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# HISTORY PHILIPPINE MEDICAL DEPOT

*Green, Manila  
4th M.D.*

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HISTORY OF THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL DEPOT DURING THE PHILIPPINE ENGAGEMENT  
FROM DECEMBER 8, 1941, TO \_\_\_\_\_

In order to write a comprehensive history of the Medical Supply Depot during the Philippine engagement it is necessary to present a picture of the organization and distribution of supplies before the war.

1. Shortly before the outbreak of hostilities the organization of the Depot consisted of 1 Major M.A.C. (Commanding Officer) 3 Lieutenants, M.A.C. 5 Non Commissioned officers, 1 Pfc Medical Dept, 1 Pfc (Phil. Scout) Med Dept., and about 35 civilians employees. At the time of the beginning of hostilities, 1 general hospital (1000 bed) had been stored at Lemay, Bataan Peninsula. Two additional warehouses had been leased in the city of Manila. Class 7 supplies had been stored in its entirety in one, and in the other equipment of an old 1000 bed general hospital and 750 bed evacuation hospital. A compound of 5 buildings had been leased at 92-Panderos St., Santa Ana, Manila, and equipment of all classes was being removed from the Depot in Port Area into these buildings. A few days after the outbreak of hostilities all serviceable equipment had been removed from the Port Area to this place and it began to function as the Philippine Medical Depot. This group of buildings was ideally adapted for use as warehouses, 4 buildings had 2 floors, the lower floor being concrete, and the second floor of each building being connected with the other building by covered runways. The area was on the banks of the Pasig river and it was planned to build a dock in order that supplies could be received from the Port Area by barge. About 4000 collapsible hospital beds belonging to field units were stored at Ft. Wm. McKinley.

2. The equipment of 2 new General Hospitals began to arrive in Manila about Nov. 1941. The new Gen. Hosp. equipment nearest complete (about 35% at this time) was sent to Estado Mayor for use in conjunction with Sternberg Gen. Hospital.

3. At this time a period of purchasing of all available hospital supplies in Manila ensued, needed to establish a projected hospital center in Manila and to augment stock in the depot. Civilian personnel increased to about 235 but it was impossible to obtain additional commissioned personnel with knowledge of supply work. Work progressed rapidly however, and we were able to supply medicines and equipment for units in the field with the minimum of delay. Medicine and equipment was shipped to all points of Luzon and by water to other islands. A 100 bed hospital was lost on the S. S. Corregidor in Manila Bay when the ship struck one of our submerged mines.

4. On December 23, 1941, orders were received to evacuate Manila for the Bataan Peninsula taking all supplies and equipment possible by trucks. We were not allowed to carry any of our civilian employees with the exception of truck drivers. Losing the services of all the old employees of the Depot who had been in service for years and knew the work well was a staggering blow. However, the assistance of Captain Ranson, M.A.C., and Lieut. Goldberg, M.A.C. (two very energetic officers) the problem of evacuation progressed rapidly. By nightfall of Dec. 23rd, the first convoy of 30 trucks of equipment left for Bataan under the command of Capt. Ranson. By nightfall of the following day the undersigned took the last convoy out of Manila. At this time we had approximately 100 trucks on the road.

5. We established our Field Medical Supply Depot at kilometer post 162.5 on the Bataan-Mariveles Road. On December 29th a sub depot was established at Orion, Bataan, to furnish front line units with supplies. On January 4th, the entire town was bombed out and the personnel returned to the main Depot with such supplies as could be salvaged. Convoys continually returned to Manila for supplies (night and day) until Jan. 1st, when the road between Manila and Bataan was cut off by the Japanese. The personnel trapped in Manila at that time escaped to Corregidor by boat, but had to abandon their supplies.

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All the officers and enlisted men who took part in the evacuation of supplies from Manila are to be highly commended. They convoyed supplies night and day during the period from Dec. 23rd to Jan. 1, 1942, with scarcely any rest except that gotten on their trucks going to and from Manila. They went through bombing raids performing their duty effectly and with dispatch. Not one vehicle that left Manila with supplies failed to reach its destination. The civilian drivers are also to be commended. They performed their duties without complaint and were eager to perform a part in the mission assigned us. In fact the moral of the entire organization was very high during the entire campaign and there was no need for any disciplinary action during the entire time, except that of the most trivial nature.

6. General Hospital No. 2 began to function at the end of December 1941, and supplies for that unit were furnished by the medical depot as they had not been able to evacuate any appreciable amount of supplies from Manila. Drawing attention to the fact that shortly before the surrender of Bataan, the patient population of that hospital reached above 5000 it can readily be seen that its caused quite a drain on our supplies. Also at this time the Philippine Army General Hospital started to function and had to be equiped entirely by the Depot. Small shipments of supplies were flown from Cebu and Iloilo although they were very definitely insufficient to meet the demands. These shipments consisted mainly of sulfa drugs, quinine, vitamins, etc.

7. On January 30th a sub Depot was established on Corregidor where the bulk of excess supplies and equipment not needed in Bataan were sent. Only a six week supply was maintained in Bataan. All supplies and equipment in Bataan and Corregidor were stored under what natural shelter that could be found. Trenches were dug and covered in which were stored drugs in bottles and tins to safeguard them from shell and bomb fragments and from strafing. All inflammables were buried in pits as a precautionary measure.

8. On April 8th, foreseeing the eminent surrender of Bataan all critical supplies that were on hand at the Depot in Bataan were removed to General Hospital No. 2. At this time the undersigned contacted Colonel J. O. Gellispie, M.C., Commanding Officer of the Hospital and it was agreed that the personnel of the Depot could capitulate with that organization. In the afternoon of April 8th the undersigned received an order from Lieut. Col. Walter Manning, M.C., Assistant to the Surgeon, USAFFE, to send certain critical items of supplies to Corregidor. These supplies were dispatched to Cab-caben, P. I. for shipment to Corregidor by boat. When the boat arrived at Cab-caben the supplies were refused and the trucks returned to the Depot at about 8:30 P.M. Somewhat after 9:00 P.M. Colonel Manning again communicated with me and was informed that the supplies requested had been refused for shipment. Colonel Manning then ordered that I take these supplies to Mariveles and to see that they were accepted for shipment on a boat that was being sent to evacuate the Army Nurses from General Hospital No. 1 & No. 2 at 11:00 P.A. As Col. Manning could establish no communication with Gen. Hosp. No. 1, I was ordered to sent an officer to inform the Commanding Officer of the order to evacuate these nurses. The supply trucks were dispatched and I followed them accompanied by Major Edwin O. Cagy, M. S., and 1st Lieut. Louis C. Klien, M.A.C., Major Cagy's mission being the evacuation of the nurses mentioned above. The congestion of traffic was incredible and it became apparent that we could not reach Mariveles by 11:00 P. M. We actually arrived somewhat after 3:00 A.M. but upon inquiry we found that the supply trucks and the Nurses from Gen. Hosp. No. 2 had not arrived. In the meantime the ammunition dumps and ordnance warehouses between Mariveles and the Gen. Hosp. No. 2 and below what was known as the "Zig-Zag", had been blown and it was assumed also that the road had been blocked that the nurses and supply trucks had been cut

off below this point. Assuming this to be the case Major Gagy boarded a boat that was at the dock and went to Corregidor. I ordered Lt. Klein to go with him. I could establish no contact with the Depot nor with the Surgeon's Office at Corregidor. My driver and myself patrolled the road on foot from Mariveles for a distance of 3 kilometers or more but could find no sign of the nurses or trucks. I ordered my driver that if he should find no sign of our people by daylight to take any available transportation to Corregidor. We became separated and I took a barge to Corregidor at dawn. My driver arrived some time later.

9. After the capitulation of Bataan three shipments of medical supplies were received from the South; 2 by plane and 1 by submarine. These shipments consisted mainly of quinine, sulfa drugs and vitamin preparations. All critical supplies in the Depot on Corregidor were stored in the Malinta Tunnel but it was impossible to store more than a very small amount of the stock because of the crowded condition of the tunnels. The Depot on Corregidor was completely shelled out on April 22nd by Japanese land batteries operating on Bataan. The remaining personnel of the Depot was attached to the Medical Detachment, Ft. Mills, P. I. and surrendered with that organization to the Japanese on May 6th.

|| On June 14th I was taken by the Japanese to Manila to classify medical supplies and equipment that had been seized from civilian firms and institutions. I was surprised to find so little of our equipment there but this matter was cleared up when I was informed that our medical supply depot had been burned before the entrance of the Japanese. || I underwent two rather unhappy interviews in regard to this matter but on the whole was treated rather well. I remained in the Japanese Depot from June 14th to October 20, 1942, at which time I was sent to the prison camp at Cabanatuan, P. I.

10. Upon arrival at Cabanatuan I learned that our convoy had finally gotten through, but too late to secure transportation for the supplies to Corregidor. All were without fuel and were abandoned except one under the command of Staff Sgt. Bish. MD. which was taken as far as Gen. Hosp. No. 1, where the supplies were turned in.

11. Attached hereto is a roster of the organization of the Philippine Medical Depot in Bataan. Only the roster of American officers and soldiers is submitted; as the roster of Philippine Army soldiers and civilians is not available.

The entire organization is to be highly commended. Although most of the men were newly assigned and without experience they overcame this handicap by willingness and eagerness to perform any task assigned to them. This spirit prevailed through out the entire campaign.

O. V. KEMPF,  
Lieut. Col., Med. Adm. Corps,  
Commanding, Philippine Med. Depot

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*Charles A. Gauvreau*

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Asst Adj Gen

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