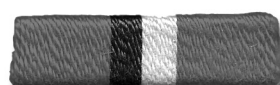
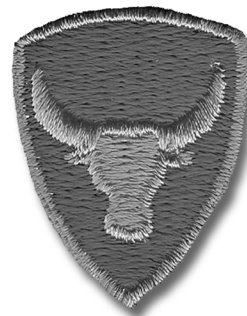


# Philippine Scouts Heritage Society



*Preserving the history, heritage, and legacy of the Philippine Scouts for present and future generations*



*Fall 2009*

## 25th Annual Reunion Recap

**By President John Patterson**

Hi Everyone!

The 25th Annual Reunion of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society took place in Long Beach, California on May 8 and May 9, 2009. This 25th Anniversary gathering was hosted by the Living History Company of the Alexander Nininger Chapter of the Society.

It's always risky to thank certain individuals since inevitably others will inadvertently be left out. Nevertheless, congratulations and thanks are due Nininger Chapter Officers, Philip Garcia, Gil Mislant, Victor Verano and Rudy Cabigas and the others for making the

reunion such a success. It was truly a home run in every respect. There was excellent attendance at the panels and presentations and at the closing dinner on Saturday night. Everything went off like clock work. It takes a lot of effort and attention to detail which the chapter gave in abundance. The two days were a fitting tribute to the Scouts and their heroism.

Highlights included retired Major General Antonio Taguba's keynote speech at the closing dinner in which he spoke forcefully of the responsibilities



*Keynote Speaker  
Major General Antonio Taguba  
Photo courtesy Nininger Chapter*

*See 25th Reunion Page 4*

### **What's Inside?**

*Fall 2009 Issue*

Editor's Comments.....	2
First Vice-President's Letter.....	3
Nininger Award.....	9
Member Activities.....	9
Chapter News.....	10
Newsletter and Library.....	10
In Memoriam.....	11
Surviving Scouts.....	12
Review: Survival and Triumph.....	13
Interview: Philip Garcia.....	14
The General's Corner.....	15
GC: The Battle for Bataan.....	15
GC: Review: Tears in the Darkness.....	15
GC: My Philippine Scout Family.....	21
GC: America's Gurkhas.....	21
Review: Unsundered.....	23

## **The Next Generation Speaks Out The Philippine Scouts' Children's Perspectives on their Fathers' Service**

**By Anthony Maravillas**

Traditionally, the U.S. Army has preached that there are three types of information ranked in ascending order of importance and relevance: The **nice-to-know**, the **good-to-know**, and the **need-to-know**. Being able to differentiate information that is "nice" or "good" is of the utmost value to military units in the battlefield, or in similar crisis-type situations. For the audience today, particularly the many descendants of the Philippine Scouts of the U.S. Army who are present to celebrate this 2008 Reunion of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society (PSHS), this scholar has information that is indeed of the **need-to-know** variety. I would submit that these observations and recollections drawn from the Scouts children and grandchildren constitute **truths** that are almost universally held by the Philippine Scouts progeny. Thus, I am about to examine these truths that are inextricably linked to this audience's **sense of identity**, on a **personal** level, on a **collective** basis as supporters of the PSHS, and as **citizens** of this republic.

*See Next Generation Page 4*

## Editor's Comments

by Paul Ruiz

As your new Editor, I want to publicly acknowledge and heartily thank Mike Houlahan, who had served as our Newsletter Editor for the past 9 years. Mike's dedication and professionalism has set a very high standard that we will continue to strive for. Mike has also been very accommodating and patient during this transition, and has very graciously made himself available as a resource. Mike is now our historian, a position that maximizes both his strong understanding of the Philippine Scouts and his organizational skills for the benefit of the Society. Let's all wish Mike well in this new undertaking. Mike has also written several articles that are included in this edition.

I also want to publicly thank Mike's daughter, Christa, for agreeing to continue with the design and layout for the newsletter. If it wasn't for her (i.e. left to me), you might all be receiving a newsletter that resembles something out of an elementary school PTA flyer - at least in presentation, not in content. Christa also continues to be an extremely valuable resource to the organization as our Website Designer and Manager. Thank you Christa!

When I joined the PSHS in 1995, I was recently married, living in a small apartment in Oakland, CA, and interested in, but otherwise disengaged from the PSHS. I met John Patterson, at the reunion in Tacoma, WA, and was impressed with both the mission and professionalism of the organization. John also raised the suggestion that these younger generations, consisting mostly but not exclusively of children and grandchildren of Scouts, will eventually need to step up their involvement if the organization is to continue.

Well, now it is 14 years later, my bride and I are celebrating our 15 year wedding anniversary, we have 3 kids, 2 mortgages, 1 minivan, and all of my hair is gone, but John Patterson still looks

the same. Further, his words continue to bring true that younger members of the organization need to become engaged if the PSHS is to continue. It "only" took me 14 years to get involved to the extent of being your Newsletter Editor, but fortunately, other members have also stepped up.

The Philippine Scouts Re-enactors, most of whom belong to the Alexander Nininger Chapter in southern California, have given the PSHS a "shot in the arm" with their involvement at the reunions, including hosting our reunion this past Spring. Their continuing efforts, as well as others in our various chapters, helps to ensure that the PSHS will have the "legs" to perpetuate the memory, legacy, and history of the Philippine Scouts.

I am also excited to report that we have 2 new chapters that are in the process of being formed in the Philippines - Ft. Stotsenberg and Manila. Philip Garcia of our Nininger Chapter in Los Angeles traveled to the Philippines to support this process. We will look forward to sharing further information and activities from those chapters.

On the front page of our newsletter is a piece by Anthony Maravillas, PhD, who teaches history at the university level in Chicago. Anthony's father is a former Scout, and we are fortunate he is willing to share his energy and talents which deepens the bench of historians and writers in our membership. Anthony's piece touches on the impact that our Scout relatives have had on us, and life lessons learned.

Two years ago at our reunion, David Rosen, son of Colonel Mel Rosen, and I shared a panel regarding the future of the PSHS. David and I are in our 40's, have busy careers, young children, and multiple other commitments. The extent of our involvement had primarily consisted of attending the reunions. Perhaps those of us who fit into that description can begin to carve out a little more time

to assist this organization in its continued mission.

For those who are interested in joining the PSHS, or know of others who might be interested, I would recommend the membership link contained on the website.

It has been said that "All politics are local." In that same vein, I would suggest that education is also most relevant at a grass roots level. My brother-in-law asked me to present a talk on the Philippine Scouts in conjunction with the study of WW2 in his high school history class. Using Power Point, I showed photos, discussed the fighting retreat that was undertaken on Bataan, the Death March, the state of the prisoners in the camps, and their eventual liberation. I also shared conversations that I have had with Scouts, some of whom are no longer alive, and in doing so tried to perpetuate their perspectives with an audience born over 15 years after the end of the Vietnam War. I found these students to be very inquisitive, and I think they came away with a greater understanding of a part of WW2 history that arguably has not been sufficiently addressed in the history books. Those of us in the PSHS have the opportunity to educate ourselves and to share these perspectives with others who may have an interest in history, which I have found to be many.

As for my background and that of my Scout father, I was born in Baguio City, Philippines, and came to the US at age 1. My father joined the Scouts in 1934 and served in the 12th Ordnance Company. He fought on Bataan, survived the Death March, fought as a guerilla, and retired in 1960 after further serving in the Korean War, with duty stations in Germany, Aberdeen Proving Grounds, and Ft. Dix, NJ as the First Sergeant Basic Training. He also had received a commission as a 1st Lt in the US Army. One of my proudest moments for him was when I was commissioned a 2nd

Lt of Infantry after graduating from UC Berkeley. I asked my father to commission me, and the large audience gave him a standing ovation when it was announced that he was a Philippine Scout who had fought on Bataan. He died in 1991 of leukemia, and did not speak much of the war, preferring to reminisce about his family in the pre-war Philippines, and on our future. However, he

was extremely proud of his Philippine Scout heritage, his comrades, and the tremendous fight they gave the Japanese during the outbreak of the war. The irony that my father shied away from joining WW2 groups, and that I now serve as your Newsletter Editor is not lost on me. When I am not being your editor, I work for a reinsurance company in San Francisco, coach youth soccer and

baseball, and teach fitness classes.

Lastly, and very importantly, I want to acknowledge that it is because of our members and leaders who have, through their talents, time, and energy, provided the means for this organization to remain viable and vital, and there is always room at the table for others who would like to get more involved.

## First Vice-President's Letter

The 25th PSHS National Reunion hosted by Lt. Alexander Nininger, Jr. Chapter in Los Angeles, California last May 8-9, 2009 was an outstanding success. I just want to commend all the members especially Philip Garcia, Chapter President who came all the way from Singapore to make sure everything is in order. Mr. Gil Mislant who coordinated with the hotel and programs; Mr. Victor Virano, Mr. Donald Plata showed their power point presentations.

Although, the chapter was just activated two years ago, the members who were mostly Philippine Scouts re-enactors did a super job. The display of the Philippine Scouts memorabilia and firearms reminds us of the rich history of the Scouts.

The annual reunions and meetings have taken a new approach not only in getting together but inviting speakers, power point presentations, and the Philippine Scouts re-enactors greatly enhanced the ongoing interest in the heritage of the Scouts.

I just want to thank General Antonio Taguba AUS retired, who was the guest

speaker of the reunion whose father was also a Philippine Scout.

A new chapter was organized at Fort Stosenburg, Clarkfield in the Philippines last July 4, 2009. Philip Garcia who came from Singapore open the discussion with hard copies of the By-laws.

The Philippine Scouts Heritage Society is going in the right direction under the helm of our National President Senator John Patterson. The Society is financially stable, but members have to be aware of the by-laws as far as finances which derive from membership, and proceeds from the annual reunions.

The future of the Society lies on it's members and over the years with the help of Mr. Mike Houlahan and his daughter Christa the society has maintained the website and the newsletter. The Fort Sam Houston Museum a repository of the Scouts memorabilia has helped preserve the legacy of the Scouts.

The 26th National annual reunion will be on May 7-8, 2010 in Tacoma



Jose "Joe" Calugas, Jr., 1st Vice President

Washington. Our chapter will be the host and I welcome any suggestions from the chapters on panel discussions and presentations.

Thank you for your support and Mabuhay !!!

Jose "Joe" Calugas, Jr.  
National First Vice President  
President of Tacoma Chapter

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25th Reunion From Page 1

and duties of U.S. soldiers in combat and in the handling of captives. He also noted his investigation of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal in Iraq. General Taguba lead a discussion on these topics in the morning and fielded a number of questions. General Taguba's father, uncle and cousin were Philippine Scouts.

Thanks go to Chris Schaefer for arranging great coverage from the media. There were articles in the local press as well as television coverage.

In addition to General Taguba's kickoff session, Saturday was the day for panels and presentations summarized as follows:

Felipe Fernandez, Dan Figuericion and Ed Ramsey formed a veterans' panel. They had been members of the 26th Cavalry (PS) and spoke of the early fighting on Luzon after the Japanese invasion. They answered numerous questions about the combat actions that took place including the last U.S. horse cavalry charge which Colonel Ramsey led. One poignant moment occurred when the panel members reminisced about their horses and the great loss they felt when the horses were slaughtered for food since the troops were on reduced rations and slowly starving.

Donald Plata gave us an update on his documentary about the Scouts and showed us a power point presentation of the work that was done in Hong Kong with reenactors as Scouts. This documentary is going to be an outstanding tribute to the Scouts. Our thanks go to Donald as he wraps up his work in the months ahead.

A reenactor's panel made up of Philip

Garcia, Gil Mislang, Victor Verano and Rudy Cabigas recounted how they got started with Philippine Scout reenacting and how they formed a Living History Company. They also spoke of how they came to reactivate the Alexander Ninger Chapter of the Society. The panel provided pictures and background regarding the encampments, shows, prizes won and parades in which they'd been engaged. The dynamism, energy and enthusiasm of the reenactors is infectious.

Malcolm Decker went into considerable detail about his latest book, From Bataan To Safety. It's a fascinating tale of how two brothers and their families cared for over 100 American Soldiers who escaped from Bataan. Malcolm also held a book signing event later in the day.

Tony Meldahl briefed us on his many research activities concerning World War II. This included his work with Joe Galloway, author of We Were Soldiers Once, and Young, a much heralded book that was later made into a movie. Mr. Meldahl also spoke of his research plans concerning the early days of World War II in the Philippines. He has an ambitious and exciting agenda in front of him.

On Friday afternoon, Victor Verano showed us a picture slideshow and made a presentation of his recent visits to Bataan battlefields such as Mabatang and Abucay Hacienda. It was fascinating to see where battles actually took place. There were pictures of farmers who were there during the fighting and bullet scarred trees that were still in place.

presentation brought home how desperate the fighting must have been. There was nowhere to go for the Fil-Am forces but the peninsula of Bataan.

Friday morning was spent on Society business. An audit was conducted of the Society's finances. The Treasurer's report and a summary of the Secretary's minutes from the 2008 reunion were accepted by the Board of Officers. A combined Officers and General Meeting took place in which Jose Calugas, Jr was reelected as First Vice President of the Society and Gregg Baltazar Timbol was elected Secretary. Colonel John E. Olson was named by the Board as Historian Emeritus. Paul Ruiz was named as Newsletter Editor and J. Michael Houlahan as Historian. I want to thank these gentlemen for their willingness to serve and their devotion to these extraordinary soldiers.

Thanks to Joe Calugas, Jr., and his Jose Calugas, Sr. Chapter, the next reunion of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society will be held in Tacoma, Washington on May 7 and May 8, 2010.

Our meeting closed with a moment of silence in honor of all those Scouts who have passed away. Their legacy will be carried forward and they will never be forgotten.

Until next time, as our late founding President, General Royal Reynolds would say, Mabuhay ang Philippine Scouts!

Take care, --John

Sen. John Patterson, National President Philippine Scouts Heritage Society



Photos courtesy Ninger Chapter





Next Generation From Page 1

Through email, I sent out questionnaires to a number of PS descendants and received several replies. In making my overall argument in this article, I have also been able to refer to anecdotal evidence; that is, I am able to recall conversations that I have had with various Scouts' descendants on this subject. Lastly, I also conducted telephone interviews. In my email, I presented all of my recipients with four core questions intended to have them reflect on their own impressions and beliefs concerning their forebears' service in the Philippine Scouts. At this meeting, I distributed photocopies of these queries and the responses that I received were surprising and revelatory, and yet confirm the presuppositions that I held before I began this enterprise.

**First of all**, the Philippine Scouts children, or the "Army Soup" (as US Marine 1st Sergeant Felix D. Saguing, whose father served in the 12th Medical Battalion [PS], remembers they were called in the U.S. colony of the pre-WW II era Philippine Islands) see their PS fathers as **exceedingly ordinary men who made exceedingly extraordinary achievements**. These were achievements that were both attained in the pre-war period, as regards the preparation and work necessary to day-to-day readiness and for the crucible of combat, during the conflagration of the Second World War, and afterward.

One respondent wrote to me about the inscription on her father's war-time Silver Star decoration:

**Major Joseph F. Peters-20075-Medical Corps, Army of the United States**

"For gallantry in action on Bataan, Philippine Islands, 25 January 1942. Major Peters, as Executive Officer of the 12th Medical Battalion (PS), coordinated and supervised the evacuation of the patients, personnel, and equipment of the collection companies during the withdrawal from the Abucay position. On the night of 25 January 1942, he was in the Balanga Church directing the evacuation of the medical unit located

within the church, when the enemy directed artillery fire on the church. The structure received nine direct hits during which time Major Peters, with absolute disregard for his personal safety, remained within the church directing the evacuation of the patients and personnel."

This respondent wrote to that, as she grew up in the post-WW II years and heard her Dad speak with such admiration for "his' men," the Philippine Scouts, she was always proud of her father's work during the war. Moreover, she felt drawn to learning more about the Philippine Scouts, the soldiers who, through her own father's reminisces, she came to see as such a "loyal and caring fighting group." She wrote to me that the Scouts were obviously "men who could be counted on to do their best and didn't let down, even when the Japs overran them." Based upon that Silver Star and all the other evidence that is uncovered over a lifetime of being his daughter, I believe that this respondent has concluded that her father has a rightful place with these Philippine Scouts who she has come to admire and love so much.

There is a group of Scouts' children who I have met who passed on to me a document that spoke volumes about how they perceive their father, **1st Sergeant Arthur C. Agpalasin, Company E, 45th Infantry Regt. (PS)**. It detailed a thirty-three career of a true warrior. 1stSgt. Agpalasin rightfully wore the three-starred Combat Infantryman's Badge that revealed his combat service in WW II, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War. This document stated that Agpalasin saw battle on Bataan, and was then forced to walk the "March of Death" on his way to the Imperial Japanese Army's prison camp near Capas, Tarlac. In fact, according to this article, Agpalasin went on to serve as a Platoon Sergeant in the 31st Infantry Regt., 7th Infantry Division, in the Korean War, ending up as a POW a second time following the Chinese Communist Forces'



Anthony Maravillas

intervention in November 1950.

Agpalasin's youngest son told me that his father never did talk to him about his experiences during WW II; instead the 1stSgt. wrote a thirteen-page memoir that the son got to read in which his father remembered, among other things, the ordeals of being imprisoned at Camp O'Donnell. One of those terrible memories involved being chosen by the Japanese guards to work in the burial details, interring those POWs who had expired the previous night. The 1st Sergeant did what all good soldiers must eventually do: he "faded away" in 2005. At his funeral held at the Presidio in Monterey, CA, a U.S. Army Major General eulogized this old soldier as a detachment of U.S. Marines formed the color guard, and a unit of U.S. Army soldiers gave the twenty-one gun salute. On that day (and since) a crowd of active duty, drawn from the local Defense Language Institute, along with retired military men and women honored 1stSgt. Agpalasin for his service, and his life. His children must have appreciated their father's achievements even more so on that day. The youngest son in that family summed up those feelings when he told me that his father "did pretty well for a little boy who had come from Ilocos de Norte."

**Secondly**, it is my view that the Philippine Scouts have taught their children the **ultimate lesson** that all citizens of a **democracy** must comprehend and then take to heart. The Scouts' children have learned from their fathers' efforts, before WW II, in the midst of that world-

changing struggle, and afterward during the potentially world-ending Cold War that there is nothing in this world like **freedom**.

In invoking the word "freedom" I mean the right of a person to choose how he or she wishes to live, love, struggle, win (and also lose), and so on. This condition is available to the Scouts children partly because their sires fought tooth-and-nail for their liberties in a lop-sided fight in the First Philippines Campaign, sixty-six years ago. These soldiers did so despite being cut off from any succor, sometimes fighting with outdated equipment and ordnance, and subsisting for 150 days on rations suitable only to sedentary humans residing in a far more salubrious condition than the Bataan Peninsula in the middle of the Dry Season. Those Scouts who surrendered on **Bataan** in early April 1942, as well as those who lowered their weapons for the final time when the Fil-Americans on the **Fortified Islands** bowed to the inevitable about a month later, knew what it was like to have lost their liberties. These Philippine Scouts had come to know what the loss of freedom meant on the Death March, and at Garage 92, Camp O'Donnell, Cabanatuan, Puerta Princesa, Mukden, and elsewhere. They hated it, as they hated all tyranny and oppression, and they passed on that lesson to their children.

A son of one of only five Scouts to win the Medal of Honor during that organization's existence between 1899 and 1949 wrote to me. This respondent told me how his father seized the opportunities that were available to free people in this, the freest country in the world. Despite his relatively advanced age following his retirement from the US Army in 1957, and the fact that English may have been perhaps his tertiary language, this respondent's father used funding from the GI Bill (the "Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944") to complete an undergraduate degree at the University of Puget Sound in 1961, which was the year this Philippine Scout Medal of Honor winner turned 55. My respondent

claimed that his father's determined effort showed his siblings and him that it was "never too late to seek personal advancement, and that the only way to achieve this was through education and hard work." This was obviously a lesson that this respondent took to heart.

Without his father's hard work, during the First Philippines Campaign, and afterward here in the United States, this particular Scout Medal of Honor's son would not have had the right to even be able to live in America. He was only able to travel to the U.S. to stay as an eighteen-year-old in 1958 because he was one of the many "service-connected" immigrants who the Scouts had either married or fathered. Once here in the United States, this eldest child of **Sergeant Jose Calugas, Sr., 88th Field Artillery (PS)**, exercised his freedom to make of his life what he would: he served six years active duty in the U.S. Army, used the GI Bill to earn his own Bachelor's Degree, helped make a family, and had a fruitful career at the Boeing Corporation for over thirty years.

The call of freedom resounds loudly in the minds of the Scouts descendants. One of my respondents told me how he found out that the experience of losing one's liberty scarred his own father for the rest of his life.

The many months in the Japanese Army's prison camps must have gravely wounded those of the approximately seven thousand Scouts who managed to survive their multiple trials, in more ways than one. This particular respondent wrote to me and remembered how he saw father, a former soldier in the **12th Quartermaster Battalion (PS)**, weep just once. On this occasion, his father told him that his own mother did not recognize her soldier-son after he had made his way home following his release on parole from Camp O'Donnell in at some point in either 1942 or early 1943. This singular show of emotion was a revelation, and most assuredly disturbing. All we Scouts children know that these Philippine Scouts are to all appearances very traditional men,

seemingly without emotion, stoic to the core. I liken the parenting styles of these old soldiers to that that was practiced by most of John Wayne's movie characters had they been real men and actual fathers. Specifically, I allude to "Sgt. Stryker" in the 1949 Hollywood film, "The Sands of Iwo Jima," if you know what I mean. The reality of having Tough-Men-as-Our-Fathers, our Philippine Scouts Dads, most definitely manifested Sgt. Stryker's employment of "Tough Love" towards his men, and, in our real-life cases, we, the Scouts' sons and daughters. At any rate, that one instance in which a Scout recalled to his son the tremendous pain and sorrow that came along with his loss of freedom demonstrated to one Scout child just how precious a commodity it truly is. Without it, this certain Scout descendant has the right to ask in response to his father's example here, how much value do our lives really possess?

Speaking of the "Duke" Wayne, another respondent, a retired U.S. Marine Corps 1st Sergeant, related to me that his own Scout father was actually not an authoritarian type of parent. This Scout child was the son of a true "Old Scout," a soldier who had enlisted in the 1920s and spent much of his military career in the **12th Medical Battalion (PS)**. Rather than living up the popular stereotype that civilians have of the "military parent" who is "totalitarian" in his or her parenting practices, this respondent's sire was "more of the persuasive type than a 'screaming finger wagger.'" The lesson that his Scout father offered to this respondent was, "you make your own path in life. There may be forks and obstacles along the way. It is up to you to find and follow the right path. Should you make a bad choice or stumble along the way, I will be there to pick you up." What better gift and legacy, then, could this Old Scout, who had been literally been through "the wars," have bequeathed his child?

**Thirdly**, and finally, I believe that the Philippine Scouts children are **inspired**

See Next Generation Page 8



Next Generation From Page 7

to live just and meaningful lives by their soldier-fathers' examples, ones that have been set out over entire lifetimes. Such examples are most critical to people: the old adage applies, if others can persevere and ultimately succeed, then anything is certainly possible in our lives.

A respondent related to me some of her own Scout father's deeply-held beliefs. She wrote that her Dad's experiences during the First Philippines Campaign and as a POW at Camp O'Donnell and Cabanatuan "reinforced his natural resilient outlook and positive view of life." He had, this particular Scout father often told his children, noticed that "those fellow POWs who gave up, died within hours." My respondent told me that her Dad, **Captain Melvin D. Rosen, the CO of Battery E of the 88th Field Artillery (PS)**, affirmed to her the tried-and-true saw that, "Keeping hope alive was the most difficult act and most important." After the hardships of battle that his own Scout outfit endured, and then the travails of the Death March, the POW camps, and the subsequent forced transport to Korea to work as a slave laborer, this respondent's father found that all of his long post-liberation was simply "gravy." This respondent emphatically stated that her father inspired her to live her life as fully as possible because: ". . . I feel like I walk in my father's shadow, with him acting as both advisor and guardian." She then added that, "I strive to embrace my dad's values, and make him proud of me, just as I am proud of him."

Other respondents were moved by their Scouts-Dads' achievements to render service to this nation in one way or another. One of them, the son of **Pedro Sarmiento**, an "Old Scout" who served in the **14th Engineers Battalion (PS)** from 1925 through to the surrender of Bataan, contacted me from his home in the state of Maryland. This PS son is old enough to have attended one of the Christmas celebrations at Fort William McKinley, either before or shortly after the war. Those were grand events, he

recalled. Pedro Sarmiento's son grew up in the Guadalupe, Rizal Province, barrio of Panigkaisanhan, where many enlisted Scout families lived. This respondent was inspired by his father's thirty-two year service in the U.S. Army to enlist in the U.S. Air Force in July 1953, right in the midst of the Cold War. After a four-year hitch, he then went on as a civilian to labor as a Research Chemist for thirty-five and a half years for the U.S. federal government.

The eldest son of **Private First Class Rosendo Luna**, who fought on Bataan as a Combat Engineer in Company C, the **14th Engineers Battalion (PS)**, communicated to me how his father's service in the Scouts inspired him to serve his community in Washington state. This Scout child sought to emulate his father's "organization, punctuality, [attention to] details, and achievement of goals" as he himself worked as an educator and educational administrator in a very public career that lasted thirty-seven years.

I have met grandchildren of Philippine Scouts. They have emphasized to me that their now-deceased Scout ancestors continue to be role models for them today. One of them, the granddaughter of **Arcadio Mabanglo**, a trooper in **Troop A, 26th Cavalry (PS)**, spoke to me of how her grandfather's legacy of service as a professional soldier that spanned three decades pushes her to perfect her craft as a writer. She wrote to me that, "The meaningfulness of his life for me, though, is that he believed deeply in what he did as a soldier, believed that his family would benefit from his hard work and his six daughters, fourteen grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren have benefited from his choices." One Scout grandson taught me that the death of his grandfather, **Corporal Fernando Balthasar, Company H, 45th Infantry Regt. (PS)**, at the Battle of the Points on 25 January 1942, engulfed his family in a "lifetime of pain and loss." Yet, today, he himself takes some consolation and

inspiration from this loss. This young man has always sought to live an ethical life, one that is based upon his grandfather's spiritual and religious values that this one infantryman affirmed almost sixty-seven years ago in his last words to his own brother.

**In conclusion**, the Philippine Scouts' children and grandchildren have received many figurative gifts from their fathers and grandfathers. **One**, they are the citizens of **exactly** the sort of free, democratic and tolerant society that those very ordinary men fought to preserve and uphold against a maleficent and authoritarian enemy many decades ago, in the faraway Philippine Islands. These Scouts descendants are constantly awed by their Dads' extraordinary achievements in the face of a cunning and, tragically enough for them, ultimately irresistible opponent. **Second**, the Philippine Scouts have inculcated in their issue **a enduring legacy of love for the freedoms** that their own relentless efforts in a 150-day siege, on a bit of land surrounded by hordes of Japanese military forces that were then enjoying a roll of consistent successes, helped to keep alive in those early and dark years of the Second World War. **Finally**, the Scouts' successors are **inspired to lead fruitful, productive, and meaningful lives** by their fathers and grandfathers, the men who had the courage to fight for those values and ideals that they so strongly believed in against great odds at the very beginning of WW II. As **they** go about this world, as **they** deal with the pitfalls of modern existence, **these offspring of the Philippine Scouts** are able to draw daily on that **great reservoir of strength and determination** that their Dads so manfully manifested during those four months of Hell sixty-six years ago on distant Bataan. One daughter of a Scout put it so succinctly:

"Dad's experiences, which I strongly relate to, have colored my whole life. When life has thrown me a curve, I've truly thought of the ordeals those on Bataan suffered and decided I could

beat my problem. 'I can do it!' I only have to think of those POWs and their adjustments to hell to be inspired . . . In [the] PI, fragile bodies withstood severe trials . . . It was an incredible feat . . . The reasoning and the ingenuity of the mind, along with the ability to cope with severe abuse they were exposed

to, is an extraordinary asset of the human being."

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## Nininger Award

The West Point Association of Graduates awards annually the Alexander R. Nininger Award for Valor at Arms. The award is intended to further the ideals of West Point by presenting to the Corps of Cadets an outstanding example of heroism by a recent graduate. I was able to attend this year's ceremony on September 16, 2009, in which First Lieutenant Nicolas M. Eslinger, Class of 2007, was recognized for his personal bravery and leadership.

The award is named after my uncle, Second Lieutenant Alexander R. Nininger, Class of 1941, who joined the 57th Infantry Regiment of the Philippine Scouts shortly before Pearl Harbor. During the first month of World War II, Sandy, as he was known, was killed in action. For his heroism on Bataan he

was awarded posthumously the Medal of Honor.

Lieutenant Eslinger was awarded the Silver Star while serving as a Platoon Leader in the 101st Airborne Division. As a result of his action in Iraq, Lieutenant Eslinger saved the lives of several soldiers in his platoon by covering a grenade during an attack and having time to throw it away before it exploded.

Lieutenant Eslinger spoke to the 4000 plus Corps of Cadets at dinner. His message was unique and inspiring. It resonated well with the Corps because many Cadets remembered him and because he talked about leadership and how important it is to take care of those who are in one's command.

Sandy Nininger's family is honored by this award. It is endowed by E. Douglas

Kenna (Class of 1945) and Jean Kenna. Doug Kenna was a three sport athlete at West Point including as the quarterback for the undefeated 1944 football team. He was named an All-American that year. Mr. Kenna also has had a highly successful business career.

Sandy Nininger died while a Philippine Scout. His remains were never found after the war but his memory lives on in the family and through the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society. The Alexander R. Nininger Award for Valor at Arms is a tribute to him and the Scouts. We must never forget.

Sen. John Patterson, National President Philippine Scouts Heritage Society

## Member Activities

*An important objective of this newsletter is the encouragement of our members to raise public awareness of the proud patriotic legacy of the Philippine Scouts. Examples of member's efforts to accomplish this over the last six months follow:*

The culmination of Philippine Liberation Week in San Diego was a Philippine Veterans Recognition Dinner and Awards Ceremony. During this dinner the Philippine Scouts were honored with an award accepted by **Lt. Col. Ed Ramsey, 26th Cavalry (PS)**. Also participating were the reenactors of the **Nininger Chapter**.

**Michael and Elizabeth Norman's** new book **Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March** was released on Memorial Day to excellent reviews and is selling briskly.

**Donald Plata's** documentary on

the Philippine Scouts is scheduled for release this fall.

**Chris Schaefer** has sold out his first book **Bataan Diary: An American Family in World War II, 1941-1945**.

**Malcolm Decker** reports good sales on his second book, **From Bataan to Safety: The Rescue of 104 American Soldiers in the Philippines**.

The AmCham Business Journal, published in Manila, ran **Mike Houllahan's** article "Their Finest Hour: The Philippine Scouts on Bataan" in its June issue and **Beyond the Wire**, a newsletter published by internees and POWs held

in the Philippines by the Japanese during WWII, carried his article "American Gurkhas: The Philippine Scouts 1901-1950" in its September issue. In mid October Mike will speak on the History of the Philippine Scouts and how the PSHS keeps that legacy alive at the final luncheon of the three-day Filipino American National Historical Society's Midwest Biennial Regional Conference at Ohio State University. The **PSHS 12-panel poster** show on the history of the Philippine Scouts also will be displayed throughout the conference.



## Chapter News

### Capt. Jose Calugas, Sr. Chapter:

April 4, 2009, **Goody and I** attended a dinner commemorating the Fall of Bataan and Corregidor to honor the WWII veterans and their spouses. This was hosted by The Bataan and Corregidor Survivors Association and their Families in Seattle, Washington.

**General Oscar Hilman** was among guest speakers to honor the WWII veterans in celebration of the 67th Anniversary of the Fall of Bataan before a landmark monument dedicated to the Filipino WWII warriors at the Lake Street Park in Los Angeles, California last April 9, 2009.

**Members of the Tacoma Chapter** volunteered for the Consular outreach program sponsored by the Philippine Consulate General, San Francisco.

Also, attended the Mount Rainier Branch 104 Fleet Reserve Association to recognize and award the youth essay contest.

The Tacoma Chapter was well represented at the 25th PSHS Annual Reunion in Long Beach, California last May 8-9, 2009.

May 16, 2009, **Mr. Arturo Garcia** a life member of the Tacoma Chapter and his group has a tent representing the Philippine Scouts during the Armed Forces Day at Fort Lewis, Washington.

Memorial Day, **Goody and I** attended the dedication of the Medal of Honor Monument bearing the names of the seven Medal of Honor recipients from Pierce County at the War Memorial Park in Tacoma, Washington. I was proud and humbled that my father's name was among the seven recipients that were honored. Also, at the Memorial Park there's a place to honor the POW/MIA veterans and tiles with the names of 79 POW/MIA and 4 Medal of Honor recipients from Pierce County who were POW was installed and proud that I was involved with these projects. Out of the 79 engraved names on the tiles, there were 6 Philippine Scouts.

The Tacoma Chapter has a total of 78 members, life members 72 and 6 annual members. Among the new members that recently joined are : **Ms Eleanor Noble** a retired school principal in Tacoma, whose father **Marcelino Noble** was with

the Hawaiian Division, all Filipino US Army; **Mr. David C. Bertoli**, a nephew of **Major. Sam C. Jones** 45th Infantry PS., **Captain David Deleon** US Army assigned at Ft. Lewis whose father was a recognized Guerrilla in the Philippine during WWII.

Jose "Joe" Calugas, Jr.

**Lt. Alexander R. Nininger Chapter:**  
No Activities reported.

**Gen. John J. Pershing Chapter (El Paso):**  
No activities reported.

**Golden Gate-Bay Area Chapter:**  
No activities reported.

**LTC Loyd E. Mills Chapter:**  
No activities reported.

**Monterey County Chapter:**  
No activities reported.

## Newsletter and Library

Non-member newsletter subscription: 2-years: \$10.00 domestic & \$14 overseas; 3-years: \$14 domestic & \$18 overseas. Email subscriptions are \$4 & \$6 for 2 & 3 years. Members receive the newsletter at no charge.

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Sen. John Patterson  
President, PSHS  
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North Kingstown, RI 02852



First gathering of the Fort Stotsenburg, Pampanga chapter of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society  
L to R - MSgt. Alvin Alfonso, Pedro Javier, missing need info, Philip Garcia, Col Restituto Aguilar, Lt. Guy Hilbero, Ernie Penas, Bong Casayuran, Mr. Edison David, Mr. Mon Canlas, Mr. Joe Mamam.

## In Memoriam

**Greg Ramos**, past president of Monterey Chapter passed away on February 20, 2009 after a long bout with bone cancer. A husband, a father and a soldier, born April 22, 1919 and passed on February 20, 2009. Greg was a loving husband and father. He is survived by his wife Conchita, four children by his deceased first wife and numerous grandchildren.

He enlisted in the Philippine Scouts in 1940 and was assigned with the 88th Field Artillery stationed at Fort Stotsenburg, Philippines. In December 1941, Greg unhesitatingly joined the soldiers who fought to preserve the freedom we now enjoy. Like many soldiers he suffered many hardships and dangers and at the end he involuntarily submitted to his misfortune that of having been captured and interned in the infamous War Prisoner Camp at Camp O'Donnell in Capas Tarlac. While in the camp he told those around him that they should not be downhearted, that their internment is just a set back.

When he was released from the Prison Camp, he became a guerrilla fighter until

the liberation of the Philippines in 1945. Greg brought and raised his family in the United States and after he retired from the Military in 1964 and Civil Service in 1981, he joined the fraternity of Philippine Scouts and later became the Chapter President of Monterey Peninsula until October 2008. On his deathbed, Greg welcomed death not as a grim tyrant that came to end his earthly life but as a kind messenger that came to transform him from this imperfect world to that all perfect and glorious place where nobody has ever returned.

**Mario D. Cid** Passed away in San Francisco on February 13, 2009. Survived by his beloved wife of 50 years, Hortensia; devoted father of David, Doraliza Cid-Bouska (husband George), and Darlene; loving grandfather of Georgia Bouska, Annalisa Bouska, and Giana Blagdon. Born in the Philippines, Mario immigrated to the United States in the early 1950's. A Sergeant in the Philippine Scouts, 14th Engineers (PS), he helped defend Bataan and then escaped from the Death March. Mario

also was a US Army Veteran of the Korean War. He enjoyed a long career as a mechanical engineer at Southern Pacific Railroad Co.; after which he retired and enjoyed many years of gardening, raising orchids, cooking his favorite Filipino recipes, and rooting for all Bay Area sport teams, especially his favorite SF Giants. An active member in the Catholic church, he was a founder of the Filipino Catholic Association of San Francisco at St. Dominic's Church. Respected by all who came in contact with him, he will be deeply missed and always remembered for his unique wit, devotion to family and friends, and his unending courage to meet the challenges of his life head-on. His wife can be reached at (415) 585-3364.

**Floriano R. Castaneda, Sr.** passed away Sept. 6, 2009. He served with the 3rd Bn., 45th Infantry (PS) during the Bataan Campaign, participated in the Death March and was a POW at Camp O'Donnell, Capas, Tarlac, Philippines. During his military service he was

See *In Memoriam* Page 12



In Memoriam From Page 11

awarded two bronze stars. Floriano was retired in Kanoche, Hawaii at the time of his death.

**Lorie Cabiao** was born on May 3, 1922 in Camiling, Tarlac, Philippines and passed away August 29, 2009 in Lacey, WA.

Lorie was a devoted family man and enjoyed traveling especially to Hawaii, gardening and raising various animals. As a young man, he fought in World War II as a Philippine Scout in the 26th Cavalry (PS), and was a POW in Bataan. He later joined the US Army, fought in the Korean War and retired after 21 years. After retirement, he was a chef at the Olympia Oyster House for many years.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years Alejandra Cabiao; daughters Gloria Talvo (JG), Eleanor Cabiao and Lerma Cabiao; son Jay Cabiao(Tracey); and many grandchildren.

**MSgt. Martin Andora**, a member of Monterey Chapter of the Philippine

Scouts Heritage Society, died at home in Seaside, California following a long battle with cancer on July 1, 2009. He was 92. During WWII, Martin was a Philippine Scout artilleryman, who was taken prisoner on Corregidor after the surrender in early May, 1942. He survived POW camp and remained in the U.S. Army, later serving in the Korean War. He was survived by his wife, Aurora, six children, 12 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

Retired Philippine Scout **MSgt. Lauro Villagracia, Sr.** was born in Lubang, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. He served in the 91st Coast Artillery (PS) during WWII and was a POW at Camp O'Donnell. Upon his release, he returned to Lubang and joined the guerrilla resistance. During his 23 year military career, he was a highly decorated veteran of two wars. After retirement from the military, he spent 21 years as an employee of AAFES ( Army Air Force Exchange Services) where he

retired as a warehouse manager.

He was a life member of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society, VFW and AEX- POW. Larry is survived by his wife of 68 years and six children, 15 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

**Nick Lozada**, 3rd Bn., 45th Infantry (PS) died on 3/6/09 in American Canyon, CA at 89. During his WWII service, Nick survived the Pantigan River bed massacre during the surrender on Bataan. He is survived by his wife.

**Benigo G. Tabora**, 91, died in December, 2008, in Acton, Massachusetts. He joined the Philippine Scouts in 1936, was captured on Bataan, survived the Death March and POW camp, and then joined the guerrillas. Following WWII, he served in Korea and retired as a Sgt Major in 1968. He was survived by his wife, Mae, and several children.

## Surviving Scouts

The following are surviving Philippine Scouts identified since our last newsletter:

**John Begornia**, Pearl City, HI (New Scout)— 510th Transportation Co. (PS)

**Romeo Castro**, Chicago, IL—26th Cavalry (PS)

**Eduardo "Eddie" Verchez Garcia**, unit unknown (New Scout)

**Mel L. Escuadra**, Quezon City—Battery "A", 1st Bn., 24th Field Artillery (PS)

**Cris Madayag**, Wahiawa, HI (New Scout)— 14th Engineers Bn. (PS)

**PFC Angel M. Namera**, Pangasinan, RP (New Scout)—99th OHM Co. (PS) (probably a maintenance unit in the Ryukyus Command)

**SFC Tomas B. Taguba, Sr.**, Wahiawa, HI—57th Infantry (PS) [earlier 12th Ord Co. (PS)]

**Valentine Untalan**, Calasiao, Pangasinan, Philippines - 57th Infantry (PS), L company

**Cpl. Marcelino Perez Ventura**, Pangasinan, RP—"A" Troop, 26th Cavalry (PS) post-war in Military Police (PS)

The entire list of 116 survivors is under "Scouts" on our PSHS Message Board. Updates to this list should be sent to Historian Mike Houlahan.

## Review: Survival and Triumph: A Soldier's Story

### Historical Biography of the War in the Philippines by Jaime I. Romero

University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, Manila, 2008. Pp. 136 incl. 21 photos, 12 combat maps, bibliography and 10 pp. index, ISBN 978-871-506-486-6, pesos 275 (paperback).

Reviewed by **J. Michael Houlahan**

This book is part WWII history and part biography of military lawyer and Brigadier General Tagumpay A. Nañadiego. The author, a Santo Tomas University economist, devotes well over half the book to a concise description of WWII in the Philippines: the defense of Bataan, POW experiences, the parole of most Filipino soldiers, the Japanese occupation and eventual liberation. Included is an interesting ten-page photo insert, including rather chilling shots of combat destruction in Manila and starving foreign civilians incarcerated at the Santo Tomas Internment Camp.

Almost nothing is written of then-Private Nañadiego's experiences on Bataan, probably because he was a company clerk and appeared not to have been in frontline combat. However, the author does recount the heroism of several other Filipinos directly involved in the fighting.

Following the April 9, 1942 surrender, Nañadiego took part in the Bataan Death March, but was fortunate enough to ride the last third of the way on a truck. Still, by the time of his parole five months later, he was malnourished and diseased, requiring two months of hospitalization. After a lengthy recuperation, he joined a guerrilla unit in early 1944 and was made an officer.

Prof. Romero mixes biographic commentary on Nañadiego throughout this historic account. The result is a curious mix of history overlaid on what appears to be a commissioned biography. In any case, the calm historical discourse suddenly and rather disconcertingly veers to a description of Nañadiego,

by then a guerrilla officer, falling in love: "His eyes, black as bottomless water and brilliant as fire, locked into hers for a moment that seemed like an eternity....before long, mutual attraction was bursting out between the two like sweat....their hearts simmered with angry love like chicken soup [on a] stove..." (p.89)

Although the combat descriptions are well written, the author does make one dubious and undocumented claim concerning Japanese invasion commander Homma's loss of three senior officers due to Tokyo's impatience with his lack of military progress. According to Romero, this loss "...riled [Homma] so, he promised to vent his vengeance on the survivors of Bataan." (p. 53) I've seen nothing in the literature indicating Homma made such a threat.

The biographic portions become more interesting post-war. Following the end of hostilities, Nañadiego joined the Philippine Army's Judge Advocate General's Service, where he distinguished himself as an administrator, specializing in resolving claims for killed and wounded Philippine Scouts.

He also completed law school, which would open up the higher reaches of the JAG Service. On detached duty with the Philippine contingent taking part in the Korean War, he became friends with then-lieutenant and future Philippine President Fidel Ramos. (President Ramos wrote the book's foreword.)

A few years after his Korean War duty, Capt. Nañadiego was sent to the U.S. for additional legal training. Now promoted to Major, he first was assigned to a Senator and then parlayed

this into a position in Malacañang Palace under President Diosdado Macapagal. He retained this position when Ferdinand Marcos took over the presidency in 1965.

Under Marcos, Nañadiego's heretofore promising career would flourish. Eventually he became Judge Advocate General of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the military's top legal position and rose to the rank of brigadier general. However, the beginning of the end came after Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972 and had Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, Jr., his main political rival, arrested and placed on trial "for high crimes". A year later, Judge Advocate General Nañadiego discovered that the testimony against Sen. Aquino by a key government witness was fabricated and reported this to President Marcos. A few days later Nañadiego's 33-year-old career was over.

Two years after his forced retirement, Gen. Nañadiego and his wife immigrated to the United States where they settled in New Jersey. Some years later he came out of retirement to accept appointment by his old friend, President Fidel Ramos, as head of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office in Washington, D.C. In that capacity, he played an active role in lobbying for recently passed legislation awarding additional compensation to Filipinos who fought the Japanese in WWII.

This book will primarily appeal to readers desiring a compact description of the defense of Bataan and those who know General Nañadiego. It is available for P. 275 in the Philippines, but does not appear to be available through U.S. booksellers.



## Interview: Philip M. Garcia, President, PSHS Nininger Chapter

Interviewed by Kinue Tokudome

From: US-Japan Dialogue on POWs  
<http://www.us-japandialogueonpows.org/>

The Philippine Scouts were part of the regular U.S. Army who fought valiantly side by side with American soldiers in the defense of the Philippines. After the surrender in Bataan, they were forced to walk the Bataan Death March and were interned at Camp O'Donnell where over 27,500 American and Filipino POWs died. Many of those who survived the Death March and Camp O'Donnell later became guerrillas to carry on their fight against the Japanese.

Former POW of the Japanese and the author of O'Donnell: Andersonville of the Pacific, Col. John E. Olson, USA (Ret.) described the Philippine Scouts as follows:

Little known outside the Philippines and largely forgotten by the U.S. Army of which they were a proud part, the Scouts were soldiers par excellence.

The Philippine Scouts Heritage Society's mission is to preserve the history, heritage and legacy of the Philippine Scouts for present and future generations. Mr. Garcia is the president of its Los Angeles chapter as well as the Philippine Scouts Living History Company that perform reenactments of the battles in which Scouts engaged.

### How did you become involved in activities of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society?

We started doing Philippine Scouts impressions in 2006 at different veterans and military historical reenactment events around southern California. We first participated as color guard unit in the Tacoma Washington 2007 Reunion, one of our members Gil Mislant proposed that we join the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society. From then on we choose to reactivate the Lt. Alexander Nininger Los Angeles chapter and the rest was history.

### Are you related to a former Scout?

Unfortunately no. But I have an deceased uncle, Brig. Gen. Benjamin Molina, an Ordinance Officer who served in Bataan and served with the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, which was part of the USAFFE (United States Army Forces in the Far East) where the Scouts belonged too.

### What is "Philippine Scouts Living History Company?"

That was the name we chose for our Living History activities under the Lt. Alexander Nininger Los Angeles Chapter. What is unique about our chapter is that we portray and show impressions of the Philippine Scout soldier through uniforms, equipment they wore or carried and their military bearing and way of life.

Our chapter officers include, Gil Mislant - treasurer, Reunion event chairman (PS descendant), Frank Lopez- secretary, Victor Verano- chapter historian, Sen. John Patterson, main adviser- President of the National Society and nephew of a Medal of Honor PS Lt. Alexander Nininger who our chapter represents.

We have 5 retired PS WWII veteran "advisers" who are Col. Edwin Ramsey, Dr. Isabelo Torio, Brig. Gen. Antonio Ortega, Ted Villasor Sr. and Rommy Entac.

And the re-enactor members we have are Rudy Cabigas whose father and uncle both served with the 26th Cavalry. PS., Ray Ortega whose uncle served as PS.

We also have two members who portray our American "PS officers" Louis Cogut and Mark Lawrence. There is Luther Ritter who provides our Military vehicles and bigger equipment the Scouts used. We have about 25 members in our chapter. Joe Lopez's uncle served in the 200th Coast Artillery in Bataan. We even have a member Lawrence Al-

cazar on the other side of the Atlantic based in England.

### What is the purpose of reenacting the battles that the Philippine Scouts engaged? What do you want to achieve?

The purpose is to honor the sacrifices of the PS veterans and continue to tell the history of their service to the US and the Philippines. It is also a venue where we can show and tell the public by presenting a small visual experience of what it was like to be a Scout soldier under MacArthur's USAFFE. And to also let the American and specially the younger generations of the Filipino public realize and make them really aware that there were brave Filipino soldiers who fought and suffered side by side with their American brothers in arms.

Their Filipino heritage was very proud military history which has been tragically forgotten and neglected. Sadly many of the new generations Filipino American youths have not been educated about their country's history from history classes and books. The Philippine Scouts had a proud legacy and the few remaining veterans hopefully have not been forgotten and should be honored while they are still among us. We use this as a great venue to raise awareness and help bring the issues of the lost benefits of Filipino veterans who answered the call to serve America in time of war.

### Where did you get the uniforms and all the equipment for your reenactment? How extensive a research did you do to make sure that they were historically accurate?

A lot of our uniforms and equipment were collected and accumulated through a long period of searching and hunting around from Militaria shows, Militaria stores and now a lot of it on ebay! Some from trade ins or sharing by fellow collectors/members. And we try and get

the originals as much as possible and if they are not available we use reproductions as a second option. A lot of our research comes from asking the veterans themselves of what they wore and used. And the vast information from Military books and now from the internet about US military history.

A lot of the reenactment events stress the importance of accuracy in portraying the uniforms and even in military bearing, as we are representing a unique unit of the US military in 1940. We also try and provide anyone interested in doing the PS, as we have advise and help acquire uniforms and gear to various groups in the Hong Kong, England and the Philippines.

### How often do you perform reenactment?

We plan and prepare weeks ahead to always participate in two major reenactment events every year. The last major event was on Oct. 2008 at "Marching through History" at Prado Park, Chino Hills, California where we were awarded First place for best encampment display for the period of 1900's up to WWII.

And the other huge event was at "Old Fort MacArthur Days" at Fort MacArthur, San Pedro, Calif. We have a few members who represent our chapter in the east coast who also participate regularly in major reenactment events back there. And Last year was the very first time a member portrayed the PS in one of Europe's biggest Military reenactment gatherings in England. We also have another big group in Hong Kong and the Philippines also portraying the Scouts.

We always participate in Philippine American events, parades like the Independence Day celebrations and Filipino Veteran's events, as color guards. And now we regularly help provide the PS Color Guard unit for the Annual PSHS reunions. And for the first time this year the Lt. Alexander Nininger Los Angeles Chapter will be hosting the unique 25th Silver Anniversary reunion in Long Beach California. And we will have a



Winning the first place for the best encampment display With Bataan Death March survivor and PS Veteran Theodore M. Villasor, Sr. Photo: Rudy Cabigas

presentation and discussion talk about the hobby of the reenacting world.

### I saw Japanese soldiers in your reenactment. Who volunteer to be Japanese soldiers?

Yes there are "Japanese" reenactment groups all over the US and one is based in southern California like the 2nd Sendai group, who are much in demand for reenactment world war two pacific battles. They are a mix of Japanese Americans, Asians, Americans and one or two Filipino members from our group who are all very interested with Japanese Army's history during WWII. They are a relatively new novelty portraying the opposing "axis" forces of WWII reenactment events.

### There are many Japanese nationals living in Southern California, do you want them to come out to see your reenactment? What do you want them to experience or learn by watching your reenactment?

Yes, We would like Japanese nationals, and all Asian Americans from the new and younger generations in California and the rest of the US to realize and witness how their Asian heritage was a major part of this tragic event in the Pacific. Our reenactments gives the public

a small glimpse of what happened in history and will also discover and learn that the biggest land and sea battles in the Pacific war happened in the Philippine Islands during World War II.

We have a great forum (<http://pinoy-history.proboards22.com/index.cgi>) where chapter members post and share a huge amount of information about reenacting and Philippine Military history specifically about the Philippine Scouts.

The creator and moderator is our chapter historian Victor Verano. The forum has grown to over 500 members all sharing the same interest about Philippine History and reenacting.

We are now advising and trying to help set up a Manila chapter of the Philippine Scouts. As we have a group of the new generation of Filipino reenactors with a collection of WWII Military Jeeps that they use for celebrating events in the Philippines who also want to help continue the legacy of the Scouts.

It is important now more than ever while there is the time that we make sure that the PS veteran's sacrifices are remembered and their legacy continue through the youth, who are the future of the Scout's Society. The veterans are getting fewer and slowly fading away and their stories should not be forgotten in this fast moving and changing world.



## THE GENERAL'S CORNER

The General's Corner is dedicated to the memory of **Brigadier General Royal Reynolds, Jr.** During the early days of World War II, General Reynolds commanded the First Battalion of the 57th Infantry Regiment (PS). He led his unit in the defense of Bataan and then spent the remainder of the war as a guerrilla. As the first President of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society, he was one of the Society's founders and a longtime staunch supporter. **The Generals Corner** publishes historical accounts of World War II in the Philippines.

### In this issue of the General's Corner:

**The Battle for Bataan: A Japanese Officer Remembers**

**Review: Tears in the Darkness**

**My Philippine Scout Family** (page 21)

**America's Gurkhas** (page 21)



Brigadier General Royal Reynolds, Jr.

### The Battle for Bataan: A Japanese Officer Remembers (Part One)

by Toshimi Kumai

Translated by Ms. Yuka Ibuki

Edited by PSHS Historian J. Michael Houlahan

The author, Captain Toshimi Kumai, is the former Adjutant of the Japanese Imperial Army's Panay Garrison during WWII. He also is the author of *The Blood and Mud of the Philippines: Anti-Guerrilla Warfare on Panay Island* published in a limited edition earlier this year. Now 92, Mr. Kumai, initially experienced combat on Bataan as a Second Lieutenant in the 142nd Regiment of the 65th Brigade (also known as the Nara Corps). In September 1942, several months after the fall of Bataan and Corregidor, he was sent to Panay Island. Following the Japanese surrender, he would serve eleven years in prison for his involvement in repressing guerrilla activity on Panay. The memoir was written for his father in 1968 and recently was translated into English.

#### Introduction

I'll be fifty-one years old this year, 1968. This is my private memoir to tell my experience in the battles in Bataan Peninsula in April 1942 to my father and children. Though it is recorded as a brilliant victory for Japan, the reality was physically the most painful experience in my life. I was a Second Lieutenant and a gun force platoon leader. I carried the 55 kg machine-gun with my subordinates at the risk of my life, and, with the pride of a platoon leader, I made desperate efforts to carry out my duty. Had there been another battle, my and my subordinates' physical energy would have reached the limit, and

See *Battle for Bataan* Page 17

### Review: Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March and Its Aftermath

By Michael and Elizabeth Norman

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, NY, 2009. Pp. 463 incl. 8 pp. photos, 1 map, 22 drawings, 23 pp. end notes, 14 pp. bibliography, 20 pp. index.

Reviewed by J. Michael Houlahan

This comprehensive, thoroughly researched and well-written study of the Bataan Death March and its aftermath is the definitive book on the horrific events that took place. It is a must read for those interested in the heroic defense of the Philippines and the dark aftermath of that defense.

In researching their book, the Normans have interviewed numerous. See *Tears in the Darkness* Page 20

### Battle for Bataan From Page 16

having lost our composure, we might have perished in Bataan.

#### I. To Bataan Peninsula

I had been commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the Japanese Army, on November 1, 1941, and at the same time I was ordered to be transferred from my original 24th Regiment of Fukuoka Prefecture, Kyushu, to 142nd Regiment of Matsue, Shimane prefecture. (Regiments 122, 141 and 142 formed the 65th Brigade.) Around fifteen of us newly appointed lieutenants in new uniforms departed for Matsue, on the western coast of the Japan Sea, Main Island of Japan. Being in the middle of mobilization, Matsue city was full of drafted soldiers. We who were transferred from Fukuoka were ordered to serve in the remaining troop of the 142nd Regiment. The first arrivals in Matsue had been those from Kokura city, Kyushu, and they were all ordered to join a field operation on Bataan peninsula, where 70 to 80% of them ended up killed in action. The next arrivals were those from Ohita prefecture, Kyushu, half of whom were ordered to serve in the remaining troop, and the other half in a field operation. Our Fukuoka group arrived in Matsue last. Thus, otherwise trivial order of arrival fixed our fate. (My original home unit, the 24th Regiment, was later mobilized as the 113th Regiment of the 56th Division, which was sent to Burma, where most were annihilated.)

In the beginning of February 1942, I was in the officers meeting room of the Western Army's 46th Unit in Matsue. The media were reporting brilliant victories on Bataan Peninsula. However, we were listening to a grave and heart-rending report by Regimental Commander Tobita of the Mt. Natib Offensive carried out by the 65th Brigade. We learned that two thirds of the Brigade perished in the battle.

Following the report, names of those who were summoned as recruiting officers for the 65th Brigade were announced. I prayed that my name would

not be called thinking of my mother who had been seriously ill with TB, but I was called. On Feb. 21, while we were waiting for our flight at Tachi-arai Airport, my mother passed away. Unable to wait for the funeral, I bade farewell to my mother at our home in Yawata, leaving behind my father, brother and sisters. On February 27, we recruiting officers departed for Manila via Shanghai and Taipei, Formosa, arriving in Manila on March 3. The city was so beautiful, and in the few days I stayed in the Manila Hotel, which was full of luxurious accommodations, I wandered if I were in a dream.

On March 5, we were transported in three unclean military trucks along a wonderfully constructed main road. As we got out of Manila, the villages of the Philippines were there in the image I used to have in Japan. Young boys in dirty shirts shouted here and there, "Give me a cigarette". In an hour we reached quite a big town of San Fernando. It seemingly was the location of a Japanese Head Quarters. The town was full of Japanese soldiers. While we took a short rest, around a dozen NCOs and soldiers surrounded us, asking to which unit we belonged. On hearing it was Nara Corps, one after another they vented frustration and criticism, "Nara Corps? They are no good. They are awfully bad at fighting." Whispers were also heard from among the officers of our group, "In the Middle-China battles the Nara Corps Commander was well-known to have produced a lot of damage. Is he also known for a large number of deaths in action?" Those soldiers seemed to have believed the comments by their senior officers at the HQs. We asked them, "How many enemy are there? We thought the Philippine Campaign was finished by the assault on Manila, and we were just sweeping up the remaining enemy." Their understanding seemed to be the same, but at their ranks, they didn't know any more. It was certain that Nara Corps was heavily hit by the US and Filipino Forces, and was exhausted

at the moment, having no strength for attacking the enemy forces.

We had already seen some deserted or turned over vehicles before reaching San Fernando. The further beyond the town we advanced, the bigger was the number of burnt down civilian houses and burned over vehicles. In one place, quite a big town was completely burnt down with nothing left. Eventually all the villages turned into burnt fields and no local people were seen, making us feel it might be the new battle field in a southern part of the peninsula. Only the tropical sun was scorching us. In only three hours, from the heaven of the Manila Hotel we fell into the bottom of hell.

We reached the town of Orani, where three or four civilian houses were destroyed. Twenty of us assigned to 142nd Regiment reported to the sun-tanned and gaunt 65th Brigade Commander, Lt. General Akira Nara. His voice was vigorous and he was an experienced war-veteran, who had studied in the US and knew a lot about the situation of the US Forces and their ways of fighting. He expressed no emotion of regret or sympathy for the large number of lost lives, except his regret at losing a great chance of victory by a hair's breath at Mt. Natib. He told us that, at that moment in the front line, both sides were facing each other so closely that the others' voices could be heard.

We also learned for the first time, from Commander Nara and other officers of the HQs, that we were going to fight against the USAFFE (the United States Armed Forces Far East) commanded by General MacArthur, whose HQs was on Corregidor Island where they had a modern underground fortress.

Met by the officers and NCOs of the Regiment, everyone asked after the colleagues they knew. Most of them had been killed or wounded in action, leaving only six or seven officers of the Battalion. Sixty percent of the NCOs and soldiers, and nearly all the officers

See *Battle for Bataan* Page 18



*Battle for Bataan From Page 17*

were annihilated. We had to renew our resolution as there was no hope for us to survive.

**II. Bataan Peninsula: 5 to around 24 or 25 of March**

From that point, we were told we entered within the shooting range of the enemy, so we stayed in Orani until it was dark, and started again into the mountains. The trucks advanced over hastily constructed mountain paths, with the lights turned off. It was near Mt. Natib in the north east of Bataan peninsula. We were informed it was this area that in the fights against the superior US Filipino Forces, Nara Corps received devastating casualties, and a lot of our colleagues fell. It was so quiet in the mountain forests that we became suspicious that it was not a battle field. Eventually the car stopped. The guiding officer told us it was the 142nd Regiment HQs, and we would report to the Regimental Commander and then head for our Battalion, and then to our Company.

We were guided to somewhere that seemed like a cave. The 142nd Regimental Commander Col. Shotaro Yoshizawa's exhausted and awfully gaunt figure revealed the fierceness of the past battles, with his proud Kaiser mustache drooping like a goat's, his speech and greetings sounding as if listening to someone ill. We paid respect to the Regiment Flag, but the flag holder, a 1st Lt., also looked to be in extreme fatigue. How awful! Even if it were war, we were assigned to somewhere horrible; I felt anew some emotions similar to resignation and psychologically giving-up.

In the dark, we were then guided to report to 1st Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Kanji Tanabe. Contrary to the Regiment Commander, although a bit thin, he was in high spirits. He made me feel a little better. I realized that in such situations the facial expressions and posture of the senior officer affected the morale of his subordinates. I renewed my reso-

lution: from now on I have to behave with composure to give a sense of security and reliability to my subordinates. The Battalion Commander advised us in his speech, "The soldiers and NCOs who are to be your subordinates have gone through continuous fierce battles and though it has not been long since the unit was formed, they have already got a certain solidarity among them, so you should try to become part of this as fast as possible."

The 1st Battalion consisted of three infantry companies, each of which consisted of three platoons, 1st Machinegun Company of the 142 Regiment, which consisted of two platoons, and a Battalion infantry gun unit. Next, we reported to our 1st Machinegun Company. The original Machinegun Commander, 1st Lt. Kamagata, an Army Academy graduate, and 2nd Lt. Minamitsu, who was my classmate at a Reserve Officer's Cadet School, had both been killed in action. The staff officers of the Battalion had been annihilated. Therefore, 1st Lt. Masuda was Adjutant of the Battalion, and 1st Lt. Moriguchi, formerly one of the machinegun platoon leaders, was acting Machinegun Company Commander. He was a war veteran transferred from China, and with his low voice and shiny eyes, he expressed his joy and relief for the arrival of the three new platoon leaders.

I was introduced to the machinegun platoon, which late 2nd Lt Minamitsu commanded. In the jungle, under the dim moonlight, around twenty soldiers of two detachments, their leaders being respectively Sgt. Okazaki and Cpl. Yokoo, were standing in lines and waiting for me. I greeted them briefly. "As you know, the 2nd Lt. Minamitsu was a colleague of mine. From now on I want to work hard so that I would be able to cover his role as well. I hope you will work with me as you did with Minamitsu." The elder Okazaki gave orders to the soldiers and they all started digging deep to construct a solid shelter for me. It was around 10:00p.m., so I said,

"It's late now. I don't need such a solid one. Take it easy and finish early." But they said, "You will know tomorrow, sir. They do horrible firing." They told me a big shell like a drum would come sometimes.

That night three newly appointed Sec Lts took over the duty, and the new formation of our machinegun company finished; 1st Lt. Moriguchi as Commander of the 1st Machinegun Company of 1st Battalion, 2nd Lt. Kimura as 1st Machinegun Platoon Leader, 2nd Lt. Kumai as 2nd Machinegun Platoon Leader, and 2nd Lt. Katsube as Battalion Infantry Gun Force Commander. The area seemed around 2 or 3 km North West of Balanga.

Through the small entrance of the shelter, faint morning light came in. I crawled out to see Bataan for the first time. Jungle was surrounding us. The tropical morning was nice but shortly, with various birds singing in the trees, the scorching sun shone and the fierce heat of Bataan was like being in a sauna. I felt dizzy in the heat and silence, but suddenly heard dull sounds of "bang, bang," at a far distance, and soldiers crazily jumped into the shelters or laid flat to the ground. At the same time, with a whiz I heard ear-splitting explosions 300 to 400 meters behind us. It sounded as if demons were crushing men. When it occurred close, sprouting a cloud of dust, my heart beat violently. Shells fell sometimes close, but the target seemed a bit behind us. However, if the distance were shortened they would fall on us. I lay flat at the bottom of my shelter. In around an hour and a half, the shelling stopped, and the sound moved farther away. I checked the damage and found everyone was all right. According to them, the same would happen in the afternoon, and it was repeated daily. If the Japanese bombed, the enemy's counter fire would be multiplied dozens of times. It started again after mid-day and around supper time. The first day in Bataan passed with my first experience of artillery shells.

The same pattern went on. It seemed the enemy had a large amount of bullets and shells. In the common sense of the Japanese Army, such continuous bombing was carried out only in support of position assaults. The US forces regularly, unsparingly bombarded various Japanese positions. Sometimes a shell called a "drum" flew over with horrible sounds.

After the first impressive days in Bataan peninsula, the steam-bath heat and every-day bombings added to the fatigue, making my memories vaguer. With the Company orders, we moved positions four to five times. The Battalion HQs sent three to four scouts to get more information about the general formation of the enemy front positions. Each position was given an easy-to-remember name, like pigeon, pheasant, etc., in preparation for the general assault. Our company was also equipped with tools like saws, axes, and sickles. My turn came, and we were repeatedly warned not to pass along any of the paths in the jungle however narrow they might be, as the enemies would be waiting with machine guns. Around ten members led by me, half were snipers, and the others carried equipment to cut our path in the jungle to reach behind the enemy front line. The jungle was dense beyond my imagination, completely different from the Tarzan movies I knew. Big trees were not many, and it was mostly bushes and bamboo groves, covered with vines. Bamboo groves consisted of tens of bamboos, coiled around with thorny bamboo vine, which attached to our skin, was hard to get rid of and painful. They were unique Bataan bamboo groves, which were impossible to break through. We had to cut off bushes, branches, and vines, making a slow advance. Hearing machine guns sometimes firing behind us, using the compass we moved through the jungle. We made around 2 km in four to five hours. We couldn't get any effective scouting information, but we had to return to our position and report what we did. We were told then that most of the other parties sent that day

from another company were annihilated, passing one of the jungle paths. I knew the leader who came with me in the same plane. His beautiful wife and lovely little daughter were seeing him off at Shimonoseki.

Once we moved to a position near the Japanese Army Field Hospital. In the junctions of the road in this area, notice boards said, "Enemy shelling is fierce in this neighborhood", and trees scraped cut down by shells made some horrible scenes. Sights of the severely wounded transported by stretcher or tent cloth damaged our morale, making us feel how painful it must be. We also moved to a position near the river. By then, a lot of supply units seemed to have arrived and we met units with different marks, while we were marching. According to the HQs, in preparation for the general assault, heavy guns, and a Division from China were arriving, and that was why we were changing positions.

The position close to the river, the name of which I don't remember, looked like the best position where we could enjoy swimming in the river of 14 or 15 meters wide. The number of malaria and ameba dysentery patients had been increasing, but it was expected they would get better with that water close to us. However, it actually was an ideal target for the enemy artillery, and we had to spend all day in the shelter.

With the All-out Assault approaching, rumors started to go around such that in another company a soldier shot his own wrist in order to escape the battle. Also serious cases of malaria started to increase in each unit. Therefore, an order to "ban hospitalization of the unwounded, but suffering from diseases" was conveyed, though I didn't think it was issued by the Brigade HQs. Commander Moriguchi was painfully affected by this order, as he had been suffering from the regular high fever of malaria. The awful malaria of Bataan peninsula: quinine was not strong enough to cope with it.

Although we received fierce bombardments nearly every day, fortunately

we had had no casualties in our platoon. However, some misfortune finally came upon us. Lance Cpl. Kuroki had been suffering from malaria, but the MD didn't admit him to the hospital because of the ban order. Kuroki fell unconscious and in spite of the doctor's effort, he passed away, victimized by the order. It was my first sad experience of losing a subordinate. According to the Japanese custom, in order to return the ashes to the family, cremation was carried out, consulting experienced subordinates. It was in the afternoon, and we were afraid to raise too much smoke, so we failed in a perfect cremation. The Battalion Commander found that, and he shouted at me, "What! Is it all the ashes? The bereaved family strongly wishes to get all the ashes back. You do such cremation and your subordinates will do the same if your turn comes!" I felt sorry for Kuroki, and humiliated as a leader. We succeeded in the second trial. But I was depressed to see a man's death. Soon enemy firing began and they aimed well. Around half an hour passed, and someone groaned. I ran to the voice, and Pfc. Edagawa said, "Sir, I was hit my abdomen." Others came and we all encouraged him, but the MD said, "The bullet stays in the abdomen. Hopeless." Edagawa himself knew it, repeating, "I'm done." We kept encouraging, but his voice became low and he died.

What a day! I experienced untold, unseen misery of war. My men all got depressed, and no one spoke. I told myself, "The all-out assault is close. These are usual events with war, and this is the battle field. Commanders have to be steady." I told this to everyone, and gave instructions to prepare a meal, and then cremation at night. I thought carefully about the method of cremation, which would be required from now on, and with knowledge I learned at agricultural college in constructing a charcoal kiln, we succeeded.

By that time, I had learned a lot: the enemy main force had their frontline position along the Bagac/Balanga road,

*See Battle for Bataan Page 20*



**Battle for Bataan From Page 19**

and the second position at Mt. Mariv-  
eles. The total number of the enemy  
was tens of thousand. Bataan peninsula  
originally was the training field of the  
USAFFE and they had already ranged  
their artillery in on various targets. It  
was a failure of the Japanese Army (JA)  
HQs to have put Brigade 65 as the main  
force for the first Bataan Assault, as it

originally was a unit trained for defense.  
Moreover, it was a campaign failure of  
either the Army HQs or the Imperial  
HQs to have let the enemy main force  
escape into Bataan. General McArthur  
having already fled to Australia, General  
Wainwright, Chief of General Staff, was  
the HQs Commander. In preparation of  
the general assault, the JA formation had

been reinforced. The enemy had been  
running short of food rations. Conflict  
between the US and Filipino Forces had  
been increasing. Though it was not of-  
ficially announced by the Battalion HQs,  
we heard such information.

*To be continued in our next issue.*

**Tears in the Darkness From Page 16**

ous Americans, Filipinos and Japanese  
who lived the events covered. This  
inclusion of extensive interviews of  
soldiers on both sides of the war greatly  
increases the book's power.

The authors also developed a high  
regard for the Philippine Scouts, con-  
sidered by many to be the "best light  
infantry in the Pacific." The Scouts  
would pay a price for this after sur-  
render, as the Japanese, stung by the  
mauling they had received from the  
Scout Regiments, would single out any  
Filipino they suspected of being a Scout  
for special abuse.

The authors have chosen Ben Steele,  
a young Montana cowboy and self-  
taught artist to guide us through many  
of the events. In doing so, the narrative  
switches back and forth between Steele's  
simple ranch life before combat and his  
mostly horrific military experiences.

Steele, on his mother's advice with  
the nation gripped by the Great Depres-  
sion, enlisted in the peace-time U.S.  
Army Air Corps in late 1940. After  
training, Ben was shipped to the Philip-  
pines, arriving approximately six weeks  
before the Japanese attacked in early  
December, 1941.

The description of the desperate  
combat that followed captures the hor-  
ror and privation suffered by both sides.  
Hunger, disease and exhaustion were as  
debilitating to both armies as the actual  
combat. However, over time, the Japa-  
nese had the advantage of being able  
to resupply their forces and introduce  
fresh troops. Their heavy casualties had  
forced them to suspend their attack for  
more than a month, but they resumed

in late March with rested and retrained  
troops augmented by new replacements.  
By then they had long enjoyed complete  
control of the air and an increasing  
advantage in artillery firepower. The  
Easter weekend offense, as it came to  
be known, overwhelmed the last of  
the Fil-Am resistance and, on April 9,  
Major General Ned King surrendered  
the 76,000 troops under his command  
defending Bataan.

Two days after the surrender, the  
Pantingan River massacre took place,  
a particularly gruesome war crime  
committed against 400 commission  
and noncommissioned officers of the  
Philippine Army's 91st Division by the  
Japanese infantry of the 65th Brigade.  
The authors' account of this atrocity  
runs thirteen heart-wrenching pages  
and is the most complete I've read.  
The massacre apparently was ordered  
by the Amherst College educated and  
Fort Benning Infantry School trained  
brigade commander Lt. General Akira  
Nara, in revenge for heavy casualties  
his brigade had incurred. Nara sur-  
vived the war and lived well into his  
seventies.

Even more poignant than the descrip-  
tion of the sick, starving and stunned  
defenders as the final Japanese offense  
ground them up, are the accounts of the  
often murderous abuse they endured  
as captives. The greatest concentra-  
tion of cruelty occurred on the Bataan  
Death March; however, conditions in  
the prison camps, on the Hell Ships and  
during slave labor in Taiwan, Japan,  
Korea and Manchuria also were almost  
unbelievably inhumane.

The book follows Ben Steele through  
prison camp; shipment to Japan, a pro-  
longed period of suffering on two Hell  
Ships; work as a slave in a coal mine;  
liberation; and a return to civilian life.

During his imprisonment, Ben, with  
the encouragement of his fellow prison-  
ers, developed his artistic skills, which re-  
sulted in a detailed pictorial record of the  
life prisoners led. Most of the 22 draw-  
ings in this book are taken from those  
POW sketches. Years later he would  
further hone these skills and become an  
artist and a university professor.

In addition to the graphic detailing of  
the horrors of war, the authors debunk  
the myth of the heroic samurai which  
was partially responsible for Japanese  
wartime conduct. They also add fur-  
ther ammunition to the claims of many  
scholars that part of the reason for the  
Philippine disaster was General Doug-  
las MacArthur's slowness to prepare  
defenses; ego-driven and unsustainable  
attempt to defend the beaches; failure to  
fully provision Bataan and Corregidor  
for the inevitable siege; and inexplicable  
failure to authorize his air force to attack  
its fog-bound Japanese counterpart on  
Taiwan in the early hours of the war. This  
failure to act resulted in the loss of most  
of MacArthur's air power, wiped out on  
the ground when the Japanese finally  
were able to launch their air assault.

In fairness, even if MacArthur had  
exhibited better leadership and greater  
foresight, the Philippines still would  
have fallen, as most of the Pacific fleet  
rescue force was at the bottom of Pearl  
Harbor. Still the resistance on Bataan  
and Corregidor might have lasted two or

three months longer. And, if the Fil-Am  
forces had been divided into northern  
and southern commands, major southern  
units might have held out for many more  
months instead of being surrendered  
under duress by General Jonathan Wain-  
wright upon the Japanese capture of his  
Corregidor command center.

The book might have benefited from  
a more complete picture of the 31st  
Infantry Regiment, manned entirely by  
Americans. This 2,100 man unit nick-  
named "Sundowners" was composed  
of American expatriates recruited in the  
Philippines. The Normans describe the

peacetime unit as known for precision  
marching, a half-day training schedule  
and heavy drinking, as its officers and  
men partied late into the night.

During the defense of Bataan, the  
Sundowners were mostly held in re-  
serve, and then committed in a final  
attempt to prevent the total collapse of  
the Fil-Am defenses. The authors de-  
scribe what happened next: In the April  
6 pre-dawn darkness while still not in  
battle formation "A battalion of the 31st  
moving forward with fixed bayonets ran  
into the Japanese at a trail junction and  
crumbled." The book then vividly (and

courageously) documents the collapse  
of the 31st as a fighting force (p. 144),  
which parallels the general meltdown of  
Fil-Am resistance on the peninsula. To  
save the broken remnants of his com-  
mand, General King ignored his orders  
to fight to the last man and raised the  
white flag of surrender on April 9.

*The authors, Michael and Elizabeth  
Norman, both have previously written  
on war and Michael is a Vietnam combat  
veteran. Elizabeth has written two books  
on American military nurses in combat,*

**My Philippine Scout Family**

**by Julius Mesias**

My grandfather, Emilio Mesias  
was one of the few Filipino Philippine  
Scout officers. After the fall of Bataan  
and Corregidor, Lolo (grandpa) Emilio  
made his way to Mindanao and formed  
his own guerilla unit. His band harassed  
the Japanese and helped to establish and  
maintain communication with Allied  
forces in Australia. He suddenly died of  
a massive stroke in 1943 upon learning  
that he was being betrayed by another  
guerilla unit to the Japanese. My father  
Napoleon who was seventeen at that  
time, soon took over command of Lolo's  
group. My uncle Emanuel at sixteen,  
sought out and killed the leader of the  
rival unit and took over command of it.  
He and my dad consolidated both groups

and started operating together under  
Wendell Fertig's sphere of influence.  
They were known for their ferocity and  
were deeply respected by both the local  
villagers who sought their protection and  
the Japanese who fought them.

After the war, my father and uncle  
became well-respected leaders in our  
community. They never talked to us  
kids about the war. They would however  
frequently sit down together and remi-  
niscence about their exploits during the war  
and we kids would secretly eavesdrop  
on their conversation. Never did I hear  
them utter a word about hatred against  
the Japanese. From their stories about  
the Japanese atrocities, I found it hard to  
understand how they could not. I never  
asked my dad and he never told me.

When I graduated from high school,  
my dad sent me to Japan as an exchange  
student. That experience opened up my  
eyes to the utter differences in culture  
and the stark similarities of the human  
experience. For once, I began to see the  
Japanese as other than the horde that  
occupied my motherland and abused  
my people. They actually were sincere,  
honest and hardworking folks who were  
easy to make friends with...and I made  
many of them.

I finally learned the lesson of my fa-  
ther's and uncle's story: war brings out  
the best and worst in individuals. It is  
what you do after the experience that  
defines you as a human being.

**America's Gurkhas: The Philippine Scouts—1901-1950**

**by J. Michael Houlahan**

One of the best-kept secrets of World  
War II is that the most decorated U.S.  
Army units in the early days of that  
conflict were manned by Filipinos.  
The heroics of the Philippine Scouts  
are omitted from most history books.  
While the commissioned officers of the  
Scouts included a number of native-  
born Americans, the noncommissioned  
officers and enlisted men were Pinoys.  
Well trained and highly motivated, they

played a dominant role in the defense  
of Bataan in the face of the devastat-  
ing invasion of the archipelago by over  
43,000 battle-hardened Japanese combat  
troops.

The Philippine Army, 120,000 strong,  
existed more on paper than in reality.  
It was far from completely trained and  
equipped when the Japanese attacked in  
December 1941 and many of its soldiers  
had never fired the outdated WWI rifles  
they were issued.

One of the very few bright spots in  
this otherwise gloomy scenario was the  
well-trained Philippine Scouts, who had  
almost doubled in manpower in the year  
prior to the outbreak of hostilities, reach-  
ing full strength at about 12,350 officers  
and men. These Scouts, considered by  
many to be the best light infantry in  
the Pacific theater, were Gen. MacAr-  
thur's most effective force against the  
Japanese. During the defense of Bataan

*See America's Gurkhas Page 22*



America's Gurkhas From Page 21

three Scouts, Sgt. Joe Calugas, Sr., 1st Lt. Alexander R. Nininger and 1st. Lt. Willibald C. Bianchi, received Medals of Honor, America's highest award for combat valor. Only Sgt. Calugas survived the war.

The heroic stand of the Scout combat units began while opposing the Lingayen Gulf landings in mid-December 1941 and continued until the surrender of the main body of Fil-Am forces on Bataan in early April 1942. After that surrender, smaller groups of Scouts carried on the fight from Corregidor and the southern islands, and then hundreds joined various guerrilla groups following the surrender of the USAFFE forces when Corregidor fell in early May.

The aftermath of the surrender was horrific. Of the 75,000 Fil-Am soldiers captured on Bataan, only 63,000 arrived alive at Camp O'Donnell following the Bataan Death March. In the camp approximately 26,000 Filipinos and 1,565 Americans died. Included among the Filipino victims were 2,600 Scouts. Between combat, the Bataan Death March and prison camp, over one-third of the Scouts did not survive the war.

The conquest of the Philippines, expected by the Japanese high command to require only 50 days, had taken five months. The valiant stand of the Fil-Am forces had bought enough time to save Australia and New Zealand from invasion. These two countries became the staging point from which General Douglas MacArthur launched his island

hopping campaign which eventually liberated the Philippines and saved thousands of civilian internees and hundreds of POWs from slaughter.

#### Scout Origins

Organized in 1901 by an Act of the United States Congress and recruited from the indigenous population, the Philippine Scouts initially were used to suppress Muslim Moro rebels in the Southern Philippine islands and garrison the colony when most U.S. troops were diverted to Europe during World War I. In gratitude for this service, the U.S. Congress authorized induction of the 6,000 Scouts into the regular U. S. Army following the war.

#### Post-war Scouts

The Japanese unconditional surrender on August 15, 1945 ended World War II. The United States quickly moved to fulfill its pre-war promise, granting independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946. It was not immediately obvious, but these two events were to mark the beginning of the end for the Philippine Scouts. By 1947 aggressive recruiting had increased their ranks to a peak of around 36,000, with the new troops used to guard U.S. military bases in the Philippines and for occupation duty, mainly on Okinawa.

Unfortunately, the use of Philippine Scouts on Okinawa was not a success. Animosity towards the Japanese as a result of their brutal wartime occupa-

tion of the Philippines appeared to be an important factor in the problems that emerged. Also weak discipline due to less intensive training and the inexperience of newly recruited junior officers further aggravated the situation. Finally, a tendency for the veteran Scouts to become naturalized Americans and transfer to non-Scout units reduced the numbers of experienced, well-trained officers available to Philippine Scout units.

These assorted problems led in mid-1947 to the gradual demobilization of Philippine Scout units. Post-war Scout recruits were not allowed to reenlist and pre-war Scouts with American citizenship were encouraged to transfer to non-Scout units. By mid-1949 most post-war Scouts had been discharged and by early 1950 only a few hundred unabsorbed pre-war Scouts remained, mostly men with medical problems awaiting discharge or retirement. A proud tradition of loyalty and combat heroism in the service of the United States had ended, made obsolete by the demise of the colonial relationship and the achievement of full independence for the Philippines.

*Mike Houlahan, a retired Foreign Service officer, has about 50 published articles and reviews, almost all on the Philippines. He is the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society Historian.*

## Review: DVD Documentary: "Unsundered—100 Voices"

Produced by Peter Parsons and Lucky Guilermo

Reviewed by J. Michael Houlahan

Peter Parsons and Lucky Guilermo have produced an excellent, often inspiring, documentary chronicling World War II mainly through the eyes of men and women who took part in the guerrilla movement against the Japanese following the surrender of the USAFFE troops in April and May 1942. As the title implies, the story is told through footage from that period and the videotaped interviews with 100 who took an active part in the resistance. There is no narrator, so the veterans of nearly three traumatic years of guerrilla combat tell the story unedited and in their own voices. This was a fortunate production decision, as it lends enhanced credibility and poignancy to the tale.

The resistance was massive, with an estimated 300,000 guerrillas and their auxiliaries taking part. The effort was primarily Filipino. Of the approximately 400 American military evading capture or escaping from the Death March, approximately half died of disease, starvation or Japanese action during the first six months. About half of those remaining played an active role with various guerrilla groups. Most who evaded death during those first six months, survived the war. All of those Americans credited the bravery and loyalty of the Filipino people for their survival.

Overall casualties among the mostly Filipino resistance movement were huge and in the early months particularly heavy as the guerrillas were lightly armed and not yet sophisticated in unconventional warfare.

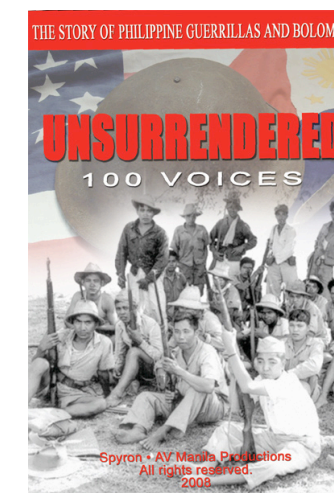
The movement grew progressively more powerful, as more and more Filipinos joined, alienated by a continuous string of Japanese atrocities. They were greatly aided when General MacArthur authorized a fleet of twenty submarines to bring tons of supplies to guerrilla groups on the main Philippine islands.

The man in charge of organizing this was Peter Parsons' father, Cmdr. Chick Parsons, a Manila businessman and naval reserve officer. The submarines delivered up to 100 tons of arms, ammunition, food, medicine, radios, money, cigarettes and propaganda material per visit. They also brought in small commando and coast watcher units and evacuated wounded guerrillas, as well as rescued American pilots shot down by the Japanese and some allied civilians caught in the war zone. Without such support, a massive resistance would have been impossible.

Sadly, the Japanese were not the only hurdle faced by many of the guerrilla groups. Several of them engaged in repeated and violent turf battles. Some of the groups turned to banditry and had to be suppressed. And often there were clashes between USAFFE guerrilla groups, frequently under American command, and Hukbalahap squadrons, which were mostly (but not entirely) communist-led. Indeed, as the documentary points out, a few units spent more effort in battling each other than in fighting the Japanese.

Another problem was the relatively small number of informants, who betrayed fellow Filipinos to the Japanese, especially as efforts to suppress guerrilla activities became more violent and less discriminating as the occupation wore on. These traitors sometimes acted out of pro-Japanese sentiment, but more frequently were opportunists seeking rewards or settling old grudges.

Some of the highlights of this DVD were the pre-war footage of Manila, the "Pearl of the Orient"; the largely unreported history of the massive resistance resupply efforts by submarine; survival for the three years before liberation; the country-wide attack on the Japanese launched four days before



General MacArthur's liberation army landed; and interviews with individual guerrilla group leaders, including Philippine Scout Officers Ed Ramsey and Bob Lapham (the latter now deceased).

*To obtain this 103 minute DVD in the U.S., send a \$30 check, made out to Peter Parsons, 6960 Magnolia Ave; Suite 200, Riverside, CA 92506. In the Philippines it can be purchased at La Solidaridad Book Store in the Ermita area or by mail through sending a 750 peso check to Peter at 309 Ambuklao Rd., Baguio City 2600. (The high cost in the U.S. is due to a recent doubling in Philippine international postal rates.) Peter Parsons can be contacted by email at [petercparsons@gmail.com](mailto:petercparsons@gmail.com).)*



# Philippine Scouts Heritage Society

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**Please contact us if you have questions or would like to become  
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*If you would like to contact us via email,  
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