

EVACUEE REPORTS:

OSSORIO, GEORGE H.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SECTION GENERAL STAFF

AP0 500
3 August 44

Philippine Evacuee Report #350

Subject : NEGROS
From : George H OSSORIO

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Name : George H Ossorio
Born : 23 April 1900, ~~Home, Kansas, United States~~
Education : Louisiana State University, 1922-26,
specializing in Sugar Technology
Occupation : Chief Engineer for the North Negros Sugar
Company, Manapla, Negros Occidental,
PI, from 1929 to 1942
Service : With guerrilla forces in Negros, Dec 42
to June 44. Held rank of Major at time
of evacuation.
Assignment : Engineering Corps and Liaison Officer
at District Headquarters
In PI : Since 1916 except for period from 1921 to
1929 which was spent in the United States

Interrogated by G-2 GHQ SWPA

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Mr Ossorio apparently was able to get along with the Filipino people, especially the officers and men of the guerrilla army, much better than most other American evacuees. As a result of this, which was undoubtedly helped by his being half Spanish, he was able to advance from 1st Lieutenant to a Major and was able to gain the confidence of several of the high ranking officers. Because of his education, his long association with and intimate knowledge of the Filipinos, it is believed that the information submitted by him is reliable.

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1929-42 - Chief Engineer for North Negros Sugar Company at Manapla, Negros Occidental.
- Apr 42 - Evacuated with family into the mountains near Manapla.
- Apr-Dec 42 - Lived in evacuation with his family near Manapla.
- Sept 42 - Guerrilla groups bordering on banditry were formed.
- Dec 42 - Guerrillas were organized under Major Fidel SOLIVEN.
- 15 Dec 42 - Joined Major Soliven's forces in the Cadiz-Manapla area as a 1st Lieutenant.
- Jan-Oct 43 - Served in Sub-Sector "G" in the headquarters as Liaison Officer.



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Apr 43 - Promoted to Captain by Colonel ABCEDE.
15 Oct 43 - Promoted to Major.
1 Nov 43 - Transferred to Col Abcede's District Headquarters.
Nov 43-Jun 44 - Station at District Headquarters as Liaison Officer and was closely associated with Col Abcede.
31 May 44 - Jap drive on southern coast of Negros.
21 June 44 - Evacuated.

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JAPANESE STRENGTH : It is believed that there are approximately 2800 Japanese soldiers stationed on Negros. In addition to the larger garrisons in Bacolod, Dumaguete, Binalbagan and Fabrica, there are small garrisons in several other towns, including Siaton, Sipalay, La Carlota, San Carlos, Hinigaran, and Isabella.

TRANSPORTATION : In addition to the extensive use of launches and barges in the movement of supplies use the paved highway which extends from Dumaguete along the northern coastline of Negros to Bacolod and south to Kabankalan. Most of the bridges on this highway are of concrete and steel structure and the guerrillas have been unable to hamper or hinder the use of same by the Japanese.

Japanese Penetrations On 31 May 1944, the Japanese landed an estimated 1500 troops on the southern coast of Negros. Simultaneous landings were made at several points between Siaplay and Tolong.

During the drive, which lasted until 3 July 1944, the Japanese killed one guerrilla soldier, many men, women and children. The usual rapings, bayonetings, and other forms of atrocities occurred.

It was reported that two transports and four fast launches were first sighted at about six o'clock in the morning. The first landing was made about eight o'clock. Just prior to the landing, two old seaplanes appeared and were used for reconnaissance and strafing.

The 7th Combat Battalion, under Major TORRES, was charged with the duty of opposing the enemy. Only one company did any actual fighting. It was later reported that about 60 Japs were killed. It was not known why the other companies failed to engage the enemy.

After the first bit of fighting which occurred within a few hours after the landing, no effort was made to repulse the enemy. The guerrillas retreated into the mountains. The Japanese burned every Command Post except the one which belonged to the company that had returned the fire of the Japs and had not retreated at first.

While most of the records and supplies were moved into the mountains for safe keeping, reports indicated that several thousand rounds of ammunition were lost at one Command Post as well as some of the records. It was not known just which records were lost and which ones had been burned.

During this same period, the Japanese also conducted campaigns in the Kabankalan area and against Colonel MATA's Headquarters in Central Negros. It was reported that these punitive campaigns resulted in the destruction of food crops, shooting of all animals, and the killing of civilians found in the so called "Bandit Zone".

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Guerrilla Organization

The 72nd Division has approximately 12,000 enlisted men and 1,000 officers.

During the past few months the organization has been greatly improved. Colonel Abcede has been able to overcome most of the opposition and eliminate most of the dissension which formerly existed.

Training schools for both officers and non-commissioned officers have been instituted. At the schools, which last for six weeks, such subjects as discipline, manual of arms, drilling, combat tactics, court martial procedure, sanitation, and defense against chemical warfare are taught. Officers who are best qualified in the various subjects are used as instructors.

The best organized branch of the guerrilla army is the intelligence service under Major REYES, the G-2 of District Headquarters. He picks his own men, trains them thoroughly on the duties they are to perform, and is very exacting in demanding regular reports from them. He has some of his men planted in most, if not all, of the Japanese occupied towns. In addition to these agents, he also has civilians in the towns who, in some instances, these sources of information have been able to advise the guerrillas of planned future operations of the Japanese.

Major Reyes has developed a well organized coast watcher system with observation posts located at strategic points along the coast. Some of the observations are flashed to Headquarters by radio while others are sent by couriers.

In an effort to prevent the Japanese from sending their agents into the guerrilla occupied territory, a pass system has been inaugurated and is strictly enforced. It applies to the civilians as well as the army. In order to move from one sector to another or from one area to another, it is necessary to have a pass which sets out sufficient information to show the purpose of the trip.

FOOD : The food situation for the guerrilla forces is bad, but there is no danger of starvation. In some areas, conditions are better than in others. In most areas either corn or rice is available in addition to camotes, bananas, papayas, and some fish. In order to help relieve the food situation, Colonel Abcede ordered each unit to plant food crops in its area. When the crops are harvested toward the latter part of July, the food situation will be much better.

COLONEL ABCEDE : A good man, honest and sincere, has plenty of initiative, but is slightly anti-American. He wants to get all of the credit for any action on Negros without the help of U.S. personnel.

COLONEL AUSEJO : Strongly pro-American. Though he is a good man and well liked by everyone, there is a certain amount of rivalry between him and Colonel Abcede.

MAJOR SEFERINO GALVEZ : Formerly with the Philippine Army, he surrendered and served with the Japanese Constabulary until he escaped and joined the guerrillas in November 1943. Besides being a brilliant man, he is a good fighter. He was Commandant of the District Service School. Recently, he was given command of the Provisional 73rd Division which is now being organized.

MAJOR RODOLFO REYES : An attorney serving as the G-2. Though he is anti-white and is desirous of getting all the white people off Negros, he is doing a good job.

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MAJOR E R TORRES : CO of 7th Combat Bn. He is regarded as a good man though there have been times when he has had his troops retreat when some resistance would probably have saved the lives of many civilians.

CAPTAIN "RAFAEL" GEBUSSION : Now assigned to the G-3 section under Lt Col Ausejo. He is responsible for the execution of an estimated 75 innocent people in the Kabanalan area during the early days of guerrilla warfare in 1942. Reasons for the executions range from plain personal grudges to stealing the victim's money and jewelry. Since the organization of the guerrillas he has been denied the command of a unit in order to avoid the killing of any more people.

SGT VILLANUEVA : Formerly with the guerrillas. Acted as the guide in the Japanese raid on the 31st of May 1944. He knew where every CP was and led the Japs to them.

Personnel Requirements The high ranking officers on Negros do not want Americans. Because of the inferiority complex which characterizes the Filipino, a sincere desire exists to handle the situation without any outside help. They believe that by running the show by themselves they will become heroes in the eyes of the world when it becomes known what they have done.

Secondarily, American officers are not wanted because they realize that their present organization is inefficiently operated, and they do not want General Headquarters to find out the truth.

Thirdly, they realize that American officers would quickly discover that most of the Filipinos are in the army for the personal aggrandizement which accrue to them.

Colonel Ausejo is the only high ranking officer who would sincerely welcome some competent American officers. On different occasions he has told Mr Ossorio that he realizes that only American officers can straighten out the organization and mold it into an effective fighting unit.

The enlisted men would welcome good combat officers and non-commissioned officers to train and lead them against the enemy. The soldiers could be developed into effective and dependable fighters if they only had someone to lead them against the enemy, rather than blazing the trail in retreat into the mountains.

General Conditions Because of the scarcity of commodities and because of the presence of entirely too much money, prices have gone sky high. This has resulted in an undue hardship on the civilians.

The morale of the civilians is high because of the recent victories in the SWPA and in the Central Pacific. Morale has been raised considerably because of the supplies received from Australia.

While malaria is prevalent, health conditions are not as bad as might be expected. The medicines received from Headquarters have done a world of good, doing as much to raise civilian morale as in combatting diseases.

The attitude of the people is best reflected by observing that in recent months the value of the emergency money has risen to such an extent that it is worth more now than the Japanese money. In some areas the Japanese money is not acceptable at all.

Propaganda is not as important now as it formerly was. The programs are listened to attentively, and the news spreads rapidly throughout the free areas as well as into the occupied towns. The Japanese have just about abandoned any hope of converting the Filipinos by propaganda and the "attractive" policy, and are now resorting to terror tactics.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT : Governor ALFREDO MONTELIBANO has been a lot of help to the Army. The municipalities in the free areas have governmental agencies which maintain peace and order, dispose of civil cases, encourage the people to plant more crops, collect some taxes, either in cash or a percent of the crops, and attempt to prevent the sale and transportation of commodities to the Japanese occupied areas.

PROPERTY DAMAGE CLAIMS : Recently, Governor Montelibano issued an order directing the people to prepare and file claims for property destroyed by either Japanese or the guerrillas. The people have been given the impression that the United States Government will make good these losses. This has resulted in the people encouraging the army to destroy their property. False claims, as well as highly exorbitant claims, are being filed.

ALFREDO MONTELIBANO : Governor of Free Negros. A good, honest man. He was wealthy before the war. Has been a lot of help to the army though there have been some petty disputes between the army and the government.

TRANQUILINO VALDERRAMA : The owner of the Valderrama Lumber Mill located at Victorias. His mill was burned by the guerrillas to keep it from falling into enemy hands. Though it was probably worth half a million pesos, he has filed a claim for eleven million pesos.

GIRARDO IGOA : Formerly a planter living in Manapla. Was shot by a band of guerrillas in August 1942. His wife and two children were taken to sea and drowned. The name of the leader of the guerrillas is unknown, but Mr Ossorio strongly suspects that Major Fidel SOLIVEN, Jr and Captain Charles H SMITH know about these murders, judging by the way they attempted to keep the facts from becoming known.

FIDEL SOLIVEN, JR : Formerly Chief of Police of Bacolod before being inducted into the army as a Major.

CHARLES H SMITH : Captain in the army. Prior to the war he was branch manager of the International Harvester Company in Bacolod.

WILLIAM "HABLUTZEL" : Swiss nationality living in Bacolod. He is about 50 years old and has been a resident of Bacolod for over 30 years. He is honest and trustworthy. Besides being the former manager of Warner Barnes & Company, he owned two sugar cane plantations. He is regarded as the best informed person on Negros as a whole.

A ARKHANGELSKY : A Russian, but is believed to be a naturalized Filipino. He has lived in Manapla for over 30 years. Considered to be reliable and trustworthy.

JOSE PEREZ : An attorney living in Kabankalan. He is Spanish and was educated in the United States. Considered reliable.

JUAN MARTINEZ GODENEZ : A Spaniard living in Bacolod. Suspected of being pro-Jap but in reality is pro-American. He has, at risk of his own life, helped American prisoners in Bacolod.

E TAYCO : A reliable Spaniard living in Kabankalan.

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