

PHILIPPINE PROJECT

SELECT MESSAGES

CEMETERIO DEL

NORTE, REPORT ON

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA

CHECK SHEET

(Do not remove from attached sheets)



File No.:

Subject:

From: C.W.

To: C-in-C

Date: 31 May 1945

1. Herewith is a report of Col. Smith on his investigation of the area in the Cemeterio Del Norte where the enemy appears to have executed most of those patriots of several nationalities apprehended for assisting our cause in Manila. Affidavits taken by Col. Smith in the course of his investigation are also attached as is a report of Mr. Earl Carrol, Chairman of the Santo Tomas Internees Committee, thereon.

2. I understand that the area involved is a gruesome sight with countless human bones protruding in all directions -- mortal remains of great men and women who have given their lives in support of our cause.

3. I recommend that:

- (a) Proper burial immediately be given these remains; and
- (b) Thereafter the area, after consultation between representatives of the Army and the Commonwealth Government, be set aside and developed by either or both as a national shrine in memory of the unknown martyrs therein resting.

*Yes -*

*Explosives possibilities etc.*

*CW  
C.W.*

*No Commitment  
at this time -*

*Col. Smith to take care  
of burial. Hold further  
action pending my return  
CW*

*Mack*

*[Signature]*



GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
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*Moak*

*[Signature]*

May 11, 1945

Brig. Gen. Courtney Whitney  
Section of Civil Affairs  
General Headquarters  
Trade & Commerce Building  
Manila

Dear General:

I am sending you herewith a copy of the letter Earl Carroll left with me regarding the situation he and Mr. Manuel Manosa found in the Chinese Cemetery Area and a recommendation that something should be done to afford proper burial to the unfortunate persons who lost their lives in this Area and for the conversion of the Area into a national cemetery with a proper designation.

Very sincerely yours,

  
C. A. DEWITT

CAD-asd  
Encl.





C O P Y

Camp Administration Committee  
Santo Tomas Camp

April 8, 1945

Mr. C. A. DeWitt, Chairman  
Philippine Committee  
Santo Tomas Camp  
USAFFE -- Civil Affairs



Dear Mr. DeWitt:

Mr. Manuel Manosa and I went to the Chinese Cemetery area today to try to locate the graves of the three internees who escaped from Santo Tomas during February of 1942 and were executed on February 15.

Two Filipinos who have been working in the cemetery for several years approached us and showed us the exact location. In conversation with them, it developed that they had knowledge of the execution and burial of a large number of persons in that area during the three years of Japanese occupation.

They took us to the places where persons numbering from one to 30 and 40 had been disposed of, either by shooting or decapitation. The details of these executions were gruesome and we found skulls, bones and bits of clothing to confirm their stories. They roughly estimate that 3,000 to 4,000 persons of all nationalities, including American, had met their awful fate at the hands of brutal Japanese in this area.

It occurred to Mr. Manosa and me that something should be done to convert this area into a proper cemetery, probably a national cemetery. It is almost certain that these persons who met their doom there were executed because of their actions on behalf of the American cause or their subversive work against our enemy -- the Japs. They died without an opportunity to fight back.

I am leaving for the United States tomorrow morning. Mr. Manosa is willing to do anything he can to assist in getting proper recognition and care for this spot. I am sure that you will be willing to do all you can. I trust you will agree that it is something worthy of our sincere efforts.

A copy of this letter is going to Mr. Manosa and I understood from him that he would contact you soon for further discussion of the matter. I think it would be a good idea to visit the area and talk to all the Filipinos who have worked there or who have knowledge of what has happened.

Yours truly,

(SGD.) EARL CARROLL, Chairman

May 11, 1945



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Section of Civil Affairs  
General Headquarters  
Trade & Commerce Building  
Manila

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s/ C. A. DEWITT  
t/ C. A. DEWITT

CAD-asd  
Encl.



COPY

CAMP ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE  
SANTO TOMAS CAMP

April 8, 1945

Mr. C. A. DeWitt, Chairman  
Philippine Committee  
Santo Tomas Camp  
USAFPE -- Civil Affairs



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(SGD) EARL CARROLL, Chairman

HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES IN THE FAR EAST

APO 501  
9 May 1945

SUBJECT: Report on Atrocities Committed by Japanese at Cemeterio  
Del Norte.

TO : Brigadier General Courtney Whitney.

1. On April 24, 1945, the undersigned accompanied by Judge C. A. DeWitt and Mr. Jose Manosa went to the Cemeterio Del Norte to examine the area where laborers reported a large number of people had been murdered by the Japanese. The area in question lies northeast of the south gate of the Chinese cemetery and measures approximately 200 yards by 300 yards. It is open ground with only one pre-war burial plot located in it. In the area there are numerous long trenches which had been filled in. The earth has since settled over these trenches leaving depressions. Most of the trenches are from 20 to 40 feet long and about 4 feet wide. Protruding from many of them are human bones. Skulls and other human bones are scattered over the area.

2. Through the kindness of Mr. Manosa of the Metropolitan Water District, we were able to locate four of the men who were connected with the cemetery. He also located one victim who had been buried with two bayonet and two bullet wounds and who later escaped from the grave. Their affidavits are attached hereto.

3. Mr. Pelageo Reyes, Chief of the Cemetery, was able to keep a secret record listing the date and number of persons killed. This record is not complete as he was not able to get the exact number in every case. This secret record was read into his affidavit. It shows a total of 1745 persons killed during the Japanese occupation of Manila. This figure does not include several groups which are listed but number involved remains unknown, nor does it take into consideration those brought to the cemetery in coffins.



*Charles M. Smith*  
CHARLES M. SMITH  
Lt. Col., CE



Mr. Guillermo Legacion, after having sworn before Lt. Col. C. M. Smith, U.S.A., to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

QUESTIONS BY LT. COL. C. M. SMITH:

- Q. State your name, residence and occupation?
- A. Guillermo Legacion, residing at 2705 M. Hizon Extension. Occupation - Watchman, Cementerio del Norte.
- Q. How long have you been working there?
- A. Since March 4, 1912.
- Q. Where were you working during the Japanese occupation?
- A. At the Cementerio del Norte.
- Q. Will you tell us about anything that happened there during the Japanese occupation?
- A. I saw people executed by the Japanese, who were sometimes bayoneted, shot and at times their necks were cut off by the sword.
- Q. When did this happen?
- A. Since they came to the Philippines.
- Q. Could you see them kill them?
- A. I could see them from a distance of about 200 meters as we were not allowed to go near during the execution.
- Q. Could you see what nationality they were?
- A. I could not on account of the distance.
- Q. How were they killed?
- A. Sometimes they put them near the grave and cut their heads off with swords.
- Q. Did they cut the head with just one blow?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. When they bayoneted them, did they bayonet them at the back or in front?
- A. At the back. Sometimes when they were already inside the grave they were shot if they thought the man was still alive.



Testimony of Guillermo Legacion - page 2

Q. How about the graves, can you see any bones out there now?

A. Yes, sir. There are many bones and this is due to the fact that the graves were shallow. Sometimes when I passed through the cemetery in going to my place of work, I found dead bodies lying on the way.

Guillermo Legacion

Personally appeared before me, Mr. Guillermo Legacion, this 9th day of May, 1945, who being duly sworn deposes and says that the facts stated in the foregoing affidavit are true as he verily believes.

May 1945

James A. Callender  
JAMES A. CALLENDER  
Capt., AGD  
Asst. AG





Mr. Daniel Santos, after having sworn before Lt. Col. C. M. Smith, U.S.A., to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

QUESTIONS BY LT. COL. C. M. SMITH:

Q. State your name, residence and occupation.

A. Daniel Santos, Masambong, San Francisco del Monte. Occupation none.

Q. How old are you?

A. 17 years.

Q. Did you ever get in trouble during the Japanese occupation?

A. No, sir.

Q. Why were you arrested?

A. Because a spy pointed me as a guerilla.

Q. When was this?

A. On January 3, 1945.

Q. What happened?

A. They brought me to the cemetery.

Q. Were you alone?

A. Two trucks.

Q. How many people were you?

A. I do not know, may be 100.

Q. What happened then?

A. The Japanese killed all, 5 only were alive.

Q. How did they kill you?

A. My hands were tied on my back. After they have bayoneted me, I was buried in the ground.

Q. Did they shoot you too?

A. Yes, sir.

(Indicating wounds in his right and left arms).



Testimony of Daniel Santos - page 2

Q. Did they bayonet you?

A. Yes, sir. (Indicating wound on the chest).

Q. Where did the bayonet go in?

A. Here sir. (Indicating wound on right side appearing in the chest, two bayonet wounds, one in the chest and one on the right side).

Q. What did they do to your companions?

A. All were bayoneted.

Q. Then what happened?

A. All of them were killed, 5 only were alive. I scratched the ground so I was able to come out.

Q. After you were wounded with the bayonet, what did they do to you?

A. They left me alone.

Q. Who threw dirt in the grave?

A. The Japanese.

Q. What time of the day was that?

A. About 6:00 o'clock in the evening.

Q.. And then the Japanese went away?

A. Yes, sir. As my face was not well covered with dirt, I was able to breathe and then I crawled little by little.

Q. How deep is the dirt?

A. About this (showing about one foot of dirt).

Q. But your face was not covered?

A. My nose was not covered so that I was able to breathe.

Q. Did anybody else escape?

A. Yes, sir, five of us.





Testimony of Daniel Santos - page 3

Q. In the same way?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know their names?

A. I do not know their names except one, Pepe Casusu. That is the only one I know, the 3 I do not know the names but I know their houses.

Q. Before you were taken to the cemetery, were you tried by court martial or any court?

A. By court martial.

Q. Where was that?

A. San Francisco del Monte.

Q. Were you present at the trial?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was the trial by Japanese soldiers or officers?

A. Japanese officers.

Q. How many?

A. Three officers.

Q. What happened at the trial?

A. We were asked whether we were guerilla. When we were asked we were already tortured.

Q. By whom?

A. By the spy, a Filipino spy.

Q. Who was that Filipino?

A. I do not know the name, I do not know him.

Q. Is that all that happened?

A. The Japanese drowned me. They gave me the "water cure."

Q. How long did the trial take place?

A. About one hour.



Daniel  
Testimony of ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Santos - page 4

Q. Did anybody testify and made declaration against you?

A. Yes, sir, the spy.

Q. Was his statement true?

A. Yes, sir.

Daniel Santos

Personally appeared before me, Mr. Daniel Santos, this 9th day of May, 1945, who being duly sworn deposes and says that the facts stated in the foregoing affidavit are true as he verily believes.

3 May 1945

~~XXXXXXXX~~

James A. Callender  
JAMES A. CALLENDER  
Capt., AGD  
Asst. AG





Mr. Antonio A. Torres, after having sworn before Lt. Col. C. M. Smith, U.S.A., to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

QUESTIONS BY LT. COL. C. M. SMITH:

- Q. State your name, residence and occupation?
- A. Antonio A. Torres, residing at 65 Calavite, Quezon City. Occupation - tool keeper, North Cemetery.
- Q. How long have you been working there? ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
- A. Since 1926.
- Q. Did you work there during the Japanese occupation?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Can you tell anything that happened there regarding the execution of Filipinos and others by the Japanese?
- A. Whenever I was called, I helped dig graves for the Japanese.
- Q. What were put in the graves?
- A. People who were executed by the Japanese.
- Q. Did you see the people killed?
- A. I could see them from a distance of about 200 meters, as we were not allowed to stay near.
- Q. How were the people killed?
- A. Some of them were beheaded, some were shot.
- Q. Any bayoneted?
- A. Some of them.
- Q. What nationalities were the people?
- A. I cannot tell whether Filipinos or Americans, because I was far.
- Q. How were they buried?
- A. As soon as they were killed, the Japanese put them in the grave and put a little dirt on them. We put on additional dirt to cover the ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ bodies.
- Q. Have you seen that place since?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Are there many bones exposed there?
- A. There are some.



Testimony of Antonio A. Torres - page 2

Q. How did they get there?

A. Because the graves were shallow.

Q. Do you know whether the dogs eat the bodies?

A. There were some eaten by the dogs.

Antonio A. Torres.

Personally appeared before me, Mr. Antonio A. Torres, this 9th day of May, 1945, who being duly sworn deposes and says that the facts stated in the foregoing affidavit are true as he verily believes.

3 May 1945

James A. Callender  
JAMES A. CALLENDER  
Capt., AGD  
Asst. AG





Mr. Anastacio Liwanag, after having sworn before Lt. Col. C. M. Smith, U.S.A., to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

QUESTIONS BY LT. COL. C. M. SMITH:

- Q. State your name, residence and occupation.
- A. Anastacio Liwanag, residing at 216 Arayat St., Quezon City. Occupation - Foreman, Cementerio del Norte.
- Q. How long have you been employed there?
- A. About 23 years.
- Q. Were you working there during the Japanese occupation?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Will you tell us anything you know as to what happened there during the Japanese occupation?
- A. Whenever the Japanese have to execute somebody, they ordered us to dig graves for them. After this has been done, we were asked to get away. After the persons to be executed have been killed, the Japanese themselves cover them with a little dirt and then called us to complete the burying.
- Q. When they call you to dig the grave did they tell you how many graves?
- A. They would only tell us to dig for, say 15 men or 20 men, and we estimate hole to be made for the number of people they told us.
- Q. How were the people executed? Did you see them when they were executed?
- A. I could see them but I was far, about 150 meters away.
- Q. How were they executed?
- A. Their hands were tied at the back, and then they cut off their necks. Some were bayoneted and some were shot with hands tied and eyes blindfolded. They usually tear the shirts of the victims and use the torn piece for the blindfold.
- Q. How were the graves now?
- A. As the graves were shallow, when the dogs scratch the ground, the bones are exposed.
- Q. Can you see any bones there now?
- A. May be we can.



Anastacio Liwanag

Personally appeared before me, Mr. Anastacio Liwanag, this 9th day of May, 1945, who being duly sworn deposes and says that the facts stated in the foregoing affidavit are true as he verily believes.

3 May 1945

James A. Callender  
JAMES A. CALLENDER, Capt. AGD, Asst. AG

3 copies

Mr. PELAGIO REYES, after having sworn before Lt. Col. C. M. Smith, U.S.A., to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

QUESTIONS BY LT. COL. C. M. SMITH:

- Q. State your name, residence and occupation.
- A. Pelagio Reyes, residing at 467 Dimasalang, Manila. I am at present Chief, Section of Cemeteries, Department of Health, City of Manila.
- Q. How long have you been in that position?
- A. About three years as Chief. Before that, I was in charge of the cemetery for four months. I have been working in the Del Norte Cemetery since 1918.
- Q. Under the Japanese occupation, which was your position?
- A. Also, Chief of Section of Cemeteries, Del Norte Cemetery.
- Q. What were your duties in that occupation?
- A. Receive orders from our Chief and do anything that I was ordered to do.
- Q. Were you in charge of burials in the Cementerio del Norte at that time?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Were any burials made of persons executed by the Japanese military authorities?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Did you keep a record of them?
- A. I record them secretly without the knowledge of the Japanese authorities.
- Q. Do you have that record?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Were you able to record the names of those executed?
- A. No, sir. I just recorded the number of bodies buried.
- Q. Can you tell the nationalities?
- A. Sometimes.
- Q. Do you have the dates?
- A. Yes, sir.





Q. Have you that record with you?

A. Yes, sir. I brought it with me.

(Witness produced a memorandum book which contains the record).

Q. Mr. Reyes, will you read your record of these burials of persons executed by the Japanese into your statement?

A. Yes, sir.

On February 10, 1942	4 Filipinos
February 15, 1942	3 British
April 11, 1942	9 assorted
April 15, 1942	9 "
April 17, 1942	8 "
May 3, 1942	1 Filipino
June 2, 1942	1 "
June 4, 1942	31 assorted
June 19, 1942	5 Chinese & 1 Filipino
June 30, 1942	15 assorted
July 9, 1942	15 "
July 18, 1942	20 Filipinos
July 27, 1942	20 "
August 19, 1942	25 "
October 1, 1942	14 Americans, Filipinos & Chinese
October 27, 1942	9 Filipinos
November 9, 1942	23 assorted
November 10, 1942	4 coffins. I do not know how many bodies were in each coffin as they were closed.



Q. Were the coffins heavy?

A. Yes, sir, very heavy.

December 2, 1942	13 Filipinos
December 6, 1942	1 in coffin
December 12, 1942	13 remains assorted
December 27, 1942	1 box with 2 persons. Convicted by Navy court martial
December 28, 1942	1 box with 2 persons. Navy court martial
December 28, 1942	2 extra heavy coffins. Convicted by Japanese military police
January 16, 1943	1 body - Navy court martial
January 18, 1943	2 persons - Japanese military police
April 18, 1943	1 person - -do-
June 18, 1943	2 persons - Navy court martial
July 24, 1943	2 " - Japanese military police



July 29, 1943		2 persons	- Navy court martial
August 10, 1943		5 "	- Japanese military police
August 28, 1943		10 "	-do-
September 16, 1943		10 "	-do-
October 2, 1943		40 "	-do-
October 18, 1943		7 "	-do-
November 18, 1943		3 "	-do-
November 23, 1943		1 person	-do-
January 5, 1944		1 "	-do-
January 27, 1944		15 persons	-do-
February 10, 1944		10 "	- Navy court martial
February 13, 1944		7 "	- Japanese military police
April 15, 1944		1 person	- Navy court martial
June 10, 1944		1 "	- Japanese military police
June 27, 1944		4 persons	-do-
July 4, 1944		5 "	-do-
July 5, 1944		6 "	- Navy court martial
July 21, 1944		8 "	- Japanese military police
July 24, 1944		8 "	-do-
July 24, 1944	6 p.m.	2 "	-do-
July 28, 1944		15 "	- Navy court martial
July 28, 1944	9 p.m.	10 "	- Japanese military police
July 29, 1944		5 "	-do-
August 2, 1944		6 "	-do-
August 4, 1944		3 "	- Navy court martial
August 8, 1944		25 "	- Japanese military police
August 12, 1944		25 "	-do-
August 13, 1944		10 "	-do-
August 13, 1944		3 "	-do-
August 21, 1944		Question mark (?)	Did not say how many.
August 31, 1944		6 persons	- Japanese military police
September 1, 1944		3 "	-do-
September 2, 1944		(?) "	
September 6, 1944		(?) "	- They would not tell how many. Convicted by Japanese military police
September 12, 1944		10 persons	- Japanese military police
September 27, 1944		15 "	-do-
September 29, 1944		12 "	-do-
September 29, 1944	in p.m.	1 person	-do-
October 4, 1944		1 "	-do-
October 20, 1944		1 "	-do-
October 22, 1944		7 persons	-do-
October 31, 1944		25 "	-do-
November 2, 1944		15 "	-do-
November 3, 1944		8 "	- Navy court martial
November 5, 1944		5 "	- Japanese military police
December 2, 1944		12 "	-do-

About 700 bodies hauled in trucks, already dead. They started digging at about 9:00 o'clock. They were buried at night.



Q. How many trucks were used to haul these bodies?

A. In ten trucks.

Q. People already dead?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Were these due to zonation?

A. Probably on account of zonation.

Q. Do you know where the trucks came from?

A. No, sir.



December 7, 1944	2 persons	- Japanese military police
December 10, 1944	45 "	-do-
December 12, 1944	5 "	- Navy court martial
December 13, 1944	55 "	- Japanese military police
December 15, 1944	10 "	-do-
December 22, 1944	155 "	-do-

Q. Were these 155 executed there?

A. Yes, sir. They were executed there, near the hole.

Q. How were they executed?

A. Some were bayoneted, some were shot and some had their heads cut off by the sword, whichever appeal to them.

December 23, 1944	40 persons	- Japanese military police
December 26, 1944	20 "	- Navy court martial
December 28, 1944	12 "	- Japanese military police
December 31, 1944	11 "	-do-
January 2, 1945	15 "	-do-
January 3, 1945	20 "	-do-
January 7, 1945	35 "	-do-

Q. Most of these people, except the 700, were they executed there?

A. They were killed there.

Q. Did you witness their killing there?

A. Yes, sir, because the killing place was about 200 yards from our place. We could see what they were doing because the Japanese military officers would ask my men and myself to go away from the place of execution and we would go to the tool house, which was about 200 yards distant. There we stayed until they call for us.

- Q. What was the usual method used for execution?
- A. They usually put them in line near the hole and shoot them. Next time, if they feel like doing it, they get their swords and let the people stand near the hole and cut their necks.
- Q. Are the people tied?
- A. Yes, sir. They were all tied with their hands at the back and blindfolded. They tear their clothes and used them to blindfold them.
- Q. Were they sometimes bayoneted?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Were they shot too? Do they shoot them sometimes?
- A. Yes, sir. After they were bayoneted and they find that they were not yet dead, they shoot them with their revolvers.
- Q. What would you say the majority of them were killed, by shooting, sword or bayonet?
- A. The majority were killed by sword, by beheading, especially those in 1944. They did not want to use their guns.
- Q. Did you see any case where they used bayonet practice in killing them?
- A. Yes, sir. They will get about 5 meters away from the place where the people are lined and then push them with their bayonets.
- Q. Can you see the bones of people who have been executed there in the cemetery now?
- A. Yes, sir, if we take them off we can see.
- Q. Have you seen the skulls and bones of some <sup>of</sup> them scattered around there?
- A. Yes, sir, because they do not dig deep enough so that if the rain falls, the skulls and bones come up.
- Q. So there are many bones and skulls exposed there?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Did you notice any Americans in uniform (in khaki) taken out there?
- A. I did not see at any time. We only saw those in civilian clothes.






Testimony of Mr. Pelagio Reyes - page 6

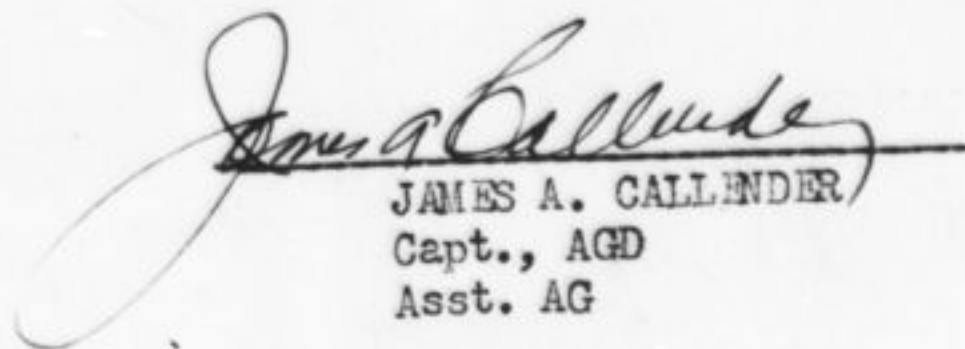
Q. Did you see any women?

A. There were several women, Filipinos. There were also some whites. I could not tell their nationality because when they passed by the office they were covered by canvas and only the color of the skins could be seen.



Personally appeared before me, Mr. Pelagio Reyes, this 9th day of May, 1945, who being duly sworn deposes and says that the facts stated in the foregoing affidavit are true as he verily believes.

3 May 1945



JAMES A. CALLENDER  
Capt., AGD  
Asst. AG

