

EVACUEE REPORTS:

PEREZ, MUNERTO Z.

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18 January 1945

**REFERENCE:** Interview with Sgt. Narciso Z. Peron, formerly of the Medical Corps, 71st Division, Philippine Army.

1. Subject, with his common-law wife, Vicenta Hernandez, and two-year-old child, Susan, left Manila on 6 October 1944. He came to Tacloban, Leyte, on 16 January 1945 to report for duty with USARPF. Subject was in Manila during the initial Allied air attacks on enemy installations and airfields in the Manila area.

2. Subject stated that the residents of Manila, at the time of his departure, were being encouraged by the puppet government to evacuate the city. He obtained a traveler's permit from the Bureau of Public Welfare. He and his family travelled from Manila to Lucena, Taybas, 1<sup>st</sup> train, thence by sailboat to Gigantes Island. The entire train, with the exception of one baggage car reserved for civilian passengers, was loaded with Japanese soldiers and military supplies. The fare on the sailboat was 200 Japanese pesos per person.

3. Their destination was Cebu but, upon their arrival at Gigantes Island, had to change plans because of the risk involved. Shortly after their arrival at Gigantes Island on or about 18 October 1944, Allied planes attacked enemy shipping in that area. Subject said that three motor boats were sunk. He met Lt. Fred Stangl, Signal Corps, U. S. Army, a member of the Ponce guerrilla organization, who took him to Carlos, Iloilo Province, where subject served in the guerrillas' medical corps.

4. Subject stated that such damage was done in Manila by the Allied raids early in September 1944. Binondo Church was destroyed, he stated. It was reported that the church had been used by the enemy to store ammunition. The bombing of the church, he added, caused no ill-feeling among the residents of the city, although the Japs pointed to the incident as an instance of American 'barbarism'. Subject heard that considerable damage was done in the port area but had no opportunity to see it himself. During one raid on the city, subject was in the Quiapo district. The attacking aircraft, he said, dropped bombs and strafed the area, causing some civilian casualties. Following the attack, he saw bullet holes in the walls of several buildings. There are hardly any air-raid shelters for civilians in Manila, and no civilians are allowed on the streets during air attacks.

5. When subject left Manila, he heard rumors to the effect that the Japs were preparing to commmence San Sebastian and Quiapo churches. A large number of Jap troops were billeted in large buildings of Plaza Santa Cruz, including the Tivoli and Oro theaters.



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6. subject heard news programs from Allied radio stations through a short-wave receiver at the home of Antonio Capilitan, an attorney, who, according to him, is presently in Tacloban. He also saw candy wrappings, marked "I shall return--anytime," in various parts of the city.

7. Prior to the first raid, he often walked by the internment camp at Santo Tomas University. The internees were permitted to receive packages of food and clothing from friends and relatives. After the first Allied raid on Manila, the university area was closed to traffic. Subject often saw American prisoners on hard labor details in different parts of the city. The prisoners were dressed in rags and few had leather shoes. Some wore wooden slippers. He did not know whether the prisoners were civilians or members of the armed forces.

8. The high cost of living forced many people to leave Manila. Inflation and the shortage of food resulted in the rise of the price of husked rice to five thousand (P5,000.00) Japanese pesos. Most of the evacuees went to the rice regions in the Central Plain, north of Manila.

9. Subject was born in Ormoc, Leyte, on 11 May 1915. He attended elementary school in Mandawa, Cebu City, Cebu Province; high school in Iloilo City, Iloilo Province, and took a pre-medical course at San Carlos College, Cebu City. He was studying medicine at Ateneo College of Medicine and Surgery in Manila at the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941. He had completed two years of ROTC, and was called into service on or about 15 December 1941.

10. He was assigned to the medical unit of the 2nd Regular Division, Philippine Army, then in Tagaytay, Cavite Province. The unit later moved to Batasan, where subject served until the surrender on 9 April 1942. Subject, while marching in a prisoner-of-war column bound for Camp O'Donnell, Tarlac Province, escaped in San Fernando, Pampanga Province. Posing as a civilian, he went to Manila after spending one month in Pampanga. Subject returned to Ateneo College of Medicine and Surgery and continued his studies until his departure for the Visayan Islands.

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