

# Saga of Juan, Filipino Guerrilla: Here is his story, that of many ...

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Filipino guerrilla—One of thousands of patriots who are fighting the Japs.



Brothers in arms—A guerrilla scout points out a Jap position on Leyte.

## Saga of Juan, Filipino Guerrilla

Here is his story, that of many Juans  
who fought the hated Japanese invader.

By BRIG. GEN. CARLOS P. ROMULO  
Resident Commissioner of the Philippines

**I**N a mountain hide-out on Panay in the Philippines three men were working over a home-made portable radio trying to send a message to the outside world. Every island in the Philippine chain, including Panay, was occupied by the Japanese. Communication with America had been ended. The Filipinos, beyond all else, wanted to get word through to America.

The three Filipinos, formerly employed by a radio station in Manila, had rowed in a small boat all the way to Panay and set up their makeshift equipment in the hills. There was no electricity. They took turns all day pedaling a bicycle that generated just enough power to permit them to send for fifteen minutes a day.

During this brief space they tried to tell the outside world of the guerrilla movement forming within the captive Philippines. They told of a scattered and secret army without leadership, ammunition, food, clothing or hope which was harassing the Japanese in many sections and needed encouragement to enable it to go on.

That encouragement could only come from America.

This was the despairing message sent out, day after day, month after month, by the guerrilla radio operators hidden in the Panay mountains. At last, on a day late in 1942, the first weak words were picked up by powerful receiving War Department stations and relayed at once to Gen. Douglas MacArthur in Australia.

The minute General MacArthur got the message he knew he had been right in his assurance that the Filipinos could never submit to Japanese rule. The scant message was the first pledge out of the captive Philippines that a great if scattered army was hungry for leadership and a chance to return to the fight.

Leadership was promptly supplied by America to the Philippine guerrilla army that was to be of calculable aid in the recovery of the Philippines. The result has been a closely knit, skilled and purposeful underground army like no other in the world.

The Czechoslovaks, Yugoslavs and Chi-



Briefing a Filipino night patrol—The skilled and purposeful guerrillas assemble around a campfire in the hills to receive instructions in harassing the Japanese.

nese have developed guerrilla armies capable of fighting with magnificent strength and purpose, but the Philippine guerrillas must remain unique as the first underground fighters to establish contact and offer collaboration with a country that was once their conqueror—America.

This Philippine purpose was apparent from the beginning. Guerrilla resistance began in the islands with the fall of Bataan. It grew with the progress of the Japanese. At first it was without military leadership, for the armies had collapsed on Bataan, and the military men who had escaped death or capture were scattered in the hills.

Civilian resistance took the place of armed warfare. Juan de la Cruz, the man in the street known in America as John Doe, was the leader of the resistance. He refused from the first to accept the authority of the Japanese.

**T**HE Japanese, who had tried long before the war to make friends with the Filipino made no friendly overtures now. He was too stupid to try. The Japanese masks his sense of inferiority with a superior strut, and, once a little power is in his hands, his cockiness becomes both brutal and unbearable. Japanese sentinels must be bowed to by the Filipino at a body angle of 45 degrees, and he who did not bow had his face slapped. Even priests and Bishops too old and infirm for such obeisance had their faces slapped by the Japanese.

Nothing could have been more offensive to the Filipino. His sense of *amour propre* was developed in him by the early

Spanish and his concept of human rights by the Americans with whom he had lived long on the island on equal and friendly terms. Being a Christian, he had considered himself, rightly or wrongly, as superior to the Japanese. Even beyond physical torture the Filipino hates indignity and, above all, he hates having his face slapped. By way of compromise Juan de la Cruz learned to bow before his tormentors, but as he bowed, he spat.

**T**HE face-slapping was a minor matter, he found. The story of Manila under the Japanese, once revealed, will vie in atrocities with the rape of Nanking. Wherever the Japanese moved, the saga of hatred and horror went with them. The Filipino held sacred beyond all his church, his family and his home. Now all were violated.

The Filipino's home is his castle, and only those he wishes to honor are invited there. Japanese soldiers tramped into Filipino houses and took away everything usable by their armies and shipped these things by boat to Japan or Formosa. What they could not use they smashed or burned. As I stated in my report to Congress upon my recent return from Leyte, their wholesale pillage was convincing evidence that they were certain of defeat from the beginning and knew that their stay in the Philippines was on borrowed time.

The segregated districts that are the first projects of Japanese occupation in any captured city were filled with Filipino girls of good families which had refused to "collaborate." These girls were rounded up and driven into the red-light streets. Assault, rape, torture and murder make

heavy the books of judgment written in the Philippines against Japan.

The Japanese conquerors were well aware how the Filipino had looked to America, certain of help, when his country was invaded. They knew how disappointed and despairing the Filipino had been when help did not come from America. The Japanese jeered at him because it failed to arrive, and, because the Filipino still had faith, made him an example in the Far East as "the white collaborationist in the Orient" and tortured him in worse fashion than he had the Chinese, Burmese or British-Malayan.

All this was fire banked in the heart of the Filipino.

**W**HEREVER the Japanese invaders moved in, entire townfuls of Filipinos moved out and fled into the hills. There they joined other rebels, pooled their resources and set up a desperate fighting opposition against the Japanese. In the beginning they collected cast-iron pipes, sash weights, any metals they could find, and with these they fashioned guns and bullets that could actually kill.

Eventually they were joined by Filipino and American soldiers who had escaped after Bataan, and the underground movement took on a semblance of the military. They had no food, armament, clothing, medicines, but they had behind them the whole-souled support of 18,000,000 Filipinos who hated the Japanese and shared with the guerrillas their only plan: To show America they could hold out. Starving, abandoned, helpless, entrapped in their own land, they still wanted America to know they were capable of holding out.

If they had been hurt by America's failure to send aid in time, hatred of the Japanese far overbalanced that hurt. We were to see this proved on Leyte by the presence of American flags and textbooks that had been saved by the Filipinos and buried in the earth in coal-oil cans when to own such flags or books was punishable by death. The Filipinos had saved these emblems of America against the day of America's return, and they had burned all the Japanese flags forced upon them by their oppressors, so that our American boys when they came to land on Leyte were bitterly disappointed at finding so few of these desired souvenirs.

The guerrilla movement—scattered, planless—covering many provinces and islands, had one universal desire. The Filipinos wanted to establish contact with America. They wanted America to know what they were doing to make difficulties for the Japanese. Above all, they wanted news, not the Japanese propaganda being laded out to them from Tokyo, but news from America, because to the Filipino American news is the only kind that can be trusted.

**A**LL radios had been confiscated by the Japanese. Even juke boxes, beloved by all Filipino youth before the war, had been carted away for scrap metal.

Here and there brave operators set up small portable stations and tried to receive and even send news reports filtered through the Tokyo radio. In Manila one Filipino boy set up a mobile set and broadcast every day for a year under the pseudonym "Juan de la Cruz." Each day he moved his sta- (Continued on Page 47)

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tion to a different place. Sometimes he broadcast from churches. The frantic Japanese would shut off the electricity in one district only to hear him piping up from another. When they caught up with him, they shot him down before his set.

**I**T was then that the three radio men from Manila set out in the rowboat for Panay, determined to get word through, somehow, to the outer world. For months, with their bicycle-propelled generator and portable set, they sent out their weak messages in the hope that one might be heard.

When, in 1942, the first feeble message was picked up, the Philippine guerrilla army was able to take on military substance and solidarity.

Under the authorization of General MacArthur submarines landed secretly on Luzon skilled radio operators and the equipment for powerful stations. From two Filipino regiments that had trained at Camp Cook and Camp Beale in California was selected a staff of officers, both commissioned and noncommissioned, and these officers were intensively trained in sabotage, intelligence, radio and meteorology. Several American officers accompanied them as volunteers. The work was most dangerous for Americans who could not so easily hide.

American food, clothing, guns, even chewing gum, were smuggled by submarines into the Philippines.

The guerrilla movement was consolidated under an American commander who was listened to by all factions and was responsible directly to General MacArthur. From all over the island hourly reports came in to headquarters on the weather, Japanese military movements and the number of Japanese planes destroyed. Not an important move made by the Japanese in the islands failed to be known within the hour.

**U**NDER official American direction the Philippine guerrilla movement received unity and leadership. It is, therefore, an army unique in history. It was begun by Juan de la Cruz, the man in the street. It collected unto itself the scattered remnants of the Filipino-American Army. It was organized and given active leadership by America, the country that once conquered and then won with democracy the loyalty of the Philippines.

We saw on Leyte the added power that can be given by an army fighting from within. On Luzon we shall see greater action from the powerful guerrilla forces organized there and fighting their way through to meet our armies, unite with them and drive the Japanese from the Philippines.

This is shared brotherhood in arms. This is Bataan, unconquerable even in the dust, white and brown armies fighting together to end oppression and give freedom "to all men of all lands."