

# Reflections on Bataan

## A Story of Courage, Loyalty and Betrayal

### Introduction

*“They were ill trained and poorly led. Theirs is the glory of Bataan which nobody recognized and everybody wants to claim. These boys were in the front lines without relief for 3 months. Ill fed, ill equipped and poorly trained. However, they stood their ground notwithstanding all this and the lack of leadership and training officers. History and MacArthur may decide who was the merit. To me it was the courage of the Filipino defending his country and his own.”*

— First Lieutenant Fernando Camus

Anyone reading this passage by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. F. Camus written with such stirring emotion ought to be touched for expressing the young Filipino soldiers spirited defense of Bataan and for evoking the Filipinos love of country. It was this testament that inspired me to write.

The words Bataan, MacArthur, and The Death March have been part of our family’s vocabulary ever since I was a young kid. I was given a brief lesson on “The Panahon ng Hapon” (Japanese Occupation) during World War 2 by my mother and I still remember that chilly morning. As she began telling her story some white flaky particles were forming outside our kitchen window and it started multiplying and then my teeth began to chatter. Perhaps I was more interested at the adornment outside the window and so my mother finally ended my lesson...but not my chattering. The year was 1958 I was 7 years old. We had just immigrated to

America and settled in a quaint picturesque town of Wickford in the state of Rhode Island.

I am now 70, living in Cavite the “Cradle of the Philippine Revolution” back to where my life began. There are no flaky particles forming here, only from the fallings leaves of the native santol tree dotting my terrace and the similarity to the winter hues that was blanketing our home in Wickford is the silvery white adornment that’s now covering my head, and it’s not multiplying. But there is chattering, it’s from the sound of the Filipino ladies walking past our gate and it’s not even winter.

I would love to rewrite this chapter of history when war came to the Philippines. But I’m not a writer or a historian just a guy a Filipino-American that grew up in the United States with a happy normal life. Knowing what I know now, about the sacrifice of the Filipino soldiers in battle, “I honestly believe that their contribution in upholding American Democracy during World War 2 were not given their dues by historians”. They were understood only as peasants, under trained and poorly equipped. They were more that, this is their side of the story.

Because of America’s fascination with legends and folklore the “truth” is often hidden by the glamour of a myth. During the war, there was a legend, that was created, that has dominated the media and history books and emerge as a hero. Often, when stories are told, especially in newspapers, and in choosing between facts or legend, “print the legend.” In my research, it was the sacrifice and the courage of the Filipino and American soldiers defending “Our Freedom” is the greater story.

Before I continue this article, I just want to pay my respect to all those who serve, soldiers and civilians that had endured this dark episode of Philippine history. Thank you for your Service wherever you are.

Materials about the conflict in the Philippines during WW2 were written largely by Americans for American readers. The roles of the Filipino soldiers fighting in battle were not given much attention and credit. As a result, they have been short-changed in history books. Eighty-five percent of the soldiers in Bataan were Filipinos and fifteen percent were the Americans. It was the Filipinos that did most of the fighting and the dying. They were in the front line, dug in their foxholes always the last platoon to get the food supplies.

The American POWS arriving from Asia after the war were the main source of information which became facts in newspapers, books, magazines, etc. They were a shadow of themselves but their memories of Bataan persisted. It was their recollection of the torment of surrender and the Japanese atrocity that was highlighted in their stories, and it overshadowed their own heroic performance in the battlefields of Bataan. From their interviews the "Death March" was born and it became history.

It was General Jonathan Wainwright and some of the American officers that were in the front lines with their troops that had witnessed the heroic performances of the Filipino soldiers in battle. The highest tribute to the Filipino Scouts was paid by Col. Ernest B. Miller of the 194<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion which he stated, "I have never seen, nor do I ever expect to see, any better or braver soldiers than the Scouts. They were truly an inspiration." In the world of soldiers, the Scouts were without peer.

But the unsung heroes were the soldiers of the Philippine Army; poorly trained that fought with obsolete WWI weapons, but they stood their ground manning their foxhole surviving with just a handful of rice or none at all. What they lacked in modern military equipment they made up with their courage and determination to stop the enemy.

I now have a different perspective of this war. The hero was not about the man with the corncob pipe, the scrambled egg hat with the dark sunglasses that abandoned his troops. The real heroes never left, they stayed, they fought...They Served with Honor.

Lieutenant Fernando Camus wherever you are we are going rewrite history so that "these boys" will get the recognition they deserve. This story is still alive, the torch was passed on to me and it will be passed on to future generations. The merit "belongs to the courage of the Filipino defending his country and his own" which you have so deeply expressed. That, I truly believe... one of them was my father.

## Part I

### 1

#### “These Boys”

I never knew, never knew...all that time. I was still young and there I sit across the dinner table from him and wait for my mother to bring his favorite dish at the table a nice hot bowl of sinigang, he would take in the aroma give a nod and smile. He would offer me the first serving but I politely refuse as he looked a lot hungrier than me. My father hardly talked about the war with us kids, a quiet man with determination, there are six of us, being the youngest I'm the bottom feeder. But now I know, it was in him all that time, the war was in him.

There are only a few books written about the performance of the Filipino soldiers that fought during this war. Many soldiers like my father that survived the war remained silent about their experience, it was the future of their family and not the past that mattered. He was from that era of “the greatest generation any society has ever produced” that Tom Brokaw penned in his book. “They fought not for fame and recognition, but it was the right thing to do”. But there are soldiers who will not have a future and not have a family, they are the fallen heroes whose names are engraved on the Wall of Heroes at the Capas National Shrine in Tarlac. This was the location of the concentration camp where the captives were taken after their Death March, formerly named Camp O'Donnell.

On the black circular marble walls that wraps around the shrine are the names of 26,000 Filipino soldiers and across the field is the shrine of the of the American soldiers with 1600 names. They too have their stories and they once had dreams, they were in their youth. “These Filipino boys” were the sons of farmers from central Luzon, they were laborers, ROTC students, peasants from different provinces fighting in the same battlefield with the American youths from Americas Midwest. They were National Guards from the 192<sup>nd</sup> and 194<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalions and the 200<sup>th</sup> and 515<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery from New Mexico. These guys the Filipinos and “Americas best” really put up a “helluva fight” that brought the Japanese Army's

momentum to a crawl and frustrated their time timetable to continue further South.

Their story was never about how they surrendered, their story, is how they fought and how they stood their ground!

## 2

### Water cure to Chocolate

America's entry to the Philippines began when Admiral Dewey was exchanging cannon balls with the Spanish Armada that ended with Admiral Patricio Montojo's decrepit ships at the bottom of Manila Bay. But why did Dewey have to summon the United States Army to the Philippines. They liberated Cuba but conquered the Philippines. Weren't they elated enough when Teddy and the Rough Riders made their daring charge up San Juan Hill? Why come here, is it the women, the lure of the tropical climate or maybe there's something up there in "them thar hills" of northern Luzon?

America's first attempt to colonize the Philippines was a political and a moral disaster, there was no "Idiot's Handbook" to guide them. This was the dawn of Americas imperial dream when the country was ruled by a military governor and they invited veterans of the "Injun War" with their pre-conditioned racist attitude torturing the Filipinos. So much for America's "Divine Manifest Destiny"!

News of the American soldiers abusing the Filipinos soon reached Washington and opponents of Americas expansion started expressing their anger. Mark Twain an anti-imperialist who had accused the United States of duplicity finally wrote a stinging condemnation in "The North American Review.

*"It should, it seems to me, be our pleasure and duty to make those people free, and let them deal with their own domestic questions in their own way. And so, I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talon on any other land."*

Mark Twain

Finally, on April 1900 an imposing figure accompanied by his wife and three children had arrived at the docks of Manila Bay. Judge William Howard Taft will be replacing the harsh military rule of the Philippines with a more “benevolent treatment” of the Filipinos. He was later appointed civil governor. The Taft administration established a civil government, promoted public health and introduced the public school system that would transform the Philippines from a backward nation to a more civilize society.

It was the arrival of the USS Thomas with over 500 teachers aboard that had a positive influence on the lives of the Filipino people. They were referred to as “The Thomasites” because of the name of their transport ship. The Thomasites spearheaded their country’s policy to implant American culture throughout its new territory. Besides teaching their students the ABCs; baseball, tennis and basketball were introduced. It was their missionary spirit of educating and dedication that earned the respect of their Filipino students.

After several decades, the Americanization of the Filipinos have now come into fruition and the dark days of the “Howling Wilderness of Samar” and the “water cure” torturing the Filipino soldiers are now in the past. A new generation of students have entered colleges in America and some have graduated from West Point. To the joy of the Filipino children, the American peacetime soldiers are always a welcome sight, as long as they’re armed with a bag full of apples and some chocolate bars.

### 3

#### In Our Image

In preparation for the country’s full independence the Commonwealth of the Philippines was established in November 1935 that was made possible by the passing of The Philippines Independence Act. As Asia’s most westernized country the Philippines was groomed as a model of American Democracy. This was a

ten-year transition period that paved the way to their road for self-government. The Filipinos voted Manuel Quezon as their President, Uncle Sam's "mini me."

America's influence in food, fashion, film and music have integrated into the Filipino culture. Anything "Made in America" the Filipinos crave. But it's the English language and the virtues of democracy that would have a lasting effect.

Educated in America's history the Filipinos studied the birth of a nation and "The American Revolutionary War". George Washington, Valley Forge and America's struggle for independence were part of their classroom studies. They have recognized it was the sacrifice of the patriots that forged the identity of the American spirit. When war finally came to the Philippines in December of 1941, the Filipino soldiers understood the price to defend their country against an invasion, and they were willing to pay the price. Like the passing of the torch, they fought with that same spirit protecting the stars and stripes and their own.

## 4

### Pre-War Manila

In the mid-1930s while America was still in the throes of the Great Depression, life in the Philippines was a soldier's paradise. An Army private with his monthly salary of about \$24 can hire a house boy to polish his boots clean and press his uniform and even make his bunk. Their lazy schedule was from 7:00am till noon. A bottle of beer was a nickel. But if you're a first lieutenant with the Army Air Corps with a salary of around \$145 a month were talking swanky lifestyle. A luxury apartment with a full staff of servants including a lavandera with plenty of leisure time to play tennis, golf, polo or just siesta in the afternoon. During the evenings their hang-out venue was the Army-Navy Club on Dewey Boulevard or their favorite local bars in Manila. 10 to 15 cents for a drink their orders to the bartender, don't stop till I say so.

Setting the pace for the languorous life in the Island is another imposing figure that was handpicked by President Quezon to be the military advisor for the Philippine army. General Douglas MacArthur was given a lavish penthouse atop

the Manila Hotel where he lived with his second wife Jean and their son Arthur MacArthur IV. MacArthur was assisted by his two aides Majors Dwight D. Eisenhower and James Ord; their mission was to build the Philippine army.

This was peacetime in the Philippines the era of the boogie-woogie and the swing setting the tempo at the Manila night clubs. But the glory days of this beautiful city known as the “Pearl of the Orient” would soon become a memory as ominous clouds were drifting across China and is headed southward. After the war Manila was never the same.

War with the Japanese was coming to the Philippines; oh yeah what war, that was the sentiment of most American soldiers. Douglas MacArthur who eventually became the supreme commander of the armed forces kept insisting that the Japanese does not covet the Philippines. A paradox to his mission. Even if the war came, the Filipino population believed that the Japanese was no match for the Americans, they too had their illusions. Woefully, it was Washington’s impassiveness that will have dire consequences.

## 5

### Defense of the Philippines

Ever since Japan started grabbing chunks of real estate from their neighboring country to the West (China and Russia) during the turn of the century; the Joint Army-Navy Board and the Navy War College have been wracking their brains on how to defend the Philippines if it was invaded by a foreign country. They identified their foe as Japan. The gurus of the War Department came up with a defensive strategy called War Plan Orange, Orange is the color coding for Japan. After more than three decades in the war room and by assessing Americas’ peacetime military hardware, the Philippines with over 7,000 islands cannot repulse a Japanese invasion. Maybe they should look for Teddy Roosevelt’s “Big Stick”.

The decision to withdraw to Bataan was the garrison’s best option as outlined in the War-Plan Orange. Harass the Japanese Army in Luzon in a delaying action and



take the fight to Bataan Peninsula. The logic of this strategy is to hold Manila Bay, to hold the bay is to control Bataan and Corregidor and prevent enemy ships from entering the harbor. Hopefully reinforcement will arrive in six months. It was imperative for the military quartermaster to stockpile Bataan and Corregidor with enough supplies to withstand a lengthy siege; food rations, clothing, medicine and weapons, etc.

General George Grunert was the Commanding General of the Philippine Department in 1940-41 and saw the potential of the newly formed Philippine Army. Acting on his insight General Grunert revised the long-standing generic plan of WPO for the defense of the Philippines and developed a more aggressive action rather than a passive one. The details of Grunert's plan were to have the regular army, the scouts and perhaps the marines included to make a genuine effort and destroy the enemy with their "fire power" at the beach landing. The Philippine Army would be use as a backup and to relieve the forward garrison.

Included in Grunert's revision of WPO is the Bataan Defense Command. Should the Japanese Army breach the forward garrison, all attempts will be made to delay the enemy's advancement in Central Luzon and finally bring all units into Bataan at a "state of readiness" without compromising the supplies. The previous WPO-1 and WPO-2 did not include the Philippine Army it didn't exist. Credit should be given to General Grunert for being the author of "WPO-3".

The Philippines was in the path of two European territories to the south. British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies were targeted by Japan for their rich resources of rubber and oil that is badly needed to continue their war with China. There were no resources in the Philippines that Japan wanted, it's what they didn't want was the objective...the Americans.

## 6

## The Commonwealth Army

Tied to the Philippine Independent Act was the National Defense act of 1935. The development of a National Army and a defense policy to be ready in ten years when the Philippines becomes sovereign. Before and during the commonwealth period the United States assumed responsibility for the defense of the Islands.

To build or not to build, you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't. The creation of a national army was not a popular subject among the soldiers in the Philippine Department. The all American 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry and the Philippines Scouts led by American Officers were the forces protecting the Islands. General MacArthur the military advisor wanted to build an army the size of his ego, they say it was legendary. It was a grand idea of 400,000 soldiers, a fleet of 50 torpedo boats and over 250 planes and wants a parade to show off his creation. The Philippines is a developing country where food is more important than boats and planes. If MacArthur wants a parade, he should go to a town fiesta.

Both Eisenhower and Ord worked tirelessly to develop the Philippine Army while their boss was in his ivory tower busy entertaining guest. It was on a rare occasion that MacArthur would visit the training camps. Instead of building from the ground up MacArthur's plan was to use the existing Philippine Constabulary a para-military police force as the nucleus of the army and started peeling away personnel from the Philippine Scouts to train the new recruits. The PC and the PS are an organization with different principles and combining the two groups created friction. The military advisor did not develop a unified organization, instead he stirred the pot.

Eager to join the army were young men from different provinces of the Philippines. Manila and Central Luzon is the Tagalog area, further north is the Ilocos Region where Ilocano is spoken. Towards the south of Luzon is Bicol province they too have their own dialect and heading south are the Visayan

Islands where Magellan first made his landing and General MacArthur's return to the Islands as he wades ashore at Leyte.

"They don't understand a word of English" were the gripes of the American instructors. These Filipino peasants are being groomed to be soldiers and not as call center operators, they soon will be digging their own foxholes and firing a rifle. The art of soldiering is to "lead by example" there is no substitute. The only language they need to know is how to shoot the enemy. There were American officers that found their new trainees very attentive and eager to learn. Notwithstanding the language barriers, and poorly trained, they were good soldiers. In the battlefield it was their determination and loyalty to their officers that were notable.

The American War Department "loaned" the Philippine Army old World War I canons and other obsolete munitions that have been dusted and taken out of the U.S. Army military attic, but they made the Philippine government pay for the old WWI Lee Enfield rifle at nine dollars apiece. The Filipinos fighting to defend the Star and Stripes would eventually take the hand me down equipment to war; and once "these boys" spilled their blood on the battlefields and their sacrificed body placed on the altar of democracy, the "loaned" equipment is returned to Uncle Sam. A nine-dollar rifle and the obsolete WWI equipment was defending Americas Freedom...heartbreaking!

After four years of duty in the Philippines, Eisenhower decided to take his family and returned to the United States as destiny awaits his "true calling". Colonel Ord in 1938 at age 45 died in a plane crash on his way to Baguio.

## Part II

### 7

#### A Tale of Two Oceans

During the summer of 1940 France had fallen to the Nazis and Britain will be fighting Germany alone on land, sea and in the air. Across the Pacific Japan took the opportunity to enter French Indo-China (Vietnam) as they've started marching to the drumbeat of their own imperial dream. Japan's ambition to expand its horizon out into the Pacific would need to knock off the European holdings in southeast Asia plus the United States in the Philippines. It was rooted from their ancient culture that the Japanese were the chosen people to rule all of Asia.

As the war raged on in Europe and Asia the United States was still sitting on the fence. The American public wanted no part of the mayhem. President Roosevelt was allowed to aide Britain with the cash and carry program and when they ran out of cash the United States started the Lend-Lease Act. The Act allowed the U.S. Government to lend or lease war supplies to any nation deemed "vital to the defense of the United States". A total of \$50 billion worth of war supplies was shipped out to over 30 different allied nations across the Atlantic until 1945. Great Britain received over 30 billion dollars of war material to fight Germany and the Filipinos received the 9 Dollar discarded rifles and some canons with wooden wheels to defend themselves against an invasion. "Hurrah for Democracy".

The new elected Prime Minister of Britain Winston Churchill wants more than just tools to fight the Nazis, he needs a partner to win the war. From 1940 to 1941 was considered to be Churchill's darkest hour.

The year 1941 began with the release of the Andrews Sisters WWII novelty song "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" the "swing era" is very much alive, but America is still in its isolationist world, they wanna dance not fight.

Roosevelt and Churchill finally had their meeting on August 1941 in Newfoundland known as The Atlantic Conference & Charter. The Charter was to establish a vision for the allied postwar world which laid out the foundation for

the United Nations. The United States had yet to enter the war, and President Roosevelt was hoping the public would be encourage to support Britain in fighting Germany. Churchill sailed back home to Britain still in the dark.

America was now being dangerously complacent as the writing on the wall reads not one but two theatres of war.

For President Roosevelt time was now crucial and must take drastic measures. In July 1941 he took the first step and stopped shipping oil to Japan and froze all Japanese assets in the United States. Roosevelt then created the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) and recalled Douglas MacArthur to active duty to command all the forces in the Philippines.

For the United States the greater crisis remained in the Pacific. As part of the military build-up, U. S. National Guard units were sent to the Philippines. The 192<sup>nd</sup> and 194<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalions plus the 200<sup>th</sup> and 515<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery arrived during the fall of 1941.

The Far East Air Force commanded by Major General Lewis Brereton Brereton arrived to the Philippines in early November and immediately reported to MacArthur the good news that the thirty-five B-17 bombers will be arriving soon and 107 new P-40 fighter planes were on its way. MacArthur jumped up from his desk and said “Lewis, you are as welcome as the flowers in May.”

Just about the same day USAFFE was created a young man in his early 20s was approached by a Navy Officer at the Sangley Point Bowling Alley in Cavite. The young man was working as a pin setter, their job is to reset the bowling pins to their correct position, clear the pins and return the ball to the players. That day the young man was recruited into the Insular Force of the U.S. Navy, the new recruit was my father. Those bowling pins must have been some kind of “talisman” that inspired my father through the war “if you get knocked down keep getting up, keep getting up!”

The Insular Force of the U.S. Navy was started during the early 1900s by President McKinley to enlist Filipinos for the purpose of operating in their local areas to conduct maritime patrols, they were use as guides to assist gunboat commanders and to bringing the rule of law to the provinces. The U.S. Navy was authorized to enlist up to 500 natives. The last class of the Insular Force joined the Navy in 1941.

During the siege of Bataan, the Navy and the Marines played a major role in repulsing an amphibious Japanese landing off the coast of Mariveles.

## 8

### Diplomatic Ties

British Prime Minister Churchill will eventually get his partner. By the fall of 1941 President Roosevelt has now grasp that the future of Western Civilization is in jeopardy as the Nazis has flat-out devoured most of Europe, but America remained committed to his “non-engagement” foreign policy. Roosevelt needed a “casus belli.” After shutting down Japan’s oil supply, a series of tense negotiations were being held in Washington between Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Japanese Ambassador Kichisaburo Nomura. Ultimately, on December 7, 1941 Nomura was joined by special envoy Saburo Kuruso as they tag-team Cordell Hull and delivered the final “Japanese Memorandum.”

“I shall run wild for the first six months or a year, but I have no confidence for the second or third year.” Those words were uttered by Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto to Japan’s prime minister Prince Fumimaro Konoe in the fall of 1940. Yamamoto was the architect who dreamed up the daring surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. He attended Harvard University for two years in 1919-21 and also serve as a naval attache in Washington, he understood and respects the U.S. industrial capacity and hoped he would never be asked to carry out his own plan.

During the fall of 1941 the Philippine Department was beginning to strengthen its forces by recalling veterans of the Philippine scouts. When the USAFFE was established, President Roosevelt nationalized the Philippine Army into the service of the United States. The PA reserves were called into active duty for additional training and were later dispatched with their units throughout their assigned areas.

General MacArthur who is now in complete command of the defense of the entire archipelago should prepare his forces at a state of readiness, but instead kept insisting that the Japanese will not make their move until April and it's now fall of 41'; he still takes those long lunches while on duty. There was no urgency.

In Japan Admiral Yamamoto is reviewing his charts and making the final preparations for the attack at Pearl Harbor.

To our "American boys", on their half-day schedule, it's the life of the white man in the tropics. Nothing beats the "tropical downpour" of an ice-cold beer, and still a nickel. In Main Street America, the fashion "craze" for teenagers are blue jeans and bobby socks as they hobnob at their local drive-in fast food. On the air waves, "nothing could be finer" than Glenn Miller's "Chattanooga choo-choo."

Soon, those blue jeans will be turned in for a uniform representing America's proud colors. The young women will join "Rosie the Riveter" in factories and shipyards as they fulfill President's Roosevelt's military build-up "The Arsenal of Democracy".

## 9

### Allied Strategy

*"If Britain wins decisively against Germany, we could win everywhere; but that, if she loses, the problem confronting us would be very great; and, while we might not lose everywhere, we might possibly, not win anywhere."*

- Admiral Harold R. Stark

The above is an excerpt from a document known as Plan Dog Memo written by the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Stark confronting the problem of a two-front war against Germany in Europe and Japan in the Pacific. The memo became the Allied strategy known as Rainbow 5 and was the basis for the American policy of "Europe first." It implies Germany is the greater threat.

This was a showdown between the Army vs. Navy not on the field but in the war room regarding allocation of military resources. President Roosevelt's "Arsenal of Democracy" would prioritize aiding Britain in defeating Germany first while the Navy in the Pacific would maintain their "holding action" and uphold their defensive stance. The Pacific was now the secondary theatre.

By the end of November, the Philippines developed a force that could harass a Japanese invasion and protect Manila Bay from being occupied by the enemy. This strategy was outlined in War Plan Orange 3. To the Imperial Japanese Navy, Manila Bay is an important asset that can be used as a launching pad to further their expansion southward into the Pacific.

MacArthur's vision is to defend the entire Island, he believes he can stop and defeat the enemy at water's edge and unwisely invalidated WPO-3 which he viewed as a "defeatist". The scheduled supply run to the Bataan Peninsula with food rations, medicine and war materials was scrubbed. "We will fight the enemy at the beaches" was MacArthur's battle cry, "no withdrawal from beach positions". The beaches were "to be held at all cost." The war department in Washington approved MacArthur's plan.

## 10

### Aloha Sunday

At midnight, as the trade wind gently wheezes across the waters of Waikiki Beach the band at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel would play the national anthem to signal the sailors on liberty to rush for the harbor and hop on the ferry. The soldiers and airmen would straggle double time to their barracks. On that Saturday evening after the last stanza of the anthem "O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave" December 6, 1941 came to a close.

The following morning was "A Day That Will Live in Infamy".



## Part III

### 11

#### The Last Hurrah

On the evening of December 7, 1941 (Manila time) at the Fiesta Pavilion in the Manila Hotel was an exuberant party thrown by the 27<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group to celebrate the delivery of its fifty-two single-engine Douglas A-24 dive-bombers. Junior officers from the U.S. Army and the Army Air Corps units were invited guests. Special guest of honor was Major General Lewis Brereton, commander of the U.S. Far East Air Force (FEAF). The wild celebration lasted right after midnight. As the airmen straggled back to their quarters that evening, in the vast gray stormy waters of the Pacific six inconspicuous aircraft carriers are making headway to a position northwest of the Hawaiian Islands.

For some of the men in uniform that evening, this would be their last time listening to their favorite big band music on the radio. At Fort Stotsenburg a few officers of the 194<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion listened to the Concerto in B Flat Minor before turning in. On the last night of peace Tchaikovsky's poignant music made an impression which was to be deep and lasting.

## 12

## The Lost Hours

“Air Raid. Pearl Harbor. This is not a drill”. At 2:30 a.m. on Monday, December 8 Manila time the news of the bombing first reached the headquarters of Admiral Hart the commander of the Asiatic Fleet. It wasn’t until 3:40 when MacArthur received a telephone call from his Chief of Staff General Richard Sutherland and told him that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. An hour later MacArthur was at the USAFFE headquarters at 1 Calle Victoria in Intramuros huddled with members of his staff. Early that morning MacArthur received a phone call from the Army Chief of Staff George Marshall to execute Rainbow 5 war plan; they were orders for the commander to go on the offensive. The person MacArthur should be consulting with during this crisis is the commander of the Far East Air Force. They have the weapons to execute Rainbow 5. A state of war now existed.

At 5 AM breathing heavily and rushing up the stone steps of the USAFFE headquarters is General Brereton who is requesting permission from MacArthur’s Chief of Staff Sutherland to confer with his boss. He’s not to be disturbed was Sutherland’s exchange to Brereton. MacArthur was evidently having a conference with someone else. The Commander of the Far East Air Force is the “go to guy” at the moment to take action with his aircrafts, he wants to launch an air attack with the B-17 bombers against Japanese airfields in southern Formosa but was denied getting the “tails up signal” from headquarters. Feeling agitated Brereton went back to his quarters to await instructions.

Several cables were also sent from Secretary of War Henry Stimson to the USAFFE Headquarter for MacArthur to take action. The last cable stated “reply immediately”. Formosa is three hours away from Manila where the Japanese fighter planes and bombers are standing by for the fog to lift that had prevented their early morning attack.

Brereton returned again the USAFFE Headquarters at 7:15 AM, again he was denied access by the protective Chief of staff to meet with MacArthur personally. This was the same person that MacArthur warmly greeted like the fresh flowers of

May back in early November; and in the hour of need, General Brereton was as welcome as a gopher in a cabbage patch. Brereton never got to see MacArthur.

12:30 PM. "Here they come! Here they come!" Yelled by one of the airmen at Clark Airfield. Coming in over the mountains from China Sea and glistening in the bright sunlight are two beautiful 'V' formation of twenty-seven planes each are approaching the base. They must be U.S. Navy planes someone speculated, as it got closer the flaming red "meatball" insignia was spotted on the undersides of their wings. "They're Japs" someone cried "it's an attack". Tailing the bombers are thirty-seven fighter planes universally known as Zeros.

The first wave of the attack the bombers dumped their load at the officer quarters, barracks and the exposed B-17s and P-40 aircrafts. After the bombers departed, flying at low level are the Zeros and began their strafing of the entire base with devastating effect. In less than an hour Clark Airfield became a blazing inferno and the neatly parked aircrafts were transformed into a carnage of smoldering twisted metals. The FEAF is no longer an effective fighting unit.

General MacArthur's visitor was scheduled to arrive in April, they came early!

## 13

### Family Affair

Cavite City is two miles away from our barrio. Just about noon time on December 10, 1941 my maternal grandfather and my uncle Roger had just arrived at the Cavite Naval Yard and was headed for the dock of the USS Isabel (PY-10) to deliver some important items to the officers and crew. It was their uniform cleaned and pressed. My grandfather was the "laundryman" for the U.S. Navy stationed in Cavite. Finally, my grandfather and uncle who was 16 at the time got on board the ship and started distributing the uniforms, hovering at 20,000 feet were 54 Japanese bombers approaching the Cavite Yard. The two visitors were immediately escorted inside the ship's cabin and were given cotton balls to plug their ears. They saw the first wave of bombers targeting power plants, barracks

and warehouses being blown up and set them ablaze! It was during the second wave of the bombing that the USS Isabel had a close call, eight bombs were dropped near the stern of the ship all eight were duds. Somebody up there way beyond the 20,000 feet level must be guarding the ship.

The Japanese aircrafts were dropping their loads at will and unopposed for two hours. The P-40 pursuit planes that can slug it out with the bombers was a no-show. What happened with the “swanky” air corps pilots? It was a sad day for Cavite.

When it was finally safe the guests of the USS Isabel were allowed to leave. With cotton balls still in their ears they departed the ship. They had one more place to visit, not to deliver laundry but to see someone. They finally approached the area where the patrol boats and small sea crafts were docked and from a distance, as they waited for the mist of smoke to clear my uncle recognize the sailor they were looking for, he was up and standing on the deck of one the boats, he was safe.

On the way home the two laundrymen drove through Cavite that’s now been razed and engulfed in flames. Little did my grandfather knew that being a laundryman can be a hazardous profession, but he can stand proud that through rain or shine or caught in a downpour of screeching bombs he can deliver his goods. That evening the USS Isabel and her crew left Cavite Naval Yard with four other ships bound southward to Borneo wearing the damndest clean uniform of the entire Asiatic Fleet.

At the barrio of San Juan, a concerned mother and wife nursing a two months old baby girl was nervously waiting for her father and brother to arrive home. Perhaps it was my uncle who narrated the harrowing events that day to his older sister (my mother) and told her with joyful tears, that Solly’s tatay (dad) will be coming home for dinner.

## 14

### The MacArthur Plan

It took just three days for the air and sea protection to collapse. The remaining aircrafts of the Far East Air Force were flown to Australia and the Asiatic Fleet what's left of it sailed down to the Java Sea to assist the British Royal Navy. The Japanese have control of the sky and the water lanes.

"Why weren't our pilots ready to go when they hit our base? Why didn't we attack?" There were a lot of questions but no answers. Nine hours elapse between the attack at Pearl Harbor and the bombing at Clark Air Base. An explicit order was given by Washington to execute the Allied Rainbow Plan (go on the offensive), but somebody was asleep at the wheel. MacArthur's non-action was a dereliction of duty.

Without the sky and water support the MacArthur Plan "at the beaches" would now seem futile. Brig. General Charles Drake who was assigned as quartermaster for the USAFFE was instructed by MacArthur to prepare supply depots near the beachheads. The areas were Tarlac (Northern Luzon), Los Banos, Laguna (Southern Luzon) and Guagua in Pampanga. The quartermaster suggested to stock Bataan as a fallback measure, "under no circumstance would any defense supplies be placed on Bataan", that was that. The supplies earmarked for Bataan went into the advance depots, MacArthur was "all in" with his beaches at all cost, while the quartermaster got an earful.

Meanwhile, General Jonathan (Skinny) Wainwright commander of the North Luzon Force have mobilized the Philippine Army to their designated areas. The predicted Japanese landing is at Lingayen gulf. This is a stretch of 120 miles of coastline that would be defended at all cost. Under Wainwright's command are three divisions of the Philippine Army that will guard the beaches with their obsolete weapons, his backup is the 26<sup>th</sup> Philippine Scouts Cavalry unit on horseback.

The other PA Divisions were scattered towards South Luzon, the best trained unit was the 41<sup>st</sup> Division led by General Vicente Lim the first Filipino to graduate from West Point. They're covering the Batangas-Cavite coastline. General George Parker

commanded the area near the second Japanese landing at Lamon Bay, this area is now called Quezon Province. The rest of the units are in the Visayan Islands and Mindanao and General William Sharp is in charge. The divisions that Sharp and Parker are commanding are Filipinos from the Bicol, Visayas and Mindanao Provinces, there are over thirty different dialects between them. Hopefully by now “these boys” understand their officer’s boisterous command.

In the “The MacArthur Plan” the officers are using troops that had no training for front line combat duties and is supported by artillery units scattered throughout the coastline. The Philippine Army Division and the marines are the reserve units and Bataan is devoid of any army supplies.

## 15

### Empire of the Sun

*“It is Japan’s mission to be supreme in Asia, the South Seas and eventually the four corners of the world.”*

- General Sadao Araki

It was July 8, 1853 when Commodore Matthew Perry steamed into Edo Bay (now Tokyo Bay) with his belching black-hulled frigate “Susquehanna”. Japan’s long slumber finally came to an end, and modern Japan was born. From the European mentorship, Japan mastered the art of shipbuilding from Great Britain, modern warfare and technology from France and Germany, from the United States it was the art of commerce. The noble samurai that had protected Japan for centuries

have put away his kimono and sword in exchange for a military uniform and a modernize weapon. The peasant rice farmer began building ships.

Like the samurai sword, Japan's ancient nobility shall never again be seen in this world.

Adapting the technology and tactics of the Europeans, the modern Japanese soldier can be seen in a "western" garb carrying a rifle, drilling and appearing like little French and British soldiers. By the 1930s when the rise of the militarist began to dominate Japan's politics, the Japanese Kwantung Army started their war with China. The aggression with their neighbor was the opening act of Japan's quest for an empire.

The strategic plan by the "Reluctant Admiral" Isoroku Yamamoto that attacked the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor by Japan's Naval aircraft was not a total knockout blow. They didn't get the "brass ring". Some of the battleships, cruisers and destroyers that went down in shallow waters were refloated and repaired. The prize target of Yamamoto's operation were the US Naval carriers. They were out of range in the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean. Their misfortune would haunt the Imperial Japanese Navy later in the Pacific.

Following the Japanese aerial "hit and run" bombing raid on Pearl Harbor, the Imperial Japanese Army began their vigorous campaign to swallow the western colonies of Southeast Asia. The two British "crown jewels" Hong Kong and Singapore were easily swept up by the rapid invasion of the IJA. Hong Kong surrendered on Christmas Day 1941 and at Singapore General Sir Arthur Percival hoisted a white flag on February 15, 1942. In January the American-British-Dutch-Australia (ABDA) Command was formed to challenge the relentless advance of the Japanese war machine going into the vast territories of the Dutch East Indies. The East Indies have an array of natural resources, notably oil reserves. By land, by sea and by air the Japanese had the upper hand and battered the Allied forces, by the second week of March the Dutch surrendered.

Out in the vast Pacific two of Americas isolated possessions Guam and Wake Island could not escape the Japanese tenacles. They are specks in the Pacific Ocean but to the Japanese they are a "must have" strategic point to secure their outstretched perimeter. The US Marines and Navy personnel fought valiantly to

protect their outposts but they were overwhelmed by the Japanese aircraft and land forces and finally surrendered.

Japan's "lightning war" in Asia was a stunning success, the European powers that had built and controlled their colonies for two hundred years was dismantled in matter of months. This was the territory where the "white men" once reigned supreme and now the shoe is on the other foot. Japan's dream of an empire was now taking shape.

But Japan's conquest of Southeast Asia was still not complete, one country held out longer than the rest, the Philippines.

## Part IV

### 16

#### The Beach Landing

The Japanese general who was given the task of invading the Philippines was Masaharu Homma. Like Yamamoto, he had a deep respect and understanding of the West he also spoke good English and was also known as a poet. Homma spent eight years as a military attache in the United Kingdom. The Japanese High Command gave Homma a mission, capture the Philippines in 50 days, he failed. It took the "poet" general five months.

It was in the predawn darkness of December 22, 1941 when the first Japanese transport ship arrived at Lingayen Gulf. The choppy waters were not cooperating which made the disembarking to the landing barge challenging. After the Japanese soldiers disgorged their supplies including their bicycles, they began



their march towards Manila. Two days later General Homma waded ashore on December 24.

General Wainwright's troops were thinly stretched along the coastal waters of Lingayen. Their first encounter with the enemy was along the shoreline of Buang Beach where the Filipino soldiers sprayed the oncoming invaders with their machine guns. After a brief engagement some of the .30 caliber machine guns jammed, rendering it useless. The other .50 caliber gun continued to cause heavy casualties among the Japanese but despite their bold attempt to hold the line, the enemy established a foothold on the shore, whereupon the Filipinos withdrew. The Division that was supposed to protect the flank were inexperienced and poorly equipped Philippine Army and was overwhelmed by the sudden surge of the invading army.

3<sup>rd</sup> Lieutenant Venicio Jalandoni from the 71<sup>st</sup> division of the Philippine Army commanded a battalion of 500 young men who were mostly farmer's son noted, "while everyone seemed eager to train, we were really ill-prepared, materially, physically and emotionally, to fight the aggressive and experienced Japanese war machine. We openly groaned upon seeing the World War 1 vintage rifles we received from the Americans. We grumbled about the mortars we got, most of them being unable to fire. The revolvers issued to commission officers cracked in half after a series of rapid fire. But we did celebrate payday when we received 150 pesos (\$75) as our monthly salary." A private in the PA is paid 14 pesos (\$7) a month, that comes to 23 cents a day. This was MacArthur's army fighting at the beach at all cost.

General Wainwright and the other high-ranking officers knew that the MacArthur Beach Plan was doomed from the start, it had no way of succeeding. General MacArthur has a staff of fourteen army officers working under him, there were six generals, six colonels, one major and one captain they are known as the "Bataan Gang". A former aide of MacArthur called them "bootlickers". Without air cover and only having the untrained peasant boys with obsolete weapons holding the front line, they should have known that this plan was inadequate to meet MacArthur's demand and should have consulted their boss to correct their deficiencies. None stepped up, what happened to their collective military wisdom?

The beaches were to “hold at all cost”?

Available to MacArthur were the Marines that had recently arrived from China, the 31<sup>st</sup> U.S. army, the Philippine Scouts and the Constabulary they were issued the M1 Garand rifle. They have the manpower and weapons to outmatch the Japanese Arisaka rifle.

As predicted MacArthur’s foolhardy attempt at water’s edge collapsed and the withdrawal from Lingayen Gulf commenced after one day of fighting.

## 17

### WPO-3

Did General MacArthur and his “bootlickers” ever studied “know your enemy” in class?

During the invasion of Shanghai in 1937, If Chiang Kai-Shek and his 600,000 Chinese National Army failed to repulse the overwhelming Japanese onslaught of air, naval and ground troops, what chances do these Filipino peasant boys have holding the line with an obsolete rifle and a busted machine gun against the same animal! This situation might seem almost laughable were it not for the loss of lives and suffering that happened.

The beach defense completely fell apart and the commander had no back up plan. The 26<sup>th</sup> Philippines Scouts were nearby in Rosario and proceeded towards the water to Damortis and held back the enemy to prevent a rout. Like an old-time fighter MacArthur threw in the towel after the first round. The outcome of his failed strategy generated into one of the great military blunders of WW2. MacArthur promised more than he could deliver.

On December 23, 1941 General MacArthur abandoned his cherished “beach plan” and is now embracing Grunert’s War Plan Orange 3 (WPO-3). The withdrawal of all his forces to the Bataan peninsula was MacArthur’s only recourse. On the same day orders were given to the quartermasters to now stock Bataan and Corregidor by Deputy Chief of Staff General Richard Marshall. “You will stock Bataan.

However, no Quartermaster Corps supplies will be moved into Bataan until all shipments to Corregidor are completed.” General Drake was dumbfounded by the sudden command. Drake had earlier calculated that it would take two weeks to stock Bataan to sustain 43,000 troops for six months and this is without being smothered by the Japanese on land and sky.

Corregidor was given a higher priority to be stockpiled. The USAFFE Headquarters, President Quezon, their families and staff will make the Malinta Tunnel in Corregidor their home. On December 26, 1941 Manila was declared an “open city”. The Japanese can walk right in without any resistance from military forces.

By way of tugs, launches and barges Corregidor was completely stocked within twenty-four hours. The food rations and supplies were gathered from the Manila area and were transported unmolested. General Drake and his quartermaster corps were now faced with a critical situation, stocking Bataan. Supplies earmarked for Bataan went into the advance depots as designated in the MacArthur Plan.

I wonder if MacArthur had any understanding of the logistics required to retrieve the supplies located in the hot spots of Northern and Southern Luzon. Imagine one hundred transports travelling up north to Tarlac and the same going southward to Los Banos with 40,000 troops in motion retreating at the opposite direction, the chaotic retrograde maneuver would result in a monumental messy ordeal. These supplies were lost to the Japanese or the local population whoever gets there first. The retreating troops were instructed to load their trucks with as much supplies they can muster when they pass the various storage facilities. If they were ever delivered to the supply dump in Limay, Bataan is another thing. Most of the supplies were probably kept within their own platoon.

In the meantime, the quartermaster corps between December 23 – 30, 1941 were in a frenzy trying to buy food supplies locally. They ran into a snag when they tried to purchase some of the 10,000,000 pounds of rice in a storage facility in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija Province. Philippine law states that rice cannot be remove from one province to another without authority of the Commonwealth government. Both MacArthur and President Quezon denied the transfer even during a time of war. Twenty percent of that hoard could feed the 80,000 troops stationed in Bataan plus the 26,000 local civilian refugees for an entire year.

The supply officers and their crew did their very best with the limited time that was given to supply Bataan, what they gathered wasn't enough.

## 18

### CAVALRY: To the Field

"Hi-Yo! Down they go, there's no such word as "can't". If there is still any romance and glamor left of the nineteenth century cavalry soldiers, it is found in the 26<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Philippine Scouts. The regiment had 784 enlisted men and 54 officers. They still maintain the proud tradition of adventure, endurance, courage and "esprit de corps". The 26<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in the Philippines has a reputation as a hard-riding, spit-polish band of soldiers but still find the time for "wine, women and song", after all the Filipinos are known as the "troubadours of the Pacific".

It was on December 22, 1941 when they left their staging area of Rosario near the gulf and proceeded to the coastal town of Damortis where they engage the invading Japanese coming from the Buang area into an afternoon showdown. Major William Chandler marveled at the accuracy of the Filipino Scouts rifle and the well-handled machine guns that gave the Japanese Army the first real fight they had seen. This was not MacArthur's army this was the Scouts. The defenders were putting up a fierce non-stop resistance and the Japanese finally stopped shooting, Homma ordered for more reinforcements. Later that afternoon orders were given to abandon Damortis and the machine gunners disassembled and packed their weapons climbed into their saddles and raced away to join the other troops back to Rosario.

For the cavalymen the encounter at Damortis was just the prelude to their main mission.

## 19

### Stand Your Ground

As the North Luzon Force are backpedaling towards the safety of the Bataan peninsula, the 26<sup>th</sup> Philippine Scouts commanded by Colonel Clinton Pierce and the Provisional Tank group were given the mission to delay the Japanese forward thrust. But it's the Scouts that would take the brunt of the operation. "Come hell or high water" the Filipino soldiers stood their ground day after day making the ultimate sacrifice for everyone else. It was on December 26 at the town of Binalonan where Wainwright asked for a detachment of sixteen American tanks to provide support for the cavalry against the Japanese armor but only five showed up, Colonel Pierce reacted with disdain and yelled to one of the tanker crew, "get your damn tanks out of the way, they're scaring my horses".

With no antitank weapons, the Filipino troopers halted the Japanese armor with fanatical feats of heroism by throwing themselves on the tanks, dropping grenades down the hatches, and firing into the gunports. Then as they fell back, they gave ground grudgingly and at a terrible cost. At the end of the day the regiment was reduced to 450 troopers.

"What a wild and crazy vision of anachronism". In an era of modern aircrafts and the monstrous armory on wheels fighting against a cavalry regiment in the same battlefield, is a "sight to behold"! In the words of General Wainwright himself, the performance by troopers of the 26<sup>th</sup> was "a true cavalry delaying action, fit to make a man's heart sing", a "troubadour" indeed.

The execution of the scouts, the tank battalion manning the roadblocks and the army engineers that had blown up a total of 184 bridges was a remarkable feat. Their accomplishment in holding back the invaders is considered to be one of the greatest operations in military history. Besides giving cover for the North Luzon and the South Luzon troops retreat into the peninsula, more significant is that they protected the High Commissioner of the Philippines Francis Sayre, General Douglas MacArthur and President Manuel Quezon from being captured by the Japanese Army. If captured, then it'll be a whole new ball game.

## 20

### The Rock

Corregidor, an island fortress strategically located at the entrance of Manila Bay also known as the “Gibraltar of the East”, Fort Mills to the military, during the Spanish Period it was called “Isla del Corregidor” (Island of the Corrector) due to the Spanish customs system, wherein all ships entering Manila Bay were required to stop and have their documents checked and “corrected”.

After Manila was declared an “open city” on December 26, 1941 Corregidor would become the center of gravity during the war. Quezon’s Commonwealth Government, MacArthur’s headquarters and the office of the High Commissioner are huddled in the bosom the tunnel. Protecting “the Rock” was the harbor defense force with their “big guns”. Manning the beach area are the navy, the marines and army totaling about 8,000 troops. MacArthur made sure their supplies in Corregidor were well stocked.

Hidden inside the Malinta Tunnel are a very secretive team of code breakers, they were the early pioneers of hackers. They were given a secret copy of the Japanese machine known as “Purple”. It was during the Battle of Midway when the Navy codebreakers broke the Japanese code that gave Admiral Nimitz the advantage over Yamamoto’s fleet. The codebreakers were the Allies secret weapon during WW2.

Not so secret was President Quezon coughing fits that would echo throughout the Malinta tunnel, Quezon’s bout with tuberculosis was turning for the worse due to the dampness and dust of the tunnel.

From the tunnel MacArthur was directing orders to his commanders in the front. “Commence foraging and accumulating rice and other food supplies.” Yea right, why didn’t he share the Corregidor supplies with his troops that will be fighting for him in Bataan. According to quartermaster General Drake, equal amounts of supplies were distributed between Corregidor (with 10,000 troops) and Bataan (with 80,000 troops). (Is there something wrong with this picture?)

On December 28, Wainwright exhausted and hungry was being driven in his green Packard around Central Luzon while dodging bullets from the sky so he could visit his boys in the fox holes to give them moral support. Meanwhile, MacArthur nestled in the tunnel was more interested in making money. He made a phone call to Quezon's secretary in Manila and said "can you buy me \$35,000 worth of Lepanto (mining) stocks". The secretary made a phone call to the manager of the Philippine National Bank in New York who bought the stock for MacArthur. There is more to this story about MacArthur's venture in the Philippines, but to probe deeper into the subject is beyond the scope of this article.

## 21

### Holiday Cheers Across the Miles

The Packard pulled up to Wainwright's trailer a few miles south of Tayug. As the general wearily spilled from the sedan before entering his quarters, an aide mentioned that it was Christmas Eve. The general thought of home and managed to call a friend at the RCA office in Manila to send a radio message to his wife Kitty in Skaneateles, New York. There was sudden rattle at the trailer's aluminum door, it was Colonel Pierce who just walked in and launched into a tirade against a commander of a tank unit for abandoning his post that left the 26<sup>th</sup> Scouts exposed. The general without saying a word reached to his belt, slid something into his palm, and rolled a .45 caliber bullet onto the desk. Wainwright smiled and said, "You know what to do with him".

Both men burst into laughter. In their moment of being human again there was a knock at the door, stepping inside was Wainwright's driver Tom Dooley brandishing a Christmas present for his boss. The two officers grinned at the sight of the unwrapped gift, an aged single-malt scotch and without further ado, Wainwright uncorked the bottle and poured three glasses, and for a few minutes, they sipped the smooth liquid, toasted the holiday, and talked of happier days.

In Corregidor, emerging from one of the laterals is President Quezon and his family as they are about to attend the traditional Midnight Mass. It is supposed to be the most celebrated mass for the church-going Filipinos. Somewhere inside the

confines of Malinta Tunnel are the residents in their fatigues, khakis and uniform attending the mass. Waiting for the President's family to arrive is Quezon's personal chaplain Fr. Pacifico Ortiz, SJ.

Fr. Ortiz spoke of Jesus Christ birth, and how this nativity would change history and save mankind. Outside the tunnel are the soldiers guarding their station perhaps singing Christmas carols to themselves and others are rooted in their foxholes at the battlegrounds of Luzon and Bataan. There is no celebration, only a simple exchange of a handshake to his partner and going back clutching their weapons again, they too were saving mankind.

During the mass the chaplain offered a prayer for those who had died defending the country and those who were ready to do so.

8,000 miles away a few hundred invited guests gathered around the national Christmas tree displayed at the White House south lawn. As the Marine Band played "Joy to the World" President Roosevelt pressed a button to turn the dark evergreen tree into a blaze of colored lights. Outside the steel fence are the fifteen thousand spectators that resounded with cheers.

Standing next to the president on the south portico is the Prime Minister Winston Churchill who recently arrived flaunting a broad smile and waving at the cheering crowd. In his holiday speech Roosevelt spoke briefly of the incongruity and necessity of honoring the Prince of Peace in a world at war and then introduced "my associate, my old and good friend". In a short address Churchill praised the American crowd and expressed "the kindness of your welcome convinces me that I have a right to sit at your fireside and share your Christmas joys".

The Prime Minister certainly have something to be cheerful about. In the hours between his tumbler of sherry in the morning and champagne and brandy in the evening, at their meeting, Roosevelt assured his guest in the white house that the United States is still committed to the allied policy of "Europe First" despite the recent calamity at Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt and Churchill's secret meeting known as the Arcadia Conference lasted from December 22, 1941, to January 7, 1942 as they agreed upon the defeat of Germany as their primary objective and to establish Australia as their Allied Headquarters in the Pacific.



## 22

## The road to Bataan

*“This country is yours! I want you to defend every inch of your country.  
Do not allow the Japanese to overrun your country, so let’s go and fight.”*

- General Albert M. Jones (51<sup>st</sup> Division, PA)

When the news of War Plan Orange came into effect, General Parker the commander of the South Luzon Force was ordered to Bataan to organize and take command of the Bataan Defense Force. General Jones was now in charge of the SLF, he was about to have his Christmas lunch when he was told of the withdrawal from the beaches was now taking place. Jones was a gung-ho officer who believed that the Japanese could be beaten. He hopped into his sedan and drove towards the front only to encounter a group of soldiers in retreat. Jones approached the American officer “Just what the hell did you mean pulling back?”

“I’m now commanding the South Luzon Force”, Jones turned to a Filipino officer and said, “this country is yours, so let’s go and fight.” The general ordered the Filipinos to re-embus and slid into his sedan and went first on the muddy road to counterattack. Sensing he was now driving into an ambush Jones decided he’ll meet the enemy again in Bataan where the terrain favored the defense.

“Blow it!” Lieutenant Colonel Harry Skerry the chief engineer just received a direct command from General Wainwright to blast the Calumpit Bridge, but hesitated. A platoon of the Philippine Scouts engineers was still on the other side making their way. Through his field glasses Wainwright could see the Japanese lead patrol rapidly advancing towards the bridge 500 yards away. They couldn’t wait.

Wainwright gave the second command, at 6:15 AM on New Year’s Day eight tons of dynamite exploded in one thunderous blast as both the highway and the railroad bridges came crashing down the Pampanga River. This was bridge number 183, there’s one more to go. The pursuing enemy was now stranded on the eastern bank. Some Japanese soldiers decided they would cross the river by the

Filipino's banca that were moored on the riverbank they tried but it sank. The Filipino boatmen had bored holes earlier to disable them.

General Jones and his South Luzon Force were racing one step ahead of the Japanese pursuit and finally crossed the Calumpit Bridge on December 31. Once they passed San Fernando in Pampanga, Route 7 takes them to Layac Junction the gateway to Bataan. The SLF would now be part of General Parker's II Corps covering the western side of Bataan.

From Lingayen Gulf to San Fernando, a distance of about one hundred miles, Wainwright's North Luzon Force fought the Japanese Army in a delaying action that had bought precious time for the Philippine Army to withdraw into the Bataan Peninsula. The 192<sup>nd</sup> and 194<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion motto in battle was "Stand and fight, then pull back and dynamite." They should be proud of their performance as they have lived up to their "rallying cry." The National Guard Tankers manning the roadblocks and the action of the 26<sup>th</sup> Calvary held up the Japanese advancements with perfect timing and execution just long enough, long enough to make "their stand" in Bataan.

General Homma and his army finally entered Manila on January 2, 1942 without opposition. They were greeted by the sullen crowd of Filipinos and cheers from a handful of Japanese freed from interment. As the Japanese army were taking their victory march into the city, the Filipino and American troops in Bataan are digging in.

## Part V

### 23

#### No. 184 - The Gateway

Layac Junction was the key point of the withdrawal where all roads to Bataan are joined. Along the route is a single steel bridge crossing the Culo River just before entering the town of Hermosa. Exhausted and battle tested, an eight-mile-long convoy of trucks and overloaded buses filled with soldiers are traveling on Route 7. It was after midnight of January 5, 1942 when the last remaining troops of the North Luzon Force had cleared the Layac Bridge closely guarded by the 26<sup>th</sup> cavalry. In the distance the low rumbling sound of heavy machinery can be heard, bringing up the rear were the Provisional Tank Group finally crossing the steel span. At 2 AM on January 6 and without further ado, Wainwright gave the signal to his chief engineer...blow it! The last gate now slammed shut.

Had General Homma taken his Chief of Staff General Masami Maeda's advice by putting more of their best troops toward Bataan instead of Manila, Homma would have joined General Takashi Sakai of Hong Kong in the winner's circle. However, the aim of the Imperial General Headquarters was "Manila or bust" and by meeting their objective on January 2 and high on their victory, the High Command in Tokyo made a decision to pull out Homma's best unit and send them south to Java to fight the allied forces. Also, faulty intelligence reporting placing the total strength of the troops in Bataan at only 25,000 would only be a mopping up operation for Homma's army contributed to their decision.

Homma's 48<sup>th</sup> Division was being replaced by the 65<sup>th</sup> Brigade from Formosa. According to the general the 65<sup>th</sup> were older men and unfit for front line duty. Even their commander Lieutenant General Akira Nara a graduate of Fort Benning Infantry School was dismayed that they had never seen action. I guess that makes it an even fight Homma's 65<sup>th</sup> Brigade going up against the Philippine Army that also had never seen action.

## 24

## The President and the General

## (Midpoint Analysis)

“These two”, General MacArthur and President Quezon have a whole lotta ‘splainin’ to do as to why the Philippines needs an army: (1) Why build a national army in 1936 when Independence Day is scheduled for 1946 (the Philippines is a commonwealth under U.S. rule and not yet sovereign). (2) American military forces were responsible for the defense of the Philippines during the commonwealth period, having two armies is a conflict of interest. (3) Insufficient budget. (4) Why hire an over-the-hill retired American soldier as a military advisor whose previous knowledge is akin to that of a 19<sup>th</sup> century and World War 1 soldiering. (5) If in 1946 they believe Japan is still the external threat, Japan would have no reason to invade the Philippines by force once the Americans are out the door. The Japanese can walk right in, “take a bow” and pencil out a deal with the corrupt leaders of the Philippines.

America’s hidden imperialist nature was apparent when the Commonwealth of the Philippines was being developed. It was a ruse, to divert attention from the real issue. In Chapter 6, I mentioned the creation of a national army that will be ready in ten years, nonsense! It will be ready when President Roosevelt says so. It was never intended for the Philippine sovereignty. America needed an army at a bargain. Why were these American military “top brass” MacArthur, Eisenhower and Ord assigned to build a Philippine Army and not the Filipinos?

In America, The Great Depression had a devastating effect in both the rich, the poor and the military. Budget concerns was an issue with the army. Eliminate some of the military hardware or scale down personnel. The Army Chief of Staff refused any kind of military reduction, he was General Douglas MacArthur and his aid was Colonel Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Philippines was the solution.

The Philippines provided the repository of young men to be recruited and also was a way to dispose the rusted World War 1 weapons that’s been stored in the

army's dust bins. They duped President Quezon to manufacture and finance an army and into buying the used Lee Enfield rifles for the Filipino troops. As a bonus, the war department threw in the busted machine guns and some dubious weapons. I don't know if Quezon was suckered into this rotten deal for the Filipinos, turn a blind eye or knowingly made a pact with the devil, it really doesn't matter now. But for MacArthur and the war department this arrangement was...slick. Outsourcing practice did not start with big corporations.

President Quezon's military advisor was advising to purchase used antique rifles for his Filipino troops to repulse an invasion...a military genius?

It was during my research about General George Grunert and his revision of War Plan Orange 3 when I began to see the big picture and realize what was happening or going to happen during the war. Grunert saw the potential of the new recruits and envisioned multiple roles for the Philippine Army to help strengthen the defense of the Islands. He wanted to get himself involve and train a small garrison and get them combat-ready. His observation was the PA was being superficially trained and not up to par to being infantry soldiers. MacArthur and Quezon were over protective of their creation and Grunert's encroachment of the conscript was not welcomed by their department. MacArthur's program was recruiting not training. What I finally realize was heartbreaking.

The American officers stationed in the Philippines had felt that General George Grunert the Head of the Philippine Department and the author of WPO3 was the obvious choice to command the armed forces in the Philippines if war came. My description of General Grunert when I read about him in "The Journal of Military History" was that he had a genuine interest to lead and inspire an army. As Head of the Philippine Department, he was the logical choice. President Roosevelt instead, had chosen MacArthur, a retired general over Grunert as the Supreme commander in the Philippines. At MacArthur's request Grunert was relieved of his duties and was transferred back to the United States.

The military advisor whose training program was a wreck would suddenly become in command of all the forces in the Philippines. The young soldiers of the Philippine Army were going to be used as a blood offering to the Japanese. President Roosevelt was going to give the Philippines to Japan, but not Australia.

Looking back at the “Lost Hours”, the result of the Clark Airbase bombing, the untrained young peasants being used as front-line infantry and the supplies purposely being squandered, MacArthur was following orders.

## 25

### Prelude to Bataan

In the wee hours of January 6, 1942, The North Luzon Force are heading south to their battle line on the western side of Bataan, they will become the I Corps under General Wainwright. General Parker and his South Luzon Force are already digging in on the Eastern side of the peninsula and they are now the II Corps.

Bataan with its rugged terrain is a natural fortification that provides a defensive edge for the USAFFE. Once entrenched, the Filipino-American troops with the mountainous surroundings and jungle growth could withstand the enemy onslaught for a period of time. For the first time in their Asia Campaign the Japanese found themselves facing a formidable obstacle of trenches, foxholes and thick lines of barbed wire with machine gun nests that can spray a deadly barrage of shells as they attempt their frontal attack.

For the inexperienced soldier Bataan provided a safe haven, the foxhole is his home away from home and is a den of security during a relentless fire of the enemy.

As the I and II Corps are preparing their main line of resistance (MLR) at the Abucay-Mauban Line, Brigadier General Clyde (Pappy) Selleck commander of the 71<sup>st</sup> Division was responsible for establishing the Layac Line. Supporting him are two Philippine Army infantry regiments, the 26<sup>th</sup> Scouts Cavalry and all American 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry also known as the (thirsty first) Infantry. It's those long hours at the Manila bars.

At about 10:00 AM the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> observers reported a column of Japanese infantry and artillery advancing down Route 7 towards Layac Junction. Moments later at 10:30 Selleck gave the signal to fire. The Field Artillery Regiments sprang into action positioned their 75mm canons and opened fire at

their target. The battle of artilleries had begun at Layac with both sides continuously exchanging volleys of fire. The defense at Layac were holding back the enemy for a while, but the Japanese countered with their long range 150mm howitzers and Selleck had no answer for it. The USAFFE's 155mm big guns that can counter were being hauled by 10-ton caterpillar tractors down the peninsula.

It was during this battle when Jose Calugas a Philippine Scout Mess Sergeant spotted an unmanned field artillery ran a thousand yards dodging enemy shelling, assembled a crew and put the gun back into action. For his act of bravery Jose Calugas was awarded the medal of honor.

General MacArthur's flip-flop strategy that had cause a logistical nightmare on the withdrawal created a lot of confusion. The 155s which has a range of over 14 kilometers was never placed in a position at Layac.

Later in the afternoon at about 2:00 PM several Japanese units had crossed the Culo River. Two hours later they were met by a squadron from the 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry and raked the enemy with their air-cooled .30-caliber machine gun. The American 31<sup>st</sup> soldiers have joined the fray and are finally shooting their rifles.

Earlier that day there were these two Filipinos carrying a washtub full of ice, inside were bottles of San Miguel beer that were being sold for one peso per bottle, what a rip-off... hoorah for democracy. In Manila they are sold for a nickel or ten centavos a bottle, oy I'll take two.

The defense at Layac were able to hold their position until late that evening of the 6<sup>th</sup>. A one-day stand, it was all they could do, one day of grace.

## 26

## Bataan

*"An army marches on its stomach"*

- Napoleon

It's a truism of military life that an army marches on its stomach, quoted Napoleon. If Napoleon can lead over 500,000 French soldiers and march over a thousand miles from Paris to Moscow and manage to feed his hommes, why then, General MacArthur on his home turf failed to feed his soldiers?

Before the first shot was fired, before the artillery men launched their projectiles over the hills of Bataan, MacArthur made a decision that will seal the fate of the Filipino-American defenders. On January 6, 1942 an order was issued to all troops on Bataan to cut their meal ration in half, from that point on until their surrender on April 9, 1942 the soldiers will be fighting not only the enemy but hunger.

The battle at Layac Junction like the overture to a musical work was short but dramatic. By the early afternoon of January 9, the II Corps troops along the Abucay line were in position awaiting the zero hour. Guarding the East Road, stood the well-disciplined 57<sup>th</sup> Scouts Infantry, "Anywhere-Anytime." Defending the center line is the 41<sup>st</sup> Division (PA) commanded by General Vicente Lim, they were the only division that entered Bataan intact. At the western end of the line straddling the slopes of Mt. Natib is General Jones 51<sup>st</sup> Division, weakened by their withdrawal from south Luzon.

The Filipino soldiers are dug in their foxholes, the artillery emplacements are strategically placed to rain a deadly barrage of shells on the enemy. At 1500 the big guns opened up and the Battle of Bataan had commenced.

General Nara's brigade led by Colonel Takeo Imai stated down the East Road and were soon met by a punishing fire from the II Corps artillery. Unlike the poorly plan "meet em" at the beach" by MacArthur, the Bataan Defense Force were well prepared. Mines, barbed wires, the big guns, etc. were placed according to General Grunert's War Plan Orange 3 (WPO-3).



The Battle of Abucay is the first of many battles in the peninsula and the most decisive battle of Bataan. It is here where a large-scale offensive was undertaken by the defending force to seize the initiative from the attacking enemy. As the enemy advanced the defenders counter-attacked. At Abucay the Japanese Army again met real opposition. The stiffest resistance came from the 57<sup>th</sup> Scouts, Filipino soldiers commanded by American officers.

One Japanese soldier described the situation: "We in the 9<sup>th</sup> Regiment feared the worst because the 48<sup>th</sup> Division, which had been scheduled to fight with us, suddenly disappeared, leaving us to fight with an elderly troop of senior reservists. In any case, we thought that all we had to do was destroy an almost defeated enemy."

Once in Bataan the Filipinos were eager to fight. The Japanese made several more attempts to penetrate the far eastern line and the 57<sup>th</sup> did not give ground. Giving up on the eastern flank, Imai's 141<sup>st</sup> Infantry began attacking the center line. However, General Lim's 41<sup>st</sup> Division was determined to hold their line and they also stood their ground. The all-Filipino untested army division was able to repel the heavy armor and the repeated infantry attack of the Japanese.

At Abucay, Bataan became the "ultimate fighting arena". This was the scene of the hand-to-hand combat, duel of the artilleries, marksmen against Japanese snipers and the Japanese banzai attacks. Second Lieutenant Alexander (Sandy) Nininger Jr. with the 57<sup>th</sup> Scouts received a Medal of Honor for his all-out-brawl with the enemy. Nininger repeatedly forced his way into hostile ground, armed with a rifle and grenades and though exposed to heavy enemy fire, he succeeded in destroying Japanese groups in foxholes and enemy snipers. His body was found after the recapture of the position with 1 enemy officer and several Japanese soldiers lay dead around him.

General Homma was now feeling the pressure from his High Command and it's been ten days of heavy fighting and the Filipino-American troops are still holding ground. Failing the frontal attacks Homma finally stopped writing poetry and started probing different avenues and they found it. A four-mile gap separated Wainwright's I Corps and Parker's II Corps, left unguarded are Mt. Natib and Mt. Silangan. The dense jungle and the rugged steep slopes of the two mountains was thought to be impassable and assumed to be a deterrent to the Japanese, USAFFE was wrong. A determined foe, can, and will surmount such obstacles.

General Nara exploited the opportunity and sent the bulk of his army through the opening and was met with very little resistance. Covering the eastern slopes of Mt. Natib was General Jones weakened 51<sup>st</sup> Division that had journeyed from South Luzon. Reserve forces were ordered to counter the mountain climbers but Nara's troops prevailed and finally gained ground. The first MLR was abandoned and moved further south to the Pilar-Bagac Line.

In a nutshell the "Story of Bataan" can be summed up between the periods of January 6 when the half ration was ordered and January 23 when the first line of resistance was breached. The 57<sup>th</sup> Infantry Scouts and General Lim's 41<sup>st</sup> Philippine Army represented the will and the determination of the Filipino soldiers. By not yielding an inch of ground, they paid the price.

The American officers lay witness to the fighting resolve of the Filipinos as Col. E.B. narrated "Fighting was terrific and bloody in the Abucay area. There was much hand-to-hand combat. The highest tribute I can pay to the Philippine Scouts, who were officered by Americans and had been trained in prewar years as part of the American Army, is that I have never seen, nor do I ever expect to see, any better or braver soldiers than the Scouts. They were truly an inspiration."

Jones 51<sup>st</sup> Philippine Army were mainly from the Bicol area, sons of farmers with their own dialect they too had the resolve to fight, its their country. They were the furthest from the supply line and the last battalion to receive the half-rations. The old saying that "An army marches on its stomach" had been rightly confirmed. No half-starved soldier can fight and win!

## 27

### CHARGE!

Before General Wainwright and his North Luzon Force arrived at the Layac Junction gateway to Bataan, they were again buying time to allow the funneling of the Bataan Defense Force to establish their Abucay-Mauban MLR Line and the First Line of Defense at Layac. The 11<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> PA Division, the 26<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, the 192<sup>nd</sup> and 194<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalions formed a road block between Guagua and Porac

(Guagua-Porac Line) and delayed the Tanaka Detachment from reaching the junction. This was a fierce and bloody battle between January 3-5 where the young Filipino soldiers honed their skills.

The 11<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Division and the 26<sup>th</sup> Cavalry now formed the I Corps at the western sector of the Mauban Line. This was a wooded area which had very little activity at first, they deservedly need the break.

It was on January 16 when Wainwright received a report of a Japanese advancement towards the hamlet of Morong and immediately sent an advance party followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry reserve unit. Wainwright had selected Second Lieutenant Edwin Ramsey of the 26<sup>th</sup> Scouts to lead the advance guard. Assigned to him were the mounted platoons of troops E-F. Long gone was the traditional saber of the U.S. Cavalry troopers that looks intimidating in their charge formation, they are now armed with a semi-automatic .45 caliber pistol and rested on their leather scabbard is an M-1 rifle.

As they approach the quiet village made up of grass huts on bamboo stilts, Ramsey assigned three Filipino troopers to take the point thirty yards ahead of the main body of riders. In the center of the village is the only stone structure, a catholic church. Moments later as the Cavalry entered the town square, the silence broke by the burst of rifle fire from the enemy's advance troops that had just crossed the Batalan bridge. Behind them was the rest of the army, lots of them.

Galloping back is PFC Pedro Euperio one of the Filipino troopers badly injured. Ramsey dismounted and manage to help his trooper into a shelter behind one of the huts, that was all he could do at the moment. Ramsey remounted and quickly ordered the Scouts to line up abreast as they are about to ride into the history books and execute the last cavalry charge of the U.S. Army. Glancing to his left, to his right, Ramsey jabbed the air with his pistol and with the forward motion of his arm shouted the final "Chaaarge!"

Like a vision from another time, the mounted warriors galloped though the town square firing their pistols at will and smashed into the enemy's line. The speed and the sight of the thundering cavalry horses was shocking and caught the enemy by surprise. In the confusion and the flurry of the charge the Japanese quickly scrambled back to the swamps and back to the river. After unloading their

pistols, the scouts took their rifle and formed a skirmish line to keep the enemy in check and took control of the village.

The 26<sup>th</sup> Filipino- Scouts performed a truly classic cavalry action re-living the tradition of the bygone mounted soldiers, and for a brief moment bringing back the glory and the thrill of yesteryear!

Staggering aimlessly towards the front wanting to join the fray is trooper Euperio clutching his pistol with four bullets still lodged in his body, Ramsey ordered him to get back to the rear. "But sir, I cannot go back" Euperio groaned, "I am on guard."

"The Charge" was perhaps the most illustrious battle of all during World War 2 but it was a respite, it bought time for a day. Advancing down the west coast towards Morong is a 5,000 Japanese force and hacking their way through the jungle on the slopes of Mt. Silangan is another 700-man force. The gap on the slopes of Mt. Natib and the Japanese advancement towards the I corps on January 22, drove the decision to forfeit the Abucay-Mauban line and was moved down to the shorter and stronger Pilar-Bagac line.

For the record, PFC Pedro Euperio survived his wounds and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross which he received after the liberation of the Philippines.

## 28

### "Beyond the Sea"

At the southern tip of Bataan is the Service Command Area home to a mix-bag of soldiers that is credited with the first victory against the Japanese. From Cavite are the sailor without their ships, pilots and airmen without their planes and some assorted service crews and engineers. Included in this force are the 500 U.S. Navy Filipino Insular Force, one of them I know. Hungry for a fight are the marines that recently arrived from Shanghai.

On January 22 while the I Corps was retreating from Mauban to their new position in Bagac, Homma ordered General Mitsuo Kimura to execute an amphibious run down the west coast of Bataan to out flank the I Corps by sea. A tactic that Homma borrowed from General Tomoyuki Yamashita's playbook against the British in Malaysia.

Late in the evening three landing crafts embarked from Mayagao Point near Morong to their destination at Caibobo Point, but their journey immediately ran afoul. The 900-man battalion encountered rough seas and strong tides and became disoriented and separated. One group of 300 men overshot their landing point by ten miles and went further south towards the Mariveles Navy Base. The other landing party came ashore at Quinauan Point about four miles south of Caibobo Point.

"It's crawling with japs down there" shouted an observer on the lookout. The 300 hundred Japanese seamen landed at Longoskawayan Point in the early morning of January 23, a finger like promontory jutting out into the South China Sea. Past the thickly forested shoreline the Japanese began to scale the 100-foot rugged cliffs to the high ground of Mt. Pucot at 617 feet. Sounding the alarm, the Naval Defense Force composed of sailors from Cavite, seaplane pilots and the marines were dispatched to the area. The sailors and the pilots were out of their element but quickly learned to become foot soldiers by fighting alongside the marines.

The battle at Longoskawayan went on for seven days as the Japanese and the defenders were playing a deadly game of "king of the hill" at Mt. Pucot. The sailors and the marines finally secured the high ground of Mt. Pucot on January 27 and drove most of the Japanese invaders back to the edge of Longoskawayan. At the cliff's edge these fanatical Japanese fighters were still resisting.

At dusk on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 500 Scouts from the 2<sup>nd</sup>, battalion, 57<sup>th</sup> Infantry arrived and relieved the Naval Defense Force, with their fire power and skills and assistance from the Corregidor artillery shelling, the Japanese was finally eradicated from the Point. Most of the Japanese chose to jump of the cliffs rather than surrender.

One of the battle stories I remember from my father must have been here at Longoskawayan where they created a device to draw fire from the Japanese snipers perched up in the trees of the jungle. During the evenings the Filipino sailors would tie and affix cigarettes on a very long string that could be six to eight

meters long. Someone would pull-out and open their Zippo lighter and with a flick of the thumb, strike-lit and...clink, the cigarettes are ablaze. The front soldier holding the string and the rear guy eight meters behind would actually march along the trail in the dark. The other soldiers would taunt the snipers by talking out loud. From the vantage point of the sniper, it appears like a small platoon is actually patrolling the trail. When the snipers started shooting at their target, there ain't nothing there but fireflies.

This is probably what the Japanese soldier recorded in his diary that he had observed a new type of suicide squad. "Whenever these apparitions reached an open space" he wrote "they would attempt to draw Japanese fire by sitting down, talking loudly and lighting cigarettes." My father must have been the one pulling the front line, he's not much of a talker.

While the marines and the bluejackets were pushing the Japanese off Longoskawayan Point, the no-show swanky pilots were doing the same thing at Quinauan Point seven miles to the north.

They didn't have their bombers and they didn't have their pursuit planes but these airmen fought with what they had...courage. They were issued weapons that 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. William Edwin Dyess remarked, "might have been picked up at an ordnance rummage sale." For Lt. Ed Dyess, the commanding officer of the 21<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Squadron airmen, it really didn't matter if they were fighting the enemy in the skies or crawling through the jungles of Bataan, they had a duty to perform and with their assortment of World War 1 rifles and machine guns they were part of a rag-tag force along with the Philippine Constabulary troops, the Scouts and a division of the Philippine Army that drove back the 600 Japanese invaders back to the ocean.

This was a tougher fight than Longoskawayan the Japanese had actually probe deeper into the thick jungle. While these motley crew were trying to push back the Japanese to their landing at Quinauan Point, Homma sent another battalion at another tongue-twister area at nearby Anyasan-Silaiim Point. The 57<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> Filipino Scouts were now engaged in challenging the new invaders and successfully drove them back to the beach. Every time the scouts were called into battle, they would borne the brunt defending their ground. During the battles at

the Points the scouts would lose fifty percent of their men by being killed in action and to injuries.

The Japanese that came ashore at these landing sites presented an imminent danger to the USAFFE'S position on Bataan. Homma sent a total of 2,000 men only 34 Japanese were believed to have survived. This was a struggle that started on January 23 and finally concluded on February 13 when the last holdouts were neutralized by the Filipino Scouts at Anyasan-Silaiim Point that eventually ended the threat to the western flank of the I Corps.

Historians have now realized that the Battle of the Points as America's first triumph of the Pacific war. The American sailors, the marines, the airmen and the 500 Filipino Naval Reservist gave a good account of themselves and their victories should not be diminished because of the stigma of their surrender. I don't agree this war was a defeat for the Filipino-American troops, that I will explain in the Conclusion. What is significant about the period between January 23 and February 13 is that the frontliners are not trained infantry men, but they are professional soldiers. They have the ability to improvise making weapons by hurling gasoline bombs, throwing bamboo spears loaded with sticks of dynamite and even creating illusions of a platoon patrolling under the cover of darkness.

It does make me wonder what the outcome of the Philippine war would be if General George Grunert was at the helm.

## 29

### "Emptying the Pockets"

*"Courage isn't having the strength to go on - it is going on when you don't have strength."*

-Napoleon Bonaparte

"The Battle of the Points" that raged along the west coast was part of General Homma's pincer movement to outflank Wainwright's position that was forming on their second MLR. The new position was divided between Wainwright's I Corps and Parker's II Corps forming a fifteen-mile continuous line and this time the two sectors are in contact with each other. The Pilar-Bagac defense was a shorter and

stronger line but during the hasty withdrawal there were some gaps that were left undefended where the Japanese have dug in and set up a strong pocket of resistance behind the line.

Between January 27 and February 17, the high point of the siege in Bataan happened during this three-week period. If this was a movie this is the climax. The battle scenes that took place here General Wainwright had described as “the dirtiest fight” in Bataan. It was up close and bloody with hand-to-hand combat, fighting in foxholes with bayonets and knives, snipers against marksmen. Both antagonist and protagonist putting up a stubborn resistance.

In the opening scene on the early morning of January 26, General Clifford Bluemel, the sector commander for Parker’s II Corps had discovered a wide gap in his line with missing units and empty foxholes. Heading east away from its assigned position was his 31<sup>st</sup> infantry (PA), in an emotional outburst Bluemel queried the American officer, “where the hell are you going?” They had been ordered by the corps commander to report to Sector A on the east coast, said the officer. “You’re not going to take those goddamn troops out of the line,” Bluemel blurted.

Changes were made by USAFFE Headquarters to pull out Parker’s best units from the MLR line, the American 31<sup>st</sup> and the 57<sup>th</sup> Scouts were now assigned into the reserve area, to fill in the gap Parker assigned Bluemel’s 31<sup>st</sup> infantry. In the confusion of the sudden shifts, Bluemel was not properly informed of the changes. Understandably high-strung, General Bluemel was now frantically trying to patch the gaps with the thinly scattered troops that were available to him. With the uncertainty of how and who were going to fill the undefended line, the suspense and tension in the general’s sector was steaming thicker than Bataan’s humidity.

On the evening of the of the 26<sup>th</sup> the Japanese 65<sup>th</sup> Brigade was now advancing towards Sector C of the line, Bruemel’s area. Had Homma ordered General Nara to attack that evening the result would have been a disaster on Parker’s II Corps eastern line. Nara received the order on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>. In position to defend Sector C, an area astride Trail 2 are three battalions of the Philippine Army’s 31<sup>st</sup> Division and units from the 51<sup>st</sup> Division now under Gen. Bruemel’s command.



As we take a closer look at the defenders, hunkered down in their foxholes are seventeen and eighteen-year-old Filipino college students who had enlisted only a few days before being sent into battle. The rest are peasants from the provinces and sons of farmers, and their prior experience in holding a weapon before learning to kill their enemy was slaughtering their grandfather's pig to be roasted for their town fiesta. Armed with appallingly obsolete weapons and with empty stomachs they gave of what was being asked of them.

Homma was hoping to take advantage of the confusion in the Pilar-Bagac line and cash-in on his fifty days victory deadline, gave General Nara the order to attack the line. It was late in the afternoon in the barrio of Capot and Capot Hill down the slopes of Mt. Samat where Nara and his Japanese regiments made their initial attack on Bluemel's Sector C Line. Elements of the 31<sup>st</sup> Division (PA) along with the 31<sup>st</sup> Engineer Battalion armed with their rifles were arduously holding back the Japanese attack. While the battle was still underway, arriving on the scene was General Vincente Lim's 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry to aide Bluemel's army. Parker the commander of the II Corps had promised to give Bluemel his best PA Division to help fill the gap. With their firepower and machines guns the 41<sup>st</sup> was able to contain the Japanese attack that evening. For their action during the Abucay fight, General Lim's 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry was given the Presidential Unit Citation Award.

The battle at Trail 2 would continue for the next several days as each Japanese attack against MLR was frustrated by the Filipino defenders. The main event of the battle at Trail 2 was when the unsuspecting Japanese were negotiating the MLR barbed wire and were met by the bayonet-charge 41<sup>st</sup> Infantrymen that overpowered the Japanese attack. This was definitely an "in-your-face" confrontational fight Filipinos against the Japanese in what is perhaps Bataan's "Rumble in the Jungle". The untested Filipino soldiers have now emerged as a seasoned fighting unit and can be counted on to put up a stiff resistance against the enemy. At dawn, as the first light starts to break through Bataan's dense greenery, slumped over the barbed wires and within 150 yards of the main line of resistance are more than a hundred dead Japanese. The result of the nights' battle. Scattered Japanese bodies were found no more than a few yards from the foxholes of the Filipino soldiers, that suffered only light casualties. General Nara's attempt to punch through the line failed, ending the Battle at Trail 2.

Further delaying Homma's conquest of the Philippines were three battle sites west of Trail 2 where the Japanese penetrated Wainwright's I Corps area. In what is known as "The Battle of the Pockets" Wainwright put in command the fiery General Albert Jones to coordinate all the forces to prevent any confusion with the sector commanders.

In the dense jungle of Bataan, the entire line was held by Filipino troops. One writer wrote "they had learnt their military skills the hard way - under fire." These Filipino boys had an inspirational leader from the very beginning of the war. He was known as the "soldier's soldier", Skinny to his friends and loves his whiskey. He would be up there in the front holding a rifle or be with his boys in the foxhole. By taking great risks he almost got his head blown away when a sniper bullet came whizzing by within inches. In a conversation with one of his officers this is what the commander said:

*"What have we got to offer these men? Can I give more food? No. We haven't any more food. Can I give them ammunition? No. That is also beginning to run low. Can I send them supplies, equipment, medicine, or tanks? No. Everything has practically gone. But we can give them morale, and that is all I have left to give them. That is why I visit the front every day. Now do you understand, son, why it is important for me to sit on sandbags in the line of fire while the rest of you seek shelter."*

-General Jonathan M. Wainwright

"These boys" were sent by MacArthur to the waters' edge at Lingayen without proper training, but in the jungles of Bataan they transformed into fighting soldiers. One writer who actually visited the Philippines and interviewed Filipino officers that survived the war put the situation this way:

*"And thus, Bataan was born – out of the blunders of unpreparedness and the overconfidence of its commander. But despite these handicaps, the forces of Bataan would put up a fight like no other army in America and World War II history, while at the same time dying a slow, agonizing death."*

"The Battle of Bataan", D. J. Young

Yes, Bataan was born and so was its "Spirit", Filipino soldiers from the provinces riddled with malaria, dysentery, hunger and thirst were fighting for every inch of

their ground. It was their will to defend their country and loyalty to their American officers that gave them the courage to go on. The American soldiers also inflicted with the jungle disease had the strength to go on despite having to fight with obsolete WWI mortars. The 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry's Colonel Townsend remarked about their ammos, "during one phase of the Battle of the Pockets, only 14 rounds out 70 actually detonated. Our grenades were all 1918 jobbers and if two out of ten went off, we'd be lucky."

In the thick of the jungle the big guns were of new use. Since the enemy was well dug-in and even created a series of interconnecting tunnels, the Japanese had to be practically rooted out by fighting with bare hands, knives and bayonets. Banzai attacks were frequently use by the Japanese as a last resort but they are usually gunned down by machine guns and rifles. Japanese snipers were well camouflage tied to the branches of the trees and Filipinos not knowing how to crawl on their bellies became easy targets. According to Maj. Beverly Skardon the fight at the Big Pocket was to be 11 days of the most bloody and bitter fighting of the campaign.

This was Bataan's "Last Stand" and General Jones finally got his revenge after the Japanese forces that landed in Southern Luzon overran his troops. Jones went on the offensive and instructed his commanders to attack the Little Pocket first and proceed with the Big Pocket.

It was Captain Alfredo Santos of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division that launch the counter-attack against the numerically superior Japanese forces in the area of the Little Pocket. Captain Santos and his all-Filipino troops took the challenge and outmaneuvered and outfought the enemy in one of the toughest-terrain of the Bataan jungle. The mission took four days of vicious fighting and the Filipinos succeeded in closing the 500-yard gap. Some of the Japanese manage to slip out of the pocket, however other soldiers who refused to face the wrath of their superiors for failing to complete their mission would instead perform their banzai attack as their final attempt. Rather than surrender they would fight to the end in honor of their emperor.

For his heroic feat in battle, Captain Santos was decorated with the United States Army's Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star. Also, the Philippine Government awarded him the Distinguished Conduct Star and Gold Cross for his combat action in Bataan.

By mid-February fighting in Bataan had taken its toll in both the invaders and the defenders. The strength of the Japanese Army was slowly diminishing and was no longer capable of launching an all-out offensive attack. Besides the beating they took from the Bataan defenders, the Japanese also succumbed to the harsh condition of the jungle. Over 10,000 of Homma's army were down with malaria, dysentery and tropical diseases. The order was given to withdraw.

It was Colonel Yoshioka's 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry with 3'000 soldiers that Homma dispatched to the sea and to Bataan's battleground, however, their amphibious operations had proved disastrous for Yoshioka's troops. As the pocket fights is now coming to a close, Yoshioka's reduced battalion had found an escape route to the northeast corner of the "Big Pocket".

Jones' plan succeeded by throwing a cordon of troops around the pockets in a horseshoe like formation and pushing the enemy back. It was February 12 when the General received the news that the pockets had been closed, still there were a large number of Japanese that manage to slip away. On that day Jones was not on the battlefield but at Hospital No.1 getting treatment for an attack of acute dysentery. Wainwright placed General William Brougher of the 11<sup>th</sup> Division in command.

Turning his attention to the escape route in the Upper Pocket, Brougher prepared his final battle with the last of the enemy holdouts. Joining forces with the 11<sup>th</sup> are the 92<sup>nd</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the 51<sup>st</sup> Division and the Constabulary. Coming from all sides of the perimeter the Filipino-American troops were slowly tightening the noose while the Japanese were fiercely fighting back. The eastern side of the perimeter was aided by the tanks of the 192<sup>nd</sup> Tank Battalion but gaining ground on this side of the loop proved to be difficult due to the rough terrain. Hampered by the dense undergrowth and faced with the maze of bamboo thickets the effectiveness of the tanks would be useless, but help did arrive in an unexpected way, Igorot soldiers from the Mountain Province that were assigned to Maj. Helmert Duisterhoff's 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry were fascinated by the monstrous looking machinery took it upon themselves to leap up on top of the tanks and guide the tank drivers through the dense jungle. With the use of their bolo knives these courageous tribesmen chopped and slash their way through the entangling foliage, vines and creepers where they were exposed to enemy fire.

Standing poised and defiant on top of the tanks, these savage tribes were ten years ahead of the murderous hood ornaments of “The 50s”.

The end was near, at sunrise of February 17 after several days of trekking and fighting through the jungle, Brougher’s troops were yards away from their original MLR. If there were still any Japanese snipers left, they are decomposing up on the trees as they were secured and tied to the branches. The remaining troops of Yoshioka’s army have now been reduced to 200. Available to them was a 50-yard-wide exit route back to their own line. Delirious from starvation and illness they refuse to concede defeat and to save themselves, they chose to fight to the end.

In the arena for the final thrust was the Filipino Constabulary 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion led by Major Deogracias Tenezas. Rising up from the rubble of the jungle the Japanese began their attack, like most battles in Bataan this was hand-to-hand, bayonet-to-bayonet struggle and breathing at each other’s faces leaving their tracks covered with blood. This final scene if I were to film would be in slow-motion and up close for written on their faces is their fighting spirit. The Japanese soldier at the prime of his life is no longer fighting to gain ground but adhering to their “no surrender” policy, but it’s the glory of fighting for his nation, for his Emperor and to purify the self that is expressively resonated on his face. In the Bushido code, the supreme sacrifice of life was regarded as the purest of accomplishments.

The Filipino soldier with dogged-determination is fighting to save his country. They went through 350 years of Spanish rule, colonized by America for another 50 years and now another invasion. No more, no more, they are fighting for the same principles that George Washington and his Colonial Army fought for, Freedom and Democracy. Bataan like Valley Forge has become symbolic of the terrible conditions that had to be overcome in the fight to create a new nation.

*“Naked and starving as they are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery.”*

General George Washington

*“Such was the spirit of the defenders, that, dying from disease, hunger and thirst, we manage to hold the line so long and with so little.”*

Lieutenant Venicio Jaladoni

America granted the Philippines its independence in 1946, nonsense, the Filipinos rightfully earned it right here in Bataan...fighting!

The camera now is now slowly ascending upwards, scattered on Bataan's sacred ground are the Japanese soldiers all 200 of them, they achieved their glory, like the short-lived cherry blossoms, they have fallen to the ground while still perfect.

## 30

### The Lull

The triumph of both the Battle of the Points and the Pockets had given the Filipino-American defenders a moral boost. Against incredible odds they drove Homma's Japanese Army out of Bataan which proves their invincibility is a myth. But they are starving and in need of medicine, General Lim who understood the Japanese culture knows that Homma's army no longer possess a threat. He was correct that the Japanese did not have the strength to execute a counter-offensive. Lim proposed to USAFFE Headquarters to take his men beyond the Pilar-Bagac line and go north towards San Fernando, Pampanga for a counterattack in hopes of gaining ground and more importantly acquiring food supplies. Request denied. When Homma returned to the Philippines in 1946 for his trial admitted that his army was so badly mangled and demoralized that the USAFFE could have walked in to Manila without much resistance.

USAFFE Headquarters did not seize the moment which was favorable to them to keep going, instead on March 2 against the protest of Wainwright and Parker MacArthur ordered another reduction in the food ration for the Bataan troops. These men are soldiers not monks! In a very sad and touching moment when General Wainwright was talking to one of his Officer about the fodder for the calvary horses also have been exhausted. Wainwright said: "Horsemeat ain't so bad, Captain. You will begin killing the horses at once. Joseph Conrad is the horse that you will kill first." So saying, he went up to his trailer with tears in his eyes. The horse that Wainwright mentioned was his own personal charger.

What a stark contrast between the two generals. One has the compassion and a leadership quality that above all else, his men come first. When Wainwright was down in the fox hole with his troops during the Pocket fights, MacArthur in Corregidor was receiving a half a million dollars payment from Manuel Quezon. Three of his bootlickers also receive some compensation which totaled \$640,000 in all from the Philippine Treasury. This was a discovery made by a historian name Carol M. Petillo in 1979 while doing research on MacArthur's Chief of Staff Richard Sutherland that she uncovered receiving \$75,000. Evidently President Quezon had written an Executive Order No. 1 rewarding MacArthur and three of his staff. The reason for the payment was for their "distinguished service?"

MacArthur couldn't even feed his men, but he sure as hell was willing to receive all that cash.

General Homma was now reeling in his 14<sup>th</sup> Japanese troops from the peninsula there are over 10,000 sick with malaria, over 4,000 wounded, 2,725 killed in action and 250 missing. At an earlier meeting Homma's Senior Operations Officer proposed an aggressive offensive attack along the east coast instead of the west. His Chief of Staff Maeda believed that offensive operations on Bataan should be discontinued, and that the blockade should be tightened and eventually the Filipino-American troops would be starved into submission. Let them wither in their vines. Maeda's proposal was logical and had merits but it would be an inglorious victory for Homma.

Homma decided to give his army a rest and called the High Command in Tokyo for reinforcements. From mid-February until the end March the guns in Bataan were silent.

Most of the activities during this period was at Hospital No.1 in Little Baguio which is up the hill from Mariveles and Hospital No.2 in Cabcaben, they were the first open-air hospitals in U.S. history since the Civil War. Every known tropical disease was treated here. In the jungle hospital nurses sleep under trees, wash their own uniforms and bathe in streams. They were mostly US Army nurses and some Navy nurses in search of a little adventure that were passing out aspirins in Manila hospitals and months later they're out in the jungles of Bataan. Also, there were 25 Filipina civilian nurses that also had volunteered. Exposed to a lot of the shelling and bombardment these courageous nurses performed critical medical

services at Bataan's two field hospitals and on Corregidor. Those who knew these nurses remembered them as "Angels of Bataan and Corregidor."

From the viewpoint of the medical team, the reality of the troops surviving in Bataan is not fighting the enemy but lack of nutrition. Hunger is by far their biggest enemy which leads to vitamin deficiency and finally tropical disease that attacks them and they start shaking to no end. In January the rations provided 2,000 calories, following month declined to 1500 and during March rations was down to 1,000 calories daily. Lt. Col. Harold W. Glanttly the Luzon force surgeon requires that each man should get 3,500 to 4,000 calories daily. He found the results of their caloric deficit alarming in the extreme.

While the soldiers in Bataan were searching for food; carabao, horses, mules, monkeys and even snakes were part of their daily diet, USAFFE Headquarters were making preparations to evacuate the rock. President Roosevelt during the month of January made a decision to transfer Manuel Quezon to the United States so that he could best help his people away from the pressure of the Japanese. MacArthur responded that it was too hazardous for Quezon and his family to leave Corregidor. That decision was reversed on February 19 when MacArthur received an official notice that Chase National Bank had successfully wired \$500,000 to Riggs National Bank, Washington – MacArthur's Bank.

The waters were not that hazardous after all, the following evening on February 20, Quezon with his wife and three children were escorted to the docks awaiting their transport to take them to the submarine "Swordfish". According to Carlos Romulo, MacArthur's PR man and the editor of the Philippine Herald newspaper, as he saw his President in the moonlight, "he looked like the ghost of the old Quezon." Standing beside the President is MacArthur wishing him a safe journey with some parting words "Manuel, you will see it through. You are the father of your country and God will preserve you." Earlier that day, an emotional Quezon had written a testimonial for the General. "I am leaving you with a weeping heart, for you and I have not only been friends and comrades, we have been more than brothers...I am leaving my boys the Filipino soldiers under your care."

President Manuel Quezon did not live long enough to see the independence of the Philippines, he died August 1, 1944 in Saranac Lake, New York.



## 31

## “I’m Waiting for Ships that Never Come In”

The guns may be silent but the airwaves were continuously blasting out propaganda. KZRH in Manila the Japanese controlled station broadcast a special program for American soldiers every night which starts with “Ships That Never Come In” followed by popular recordings to make them feel homesick. On Corregidor was “The Voice of Freedom” which broadcast several times a day, one announcer was for the Americans the other for the Filipinos. Did it boost their morale, the reaction to these programs was mixed?

Flying low over Bataan, Japanese aircraft often dropped propaganda leaflets to stir the soldiers’ emotion. Some were designed to induce the desertion of the Filipinos; “Throw away your arms and surrender to the Japanese Army in order to save your lives and enriched your beautiful future” proclaimed one handbill. Most of the leaflets painted the life of the Filipinos under the Japanese occupation in glowing colors. The Filipinos did not leave in their foxholes.

While the Filipinos remained loyal to America and still clinging to their devotion to General MacArthur, it’s the American soldiers that are beginning to have doubts about their governments’ commitment to win this war. On January 15 during their fight at Abucay, to encourage the troops in Bataan, MacArthur sent out a message to all his commanders; “Help is on the way from the United States, thousands of troops and hundred of planes are being dispatched. The exact time of arrival of reinforcements is unknown as they will have to fight their way through.”

A lie!

April, 1942: Help is on the way – President Roosevelt

A lie!

There were no reinforcements and there were no supplies on the way for the beleaguered troops in Bataan. Instead of sending food and medicine, Americas’ government was sending false hopes and promises. As the weeks went by, and

January gave way to February the Filipino and American troops were getting weaker by the day. The lull period did not re-energize the troops, instead it sent thousands of infected and malnourished soldiers to the hospitals. When the news of MacArthur was being evacuated to Australia, the American soldiers referred to him as “Dugout Doug” and composed the ballad “Battling Bastards of Bataan.”

“We’re the Battling Bastards of Bataan  
 No mama, no papa, no Uncle Sam  
 No aunts, no uncles, no cousins, no nieces  
 No pills, no planes, no artillery pieces,  
 And nobody gives a damn!”

General MacArthur visited the Bataan peninsula only once on January 10.

## 32

### Going South

During the Arcadia Conference in Washington when the American and British war planners had established their blueprint for the “Europe First” policy, a supreme commander in the Southwest Pacific Area was discussed. Rear Admiral Kelly Turner suggested that responsibility should be given to General MacArthur. It was during the holidays after singing their Christmas carols the Allied leaders had wished “grim tidings” for the Philippines, they were written off. Australia was chosen as their headquarters in the Southwest Pacific.

On February 23 a radiogram was sent inside the Malinta Tunnel from President Roosevelt ordering General MacArthur out of the Philippines. MacArthur’s name was mentioned numerous times during the December-January Arcadia Conference and so he must have known ahead of time of his evacuation to Australia. The Commander is now faced with a dilemma of deserting his men if he obeys or defying the President and share in the fate of his soldiers. If he chose the latter, he would face court-martial charges. The senior members of his staff all argued that that he would have to obey the President’s orders. They were

probably egging him on to comply, why not, they were all welcome aboard with MacArthur and his family on the B-17s bound for Australia.

Some writers had compared MacArthur's departure like a Sea Captain being the first to leave a sinking ship. So, the question lies in regards to his ethical duty as a Commander, did he not have a sense of obligation to stay with his men and defy Roosevelt's orders? MacArthur could have clung to the traditional code of military virtues – such as honor, courage, and loyalty. What military court would dare bring a case against a commander who honorably stayed with his men to fight. I truly believe General MacArthur did not have intentions of staying behind with his troops and share their fate in Bataan. If he was so consenting to accept a reward of half-a-million dollars from an impoverished country and with full awareness that the President could only afford hand-me-downs equipment for their army, that tells me where his moral values stood. When President Quezon finally arrived to America he offered Eisenhower a reward of 60,000 dollars for his service during the commonwealth, Eisenhower politely declined as he knew it was wrong. Army regulations forbade and forbid any army personnel accepting “a substantial loan or gift or any emolument.”

The docks of Corregidor were again busy, on the evening of March 12, MacArthur and his entourage of seventeen officers, his wife, young son and their amah embarked into Lt. John D. Bulkeley's four PT boats. Sailing all night, they reached a small uninhabited island in Northern Palawan by early morning, and rested for the day. Traveling under the cover of darkness to avoid being detected by the enemy, Bulkeley's PT boats propelled by a 4050 horsepower-engines continued south through the Mindanao Sea. After a perilous journey through the rough waters of the Visayan Islands, the seafaring party from Corregidor finally reached the shore of Mindanao at daybreak. They were met by General Sharp of the Visayan-Mindanao Force and were escorted to Del Monte airfield. Later that evening two B17 Flying Fortress finally arrived from Australia that would transport MacArthur's family and his servile staff to Batchelor Field south of Darwin. It wasn't until they reached Terowie railway station in South Australia on March 20 when MacArthur uttered those famous three words that made him like a god-like figure to the Filipino people. In his broadcast speech at the station, he said, “I came through and I Shall Return.”

## 33

## The Final Siege

MacArthur's departure to Australia marked the end of the USAFFE and the defending army was renamed United States Forces in the Philippines (USFIP). General Wainwright assumes command of the entire forces and is headquartered in Malinta Tunnel, taking over his I Corps is General Jones.

Wainwright trapped inside the tunnel was perhaps feeling out of touch with his troops in Bataan, created an Army headquarter to control the I and II Corps. To fill this position Wainwright selected Maj. General Edward P. King, an artillery man of wide experience with a distinguished career in the Army, he was also very much admired by those who served under him. General King would later be faced with the most difficult decision of his military career.

Homma unlike MacArthur was getting reinforcement, but the relief also signified an admission of failure, a humiliating "loss of face" for a proud Japanese soldier. Homma's 50-day deadline was at the end of January, by the middle of March he was way overdue. After the surrender of Corregidor in May, Homma was relieved of his command and sent into retirement, he was replaced by Yamashita the Tiger of Malaya.

The breathtaking speed which the Imperial Japanese Army overran Southeast Asia gave Tokyo's High Command the resources to send relief for Homma's counteroffensive in the Philippines. Heavy artillery from Hong Kong, bombers from Malaya, a division from Shanghai and thousands of fresh troops with a full stomach were at Homma's disposal. With this added strength, Homma no longer had any excuse for failure.

MacArthur answered by fleeing to Australia and gave an order further reducing his army's daily rations down to 1,000 calories.

*"A foul trick of deception has been played on a large group of Americans by a Commander-in-Chief and small staff who are now eating steak and eggs in Australia – God damn them!"*

General William Brougner

On April 3, 1942- Good Friday, Homma's reinvigorated army opened their attack against the Orion-Bagac Line. From the top of Mt. Samat, American observers could plainly see the heavy Japanese artilleries getting into position. A vast array of big guns, 240 mm howitzers and mortars, altogether over 150 pieces of fire-power began targeting the area. At 1000 the Japanese artilleries began firing in what was undoubtedly the most devastating barrage of the campaign. Simultaneously, the bombers from Malaya came out in force and drop their load without mercy upon the defenders huddled in their foxholes. The continuous pounding from the artilleries and bombers shook the whole southern half of Bataan and sent great clouds of dust and smoke swirling up in the sky which turned Mt. Samat stronghold into an inferno.

The effect of the air and artillery bombardment was so devastating it had stripped southern Bataan of its vegetation. At 1500 the shelling finally stopped. The II Corps on the eastern side was hit the hardest, the area where General Lim's 41<sup>st</sup> Division was posted. Dazed and demoralized by the five-hour-long artillery bombing and strafing attacks had left the front-line divisions with no choice but to pull back. The following day on April 4 the Japanese resumed their heavy artillery and bombing attacks and moving closer to their objectives.

On Easter Sunday the day of Resurrection was a not a joyous occasion for the Filipinos and Americans attending the dawn services. In the fastness of the jungle the chaplains invoking divine guidance, did not fail to ask as well for deliverance. At 1000 the attack began, and by by nightfall Homma's Japanese army had gained their first objective in their final drive to end the siege of Bataan. They seize Mt. Samat.

From April 3 until America's surrender on April 9, the real battle was not with the enemy, but with their health. It was at the end of January when the medical team began to warn commanders of the effects of the inadequate diet due to MacArthur's reduced ration. Hunger and disease were a more deadly enemy to the Filipino-American troops, all else was of secondary importance.

*"If we had something in our bellies, things would have been more endurable."*

- General Wainwright

*“It appears to be the consensus of the surgeons attached to American front-line troops that the diet provided is inadequate for the maintenance of health and combat efficiency.”*

- Lt. Col. James O. Gillespie

In the wake of their starvation all the evils of vitamin deficiency started to develop – scurvy, beriberi, diarrhea and dysentery. Then came the dreaded diseases – malaria and dengue. Wainwright’s urgent plea to MacArthur for additional food supply proved to be unsuccessful and only got lip service.

When Wainwright turned over the I corps to General Jones during the middle of March 75 percent of his men were unfit for action. The effectiveness of all the troops fighting in Bataan on April 3 was a pitiful 25 percent. Once the Japanese took control of Mt. Samat, the Orion-Bagac Line started to crumble. From the Orion line the II Corps was thrown back 4 miles south to Limay and on the 7<sup>th</sup> the troops fell back another 3 miles to the town of Lamao. Any counterattacks by the reserve regiments like the 57<sup>th</sup> Scouts and the American 31<sup>st</sup> to gain ground were soon lost. In the span of five days Homma’s Japanese army had punched through the MLR line and all of Bataan lay at his mercy.

4000 miles away the “fleeing general” was giving orders to Wainwright of “no surrender” and “if food fails, you will execute an attack upon the enemy.”

At 10:30 PM on April 8, Wainwright made a call to General King the commander of the Luzon Force to relay MacArthur’s message. King already knew it was an unrealistic order and impossible to launch an attack northward towards Olongapo, he contacted his I Corp commander General Jones to get information on the condition of his men. Jones response was short and realistic, “any attack is ridiculous, out of the question my men are too weak.” General King realizing the futility of further resistance, would only lead to the wholesale slaughter of his troops in Bataan.

That night in a display of moral courage, General King found the strength to make an important decision that would save the lives of his men, he ignored the order given by MacArthur that were far-fetched and dubious. And that he alone, would shoulder the responsibility of surrendering to the Japanese and was prepared to face being court-martialed.

*"I haven't asked you here to get your opinion or advise, I don't want any of you saddled with any part of the responsibility for the ignominious decision I feel forced to make. I feel that further resistance would only uselessly waste human life. We have no further means of organized resistance. There's no way we can continue to fight."*

- General Edward P. King

## 34

### The Japanese are not Barbarians

It was still dark outside, at 3:30 AM a reconnaissance car with a motorcycle escort just left General King's headquarters and started their journey towards the front line. King had selected Colonel Everett C. Williams and Major Marshall H. Hurt, Jr. his two staff officers to serve as emissaries to meet with General Homma to arrange a meeting. Once arriving at the front line both Williams and Hurt were transferred to a jeep and headed for the Japanese-held territory. They were soon greeted by a bunch of "screaming" Japanese soldiers with their flashing bayonets. Waiving a white bedsheet both men slowly descended from the jeep with raised hands, fortunately they were approached by a Japanese officer who motioned them to return to their jeep and follow him where they drove three miles towards Lamao and were taken to meet General Nagano.

Williams was kept at Japanese headquarters while Hurt was sent back to bring General King. It was 9:00 and King had just put on his last clean uniform to meet Nagano. Being from the South, King knew his history, he felt like General Lee who on the same day seventy-seven years earlier, just before his meeting with Grant at Appomatox, had remarked: "There is nothing left to do but go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

King's party left headquarters in two jeeps, taking the lead were Major Hurt and Colonel Collier. King followed behind with his two aids Major Wade Cothran and Captain Achile Tisdale. Prominently displayed were the white flags on both jeeps but they were still being bombed and strafed by low-flying Japanese aircrafts. The encounter with the aircrafts lasted about an hour until a reconnaissance plane

appeared over the road and dipped his wings to signal the attacking planes to keep away.

At 11:00 they arrived at the Experimental Farm Station in Lamao, Nagano was waiting. The ordeal with the enemy aircrafts of dodging and hiding game have made the general's uniform disheveled as those he had left behind, however, dignified... King and his aids sat down at the bargaining table. Nagano spoke no English, but through an interpreter opened the meeting explaining he was not authorized to discuss any terms of cessation activities. Moments later, Colonel Nakayama, Homma's senior operation officer arrived in a shiny Cadillac sedan.

"You are General Wainwright?" The negotiations started with Nakayama demanding for Wainwright. General King replied that he could only speak for himself and his own command on Bataan and expressed a laundry list of proposals to Nakayama, in return he promised to deliver his men to any place at any time as dictated by General Homma. Nakayama feeling agitated that Wainwright was absent flatly refused to further discuss any terms. Perhaps, it was King's persistence and gentle art of persuading that Nakayama insisted to a voluntary and unconditional surrender. This is interpreted as a single individual or a unit would surrender to the Japanese commander in the area. Their unconditional surrender meant they are at the mercy of the Japanese officer or a commander, they are now captives not POWs. The Japanese Army also did not abide by the Geneva Convention Accord, they didn't believe in it, they don't surrender.

At 12:30 General king agreed to surrender unconditionally.

"Will you treat the prisoners well?" King asked.

"We are not barbarians," Nakayama replied.

Nakayama had asked for King's sword, but it was left in Manila. King instead, laid his pistol on the table and his fellow officers did the same.

On April 9, 1942 the battle for Bataan was ended; the fighting was over.

## 35

### Victory in Defeat



(1) Was this war a defeat for the Bataan Defenders? My answer is no!

(2) Was this a victory for the Japanese? Absolutely no!

To answer question (1) Is to have a knowledge of the Allied Grand Strategy and next, is to evaluate the performances of the Bataan Defenders. There was no mandate to defeat the Japanese in the Philippines. They were on the defense “to hold” the enemy. They performed their duties remarkably well and held back the Japanese. They followed orders, retreated when commanded to, waited for their promise supplies when told to, and finally in the end, surrendered when demanded. The Bataan Defenders were the “sacrifice ball”, to advance their allied teammates forward... to victory.

It was “Mission Accomplished!” There was no shame in what they did!

“Was the United States willing to see that happen?” – Winston Churchill

“There are times when men have to die.” – Sec. of War, Henry L. Stimson

Filipino and American “frontliners” paid the price. “God save the Queen” and “Vive le France”!

To answer question (2) Homma should have listen to his Chief of Staff Maeda, he was right to form a tight blockade and let the Bataan troops “wither on the vines”. By April, General King’s soldiers were only about twenty to twenty-five percent effective to respond with a counterattack.

If this was a victory for the Japanese, it was a pyrrhic victory, a victory that comes at the expense of a great loss; time and war materials. For the Japanese it was a “whopper”. At the end of March, the Philippines was no longer a strategic necessity for Japan’s Pacific expansion. They conquered Singapore, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies and met their objectives. The U.S. Navy in the Philippines could no longer harass them, they bailed and even left the back door open for them.

But to General Tojo, the Army-Minister and his Japanese High Command the Philippines was a prize. They don’t need it, but they want it. It was pride, over strategy and by doing so, they overextended their resources needlessly and lost valuable time. They took their eyes of the ball which was in the area of Coral Sea.

Between Northern Australia and New Guinea was a critical gap, that needed to be secured.

The logistical resources should have been at Port Moresby in New Guinea and in the Solomon Islands early on in the game. Port Moresby was the key area to isolate Australia and sever its lifeline to the United States. The Japanese Navy knew this and needed the support of their army. It didn't happen, Homma's Army were busy opening up the "red light" district in Manila. Did you know that the Japanese officers brought their own geishas.

Japan's master plan was to choke the United States by forming a blockade in the Southern Pacific, hoping they'll sue for peace. That dream has been shattered.

The grueling march to Camp O'Donnell started on April 10, it wasn't until the third week when the last group struggled through the gates of the "death camp." Corregidor finally surrendered on May 6, 1942, but Homma overstayed his welcome in the Philippines, he was allowed only fifty days, it took him over one hundred-thirty days to complete his mission. Fortunately, he has a second career as he was sent back to Japan and was replaced by Yamashita.

This was a war of attrition; the Japanese were in no position to compete with America's industrial might and win. Beginning on April 3 through May 6 the Japanese used up a massive amount of their war material trying to capture Bataan and Corregidor.

"I shall run wild for six months or a year" said Admiral Yamamoto, his prediction proved correct. Chugging across the Pacific is Admiral Chester Nimitz task force with their retro-fitted warships and destroyers that were resurrected from the bottom of the Hawaiian waters and two aircraft carriers that escaped the wrath of the Japanese bombings at Pearl Harbor. Intelligence information led the carrier group towards the waters of Coral Sea and on May 4, 1942, the fight for the Pacific began. A month later on June 4, in the Battle of Midway, American aircrafts sank four of the Japanese carriers, Pearl Harbor have been avenged and the Japanese Navy no longer poses a threat.

## 36

### Final Analysis

This was of course also, a story of defeat. This was the underlying tragic story that could be best explained by one of the USAFFE's Generals. Not from the frontline Generals; Wainwright, Parker, Jones, or Lim, they were victorious!

*"To put an unequipped, unorganized, and untrained army into the field against a seasoned and trained up-to-the-minute enemy was something to make a strong men quail."*

- Quartermaster Brig. General Charles Drake

Quartermaster Drake was fully aware of the potential disaster awaiting the military forces he was responsible of supplying. "Fight it out at the beaches"; eighteen thousand tons of precious supplies were transported to Lingayen, never to be seen again.

It wasn't the Japanese Army that defeated the troops in Bataan...it was starvation. The "death march" did not start on April 9, 1942, it started back on January 6 or most likely on December 23, 1941 when the Commander went oops!

### Epilogue

Several years ago, I dogeared a couple of pages from the book "I Saw the Fall of the Philippines" by Colonel Carlos P. Romulo which I thought would make a fitting ending if I was ever to write a story on the war. Colonel Romulo was ordered by MacArthur to evacuate Corregidor on April 9, the day of the surrender and locate the plane in Bataan that will fly him out to Mindanao. When he arrived on the peninsula, he noticed the Filipino boys of seventeen and eighteen years old dragging their guns and stumbling in the dust. They would stagger a few steps and

fall, stand and fall again. He started to rally one of the boys: “come on, boy - keep it up – keep going!”

“It can’t be did, sir, can’t be did!” Cried the boy.

*“The summing up on Bataan. A man can be brave; he can be loyal; he can hate his enemies – but he has a body to carry around. When the body isn’t fed, when it is racked with fever and dysentery, when it is befouled and utterly wearied, it wears out. You can ask of it one more effort, and finally – it can’t be did!”*

Colonel Carlos Romulo

There were American boys that were worn out with exhaustion, one of them stopped the Colonel.

“You’re a Filipino, ain’t you sir?” he croaked. “Let me tell you, the Filipino soldiers are all right! They’re all right! They’re coverin’ us, see – and they’re being knocked off like rats. But they’re men, Colonel! They’re men!”

Later that day, Colonel Romulo hopped on the plane that would take him to Mindanao.

The Filipinos fighting this war understood the virtues that defined America’s national identity; freedom, equality, etc. Democracy was implanted to their country when they were still young and it was taught in school by their American teachers. The American flag was flying high outside their school.

They were fighting for those virtues.

When war came, the American flag was proudly displayed in their country. The American leaders turned their backs on this flag, they said the Philippines wasn’t worth saving.

It’s too far away.

We’re helpless to reinforce them.

We want to help Europe first.

Let’s just send the Commander and his bootlickers to Australia.

The Filipinos and the American Soldiers never left, “they stood shoulder to shoulder” protecting the Stars and Stripes. Their Valiant Sacrifice, is the story of Bataan.

I want you all to Remember That!

Living in the Kawit and Noveleta area of Cavite I'm constantly reminded of the Filipino's struggle for independence so five years ago I immersed myself in Americas colonial history of the Philippines. The Aguinaldo Shrine is just a five-minute drive, the house where the colors of the Philippine flag was unveiled. A ten-minute drive at the opposite direction is the coastal city of Cavite where the remnants of the Spanish Armada sunk by Admiral Dewey now lies underneath Manila Bay.

Four decades later on December 10, 1941 the Japanese bombers unloaded their payload of destruction at the Cavite Navy Yard home of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet and erupted into a blazing inferno. This was the sequel to Pearl Harbor and the announcement of World War 2 in the Philippines. After the war the Navy Yard was reconstructed and was back in business, they even named the elementary school "John Paul Jones" after the American naval hero.