and on the twelfth, seven more. Scattered light resistance continued until 20 April when elements of the 2d Battalion returned to PALAWAN. The CULION ISLANDS were found free of enemy.

Meanwhile, other elements of the 186th Infantry made an unopposed landing on BALABAC ISLAND on 16 April and on PANDANAN ISLAND off the southeast coast of PALAWAN on 22 April, both of which were seized without incident. These landings completed the liberation of the PALAWAN ARCHIPELAGO and placed our forces in control of the entire PALAWAN GROUP from MINDORO to BORNEO, Japanese Atrocities.

The liberation of PUERTO PRINCESA brought to light an example of Japanese cruelty and barbarism. About 150 American soldiers captured in the early days of the war had been confined in a stockade and furnished the labor for the airfield construction and other work. On 14 December 1944, when the Japanese garrison heard of the approach of an Allied convoy (actually the one bound for the MINDORO landing), the prisoners were herded into two air raid shelters which they had constructed for themselves. They were soaked with gasoline and set afire. Those attempting to escape were machine-gunned.

There were only four survivors who managed to break through
the end of the tunnel which led to the open face of a cliff
overlooking the sea and were able to drop safely on the beach.

One was injured in the fall and subsequently died. The others were
hidden by Filipinos until they made good their escape. The remains

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of the dead were left where they died and the entrances to the crematory pits covered over with earth. The bones have since been interred in a common grave under a monument erected to the unknown martyrs of PALAWAN.

Summary.

The 186th Regimental Combat Team, reinforced, of the 41st Infantry Division, was assigned the Victor-III Operation. From the very beginning it was evident that the mission could be accomplished with assurance of a decisive victory. Had the Japanese made any stand, the operation would have been short-lived. However, the enemy chose to retreat and scatter in small groups thereby forcing us to hunt him down.

By H-Day plus 30, it was apparent that the mission was essentially accomplished, and the 186th Regimental Combat Team departed for ZAMBOANGA leaving only the 2d Battalion, the Cannon Company, and the guerrilla battalion to carry out the mopping up operations on PALAWAN.

From H-Day (28 February) to 28 March, our casualties for the Victor-III Operation were 11 killed in action and 40 wounded. From 28 February to 30 June, our cumulative casualties were 12 killed in action and 56 wounded; during the same period the enemy losses were 890 killed or found dead and 20 prisoners of war.

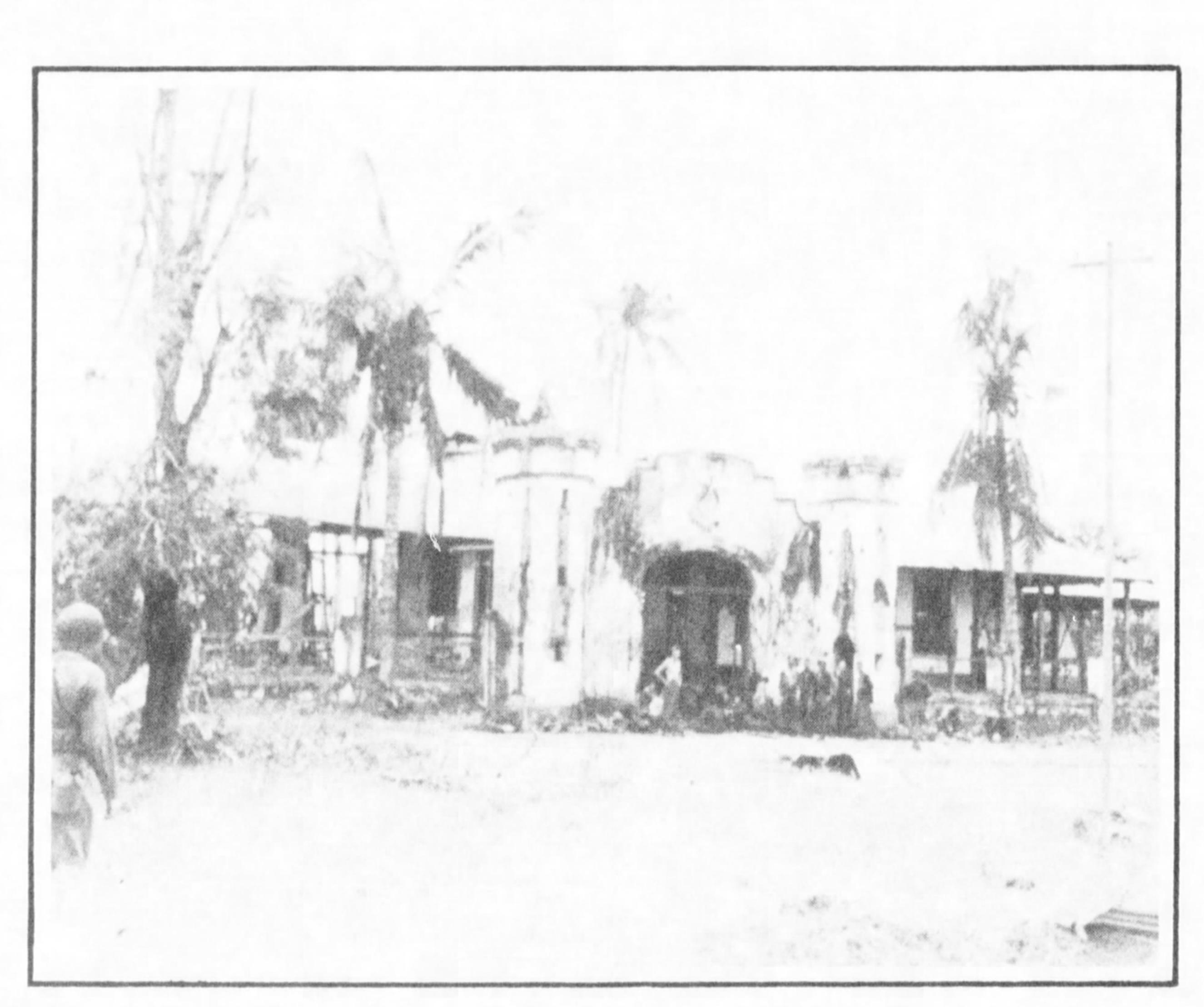
The Eighth Army Field Order No. 30, 13 June 1945, ordered the 93d Infantry Division to prepare the 368th Regimental Combat Team to be moved from MOROTAI and to dispatch one battalion (less two companies) to PALAWAN ISLAND. The battalion landed and assumed control 3 July.

On 20 June, Lieutenant General Eichelberger declared the Victor-III mission accomplished and units of the Philippine Army were directed to track down and destroy the scattered remaining enemy.

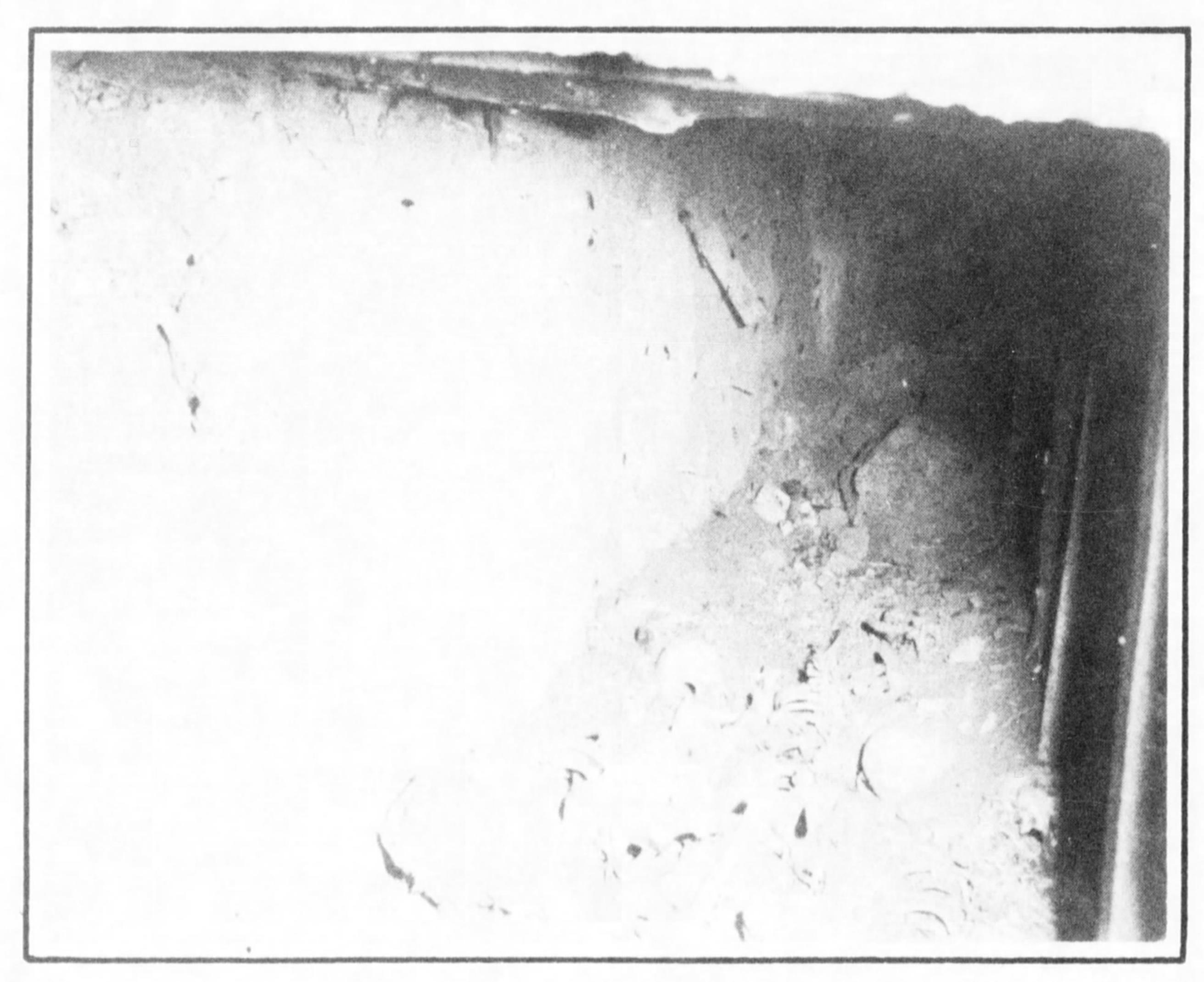
On 1 July, control of the 41st Division was passed to Sixth Army.

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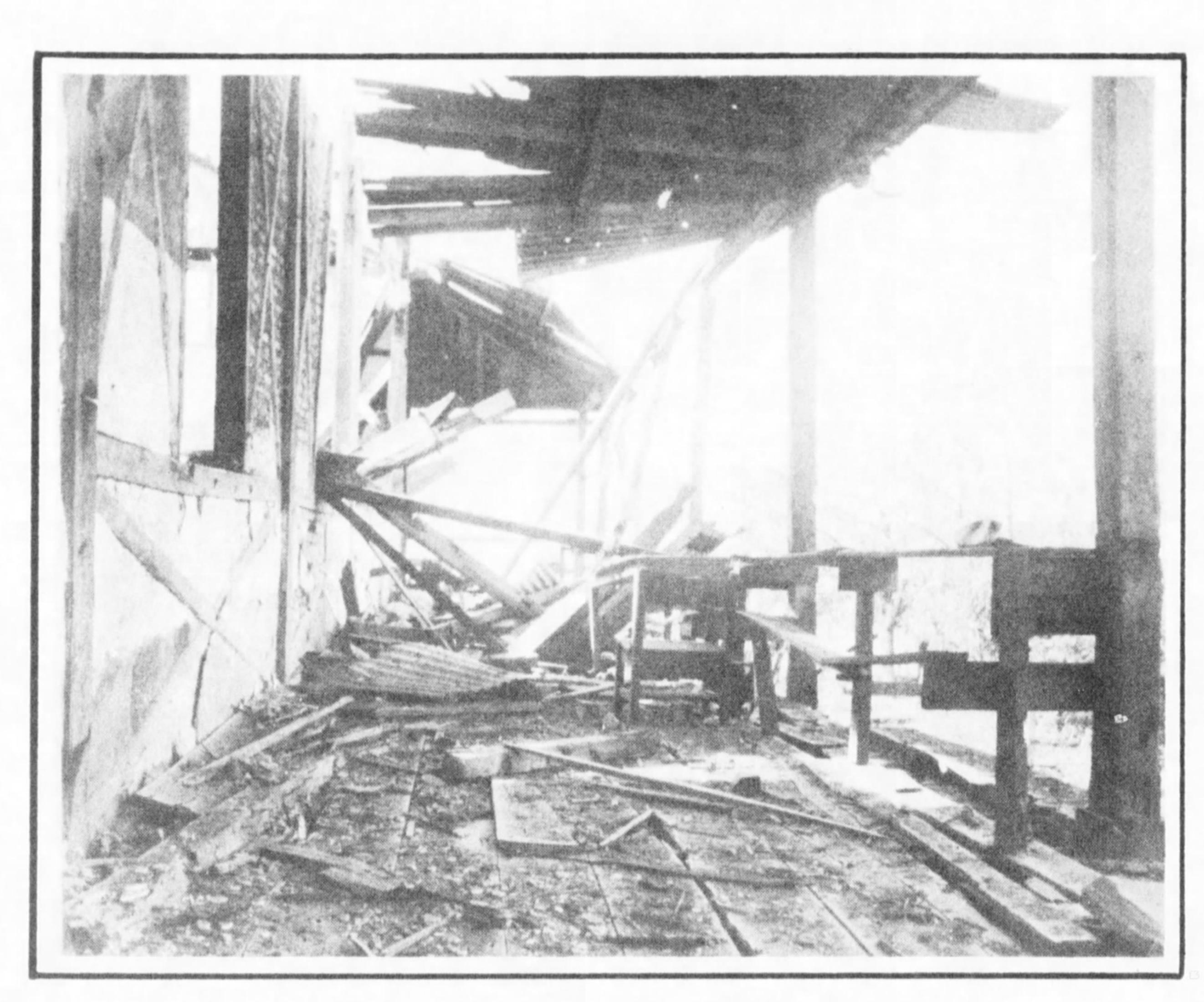
This PALAWAN stockade housed 150 American prisoners-of-war who were burned alive on 14 December 1944



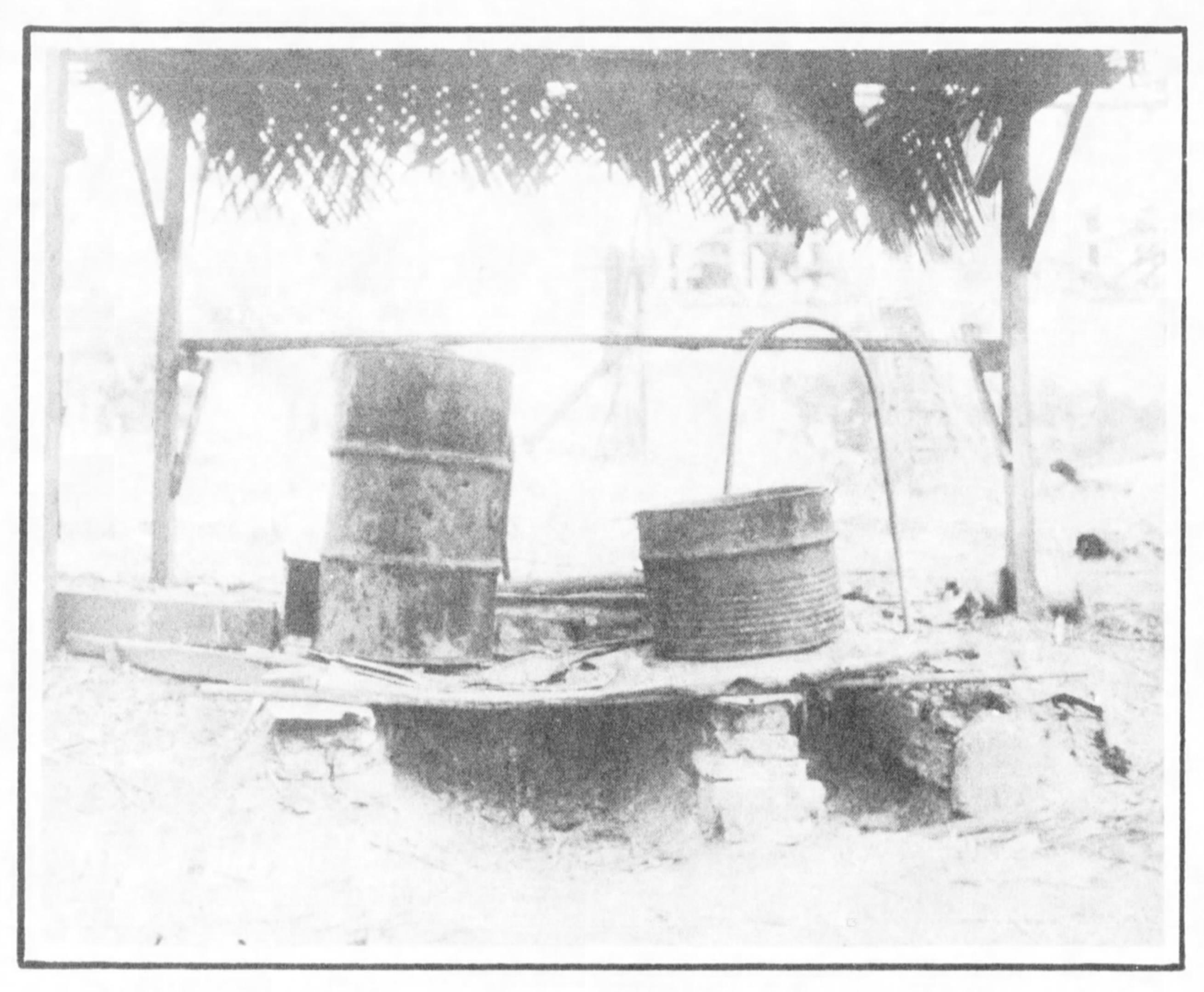
Air raid shelter in which 150 American prisoners were herded, soaked in gasoline, and burned to death.

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Mute reminder of the atrocity, a G. I. messkit still lies on the railing of the eating porch.



The stockade cook-shed, unused since the mass murder.

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entrances to the town, and the issuance of counter intelligence corps passes which served as the only authorization for civilians to enter or leave PUERTO PRINCESA. Six Filipinos who had served the Japanese in various official capacities were investigated and interned, and 14 additional investigations were started.

The Counter Intelligence Corps collected evidence and investigated the circumstances surrounding the PUERTO PRINCESA prisoner of war massacre. This evidence included the identification of United States military personnel who were victims of the Japanese atrocity and affidavits obtained relative to the killing of an American civilian by the Kempai-Tai (Japanese military police).

Victor-IV Operation: Counterintelligence activities were handled by the 41st Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, an organic unit of the 41st Division. The Eighth Army G-2 furnished no personnel, but supplied information for use in planning. The search of enemy installations yielded a considerable amount of information of tactical value. Controls were instituted for ZAMBOANGA, placing the entire city "off limits" to troops. In cooperation with Philippine Civil Affairs Units, priorities for employment were given to individuals who had evacuated the area during the Japanese occupation. Civil officials, recommended by the guerrilla authorities for the municipal government, were investigated and found acceptable. Guerrilla information led to the temporary internment of many individuals, but frequently the evidence offered against them proved inadequate. The term "collaborator" was widely misused.

A sub-detachment was sent with combat elements to TAWI TAWI and JOIO. In this operation there was a leakage of information. An investigation was made and the offending soldier identified.

Technical Intelligence.

<u>Victor-III Operation</u>: The Technical Intelligence Field Unit assigned to this operation was composed of representatives from the Ordnance Department, Chemical Warfare Service, and the Signal Corps. This unit landed on H-Day at H plus two hours with the