

= Philippine resistance against Japan =

During the Japanese occupation of the islands in World War II , there was an extensive Philippine resistance movement , which opposed the Japanese with active underground and guerrilla activity that increased over the years . Fighting the guerrillas ? apart from the Japanese regular forces ? were a Japanese @-@ formed Bureau of Constabulary (later taking the name of the old Philippine Constabulary during the Second Republic) , Kempeitai (the Japanese military police) , and the Makapili (Filipinos fighting for the Japanese) . Postwar studies estimate that around 260 @,@ 000 persons were organized under guerrilla groups and that members of anti @-@ Japanese underground organizations were more numerous . Such was their effectiveness that by the end of World War II , Japan controlled only twelve of the forty @-@ eight provinces .

Select units of the resistance would go on to be reorganized and equipped as units of the Philippine Army and Constabulary . The United States Government officially granted payments and benefits to various ethnicites who have fought with the Allies by the war 's end . However , only the Filipinos were excluded from such benefits , and since then these veterans have made efforts in finally being acknowledged by the United States . Some 277 separate guerrilla units made up of 260 @,@ 715 individuals were officially recognized as having fought in the resistance movement .

= = Background = =

The Attack on Pearl Harbor (called Hawaii Operation or Operation AI by the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters) was a surprise military strike conducted by the Imperial Japanese Navy against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor , Hawaii , on the morning of December 7 , 1941 (December 8 in Japan and the Philippines) . The attack was intended as a preventive action in order to keep the U.S. Pacific Fleet from interfering with military actions the Empire of Japan was planning in Southeast Asia against the overseas territories of the United Kingdom , the Netherlands , and the United States .

Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor , the Japanese operations to invade the Philippines began . 43 planes bombed Tuguegarao and Baguio in the first preemptive strike in Luzon . The Japanese forces then quickly conducted a landing at Batan Island , and by December 17 , General Masaharu Homma gave his estimate that the main component of the United States Air Force in the archipelago was destroyed . By January 2 , Manila was under Japanese control and by January 9 , Homma had cornered the remaining forces in Bataan . By April 9 , the remaining of the combined Filipino @-@ American force was forced to retire from Bataan to Corregidor . Meanwhile , Japanese invasions of Cebu (April 19) and Panay (April 20) were successful . By May 7 , after the last of the Japanese attacks on Corregidor , General Jonathan M. Wainwright announced through a radio broadcast in Manila the surrender of the Philippines . Following Wainwright was General William F. Sharp , who surrendered Visayas and Mindanao on May 10 .

Afterwards came the Bataan Death March , which was the forcible transfer , by the Imperial Japanese Army , of 60 @,@ 000 Filipino and 15 @,@ 000 American prisoners of war after the three @-@ month Battle of Bataan in the Philippines during World War II . The death toll of the march is difficult to assess as thousands of captives were able to escape from their guards (although many were killed during their escapes) , and it is not known how many died in the fighting that was taking place concurrently . All told , approximately 2 @,@ 500 ? 10 @,@ 000 Filipino and 300 ? 650 American prisoners of war died before they could reach Camp O 'Donnell .

= = Resistance in Luzon = =

= = = USAFFE and American sponsored guerrillas = = =

After Bataan and Corregidor , many who escaped the Japanese reorganized in the mountains as guerrillas still loyal to the U.S. Army Forces Far East (USAFFE) . One example would be the unit of

Ramon Magsaysay in Zambales , which first served as a supply and intelligence unit . After the surrender in May 1942 , Magsaysay and his unit formed a guerrilla force which grew to a 10 @,@ 000 @-@ man force by the end of the war . Another was the Hunters ROTC which operated in the Southern Luzon area , mainly near Manila . It was created upon dissolution of the Philippine Military Academy in the beginning days of the war . Cadet Terry Adivoso , refused to simply go home as cadets were ordered to do , and began recruiting fighters willing to undertake guerrilla action against the Japanese . This force would later be instrumental , providing intelligence to the liberating forces led by General Douglas MacArthur , and took an active role in numerous battles , such as the Raid at Los Baños . When war broke out in the Philippines , some 300 Philippine Military Academy and ROTC cadets , unable to join the USAFFE units because of their youth , banded together in a common desire to contribute to the war effort throughout the Bataan campaign . The Hunters originally conducted operations with another guerrilla group called Marking 's Guerrillas , with whom they went about liquidating Japanese spies . Led by Miguel Ver , a PMA cadet , the Hunters raided the enemy @-@ occupied Union College in Manila and seized 130 Enfield rifles .

Also , before being proven false in 1985 by the United States Military , Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos claimed that he had commanded a 9 @,@ 000 @-@ strong guerrilla force known as the Maharlika Unit . Marcos also used maharlika as his personal pseudonym ; depicting himself as a bemedalled anti @-@ Japanese Filipino guerrilla fighter during World War II . Marcos told exaggerated tales and exploits of himself fighting the Japanese in his self @-@ published autobiography Marcos of the Philippines which was proven to be fiction . His father , Mariano Marcos , did however , collaborated with the Japanese and was executed by Filipino guerillas in April 1945 , and Ferdinand himself was accused of being a collaborator as well .

In July 1942 , South West Pacific Area , became aware of the resistance movements forming in occupied Philippines through attempted radio communications to Allies outside of the Philippines ; by late 1942 , couriers had made it to Australia confirming the existence of the resistance . By December 1942 , SWPA sent Captain Jesús A. Villamor to the Philippines to make contact with guerrilla organizations , eventually developing extensive intelligence networks including contacts within the Second Republic Government . In addition , through the Allied Intelligence Bureau 's Philippine Regional Section , SWPA began to send operatives , and equipment , into the Philippines to make contact and supply guerrilla organizations . Unique to other guerrillas in the Philippines were the Wa Chi ; a resistance unit composed of Filipino @-@ Chinese and Chinese immigrants . They were established to counter the Japanese suspicion and abuse of the Chinese living in the country , and had over 700 men strong . The movement was aided by the American guerrilla forces and were also supported by anti @-@ Japanese civilians and farmers living in the outskirts . In Nueva Ecija , guerrillas led by Juan Pajota and Eduardo Joson protected the U.S. Army Rangers and Alamo Scouts who were conducting a rescue mission of Allied POWS from a counterattack by Japanese reinforcements . Pajota and the Filipino guerrillas received Bronze Stars for their role in the raid . Among the guerrilla units , the Blue Eagles were a specialized unit established for landmine and sniper detection , as well as in hunting Japanese spies who have blended in with the civilian population .

Nonetheless , Japanese crackdowns on these guerrillas in Luzon were widespread and brutal . The Japanese Army , Kempeitai and Filipino collaborators hunted down resistance fighters and anyone associated with them . One example happened to resistance leader Wenceslao Vinzons ; leader of the successful guerilla movement in Bicol . After being betrayed to the Japanese by a Japanese collaborator , Vinzons was tortured to give up information on his resistance movement . Vinzons however , refused to cooperate , and he and his family , consisting of his father Gabino , his wife Liwayway , sister Milagros and children Aurora and Alexander , were bayonet to death .

= = = Hukbalahap resistance = = =

As originally constituted in March 1942 , the Hukbalahap was to be part of a broad united front resistance to the Japanese occupation of the Philippines . This original intent is reflected in its name : " Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon " , which was " People 's Army Against the Japanese "

when translated into English . The adopted slogan was " Anti @-@ Japanese Above All " . The Huk Military Committee was at the apex of Huk structure and was charged to direct the guerrilla campaign and to lead the revolution that would seize power after the war . Luis Taruc ; a communist leader and peasant @-@ organizer from a barrio in Pampanga ; was elected as head the committee , and became the first Huk commander called " El Supremo " .

The Huks began their anti @-@ Japanese campaign as five 100 @-@ man units . They obtained needed arms and ammunition from Philippine army stragglers , which were escapees from the Battle of Bataan and deserters from the Philippine Constabulary , in exchange of civilian clothes . The Huk recruitment campaign progressed more slowly than Taruc had expected , due to competition with U.S. Army Forces Far East (USAFFE) guerrilla units in enlisting new soldiers . The U.S. units already had recognition among the islands , had trained military leaders , and an organized command and logistical system . Despite being restrained by the American sponsored guerrilla units , the Huks nevertheless took to the battlefield with only 500 men and much fewer weapons . Several setbacks at the hands of the Japanese and with less than enthusiastic support from USAFFE units did not hinder the Huks growth in size and efficiency throughout the war , developing into a well trained , highly organized force with some 15 @,@ 000 armed fighters by war 's end . The Huks attacked both the Japanese and other non @-@ Huk guerrillas .

= = Resistance in the Visayas = =

Various guerrilla groups also sprang out throughout the central islands of the Visayas . Like those in Luzon , many of these Filipino guerrillas were trained by the Americans to fight in case the Japanese set its sight towards Visayas . When the Americans finally surrendered the country to the Japanese , these soldiers continued to fight , believing that it was they who have surrendered and not them . As such , they commanded loyalty to the Philippine Commonwealth , and participated in many pivotal battles during the war besides their guerrilla activities . In Cebu , guerrillas and irregulars under Lieutenant Colonel James M. Cushing and Basilio J. Valdes aided in the Battle for Cebu City . They were also successful in their capture of Maj. Gen. Takeo Manjom and his 2 @,@ 000 soldiers and munitions . Panay las under Col. Macario Peralta helped in the seizing of the Tiring Landing Field and Mandurriao district airfield during the Battle of the Visayas . Major Ingeniero commanded the guerrilla forces in Bohol , in which they were credited in the liberation of the island from Japanese outposts at a cost of only seven men .

Another significant achievement for the guerrillas was the capture of the " Koga Papers " in March 1944 . Named after Admiral Mineichi Koga , these papers contained vital battle plans and defensive strategies of the Japanese Navy codenamed the " Z Plan " , as well as information on the overall strength of the Japanese fleet , naval air units and stationed troops . The documents also revealed how the Japanese managed to deduce MacArthur 's initial plans to invade the Philippines through Mindanao . These papers came into the possession of the Filipino guerrillas when the seaplane of Admiral Koga , who was on route to Davao , crashed into the coast San Fernando , Cebu . Koga was killed , and 12 other high @-@ ranking officers including Chief of Staff of the Combined Fleet Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome were captured by Cebuano guerrillas under Lt. Col. James M. Cushing . The papers were inside a briefcase which was fished out of the sea by Cebuano fishermen before being handed down to the guerrillas . The Japanese ruthlessly hunted down the documents and their captured officers ; burning villages and holding out civilians in their search . This forced the guerrillas to release their captives in order to stop the Japanese , but Cushing managed to send for a submarine that took the documents to the Allied headquarters in Australia . The discovery of the papers helped the Allies make a breakthrough in the Pacific , aiding them in the Battle of the Philippine Sea . It also allowed MacArthur to move his invasion not in Mindanao as the Japanese were expecting but in Leyte .

Waray guerrillas under a former schoolteacher named Captain Nieves Fernandez , fought the Japanese in Tacloban . Being infamously known as a crackshot , Nieves extensively trained her men in combat skills and the making of improvised weaponry . She led her men in the front and managed to take out over 200 Japanese soldiers in the war with only 110 men . Her activities

earned her the ire of the Imperial Japanese Army and they posted a 10 @, @ 000 Pesos reward on her head . The main commander of the resistance movement in Leyte however , was Ruperto Kangleon , a former Filipino soldier turned resistance fighter and leader . After the fall of the country , he successfully escaped from being captured by the Japanese . Kangleon established a united guerrilla front that is unique for being well @-@ connected to U.S. guerrilla leader Wendell Fertig . He and his men , the Black Army , were successful in pushing the Japanese from the mainland province and further into the coastlands of Southern Leyte . Kangleon 's guerrillas provided intelligence for the American landings and assisted in the subsequent Battle of Leyte . The guerrillas in Leyte were also very instrumental not only in the opposition against Japanese rule , but also in the safety and aid of the civilians living in the island . In the book *The Hidden Battle of Leyte : The Picture Diary of a Girl taken by the Japanese Military* by Remedios Felias ; a former comfort woman , revealed how the Filipino guerrillas saved the lives of many young girls raped or to @-@ be raped by the Japanese . In her vivid account of the Battle of Burauen , she recounts how the guerrillas managed to wipe out entire Japanese platoons off the various villages in the municipality , eventually saving the lives of many .

= = Moro resistance in Mindanao = =

While Moros rebels were still unsuccessfully at war with the United States , the Japanese invasion became the new perceived threat to their religion and culture . Some of those who opposed the occupation , and a fighter for Moro nationalism , were Sultan Jainal Abirin II of Sulu , the Sulu Sultanate of the Tausug , the Maranao Moros living around Lake Lanao and ruled by the Confederation of sultanates in Lanao led by Salipada Pendatun . Another anti @-@ Japanese Moro unit , the Moro @-@ Bolo Battalion led by Datu Gumbay Piang , consisted of about 20 @, @ 000 fighting men made up of both Muslims and Christians . As their name suggests , these fighters were known visibly by their large bolos and kris . The Japanese Major Hiramatsu , a propaganda officer , tried convincing Datu Busran Kalaw of Maranao to join their side as " brother Orientals " . Kalaw sent a response which goaded Major Hiramatsu into sending a force of Japanese soldiers to attack him , whom Kalaw butchered completely with no survivors . The infamous juramentados brigands , who were veterans in fighting the Filipinos , Spanish and the Americans , now focused their assaults on the Japanese , using their traditional hit and run as well as suicide charges . The Japanese were anxious of being attacked by the resistance , and they fought back by murdering innocent civilians and destroying properties .

During these times , the Moros had no allegiance with the Filipinos and the Americans , and they were largely unwelcoming of their assistance . In many cases , they would even indiscriminately attack them as well . The Moros also performed various cruelties during the war , such as thoughtlessly assaulting Japanese immigrants already living in Mindanao before the war . The vicious warlord Datu Busran Kalaw , was known for boasting that he " fought both the Americans , Filipinos and the Japanese " , which took the lives of both American and Filipino agents and the Japanese occupiers . Nonetheless , the Americans respected the success of the Moros during the war . An American POW Herbert Zincke recalled in his secret diary that the Japanese guarding him and other prisoners were scared of the Moro warriors and tried to keep as far away from them as possible to avoid getting attacked . The American Captain Edward Kraus recommended Moro fighters for a suggested plan to capture an airbase in Lake Lanao for eventually driving the Japanese occupiers out of the Philippines . The Moro Datu Pino sliced the ears off Japanese and cashed them in with the American guerilla leader Colonel Fertig at the exchange rate of a pair of ears for one bullet and 20 centavos .

= = Recognition = =

The Filipino guerrillas were successful in their resistance against the Japanese occupation . Of the 48 provinces in the Philippines , only 12 were in firm control of the Japanese . Many provinces in Mindanao were already liberated by the Moros way before the Americans came , as well as major

islands in the Visayas such as Cebu , Panay and Negros . After the war , the American and Philippines governments officially recognized some of the units and individuals who had fought against the Japanese . Recognition led to benefits as veterans but not all claims were upheld ; there were 277 recognized guerrilla units out of over a thousand claimed and 260 @, @ 715 individuals were recognized from nearly 1 @. @ 3 million claims . These beneficiaries are only available to the guerrillas and veterans who have served for the Commonwealth , and doesn 't include the brigand groups of the Huks and the Moros . Resistance leaders Wendell Fertig , Russell W. Volckmann and Donald Blackburn would incorporate what they 've learned fighting with the Filipino guerrillas in establishing what would become the U.S. Special Forces .

Back then in 1944 , only Filipino soldiers were denied from being given benefits by the GI Bill of Rights , which was supposed to give welfare to all those who have served in the United States Military irrespective of race , color or nationality . Over 66 countries were inducted into the bill but only the Philippines were not allowed , describing the Filipino soldiers as mere " Second Class Veterans " . Then in 1946 , the Rescission Act was enacted to mandate some aid to Filipino veterans , but only to those who had disabilities or serious injury . The only benefit the United States could only give at that time was the Immigrant Act , which made the naturalization of Filipinos who served in World War II into American citizens easier . It was not until in 1996 when the veterans started seeking for recognition from the United States . Representative Colleen Hanabusa submitted legislation to award Filipino Veterans with a Congressional Gold Medal , which became known as the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act . The Act was referred to the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on House Administration . The Philippine government has also enacted laws concerning the benefits of Filipino guerrillas .

World War II guerrilla movement in the Philippines has also garnered attention in Hollywood films such as Back to Bataan , Back Door to Hell , American Guerrilla in the Philippines , Cry of Battle and the more contemporary John Dahl film The Great Raid . Filipino and Japanese films have also paid homage to the valiancy of the Filipino guerrillas during the occupation , such as Yamashita : The Tiger 's Treasure , In the Bosom of the Enemy , Aishite Imasu 1941 : Mahal Kita and the critically acclaimed Japanese film Fires on the Plain . There have been various memorials and monuments erected to commemorate the actions of the Filipino guerrillas . Among such as the Filipino Heroes Memorial in Corregidor , the Luis Taruc Memorial in San Luis , Pampanga , the bronze statue of a Filipino guerrilla in Corregidor , Balantang National Shrine in Jaro , Iloilo City to commemorate the 6th Military District that liberated the provinces of Panay , Romblon , and Guimaras , and the NL Military Shrine and Park in La Union . The Libingan ng mga Bayani (translated to Cemetery of the Heroes) , which houses many historical Filipino national heroes , erected a special monument to pay respect to the numerous unnamed Filipino guerrillas who fought in the occupation .