

COMBAT OPERATIONS IN NICARAGUA

Compiled by DIVISION OF OPERATIONS AND TRAINING.

SUMMARY of preceding installments: The March, 1929, number of the GAZETTE brought our readers up to the contact of Lieutenant O'Shea's patrol with the bandits on 9 October, 1927. It will be remembered that the mission of O'Shea's patrol was the rescue of Lieutenant E. A. Thomas and Sergeant F. E. Dowdell, Marine Corps aviators who had a forced landing in the vicinity of QUILALI. A superior force of bandits, however, prevented O'Shea's patrol from reaching the exact scene of the crash and the mission had to be delayed until a stronger force of marines could be sent out to locate the missing aviators. From this time on, our efforts took the form of offensive operations in seeking out and destroying bandits and their bases. Previous to O'Shea's patrol, our operations had been purely along defensive lines in order to deny vital area to the bandits.

Operations Resulting in Seizure of Bandit Stronghold El Chipote

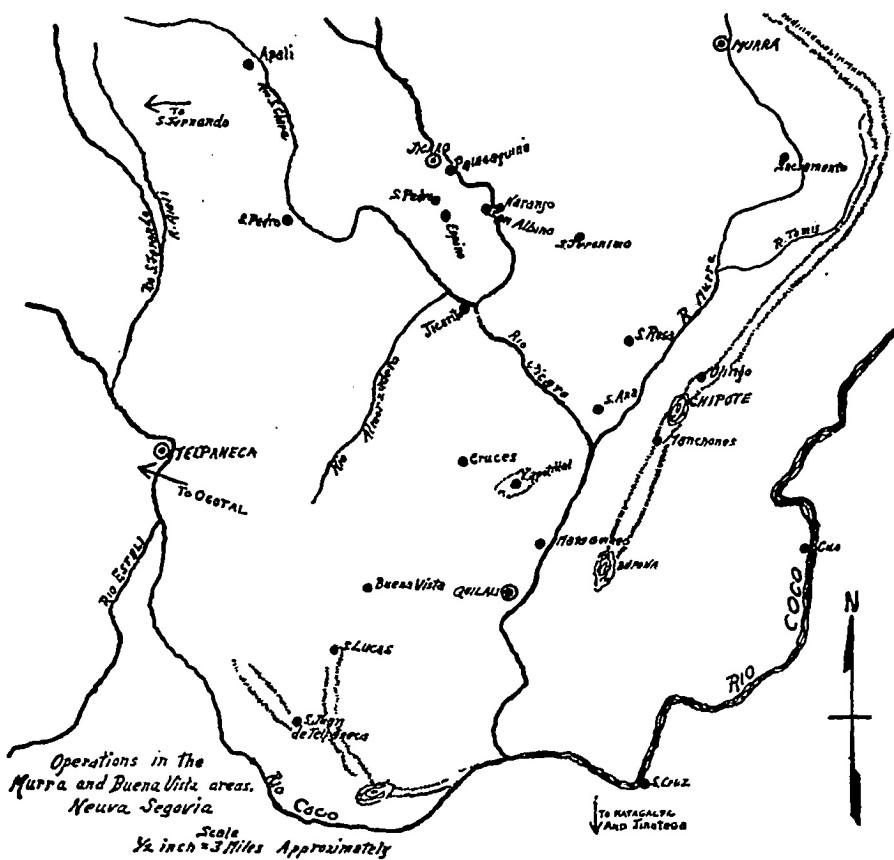
Orientation: (See sketch based on O'Shea's operations)

Many rumors had reached our forces that Sandino's main base of operations and supply was reported as being at CHIPOTE. A minute investigation of all available intelligence sources failed to reveal the existence of any such place in Nicaragua. However, the rumors persisted and finally a few of Sandino's letters and orders fell into our hands in which Sandino indicated his base or command post as "EL CHIPOTE", a mountain stronghold. To locate this base and destroy it from then on became our primary objective, with the expectation that such operations would result in the capture of Sandino and his forces.

In order to present clearly this phase of our operations this article has been divided into four stages; the location and reconnaissance of EL CHIPOTE; first expedition against EL CHIPOTE; destruction of EL CHIPOTE by our air service, and the occupation of EL CHIPOTE.

Location and Reconnaissance of El Chipote

Resuming our narrative then, we find that steps were immediately taken upon O'Shea's return to JICARO, to send a larger force of marines to locate the missing aviators. On 18 October a mixed patrol of marines and guardia under Lieutenant Gould, cleared MATAGALPA for QUILALI. A second mixed patrol under Lieutenant Chappelle cleared JICARO for



QUILALI on 23 October in order to effect a junction with Lieutenant Gould's patrol near QUILALI. Lieutenant Chappelle's patrol was forced into a defensive position for 2 days on SAPOTILLAL RIDGE by a superior force of bandits until the arrival of Lieutenant Gould's patrol on 28 October. This junction of the two patrols was adroitly accomplished by the aid of the marine air service. Reinforced by the fire power of the air service the bandits were dispersed and fled into the brush. The next day the combined patrols cleared their defensive position for the scene of the airplane crash. They arrived on the small field on the side of the mountain where the plane fell and found the motor and all metal parts intact. The machine guns (Lewis) were missing and all other parts of the plane destroyed by fire. No trace of missing aviators could be found, although the combined patrols reconnoitered the entire area for about 2 days. Our forces then returned to JICARO, encountering en route a bandit force about 250 men near ESPINO, which was routed with casualties to the bandits of about 60 dead and wounded, and one marine and one guardia killed and one marine wounded.

The patrols of O'Shea, Gould and Chappelle had been able to make

a fair estimate as to the location of EL CHIPOTE from their reconnaissance. Major R. E. Rowell, in command of the Marine air service, using a map sketched by Lieutenant O'Shea and verified by Lieutenants Gould and Chappelle, discovered on the 23d of November, the exact location of the famous Sandinista stronghold, EL CHIPOTE. Major Rowell's description as reported to Brigade Headquarters is as follows:

"CHIPOTE is a hill wooded at the top with several long thatched houses about two-thirds of the way up. A large amount of washing, laid out at one of the houses, immediately attracted attention, due to the size of the wash in relation to the number of houses in the vicinity. Immediately thereafter a number of men were seen running uphill toward a grove of trees. Three piles of freshly turned earth were seen at this house, evidently machine gun nests. Puffs of smoke from rifle fire could be seen from the houses. The planes immediately strafed the hill with bombs and machine gun fire. One hit was made close to one machine gun nest and four men were seen to fall. On circling to the east side of the hill, a number of puffs of smoke were seen from a small clearing. The fire was returned by the rear guns and all action in the vicinity promptly ceased. A number of rifle pits in addition to the machine gun nests noted above were seen around the houses on the west side. A little lower down the hill on this side there is a corral that contained about a dozen horses. This was also strafed with good results. After dropping the eight bombs on the two ships the patrol continued to the west.

"It is estimated that there were about 200 men at the main positions on the west side of CHIPOTE and also there are a number of men on the east side. One machine gun was seen and there were two other holes that were probably machine gun positions. A number of fox holes were seen around the various buildings on the west side. A large long building near the top of the hill is probably a warehouse containing stores. Four known dead were seen resulting from our fire and there may have been other casualties not noted. The planes were found to have two bullet holes in one ship and six bullet holes in the other."

Thus through the unfortunate forced landing of Lieutenant Thomas, the attempted rescue by Lieutenant O'Shea, the O'Shea map, the flight of Major Rowell, and the ground reconnaissance of Lieutenants Gould and Chappelle, the elusive stronghold of CHIPOTE was at last definitely located.

First Expedition Against El Chipote

Having definitely located Sandino's base of operations, plans were immediately drawn up to capture and destroy it. Sandino's forces had been reported in many estimates as being from 200 to 500 men armed with machine guns (2 of which were obtained from Thomas' plane), automatic rifles,

rifles of all descriptions, dynamite bombs (made from sticks of dynamite obtained from raided mines) and machetes. This force was securely entrenched on a mountain, the top of which would require strenuous efforts to reach even against no resistance due to the heavy underbrush and rugged nature of the ground. There appeared to be two probable methods of destroying this stronghold, first by an aerial attack alone, and secondly by a combined ground and air attack. The latter plan was decided upon as being more productive of results in that capture of a part of Sandino's force might well be expected.

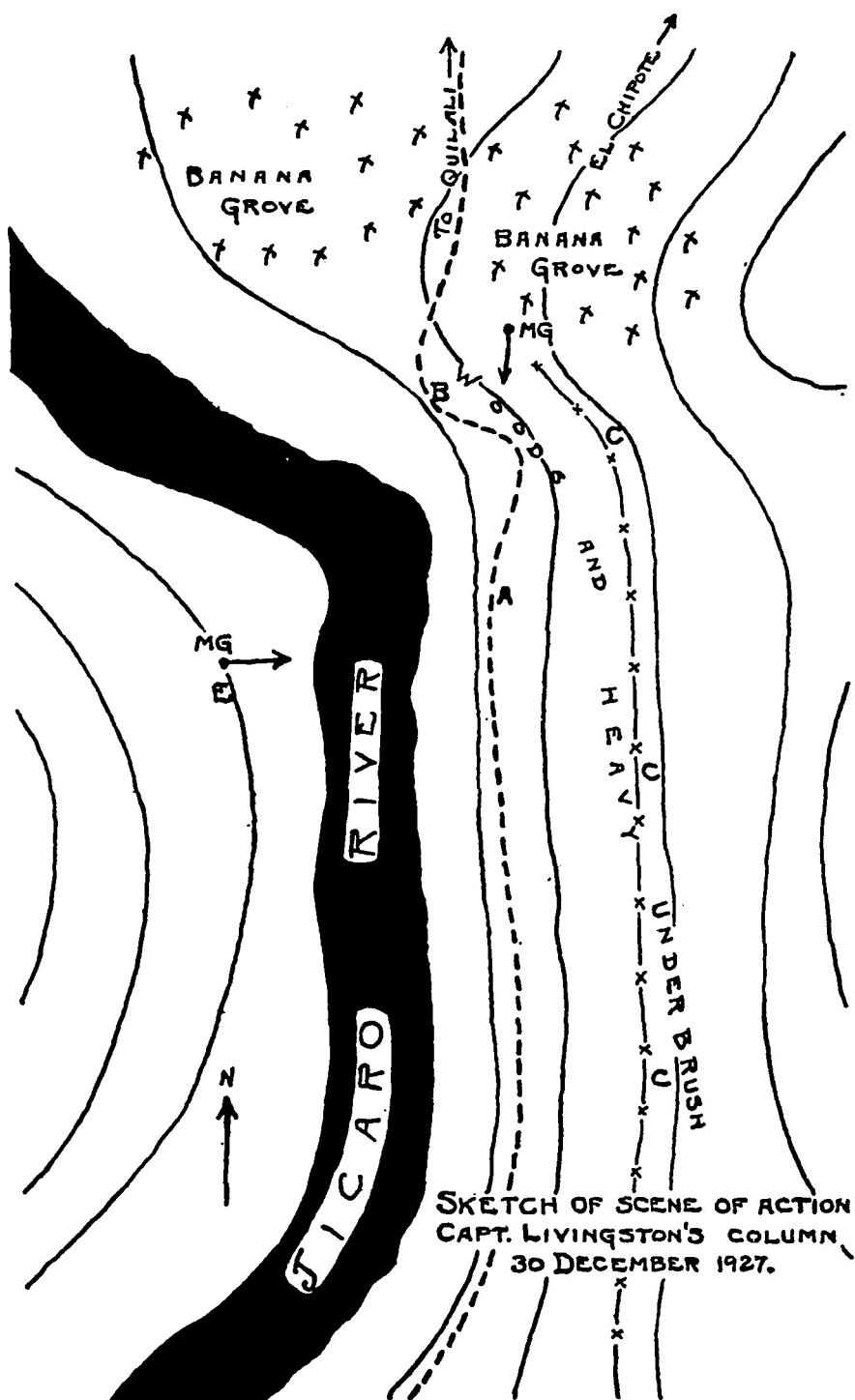
Accordingly, on December 19, 1927, a special combat force consisting of six Marine officers and 108 enlisted Marines under command of Captain Richard Livingston, cleared JINOTECA via QUILALI for EL CHIPOTE. A second force under Lieutenant M. A. Richal, one guardia officer (1st Sgt. U. S. M. C.), forty enlisted marines and twenty enlisted guardia cleared TELPANECA for QUILALI to effect a junction with the column from JINOTECA. From QUILALI, the combined forces supported by the air service were to operate against EL CHIPOTE. Both of these forces had contacts with Sandino's forces on 30 December, 1927, before reaching QUILALI; Captain Livingston and Lieutenant Richal being wounded in the engagements, necessitating their relief by Lieutenant Gould and Gy.-Sgt. Brown, respectively. Lieutenant Gould reported his contact in the following message to the Brigade Comander: (See sketch of engagement.)

QUILALI, Nic.
December 31, 1927.

From: Commanding Officer, Special Expedition
Against El Chipote.

To: Brigade Commander.

1. "At about 0930, December 30, 1927, while marching on Quilali, this expedition encountered a bandit force of Sandino estimated at 400 to 500 strong on the Camina Real about 1500 yards south of Quilali. The action continued for about one hour and twenty minutes when the enemy was driven off.
2. At the time the enemy force was encountered this force was marching in single file on a narrow trail along the side of a mountain sloped at an angle of about 45 degrees and the slope from the trail to the river, 100 feet below us, was about the same. The river at this point was about 200 feet wide and made a sharp turn to the west, the trail bending in the general direction of the river. The side of the mountain, and a hill directly ahead flanking the trail at the bend was covered with woods and extremely heavy underbrush.
3. While approaching the bend in the trail, our point detected suspicious movements in the brush to the left of the trail opposite the turn. At the



same time, fire was opened by the enemy from positions on the right of the trail and from a point across the river, with machine guns, automatic rifles, rifles, pistols, dynamite bombs, and unidentified weapons, sounding similar to our trench mortars and mountain battery guns. Enemy guns and riflemen were cleverly concealed, the riflemen being along the barbed wire fence on the mountain slope, each man behind an individual barricade of rocks piled around tree stumps about 15 inches high and wide. Although fire was commenced simultaneously from all positions by the enemy upon first contact, it is believed that this was not in accordance with their plans as our examination of the trail further on, beyond the bend, disclosed that they had prepared positions where the trail passed through a banana grove and it is believed that it was their plan to allow the advance guard to enter the trail in the banana grove, and strike the entire column simultaneously. The discipline maintained, the morale, and the accuracy of the fire of the bandits, as well as the tactical disposition of their troops were far above anything displayed by them in any of their actions heretofore in this section and leads to the belief that they are receiving training instructions from sources other than Nicaraguans because of the up-to-dateness of their tactics. All enemy seen were garbed in clothing similar to our summer field in color. No prisoners could be captured because of the superiority of the enemy's position and the fact that they removed their casualties with them.

4. The bandit leaders were unknown and there were no mounts seen. None of our planes were present during the engagement but two planes arrived immediately after, strafed the hills in the direction given by us and departed.
5. Casualties were as follows: Five Marines killed, six seriously wounded, seventeen slightly wounded. Two guardia killed, two seriously wounded. Bandit losses unknown, but believed to be heavy.
6. Medical Officer considers it necessary that all listed as seriously wounded be evacuated immediately because of lack of facilities for proper care.
7. Pack train badly shot up and scattered, report of losses of stores and animals will follow later.
8. No losses of ammunition or weapons known at present. Check up being made.
9. Check of ammunition expenditures being made.
10. Further details later.
11. Dead will be buried here.
12. Captain Livingston was wounded immediately after action started and the undersigned has assumed command pending arrival of Lieutenant Richal.

M. J. GOULD,

1st Lieutenant, U. S. M. C., Commanding.

Lieutenant Richal's column encountered a more determined force of bandits as evidenced by the two successive engagements in the latter of which Lieutenant Richal was seriously wounded and Gy.-Sgt. Bruce (1st Lt. Guardia) was killed. Gy.-Sgt. E. G. Brown immediately assumed command and took up a defensive position awaiting reinforcements. Gy.-Sgt. Brown's report to the Brigade Commander is quoted as follows:

QUILALI, Nic.
January 4, 1928.

From: Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of Lt. Richal's Column.
To: The Brigade Commander, 2nd Brigade, U. S. M. C.

1. At about 1255, December 30, 1927, while marching on Quilali, this expedition encountered a bandit force of Sandino, estimated to be about 50 strong on the trail about 22 miles from Telpaneca. The action lasted about 25 minutes, when the enemy were routed and our forces proceeded toward Quilali.
2. At the time the enemy force was encountered our forces were marching in single file, up a steep narrow trail from a creek or river (Name unknown to the undersigned), our point had just gained the crest of this hill when the enemy opened fire from a position on our left flank, at a distance no greater than 50 feet, with rifles and pistols. The bandits were well hidden and at no time were more than three seen. The bandits were so situated that to retreat all they did was to drop down the hill on the opposite side, which they did after about 20 minutes, being driven back by our point.
3. By command of Lieutenant Richal, our point made an attempt to flank the enemy after their retreat by advancing to a point about 500 yards ahead of our column, but the flanking party could only get in a few long range shots, which damaged the enemy to the extent of three killed.
4. Casualties: One marine wounded seriously.
No ammunition lost. No cargo lost. No animals lost.
5. It is unknown to the undersigned as to whether or not Lieutenant Richal submitted a report of this engagement.

E. G. BROWN,
Gy.-Sgt., U. S. M. C.

(Report of Second Engagement)

QUILALI, Nic.
Jan. 4, 1928.

From: The Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of
Lieutenant Richal's Column.
To: The Brigade Commander.

1. At about 1230, January 1, 1928, while marching on QUILALI, this expedition encountered bandit forces of Sandino, estimated at 350 to 450

strong, on the SAPOTILLAL HILL, about six miles northwest of QUI-LALI. The action continued for about one hour, when the enemy was routed.

2. At the time of the encounter our force was proceeding along the trail in single file up the side of a mountain which was on our right or northwest flank. A field which extended for a distance covering nearly the whole column on the right flank. The hill was covered with pinewoods and the field with heavy brush.

3. Our point had just turned a curve at the bottom of the above mentioned hill when Lieutenant Bruce (GN) observed a movement and started to draw his pistols, when the enemy opened fire with machine guns, rifles, pistols, and dynamite bombs, from points all along the hill and field on our right flank. There were also a small amount of the enemy on our left flank that opened fire on our left flank and rear guard. On the hill the enemy were well entrenched, behind parapets thrown up and behind pine trees. The bandit forces were well disciplined, and when Lieutenant Bruce was killed, were able to rush our point and advance guard at the command of their leader, forcing our troops to retreat to a point 50 yards behind our Stokes Trench Mortar, where they took a position in line with our machine gun, which had jammed. There they established a skirmish line and held off the enemy until the machine gun was repaired and gotten into action again. The machine gun with the Stokes Trench mortar, and the 37 MM Gun, which fired from a position in the rear of the column, gained fire superiority and routed the bandits.

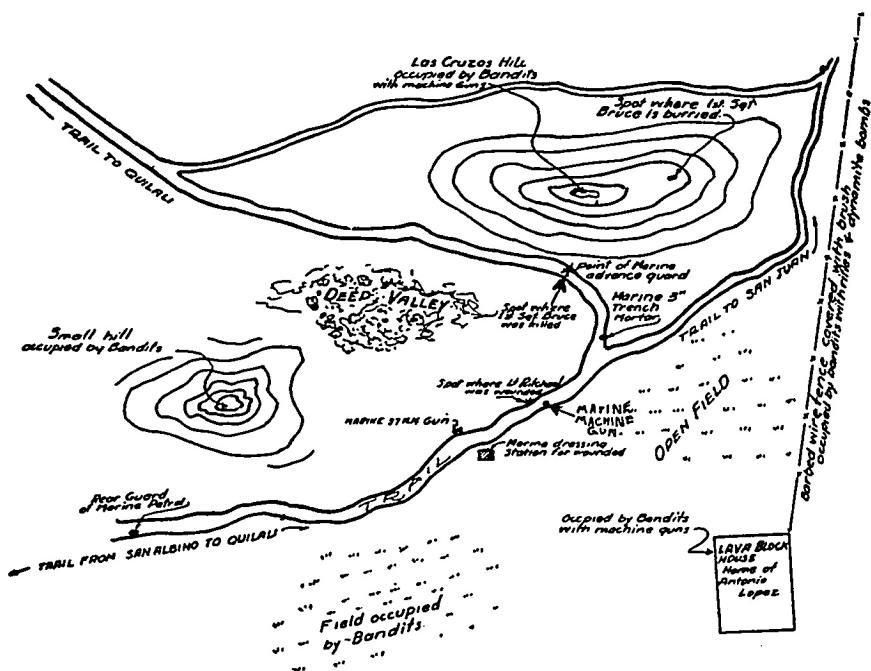
4. Our forces took up a defensive position on the hill captured and awaited re-inforcements from QUILALI, which arrived at 1415, January 2, 1928.

5. The bandit leader was unknown, there were no mounts seen, and no aerial assistance, except that two planes appeared about ten minutes after the rout of the enemy and strafed the hills and the woods in the vicinity. One marine was killed, 1st Sergeant Thomas G. Bruce, (1st Lt. GN), two wounded seriously and two slightly wounded. About thirty dead bandits were found near the place of attack.

6. Pack train was badly shot up and scattered, animals lost in action were fifteen. Animals strayed from scene of action, three. Total number of animals brought into QUILALI, ninety-nine.

7. No loss of ammunition known at present. Both of Lieutenant Bruce's pistols were captured by the bandits.

8. Lieutenant Richal was seriously wounded about twenty minutes after the battle started. Gunnery Sergeant Brown assumed command immediately and retained same until the arrival of Lieutenant Hunt's relief from QUI-LALI.



SKETCH SHOWING THE DISPOSITION OF MARINE AND BANDIT TROOPS AT THE BATTLE OF LAS CRUZAS — JANUARY 1st, 1928

9. Lieutenant Bruce was killed at the beginning of the action, his body looted and mutilated by the bandits, but later recaptured by our forces and buried on the spot; field burial regulations complied with.

EDWARD G. BROWN,
Gy.-Sgt. U. S. M. C., N. C. O. in Charge

Lieutenant Richal's column was so thoroughly surrounded by the bandits that it was necessary to send re-enforcements from Captain Livingston's column to their aid before a union of the two columns could be effected. These re-enforcements consisted of 43 enlisted marines under Lieutenant Hunt; the column then proceeded to QUILALI and joined Captain Livingston's column.

At QUILALI an improvised landing field was constructed and the wounded evacuated by airplane to the Field Hospital at MANAGUA. In effecting the evacuation of the wounded and bringing in necessary supplies, 1st Lieutenant C. F. Schilt performed a daring and courageous feat for which he was afterward awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Major Rowell, commanding the air forces made the following report of the circumstances:

"On 3 January 1928, two columns of Marines and Guardia Nacional of Nicaragua, comprising some two hundred men and three hundred animals

joined up at QUILALI, a remote mountain village in NUEVO SEGOVIA province. Both columns had been attacked by overwhelming numbers of well armed bandits operating in most remote and dense tropical jungle. Our men had suffered losses of seven killed and twenty-eight wounded. The presence of the wounded, a large number of animals, the limited provisions available and the circumstances attending combined to create a most serious situation. The Commanders of both columns had been seriously wounded and two Guardia officers killed. It was of vital importance to evacuate the wounded, who could not be carried over the difficult mountain trails without the gravest results, and to send an experienced officer to QUILALI to lead the column out. No suitable flying field could be constructed due to the difficult nature of the ground. In spite of the almost impossible conditions obtaining, Lieutenant Schilt volunteered to undertake the difficult feat of evacuating the wounded men by air. On the 6th, 7th, and 8th of January 1928, flying an O2U airplane, equipped with DH wheels, he landed and took off ten times in the rough rolling street of the partially burned village and succeeded in accomplishing a most remarkable and vitally important mission. These conditions were so difficult that the slightest error in judgment or lack of skill would have resulted in a serious crash and defeated his purpose. On the eighth landing the tail skid assembly collapsed and on the ninth landing the center section struts bent badly, but Lieutenant Schilt continued his task with superskill and courage until it was accomplished. The plane was unarmed, not escorted on many trips and he was under hostile infantry fire on nearly every take-off. He carried into QUILALI, a relief commander for the column, one enlisted man and one thousand four hundred pounds of emergency medical supplies and provisions. He brought out eighteen wounded men, three of whom, the Medical Officer stated, would have died if not evacuated by airplane."

After all wounded had been evacuated, the column under command of Captain Peard, who had arrived by plane, cleared QUILALI for SAN ALBINO. Major A. Young with a force of sixty marines cleared OCOTAL on January 7th and, arriving at SAN ALBINO on January 11th, assumed command of all the forces there. Later, reinforcements brought the strength of the command to about 400 marines and Guardia Nacional.

The type and strength of the bandit resistance encountered by the columns under Captain Livingston and Lieutenant Richal caused a revision in our estimate of the situation. Undoubtedly we had made an error in under-estimating the bandit combat strength. These engagements therefore caused us to proceed with the alternate plan, i.e., the destruction of CHIPOTE- by an air attack, and then its occupation later by the ground forces.

Destruction of El Chipote By Air Service

General instructions were now given Major Young for his forces at

San Albino and Jicaro River—from the South





Airplane View of Country in Vicinity of El Chihote

SAN ALBINO to keep in close contact with bandit forces in and around EL CHIPOTE, by aggressive patrolling, thus forcing the bandits to concentrate on EL CHIPOTE where they would be subject to attack by our air service.

On January 14th the Aviation force made a determined air attack on EL CHIPOTE, inflicting heavy damage on material and apparently severe losses to personnel. At the same time Major Young's force occupied a position on SAN GERONIMO mountain which was on the trail to EL CHIPOTE and looked down into SAN ALBINO at a distance of about two miles. The position there was placed in a state of defense and the approaches to EL CHIPOTE carefully reconnoitered. A few days later, an air patrol reported that EL CHIPOTE appeared to be deserted and that although flying low, the plane had not been fired on. Later reconnaissances showed, however, that detachments of outlaws were still holding the fortress, but that the buildings were abandoned. On January 26th the Marines and Guardia successfully reached the crest of EL CHIPOTE, the casualties in the operation having been but three men slightly wounded.

Major Rowell made the following report of the air attack on CHIPOTE on January 14th, 1928:

"Upon arrival at CHIPOTE, two planes, Major Rowell, leader, and Lieutenant Lamson-Scribner, escort, attacked the northern end of the mountain, and the other two planes, Lieutenant Weir, leader and Gy-Sgt. Munsch, escort, attacked the southern point. When Major Rowell made his first dive two rockets of some description were fired at the plane. After dropping two bombs and firing about 200 rounds of fixed gun ammunition, Major Rowell was forced to proceed to OCOTAL due to motor trouble. Lieutenant Lamson-Scribner dropped fifty pound bombs in vicinity of warehouse with telling results. The planes continued bombing and strafing until about 1232 when all bombs and ammunition were exhausted. Heavy machine gun and rifle fire was encountered during the whole attack. Several new entrenchments were observed. One bomb dropped making a direct hit on one of the houses. Upon the bursting of the bomb about fifty men ran from a house nearby. Gy-Sgt. Munsch immediately dropped another bomb making a direct hit in the middle of this group. Approximately forty-five dead were seen in and around the shacks on the hill. About twelve phosphorus bombs were dropped on the warehouse but due to the speed of the planes and the terrain satisfactory results could not be obtained. The majority of these bombs rolled down in a deep wooded ravine. It is believed a number of men were in hiding there and results may have been more than observed."

Occupation of El Chipote

After the air attack of the 14th, Major Young's force on the 19th moved on EL CHIPOTE to mop up and occupy that position. Although the results

attained by the air service were most excellent, yet it did not completely rout the bandits and drive them from EL CHIPOTE (aerial reconnaissance on 19th reported EL CHIPOTE abandoned) (note that aerial reconnaissance alone should not be accepted as evidence of non-existence of enemy forces; grounds reconnaissance must support air reconnaissance—Ed.) The reports rendered the Brigade Commander by Major Young on the operations against EL CHIPOTE are of such length that their inclusion in this paper would make it of too great length. A very good picture of this phase however is presented by Lieutenant Kenyon (who commanded the 20th company under Major Young) in the following report:

"On 19 January, 1928, the 20th company moved from SAN ALBINO to a position about five miles east by north from SAN ALBINO and southeast of the position occupied by the 45th company. Four days rations were carried by mule train. The verbal instructions at the time were to occupy successive positions directly in the line of approach to EL CHIPOTE. Aerial reconnaissance of same date reported EL CHIPOTE abandoned.

On the morning of January 20th, I left my company headquarters with a reconnaissance patrol of five squads to verify the report of the air force of day before. Due to lack of knowledge of trails my patrol went to the left of direct trail and approached the heights of SANTA ROSA from the road leading to JICARO. We proceeded at good rate of march and placed rifle grenades in places in road that looked favorable for ambush. At about 12 noon we were on the open places on the heights proceeding up hill on the side of a sharp ridge that was well cleared off. I was walking abreast with Gunnery Sergeant Brooks ahead of the point when fire broke out from concealed places on the crest from what sounded like one machine gun and a section or platoon of rifles at a range between two hundred and three hundred yards. The members of the advance party immediately took cover as was available on the slope. All rifle fire was held up by my orders until the enemy could be seen. All rifle grenades were placed in firing range of the machine gun nest and automatic rifles trained on the areas where smoke was spitting. The bandits maintained their fire for about twenty minutes. The rifle grenadier beside me was shot through the fleshy part of both buttocks with flank fire. When the enemy began to thin all marines were ordered to pursue. Only a few of the retreating men were seen jumping into the brush as they fled from their position. No dead or wounded were found.

Due to the cliff like sides of the knife ridge where that skirmish occurred, it would be easy for wounded to escape detection or dead to be concealed. The plane observers two days later reported vultures eating four bodies near the location of the contact. A prisoner captured in EL CHIPOTE reported three killed and five wounded including Maradriaga who ambushed Lt. Richal's column and Captain Livingston at QUILALI.

Our column pursued into and beyond SANTA ROSA and stayed there for the night while the wounded man was returned and preparations made to bring up the company train at daybreak. On January 21st the company train was moved up and the outposts occupied the low ridge encircling CHIPOTE. On January 22nd the ration was exhausted and the command subsisted on forage with the exception of sugar and a limited amount of coffee and hardtack from then until returning to SAN ALBINO. There was ample native coffee, beef, beans and fruit. On the same day the Commanding Officer of the Expedition arrived and accompanied a ration foraging party on the base of CHIPOTE. Two bombs were fired from the heights above, followed by one or two rifle shots, but all was beyond range. On January 23rd, I extended my line of outguards in the forenoon to observe roads and river crossings leading to CHIPOTE. In the afternoon, in company with the battalion commander, the 20th company crossed the MURRA RIVER and occupied an enemy storehouse, filled with provisions, on the base of CHIPOTE and left an observation group in a house on the other side to remain until quartering and messing arrangements were completed.

The outpost was fired upon by snipers at approximately five hundred yards. Private Hagerman of the observation group was shot in the hand and Private Ingles, leading a ration party back to the observation post, was shot through the forearm. The observation group and ration party were withdrawn and the entire company quartered near and in the storehouse for the night. Several scattered rifle shots were fired during the late afternoon by the enemy and a few bombs exploded but none near the company position. I had my company train moved up just after dark, fox holes were dug on the steep slopes and all men made as secure as possible from sniping during the night.

On January 24th, one section of the 8th machine gun company arrived at about 10 a. m. in command of Lt. Clark. The day was spent in reconnaissance and making preparations to move toward the position known as the main fort. In the late afternoon and early evening, a reconnaissance patrol accompanied by the Battalion Commander moved up the mountain and destroyed an enemy observation post with a large supply of corn after the position had been bombed by the STOKES mortar. It was freshly abandoned. The 45th company and 8th machine gun company arrived before dark.

On January 25th, the 20th company accompanied by one machine gun and STOKES mortar under Lt. Clark from the 8th machine gun company proceeded in combat formation on the left side of the MURRA RIVER toward the fort. The 45th company moved along the right bank as far as the road lasted. An entrenched and scantily fortified position one mile below the fort was found abandoned. The fort was bombed with mortar and found abandoned at 1 p. m. The machine gun saddle and many other saddles and odd pieces of American equipment taken from the two ambushes near

QUILALI were found in the fort along with a considerable amount of 1927 issue expended 30-30 ammunition and pieces of flying machine tools.

On January 26th, a combat patrol of the 20th company accompanied by the mortar and machine gun in company with the Battalion Commander pushed completely to the top. Various barricaded buildings and two large hastily constructed buildings were found freshly abandoned. A freshly butchered beef was found hanging near the house said to have been the headquarters of General Salgado and a chicken still limp and undressed was on the floor of the quarters near the fireplace. When the column reached the top of the cleared area at the barracks, a camp smoke was seen in the thickly wooded area above. A light rain was then falling. The mortar was trained on the camp fire. The rain ended abruptly and the column penetrated the highest wooded positions of EL CHIPOTE to find what could safely be estimated as the tracks of fifty or more men leaving the bombed area in all directions. The tracks were fresh on the rain-wet leaves. An outpost was left at the barracks overnight to watch for enemy stragglers. It consisted of the machine gun, the mortar and two squads of infantry. Lt. Clark caught one straggler who was turned over to Lt. McDonald of the guardia in the evening to lead him to what was said to be the private quarters of Sandino. The 45th company and guardia company arrived at the fort during the day.

On January 27th, I made a reconnaissance of the valley area and completed the destruction of every enemy storeroom in the immediate area and captured five mules and five horses from a pasture said by muleros to be that of Sandino. Preparations were made to move toward QUILALI the following morning. The 45th company returned to our last camp and guardia left on special patrol. On January 28th, the entire company and train accompanied by the Battalion Commander proceeded to QUILALI where it camped for the night and found the landing field dug with pits to wreck incoming planes. The pits were filled. On January 29th, the company and train proceeded in the direction of SAN JUAN with slow progress due to no guides and bad trails. A camp was made for the night on a height near TEOSINTAL creek about five miles above QUILALI. At night went on a special patrol to run down a bandit rumor. Took three squads. Left at 12 M. and returned at 8.30 A. M. following day. The patrol was accompanied by Lt. Clark and the Battalion Commander. No results. On January 30th, broke camp after noon meal and was proceeding to SAN JUAN when plane dropped message and course was directed toward SAN ALBINO. Arrived SAN ALBINO in excellent condition relative personnel and material at 10 P. M."

The operation against EL CHIPOTE resulted in the destruction of the fortified base which Sandino had established. His forces still remained in the field and they naturally became our objective.