

Ng 93rd Div, SAC, 9th MD

HISTORY - SAC
by ELI G. CAREY, Jr.

SAMAR AREA CMD

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A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS ON SAMAR

by

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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I hereby certify that the following is true according to the best of my knowledge and belief:

That I served as Intelligence Officer of the 93rd Division, Guerrilla Force, Samar Area Command. On 8 June 1946, I was relieved from the Philippine Army with the rank of 1st Lieutenant. The following is a brief historical sketch of Guerrilla organizations on Samar.

On 24 May 1942, the day preceding the landing of the Japanese Imperial Forces on Samar, practically all the forces that remained on this island were elements of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Companies, Philippine Constabulary Battalion (original designation before induction into USAFFE), and a few scattered Philippine Army units at Catarman, Borongan and Wright.

The Provincial Inspector (equivalent to the present Provincial Provost Marshal, MFC), was Major Andres V. Bartolome. The Battalion Commander, Philippine Constabulary, was Captain (now Major) Pedro V. Merritt. The other officers were: Captain (now Major) Porfirio Jain, Station Commander, Catarman; 2nd Lt (now Captain) Nemesio Gubatan, attached unassigned, Catarman Station, Philippine Army; 2nd Lt. (now Captain) Amado Savellano, JO, 2nd Samar Company, Philippine Constabulary; Captain Marciano Lim, Station Commander, Borongan; 2nd Lt. (now Captain) Ramon Dorillo, JO, 3rd Samar Company; 1st Lt. (now Captain) Galicano Lachica, Cadre Commander, Catbalogan; 1st Lt. (now Captain) Pedro Bautista, Disbursing Officer, Philippine Army; and 2nd Lt. (now Captain) Eduardo P. Soliman, JO, 1st Samar Company, Philippine Constabulary. While this is not a complete roster of Philippine Army officers on Samar at the time of the surrender, yet, for purposes of this sketch, the names given will suffice.

With the exception of Major Andres V. Bartolome, Provincial Inspector, none of the officers previously mentioned, surrendered to the Japanese Imperial Forces. Except Major Andres V. Bartolome who surrendered, and Captain Porfirio Jain, who left Catarman near the end of May, 1942, for destinations outside of Samar, all of the officers above mentioned remained on Samar.

As though signalled by some unseen force the people of Samar spontaneously and simultaneously rose to defy the might and authority of the invaders. The latter were given no rest and became confused and discouraged, until it was impossible to determine the victors from the vanquished. In this by-play of human aggressiveness and cunning, the officers who did not surrender had a most important role.

In the assumption that upon the incapacity or disability of the Commanding Officer, the second in command takes over, upon the surrender of Major Andres V. Bartolome to the Japanese Imperial Forces, Captain Pedro V. Merritt, Battalion Commander, Philippine Constabulary, Samar, rightly took over the command of all the remaining Filipino forces in Samar, organized them and molded them into hard hitting combat teams.

For purposes of tactical operations, the island of Samar was divided into Sectors. There were four main sectors, The Northern Samar Sector, Eastern Samar Sector, Western Samar Sector, and Southern Samar Sector. The Northern Samar Sector was placed under the command of 2nd Lt. Amado Savellano with Lt. Nemesio Gubatan as second in command; the Eastern Samar Sector was under the command of 2nd Lt. Ramon Dorillo; the Western Samar Sector was under the command of 2nd Lt. Eduardo Soliman;

and Southern Samar Sector was under the command of 1st Lt. (now Ex-Captain) Lino Nacario (pre-war elected Major of Calbiga who became a guerrilla leader).

The rest of the officers were placed on duty with the staff of the Commander, Captain Merritt.

On 2 June 1942, on the provincial highway, approximately a kilometer East of Bo. Makiwalo, Mondragon, a squad of Philippine Constabulary men, under the command of Lt. Savellano, fired the shot that galvanized the people of Samar into action. On this occasion all the Japanese officers and men who were in the ill-fated automobile met their vainglorious deaths. This shot reverberated to the farthest nook of Samar and awoke the population to the reality of the beginnings of Guerrilla Warfare. Over night, there was frenzied activity all over the islands. Japanese garrisons were stormed, patrols were ambushed, bridges destroyed, transportation and communication lines disrupted.

This state of affairs continued until Japanese garrisons on Northern and Eastern Samar were abandoned by the Japanese Forces. For a period of over a year, or from the middle of October, 1942, to about the middle of February, 1944, no son of Nippon dared tread on the forbidden terrain of Northern, Eastern and Southern Samar. This was the era of peace within an epoch of war. And this proved to be the undoing of the Japanese Imperial Forces. For, within this period the various guerrilla units were able to consolidate and take in more officers and men. These new elements were given the necessary training that qualified them well for their combat assignments.

In the month of January, 1943, Merritt's Guerrilla Force made the first contact with the outside world when a contact man of Colonel Macario Peralta, Jr., landed at Bo. San Joaquin, Tinambacan, Samar. This was the break that Captain Merritt had been looking forward to for so long so anxiously. For this meant the ultimate legalization of all his activities. From this first contact subsequent and more frequent contacts were made. The famed Panay Guerrilla leader gave Captain Merritt express orders to organize and assume command of the 93rd Division, under the IV Philippine Corps, Army of the United States of America. He was made Island Commander of Samar. Thus, in February, 1943, the 93rd Division, IV Philippine Corps, AUSA, was born under the command of Captain Pedro V. Merritt.

This 93rd Division had four Regiments. The 97th Regiment, under the command of Major Alfonso Jaime (a Philippine Army, (USAFFE) officer who saw action in Mindanao), the 98th Regiment under Captain Elpidio Arsenio; the 99th Regiment under Captain Tiburcio Jonson; and the 100th Regiment under Captain Marciano Lim. The island of Samar was divided into zones and each Regiment operated within one zone. The 97th Regiment had jurisdiction over all the territory beginning from the municipality of Catbalogan to the municipality of Sta. Rita. The 98th Regiment covered all the territory from B. Naga, Fernani to the municipality of Oras. The 99th Regiment exercised effective control over the territory from the municipality of Palapag to the municipality of Laezares. And the 100th Regiment had control of the area from the municipality of Allen to the municipality of Gandara.

The primary function of this Division was Intelligence. Tactical operation was secondary. This was in accordance with directives received from General Headquarters, South West Pacific Area, through Headquarters IV Philippine Corps, AUSA.

With the organization of the 93rd Division more personnel were taken in. Naturally more supplies were needed. And consequently, more commandeering of foodstuffs and supplies and needed equipment was made. The people reacted favorably and willingly supported the

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guerrilla forces.

Aside from the above 93rd Division, there were other Guerrilla organizations on Samar. One was the Philippine Guerrilla Forces under the leadership and command of the late Congressman Pedro R. Arteche. He carried the rank of Brigadier-General. However, his capture and subsequent liquidation by the enemy caused the Philippine Guerrilla Forces to disintegrate. Up to this writing, said unit has not been recognized.

Another was the 97th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division, under the command of Major Luciano Abia. This unit controlled the area from the municipality of Sta. Rita to the municipality of Hlangiga.

The last was the Volunteer Service Corps under the command of 1st Lt. (now Captain) Manuel Valley. This unit assumed jurisdiction over the territory of the municipalities of Guiuan and Salcedo. Ultimately, this unit was merged into the 98th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division, under Lt-Col. Juan Causing.

Save for the extent of the territories over which these various guerrilla units exercised control, their operations were practically of the same nature.

On 4 October 1944 (later revised to 4 October 1943), the guerrilla units under Major Pedro V. Merritt, Major Luciano Abia, and Lt-Colonel Juan Causing were recognized by General Headquarters, South West Pacific Area, designated as the 93rd Division, Guerrilla Forces, Samar Area Command, and placed under the over-all command of Lt-Colonel Charles Smith. Major Merritt was designated Chief-of-Staff. Lt-Col. Causing, Major Abia and Captain Soliman were designated Regimental Commanders.

Subsequently, Lt-Col. Smith was relieved by Lt-Col. Causing. Major Merritt continued to Chief-of-Staff. There were three Regiments then; the 97th Infantry, under Major Abia; the 98th Infantry, under Captain Soliman; and the 99th Infantry, under Captain Arrieta.

On 4 May 1945, the 93rd Division GF, Samar Area Command, was activated into the 42nd Infantry, Philippine Army, under the command of Colonel Juan Causing. In March 1946, the 42nd Infantry, PA, was deactivated. This deactivation brought to a close the saga of Guerrilla Warfare on Samar.

Done at Tacloban, Leyte, Philippines, on 28 February 1947.

/s/ Eli G. Garay, Jr.
ELI G. GARAY, JR.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY;

MARGARITO E. DALUSONG
Certifying Claims Investigator

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