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Folder on  
Mindoro Procurement  
CLAIMS

Note! Info. on wage claims to be found in  
folder in wage section, Inv. Section, ADJ. DIV.

4th M.D.

Some handwritten and  
by affidavit Proc

29/6/9

MINDORO PRO. CLAIMS

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Note:

In claim of Crispina Villaflores, H-6-10668  
for alleged commandeering for Comdr' Rowe -

Receipt signed by Mr David Flores

dated Sept 5, 1944, There appears an  
ASN given only after liberation. It  
definitely proves The receipts signed by  
This man are not of sufficient weight  
to justify any award.

Area - Mamburao, Mindoro

Whewel

I. O. R. ON PROCUREMENT CLAIMS ONLY OF LT COMDR  
ROWE'S UNIT ON MINDORO

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Filed with this office are at least 114 claims of a similar nature from the island of Mindoro. The unit involved in these cases is the intelligence organization set up by SWPA under Lt. Commander George F. Rowe (alias Lt. Comdr. Nicholson) sometime in July of 1944. The purpose of the unit was to establish a radio-intelligence net on Mindoro and surrounding islands (Ambil, Lubang, etc.).

This group of claims is similar in circumstances and preparation. They are mostly for an amount less than ₱1,000.00 but more than ₱300.00. The majority have receipts on pieces of lined pad paper written with pencil. Seventy of these cases are supported by the procuring agent, David C. Flores, and forty-one are supported by a procuring agent Florente A. Trias. There are a very few cases without receipts which mention several other agents as having procured, such as, Lt. Pedro Natura, Sgts de los Santos and Jerry Berg, and a Lt. Jeron. These latter, however, are only mentioned as procuring but there is no certificate, statement, nor any receipts signed by them in the files. No information is available on any of the above personnel with the <sup>EXCEPTION</sup> receipts of Florente Trias. All the claims contain the same mimeographed and typed statements and affidavits of two witnesses and neighbors with only the blank lines filled in differently. The type of items taken is also very similar, viz, there is always several heads of large cattle, mongos, rice, a few pigs, chickens, camotes, and bananas. There is usually no evidence of ownership or capacity in the files other than the usual mimeographed affidavits of neighbors that claimant's house was looted and documentary evidence of ownership of large animals was lost. It is impossible to believe that these affidavits fit all cases by just changing the names in the blank spaces provided.


Florente Trias, who signs a good many of the receipts, was a member of Major Ruffy's guerrillas (a recognized unit) ~~and~~, as were other guerrillas, used by Rowe in his intelligence unit. He was a supply agent, intelligence agent, and coast watcher. His work was considered excellent by Rowe during the occupation period, but apparently, he has "entered a new line of endeavor" recently. It is my opinion, formed from an interview with Rowe on September 7, 1949 and from a letter of Ricardo Paras to the Wage Claims Section (enclosed below) that Trias has an interest and is behind all these procurement claims.

It is a fact that until now, as long as I have investigated claims I have never come upon any Mindoro procurement claims involving the unit of G. F. Rowe.

The undersigned and Mr. S. Cayton of the Investigation Section interviewed George F. Rowe at his office on September 7, 1949.

Mr. Rowe would not support these claims. In fact, he considered them without merit (sample cases were shown to him). It was further disclosed that the unit did not issue receipts, that all obligations were paid either during the occupation or after the liberation days when ₱30,000.00 was taken to Mindoro by one of his agents, Jerry Berg, to pay those "odds and ends" still not settled. Cash left over after payments were made was about ₱14,000.00. An interesting sidelight was that when paying for cattle, particularly everyone said that his carabao was large. Rowe, knowing that all the cattle taken were not the large sized ones, decided to stop that practice, and, having photographic equipment with him, made it a point to photograph cattle taken to settle disputes on cattle size when he came to pay for them.

In summary, it is therefore definite, as we have our information from the unit commander himself, that no receipts were issued on procurements; no outstanding obligation exists; all procurements were paid; therefore, all procurement claims arising out of the SWPA Detachment of Lt. Comdr George F. Rowe should be considered as fraudulent and without merit.

  
RICHARD KYLE  
Claims Examiner

NOTE: George F. Rowe has requested that the fact that he has been interviewed, and has not supported these claims or that he has given any information about these cases be kept confidential by this office for reasons best known to himself.

  
R. K.

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*Copied from originals in folders on Mindoro Claims  
in possession of Wage Section, C/S - R.K.*

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Abra de Ilog, Mindoro  
June 22, 1949

The Director  
Wage Claim Service  
Fort McKinley, Rizal

S i r:

I have the honor to request information as to whether my wage claim and those of four others, for services rendered to the Intelligence Party, SWPA, under Commander Geo. F. Rowe, USNR, which I left personally to Florante Tria, an employee of the RPD of the PHILCOM, last September, 1948, have already been filed by him with that office.

When I met him recently, and inquired into the status of the said wage claims he told me he had already filed them.

In view of the foregoing, I wish to know if it is true that the claims in question are already on file in that office, and if on the contrary, to reconsider my claims which I will file very soon.

Immediate action on this matter is respectfully requested.

Very respectfully,

s/ Ricardo Paras  
t/ RICARDO PARAS

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Headquarters  
Adjutant General Records Depository  
Office of the Chief Adjustment Division  
APO 900.

Attention: Wage Section

Sir:

Recently, a number of claims for wages for recruiting and handling Mangyan labor performing necessary labor for my special intelligence party in Mindoro during the Japanese occupation, were filed in your office. These claims were certified by Mr. Francisco M. Isla and were from persons residing in Abra de Ilog, Mindoro.

To give you a better understanding of the nature of these claims, what follows are pertinent facts surrounding the employment of these claimants.

I arrived in Mindoro from Australia by submarine on July 9th, 1944 with a party of twenty men and eleven tons of supplies. After a short stay near Sablayan and a few engagements with Japanese forces I moved my main headquarters to a place near Abra de Ilog. The buildings of the main camps at this point were, for the most part, erected with Mangyan labor. The buildings consisted of a GHQ building, hospital, church, barracks, and various others deemed necessary to the operation. In addition, bridges, roads and observation towers were constructed. The Mangyans were also used to transport my supplies a distance of eighty kilometers from Sablayan to Abra.

Due to operational difficulties encountered by submarine supply vessels in the Verde Island passage, I was obliged to accept subsequent supply shipments off the coast of Manburao, thus it was necessary to transport these supplies a distance of thirty-one kilometers to Abra. When I first passed over this so called road it was nothing but a very poor trail with bridges out altho the road bed was intact. To afford faster transportation of supplies and, anticipating the Mindoro operation by our armed forces, I had the road repaired and the bridges replaced (17-if I recall correctly) to the extent that four-wheel drive vehicle could safely travel over it at reasonable speed. This was done with Mangyan labor.

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The Mangyans were again used when I captured a Japanese Sub-chaser off the northern coast. The documents obtained from the Captain's safe were considered so valuable by SWPA that I was forced to track down every member of the crew that had escaped during the fighting in order that the enemy would be unaware that their codes, etc. had been compromised. Over a period of two weeks every escaped crew member was captured and returned to my GHQ by the hundreds of Mangyans I sent into the jungle for that purpose.

These men were also used at various times as guides and for odd jobs about the camp. At various times it is estimated that as many as five hundred of them were on the job. I fed them and at various times gave them sums of money which, however, were not adequate to pay for their services. After the American forces had landed on Mindoro I was able to give supply them with shipments of food and other essentials and they seemed satisfied.

The claims you now have on hand are not for this labor but for the supervision of it. The Mangyan, as a rule, is an illiterate, hard working individual who was fiercely loyal to the United States. However, on every job, adequate supervision was necessary, thus these claimants were pressed into service. While these men were fed and given funds for various expenses on the job, they received little that could be called pay for their services. They believed, as did many others all over the Philippines, that they would be recognized as guerrillas, thus a weekly or daily wage was neither requested nor offered. Due to difficulties encountered in this direction, which I have no intention nor desire to go into here, they were not recognized. However, their claims for wages are reasonable.

I had Mr. Francisco Isla appointed Governor of the Mangyans and he directly supervised the supplying of this labor. It is difficult for me to adequately describe Mr. Isla's work for my party. He is an elderly gentleman and totally blind. He defied the Japanese, who knew of his power over the Mangyans, and did everything possible to make life untenable for the various garrisons. I know him to be entirely honest and therefore, I welcome his certification of the various claimants since his memory of the persons who performed the labor is under the circumstances, better than mine.

I am not prepared to recommend just how much each claimant should receive, or if they should receive the amounts they are claiming, but I do believe their labors in our behalf should be rewarded.

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If desired by your office I shall be only too happy to visit you at your convenience for a general discussion of these claims.

s/ George F. Rowe  
t/ GEORGE F. ROWE

Lt. Comdr. USNR  
501 Filipinas Bldg.,  
Manila, Philippines  
Tel: No. 2-66-72

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Adjutant General Records Depository  
Office of the Chief Adjustment Division  
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Tel: No. 2-66-72

*Copied from originals in folder on Mindoro Claims in  
Wage Section - c/s. RK*

Manila, August 26th, 1949

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Headquarters  
Adjutant General Records Depository  
Office of the Chief Adjustment Division  
APO 900

Attention : Wage Section

Sir:

With reference to our conversation of yesterday what follows is written confirmation of statements made by the undersigned in connection with various claims for wages filed by civilians from the West Coast of Mindoro for services rendered to the party of the undersigned during the occupation.

Claims for Mangyan Services Certified by Mr. Isla:

As stated, I am inclined to accept them at their face value having in mind the integrity of Mr. Isla and the unstinted cooperation offered. In my previous letter I outlined these services and I believe in each case the amount claimed is reasonable. Of course I am only certifying to that time they actually worked for me altho I have knowledge of like services performed for the late Major Philips.

Claims for Mangyan Services not Certified by Mr. Isla:

It is noteworthy that they are not certified by Mr. Isla altho the claims were all filed together and no doubt, certification could have been obtained if Mr. Isla were willing to sign them. I feel therefore, that these claims should not be treated in the same light as those certified altho they should receive favorable consideration to some extent. Since our conversation of yesterday I have received information from one of my assistants at that time that "politics" reared its usual head in supplying this labor and that some gang foremen favored certain other recruiters of labor. This informant however, agrees with me that the number of persons coming under this classification is not excessive altho he likewise favors those under Mr. Isla.

Claims signed by one Tomas Pacifico (Intell. & Labor):

I have no knowledge of the services performed and until some concrete evidence to refresh my memory is presented I feel that I cannot make any recommendations.

Claims signed by Mr. Tria : There is apparently very good reasons that Mr. Tria relies upon using the name of Captain Songco rather than that of the undersigned. Captain Songco is dead, killed in battle. Tria, himself, performed excellent work for me but it appears that he has entered a new line of endeavor. While it may be that some deserving cases have been placed in his hands because of his ability in getting about, after looking at some of his other claims in your procurement section I can only refuse to certify to any of them unless, as in the previous case, evidence of good faith and services are presented.

Mangyan Claims: This was covered in my previous letter. I feel that if any of these claims were paid the claimant, himself, would not benefit thus I am reluctant to become a party to exploitation. As suggested yesterday, if the Claims Division really wants to reimburse the Mangyans for their very excellent services rendered to the Phil-American forces, a lump sum of say, pesos Ten Thousand could be awarded to them and, under the supervision of your office, a barbacue party with cigarettes and the presentation of small useful articles could be arranged. This would be appreciated by these people and in this way they would be the beneficiaries.

Other claims: Not enough information was available to warrant any recommendations or comment from me.

Very respectfully yours,  
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