

EVACUEE REPORTS:

HEISE, ERNEST H.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SECTION GENERAL STAFF

APO 500
4 August 1944



Philippine Evacuee Report #354

SUBJECT : PANAY
From : Ernest Harry HEISE

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Name : Ernest Harry Heise
Born : 24 October 1921 in Iloilo City, Panay, Philippine Islands.
Education : University of Philippines, Manila, 1939 to 1941, majoring in Mechanical Engineering.
Occupation : ~~Mechanic for Iloilo-Negros Air Express Company~~ during the summer vacations from 1936 to 1940.
In P.I. : All his life.

Interrogated by G-2, GHQ SWPA

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Heise, a Mestizo, though living in evacuation a big part of the time, served as a 3rd Lieutenant with the guerrilla army on Panay for approximately eight months. His criticisms were given in such a sincere manner as to deserve being considered reliable.

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CHRONOLOGY

- 8 Dec 41 - Studying in the University of the Philippines, Manila.
- 28 Dec 41 - Attached to USAFTE as a civilian employee of the Engineer Supply Service.
- 9 Apr 42 - Surrendered on Bataan.
- 11 Apr 42 - Escaped and was taken into the home of a Filipino family as a member of the family.
- May - June 42 - Lived in Manila.
- 16 Jul 42 - Arrived in Panay by sail boat from Batangas.
- Aug 42 - Aug 43 - Lived in evacuation in the mountains of Panay with his family.
- 3 Aug 43 - Joined guerrilla army and commissioned a 3rd Lieutenant, assigned to Air Base Squadron under Captain Edward L GRUNDT; duties consisted mostly of repairing signal corps equipment.
- 1 Jan 44 - Placed in charge of 20 men engaged in aerial spotting in NE Panay.
- 13 Apr 44 - Went to the northwest coast of Panay to meet the submarine.
- 1 Jun 44 - Assigned to temporary duty with Co "K", 1st Combat Battalion, under Captain Silverio CADIAO; participated in several engagements with the Japanese during the June campaign.
- 20 Jun 44 - Arrival of sub, observed the inefficient unloading of the supplies.
- 21 Jun 44 - Evacuated to Australia.

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Japanese Ammunition Dump In June 1942, the Japanese had an underground ammunition dump located in front of the San Juan Church on Pananglibanan Avenue, San Juan Heights, which is northeast of Manila.

Crates of 37mm, 75mm, and 105mm ammunition and boxes of Hercules dynamite were seen being stored in the dump.

This underground dump had previously been used by the U.S. Army.

Japanese Campaign About the first of June, 1944, the Japanese started a campaign in northwestern Panay which lasted for nearly three weeks.

Company K, 1st Combat Team, under Captain Silverio Cadio, engaged the enemy in two actions. In both instances the ambushes were prepared several days in advance and the Jap troops were permitted to come within a few yards of the guerrilla line before the guerrillas opened fire.

Besides 3 B.A.R.s, 3 Thompson sub-machine guns, 30 Enfield rifles, and 50 carbines which constituted the weapons of the guerrillas, hand grenades were effectively used.

S-2 reports, which were based on information received from the civilians captured and later released by the Japanese, showed that 120 Japanese were killed and approximately 50 injured in the two engagements.

Guerrilla Organization There are approximately 15,000 guerrillas in the organization on Panay, 8,000 of these are listed as combat troops, while the remaining 7,000 are listed as service troops.

Most of the service troops are in the army because it is the easiest way to get by. They spend their time loafing, gambling, and counting up how much money they are going to draw when the U.S. Army arrives.

The combat troops, on the whole, are inefficient because of the lack of leadership. There are some units worthy of being called combat troops and that is because they have competent, fearless leaders who are not afraid to fight. All that is needed to convert the other units into dependable combat troops is capable officers.

The Quartermaster Service is characterized by a lot of grafting, especially in eastern Panay. Many of the quartermaster officers are making a lot of money by selling much needed rice to nearby islands at exorbitant prices. In an effort to stop this practice, a Proclamation was issued by Governor CONFESOR, but it still goes on. Lt Col William GEPERLE, recently placed in command of the Quartermaster Service, is attempting to stop the grafting, but his efforts are having little effect because of slow communications and crooked subordinates.

The Auditors are responsible for the stealing and grafting which is taking place because of the lax and inefficient manner in which they do their job. This inefficiency is especially noticed in the accounts of the Intelligence Officers and agents. No attempt is made to check on the large sums of money turned over to these men.

Because of the "compadre" system, about 50% of the officers are wholly incapable of performing their duties. A large percent of them are in the army for what they can get out of it. Those who are capable of performing their duties are unable to accomplish a great deal because of the inefficiency of the others. This state of affairs has necessarily resulted in the organization being loosely operated and each unit more or less able to do what ever its commanding officer desires.

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The Intelligence Service has been able to accomplish a great deal because of the cooperation of the civilians. The people hate the Japanese so much that they are willing to run great personal risks to advise the guerrillas of the activities of the Japanese.

Aerial Observation Net Heise said that from January to April, 1944, he was in charge of 20 aerial "spotters" stationed along the northeast coast of Panay.

These men had been trained by Captain Grundt and were familiar with the different types of Japanese planes. All of them had been mechanics with the Iloilo-Negros Air Express Company. They were stationed in positions so as to eliminate duplication in the observation of planes.

Over 95% of the enemy air traffic passed over the area covered by this net. During this period, 384 planes in January, 521 planes in February, and 502 planes in March were observed. 80% of the planes were going in a southeasterly direction.

Reports were sent to District Headquarters by runners twice a month. Although the Signal Corps had a radio in this area, it was not used in transmitting the reports.

Equipment Requirements Heise said that the guerrillas were in dire need of heavier weapons, such as, trench mortars, rifle grenades, light artillery, .50 calibre Browning machine guns, and, if possible, bazookas. The reason given was that the Japanese garrisons are usually in concrete buildings which will stop anything the guerrillas presently have.

Clothing is badly needed by the enlisted men. The clothing which has been received to date has been kept by the officers. An effort should be made to see that some of it is given to the enlisted men.

LT COL WILLIAM GEMPERLE : He is the best and most conscientious officer on Panay. He is doing his best to remedy the many evils which presently exist in the organization but is handicapped by lack of competent subordinates.

LT COL PEDRO SERRAN : CO of 2nd Combat Team. He is not qualified for the position he holds. The high rank that he has has gone to his head and has made him unpopular with the men.

CAPTAIN EDWARD L GUNDT : He is energetic, capable, and honest. He does not get along too well with some of the officers because he has let them know that he disapproves of their actions. He wanted to come out on the last submarine but was sent to find more sail boats and did not return in time to contact the sub.

CAPTAIN SILVERIO CADIO : CO of Co "K", 1st Combat Team. He is one of the most capable and fearless officers on the Island. He personally leads his troops in combat.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL : CO of 65th Combat Team. He is one of the better officers.

LT F ESTORES : He is in Co "K", 1st Combat Team. He is a real fighter and is well liked by his men.

PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS : American officers, especially auditors and combat officers, are badly needed. In order for them to accomplish their purpose, it would be necessary to place about half of the present officers on an inactive status. By so doing, the remaining officers would probably give their cooperation.

General Conditions There is an acute shortage of the essential things of life, but there is no doubt but that the people will be able to get by for several more months. In Northeastern Panay, the morale of the people is low even though there is plenty of food in this area. This situation has

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been brought about due to Japanese punitive campaigns without any opposition on the part of the guerrillas.

In northwestern Panay, even though the people have suffered a great deal due to food shortage, morale is high because of the determined fighting of the guerrillas against the Japanese.

Generally speaking, the civilians are receiving better treatment from the guerrillas than formerly. This has resulted in the people being more desirous to cooperate with the army. This improved treatment has been brought about as a result of the activities of Governor Confesor and the municipal governments.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT : In recent months strenuous efforts have been made by the civil officials to protect the interests of the people. There has been some resentment on the part of the army towards the civil government as a result of the actions of the civil government. In addition to the foregoing, the government is attempting to collect taxes, handles the printing and issuing of money, collects food and supplies for the army, discourages the people from cooperating with the Japanese, and assists the army where ever possible.

GOVERNOR CONFESOR : He is highly respected by the people. ~~He has been doing all within his power to protect the people from abusing the people.~~ This has resulted in some hard feelings between him and the army.

ROXAS : He is presently the most popular figure in the Islands. His popularity with the people on Panay is partly due to the fact that he is from Panay.

OSMENA : He is also a Visayan and is popular in Panay.

INDEPENDENCE : A majority of the people do not want to break away from the United States. Only those who are politically ambitious are in favor of independence. The rest of the people do not trust their own politicians.



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