

MacArthur of the Philippines

Portrait of the general whose pledge to the Filipinos has been redeemed.

By FRANK L. KLUCKHOHN

SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC (By Wireless).

TWO years and seven months ago, after the stand at Bataan, Gen. Douglas MacArthur arrived in Australia. Next day in a press interview, while the Japanese tide was threatening to sweep over the entire Pacific, he announced to a somewhat incredulous world: "I shall return to the Philippines." Today he has made good his pledge.

That this is so can be attributed almost entirely to General MacArthur himself, for not only has he fought an amazing military campaign under fantastic conditions, but when others disagreed he stood foursquare on the proposition that the reconquest of the Philippines was essential to the defeat of Japan.

During thirty months, under conditions that might have broken a lesser man, General MacArthur forged ahead into position to attack the Philippines. On Bataan he had assured his place in American history. Since that time he has often worked out of the limelight—the United States was concentrating its main military effort, in the first place, against Germany. But he has persistently risked his hard-won reputation in order to write another epic whose scale cannot be generally appreciated until years have passed.

The MacArthur of Bataan, whose men held their ground for months while everything else in the Pacific was giving way under the Japanese onslaught, was a shadowy symbol of hope. Today enough time has passed to reveal his substance, his ability, as well as his faults.

For America's senior general at 64 is not one man but many. He is both a cold-blooded strategist and an impelling, colorful, controversial personality. In him great self-confidence is mingled with humility, unusual assurance with professional sensitivity to unjust criticism.

HE has demonstrated his qualities as a statesman in his relations with Australians and Filipinos. Occasionally his public statements have caused Americans to gasp because, fundamentally, they have not understood the undercurrent of events that have called forth his remarks. The expression of his various moods has given the public a somewhat contradictory picture. What his friends see in him, however, is basically a soldier who knows his trade.

General MacArthur's reasons for insisting upon the reconquest of the Philippines have been stated in his own words:

"If we control the Philippines the new Japanese empire is cut in twain. We pierce the enemy's center, enabling us to roll up his flanks to the north or the south at will. The Netherlands Indies are the sole source of oil and other essential war materials for Japan's military and naval machines. By occupying the Philippines we put ourselves in a position completely to isolate the East Indies and Singapore from the Japanese islands and the end of Japanese militarism will be certain, and quickly achieved.

"Moreover, the American flag flew over the Philippines before the war. It is our duty and obligation and a matter of national honor to liberate the Filipinos as quickly as possible. American prestige in the entire Orient is at stake."

These are the general's paramount reasons for wanting a return to Manila as quickly as possible. He could add that the Philippines are necessary for staging large numbers of troops and establishing land-based aircraft to control Japan, Formosa and the Chinese coast, to have a land mass with room for everything that Luzon and the other islands represent. No doubt, too, he thinks constantly of the liberation of thousands of Filipinos and American fighters captured at Bataan and Corregidor, and of the inhuman sufferings they have undergone.

When I first talked with the general on my arrival at his theatre he constantly returned during a long conversation as if drawn by a magnet to the statement that "I don't want to lose a single American soldier unnecessarily." His policy of "hitting them where they ain't" has failed to make the news that conflict always engenders. But it has made his casualties the lowest in any war area.

Here are some examples of MacArthur's methods:

WHEN the Japanese concentrated at Wewak in New Guinea he landed at Hollandia far beyond toward the northwest tip of the second largest island in the world, and virtually without opposition. When he landed the First Marines on New Britain he put them ashore at a spot where the Japanese thought that they could not land and within several miles of very large concentrations of the enemy.

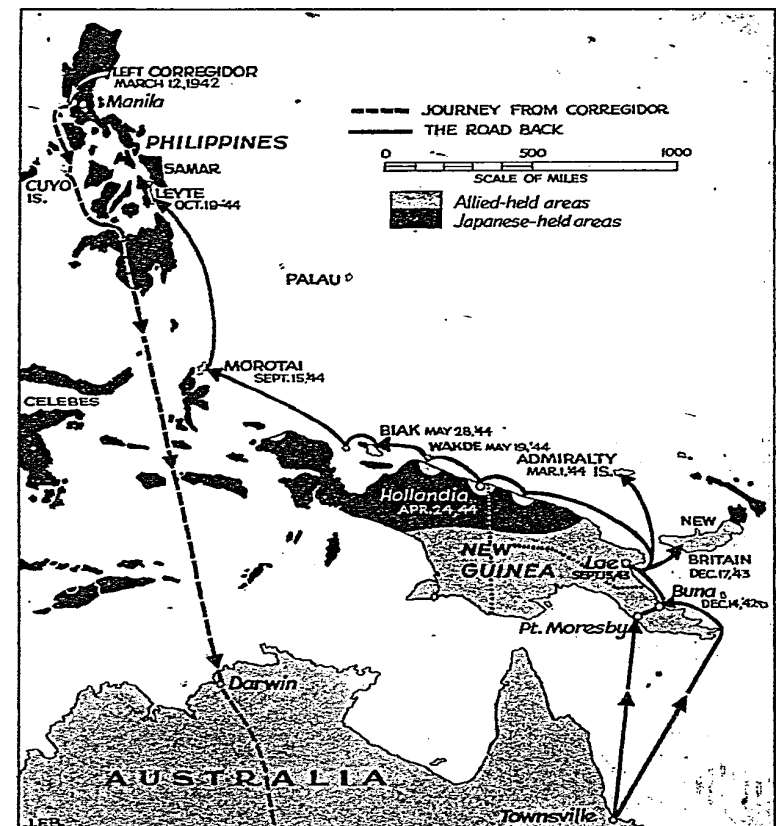
About 30,000 Nipponese crack troops had been concentrated on the Halmaheras to halt any landings on this essential flank point for invasion of the Philippines. He put his men ashore at Morotai Island just to the north without a single Japanese shot being fired in opposition. During the initial landing he obtained the airfields he needed and isolated the opposing force.

When General MacArthur walked among the paratroopers just before accompanying them for a jump in the pincers move to take Lae, New Guinea—the real start of the big-scale offensive action in this theatre—the men got a great lift out of it. Since then he has accompanied his troops in landings on the Admiralties, Hollandia, Aitape and Tanamerah Bay. He has the ability to inspire his men when he is with them. His indifference to personal danger makes his staff chew their nails. When he went ashore on the Admiralties on a braided cloth cap without helmet he walked out so far on an airstrip that an officer asked him to withdraw, remarking, "You are beyond your perimeter, sir." A few hours later that perimeter was attacked by the Japanese in force.

Despite his concern for his troops, pre-occupation with the problems of his command and the widespread dispersal of troops over a (Continued on Page 43)



Preparing to settle a score—General MacArthur, preceded by his aide, goes ashore from a cruiser somewhere in the South Pacific.



Thirty-one months in the Southwest Pacific—In March, 1942, MacArthur left Corregidor; today he is striking at the heart of the Philippines.



One of MacArthur's soldiers pushes forward on Wakde Island.

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2,000-mile front made it impossible for him to inspect all his units. He has spent many hours commuting between Australia and the tropical islands northward, conferring with the various headquarters and inspecting divisions and hospitals, but still many of his men have not seen him. To many he is only a name, some one to blame for discomforts and delays in the traditional "gripping bouts" of the American soldier.

Visiting a hospital in New Guinea, the general walked up to the cot of a wounded GI and asked, "Son, what happened?" The lad told him, and General MacArthur commented, "I know. The first time I was wounded in the last war it felt as if the whole world had come up and hit me."

EVER since he took the offensive General MacArthur has coached his generals in tactics. He tells combat generals arriving in his theatre, "If the Japanese infiltrate your lines, don't retreat. Hold your ground and take care of them later."

This advice has worked out time and again. Indeed the general seems to know his Far Eastern enemy very well. "If you force the Japs into a corner, they'll fight viciously to the death," he remarks. "They can live a long time on a little rice and few supplies. Flank them, give them a line of retreat even though it may lead nowhere, and you have them. You save lives every time." This conception of tactics has yet to be disproved.

He feels that the Nipponese misunderstand Western mentality as easily as we misunderstand theirs. Thus, he advises his officers to do the unexpected—if they do this, they can be reasonably certain that the enemy will react improperly.

TODAY General MacArthur's hair is still as black as it was in his youth. On operations he can wear out his younger aides. He insists on keeping his mind clear for major decisions, and having picked a man for a key job he leaves the task to him until he falls down or it is apparent he will fall down. He believes in organizing well and then letting his organizations do the job.

Lieut. Gen. Richard Suther-

land, his chief of staff, once remarked to this correspondent: "The boss likes to sit around and think. He then outlines his plan, leaves the details to us until final approval comes, and then he makes the decisions he has deemed necessary. Then he leaves it to us. But heaven help us if anything goes wrong."

Rear Admiral Daniel E. Barbey, who has directed more amphibious operations than any other American admiral, once remarked, "General MacArthur will listen to what you have to say, and if he thinks you are right he will stand behind you."

General MacArthur has been pictured by a few leftwingers at home as a "reactionary." Yet in Australia his relations with John Curtin, the Australian Labor Prime Minister, have been excellent throughout. There was a time when as theatre commander General MacArthur could have exerted without much doubt a decisive influence on Australian politics. Australians are touchy about such things, and it would have been easy for anyone in General MacArthur's position to mess things up. He dealt with

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the Government at Canberra only on matters directly affecting the war effort and declined to get involved in Australian politics. As a result he was occasionally accused of being unduly self-restrained, but he got along.

MACARTHUR is the only general of the Pacific who is not under a Navy commander. It would be natural if a certain jealousy should exist, and owing to this fact some Navy juniors, not in this area, and naturally imbued with esprit de corps for their branch of the service, depreciate him. But from the time Admiral Halsey moved north from Guadalcanal General MacArthur has had strategic command of operations, and he swears by Bill Halsey, the two-fisted admiral who likes to have his way. Their relations are excellent.

With Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, who bore responsibility in the days when he was fighting with an inferior force, who knows the perils to the Navy as well as its strong points, General MacArthur has got along excellently, both personally and professionally. Advancing along parallel lines in the Pacific they have tossed the ball back and forth, with MacArthur giving Nimitz preliminary and diversionary air support and Nimitz lending amphibious equipment and covering forces where necessary. General MacArthur's censorship forbids criticism of the Navy.

The general has charm in private conversation. There are

few who leave him without being wholeheartedly for him. He is a good listener as well as talker. He has a habit of thinking out loud. When solving a problem, or with something on his mind, he strides up and down his office talking all the time. These monologues are likely to astound those who do not know him and fail to realize that this is his way of concentrating upon a subject. When he talks at length he tries as a rule consciously to impress the listener.

IN public he is inclined to be austere, at times somewhat stogy. His frequent references to the Almighty come from the heart. He speaks as a man who has been a high military commander for over twenty-six years, who ranks every present general and admiral to whom he issues commands in a manner as natural as his well-cut uniforms. But he is not one who conceives of himself as a Navy commander. He leaves Navy methods to the Navy.

General MacArthur's favorite character in American history is Washington. He admires the first President as much for his character as for his military achievements. He frequently refers to what Washington did under different circumstances in discussing current problems.

MacArthur had a score to settle. Japan attacked us at Pearl Harbor. MacArthur is determined to see that the attack is avenged and that the Nipponese danger of expansionism is eliminated.