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AIRFIELDS, CONSTRUCTION OF

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601 Lamont
San Antonio, Texas
14 August 1947

SUBJECT: Construction of Air Fields on Bataan, P.I.

TO: Commanding General
Philippines Ryukyus Command
APO 707, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California
Attention: Chief of Claims Service

1. Receipt of your letter 22 July 1947 requesting information on the construction of Orani and other air fields on Bataan, P.I., during the period 25 November 1941 to 2 January 1942, is acknowledged. I was the Finance Officer, Fort Stotsenburg, Pampanga, P.I., during part of the period stated; having evacuated that station under orders on 25 December 1941 to Manila, P.I., thence to Corregidor and Bataan on the night of 29 December 1941 where I functioned as Finance Officer, Luzon Forces up to the night of 7 April 1942 when I was ordered to Corregidor, P.I.
2. The mechanics of such construction came under the supervision of the Constructing Quartermaster or Corps of Engineers. I, as Finance Officer, was mostly concerned with having a legal voucher presented, seeing that it was properly audited and furnishing the money.
3. I have a recollection that a temporary air field was being constructed at Orani. I do not remember handling a voucher covering its construction. I do remember that an air field was being constructed a few miles north of Orani on the property of one of the sugar plantations. Lt. Oppenheimer was one of its supervising officers and I furnished him money as a Class B Agent on a completed voucher on the night of 24 December 1941 in the Walled City, he having assisted my office in evacuating to Manila. I had previously made a trip to Manila in order to furnish him the large amount of change he needed to make the pay roll payment. It was not large in total but involved numerous small accounts. I remember he stated he was expecting difficulty in making the payments because of the precarious situation and he feared most of the laborers had taken off because of the small amounts due them. The scale of wages for common labor I believe at that time was from 75 centavos to a peso fifty per day and about three pesos for foremen. This could be the voucher referred to in your letter.

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Capt., Cav.

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4. The air fields at Balanga and Cabcabin were constructed, I believe, by the Corps of Engineers under the supervision of a Captain McPherson whose office was located at little Baguio for convenience and emergencies. I often advanced him funds and change on an agency account he had established with Colonel J. R. Vance, Finance Officer, U. S. Army on Corregidor. The scale of wages for such labor was approximately the same as stated. As I remember in about March 1942 a general order was issued establishing a scale of wages to be paid for civilian help in Bataan. I think this new schedule was slightly higher than before depending on the class of work performed. This situation developed about the time so many Pambusco bus drivers were seeking payment for wages due them under contract, but, I could never find a copy of the contract or find an officer that could properly certify to a voucher. I think they were finally paid by the Quartermaster, Captain Masterson, Class B Agent for Colonel J. R. Vance, Finance Officer, U. S. Army, Corregidor.

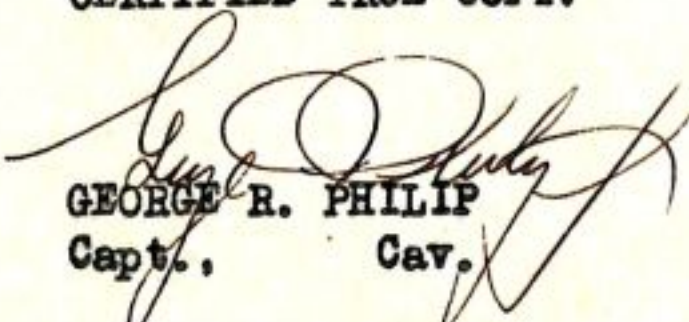
5. For your information all of my accounts with the exception of my November 1941 vouchers were safely returned to the States on a submarine about 2 May 1942 and are a matter of record with the General Accounting Office, Washington 25, D.C., or the Retained Accounts Division, Army Finance Center, OCF, 4300 Goodfellow Boulevard, St. Louis 20, Missouri. All vouchers paid by me after 1 January 1942 are now included in the accounts of Colonel J. R. Vance and are on file in Washington, D.C.

6. To the best of my knowledge and belief, there were very few unpaid pay rolls for civilian labor performed between the outbreak of war and the surrender of Corregidor. Unquestionably there are a number of civilians who were not paid because of absence from the pay table. These men were red-lined on the payrolls, which are now on file in the General Accounting Office in my or Colonel Vance's accounts. There are very few lost vouchers for the period in question.

7. For your further information I have shown this letter to Colonel J. R. Vance, Finance Officer, US Army, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, formerly on Corregidor, who concurs in my statements.

/s/ John E. Brinkmeyer
/t/ JOHN E. BRINKMEYER
Lt. Colonel, F. D.

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GEORGE R. PHILIP
Capt., Cav.

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Lyons, Colorado

May 19th, 1947

Captain Benjamin J. Pulley
Hdqs. Claim Service, Philrycom
Office of the Chief of Claims Service
APO 707
Manila, P. I.

Dear Sir:

Received your letter of April 2, 1947 which was addressed to Wantagh, L. I., N. Y., forwarded to Boulder, Colorado and finally reached me at Lyons, Colorado.

I regret to say that I cannot help you much because I was not connected with airfield construction during 1941-1942 Philippine campaign, which was done mostly by aviation battalions and 803 Engineers under supervision of Army officers.

Wendell
Stuckney was Dept Engr.

Before answering your letter I spoke to Colonel Wendell Fertig, who was Dept. Engineer of U.S.E.D. on Bataan and in direct or indirect charge of most military constructions on Bataan. At that time Colonel Fertig said that most airfields you are concerned with were under close Jap attack and construction period on those fields negligible on any of them - not over a week or a few days. On all army constructions on Bataan, as I remember, wages to natives were paid by Army every week complete, except to those who took to hills during every small air raid never to return - or returned later only to get some chow or collect his wages. The native labor problem on Bataan at that time was very complicated and delicate and all native labor mostly worthless.

Colonel Fertig can give you more information about the construction of airfields you are interested in, and he promised to answer your direct inquiry to him.

His address is as follows:

Wendell W. Fertig, Colonel, C.E.
Hdqs. R.O.T.C.
Colorado School of Mines
Golden, Colorado

Sincerely yours,

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

George R. Philip, Jr.
GEORGE R. PHILIP, JR.
Capt., Cav.

/s/
/t/

Edward Matsen
EDWARD MATSEN

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HEADQUARTERS
AIR PROVING GROUND COMMAND
Eglin Field, Florida

1 May 1947

Please address
reply to:
COMMANDING GENERAL
AIR PROVING GROUND
COMMAND, EGLIN FIELD,
FLORIDA
ATTN:

Headquarters Philippines-Ryukyus Command
Office of the Chief of Claims
APO 707, San Francisco, California

Attention: Captain Benjamin J. Pulley

Dear Captain Pulley:

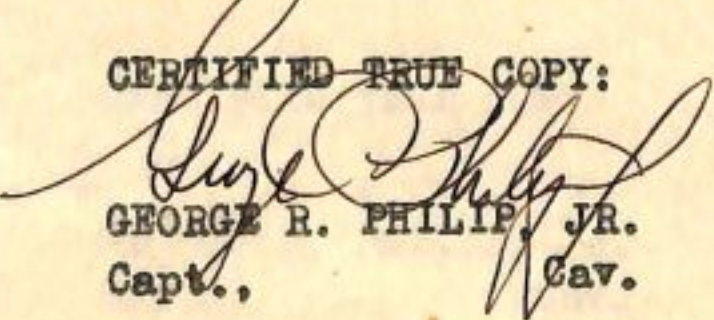
This is in answer to your letter of April 11 requesting information of airfield construction by the 803rd. Engineer Battalion at the outbreak of the war. The 803rd consisted of four companies: headquarters company, companies A, B, and C, each of which were located in separate areas and worked independently of one another. The 803rd. arrived in Manila on 23 October 1941 and proceeded immediately to Clark Field. About two weeks later company A moved to O'Donnel Field near Tarlac and commenced work on three runways which work continued until approximately 25 December 1941. On 25 December, company A moved to Dinalupijan where they remained for approximately one week on the Airstrip there. Thence company A took over work on one of the airfields at Pilar and eventually about the middle of January or possibly sooner, company A moved to the Marivales-Bagac road at approximately kilometer post 202 where they remained until they went to Corregidor to work on the runway called Kindley Field.

Company B, at the same time that company A went to O'Donnel proceeded to Del Carmen near Florida Blanca and remained there working on a three runway airdrome until about 28 December, then moved to Orani, thence to Pilar and sometime later in January they moved to the Little Baguio area near kilometer post 172 where they were engaged in road repairs until sometime in March when they also took over Marivales airfield.

Company C at the start of the war was at Nichols field and had been there for four or five months as the 809th Engineer company.

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They were incorporated into the 803rd on the 1st of December 1941 as company C. Company C moved from Nichols field to Bacan field some time around the 25th of December where they remained until 9 April. Sometime in February they assumed the responsibility for maintenance of Cabcaban field after the field had been constructed by the Philippine Department Engineer organization.

Headquarters company was located at Clark Field at the beginning of the war but was not engaged in any airfield work until after the 7th of December 1941 when their work was confined to repair and maintenance of Clark Field, Headquarters company was not engaged in any of the subsequent air field construction except jointly with one of the other companies.

In addition to the work described above a few individuals (military 803rd.) worked at various times with the Philippine Department Engineer supervising various small jobs of air field construction, but I have no definite information as to locations or names of personnel.

Here are the names of a few key officer personnel who can give you more specific information as to air field construction:

Company A - Robert D. Montgomery (Captain and former platoon commander)
152 Broadway
Milton, Pa.

Walter H. Farrell (1st Lt. and platoon commander)
87 North Avenue
Weston, Mass.

Company B - Major William B. Thomas (At present on active duty at Fort Belvoir, Virginia according to the most recent information I have).
c/o Mrs. J. B. Woodall
308 S. Green Street
Huntsville, Alabama

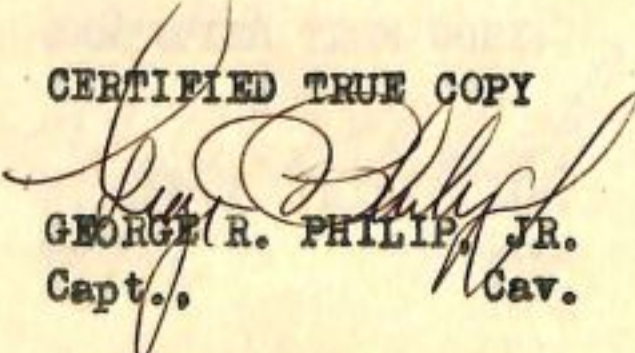
Company C - Major Robert B. Chandler (RA, Patient at Fitzsimmons General Hospital).

Capt. Fleuger or possibly Pfleeger (platoon commander - now stationed at Geiger Field, Washington).

Of the above, Major Thomas was not actually a member of Company B but he was with company B continuously during the entire period. No other company B officers are now alive.

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My own personal assignment in the 803rd. was Battalion Adjutant and Battalion Executive Officer until 6 April and until that time I was not personally engaged in any direct relations with native labor. On April 6, I was sent to Corregidor as Commanding Officer of company A, and during the succeeding one month there was little or no air field work done and none with native labor. A civilian, U. S. Engineer Department employee, Mr. Roy Allen had a survey crew of two or three natives whose names I do not recall; they were of course on duty status during that time. Mr. Allen, aged about 70 years, is I believe, still residing in the Philippines if still living. I last saw him in Bilibid about 1st of December 1944, when he was moved from there to Fort McKinley where he probably remained until the liberation of Luzon.

One general comment that I might make is that upto December 7 all native labor was paid up until the last completed pay period which would leave only a few days unaccounted for at that time. Upon the outbreak of the war numerous natives "resigned" for various reasons and in Bataan the remaining natives and volunteers were organized into labor organizations and, for the most part, worked on road construction and repair under the general supervision of the Philippine Department Engineer. Possibly Colonel Stickney, now retired, and living at Shore Acres, Cambridge, Maryland could give you some additional information. Col. Wendell Fertig of guerrilla fame was also indirectly concerned with utilizing this native labor as was Lt. Col. Harry O. Fisher, now regular army, and I believe at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Since all of the above information is so general, I am omitting the certificate you requested as I believe it will be necessary for you to contact each one of the above individuals in order to thoroughly research this entire matter.

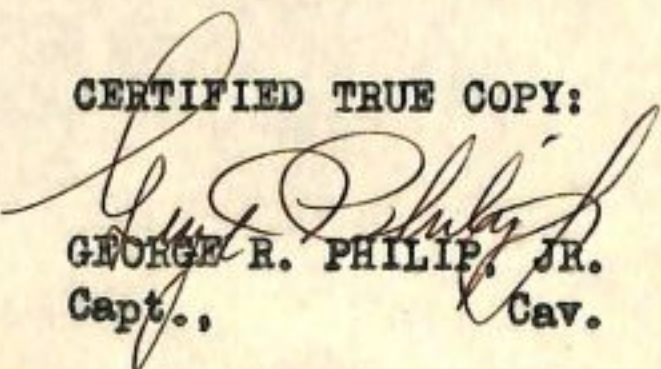
Very truly yours,

/s/
/t/

James D. Richardson
JAMES D. RICHARDSON
Major, C. E.

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Capt., Cav.

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RECOVERED PERSONNEL RECORDS BRANCH MEMORANDUMS

ADM-65

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