

EVACUEE REPORTS:

FORSYTHE,

RUSSELL L.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA  
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SECTION GENERAL STAFF

AFG 500  
13 June 1944

Philippine Evacuee Report #303

Subject: Activities of 72nd Engineer Battalion, Negros Occidental

From : Russell L. FORSYTHE

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Name : Russell L. Forsythe  
Born : Ontario, Oregon in 1911  
Education : BS Degree in Electrical Engineering,  
University of California in 1932  
Occupation : Engineer for Far East Oil Co., Manila, PI  
In PI since : 1941

Interrogated by G-2, GHQ

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Although Mr. Forsythe spent most of the time in evacuation in the mountains, he was stationed with the 72nd Eng. Bn. in the area formerly designated Sub-Sector "H" for the past few months helping this Unit build a waterway for generating power. During this time he had an opportunity to observe the activities of the Unit and his information is considered fairly reliable.

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Organization, Equipment and Training The 72nd Eng. Bn. was one of the weakest units on the Island. It had this reputation among the other units. This was due to the fact that it had never had a competent Commanding Officer. It is believed that this Unit has never killed a Jap except on paper. However, it is thought that the Unit's efficiency will be greatly improved because a capable Officer was recently placed in charge. An intensive training program was commenced about the first of May.

Prior to the arrival of the guns in February, one company had 108 men and only 10 rifles. Now the 340 men composing the Battalion have 110 guns.

Japanese Raid 12 February 1944 Commencing 12 February, the Japanese conducted a three day raid into the mountains. During this period 89 civilians were killed in this sector. The Army retreated higher into the mountains and gave no protection at all to the people. This resulted in the Army losing the respect of the people. Since then the Army has found it even more difficult to find food or get any cooperation from the civilians.

Civil Government Stronger in this area than the Army. It is doing an excellent job of affording protection to the people from the abuses of the Army. Biggest criticism is that too much money is being issued and wasted. There have been many instances of the Officers stealing money and covering it up with false entries in the books by alleged purchases of army supplies.

Food Conditions are critical but after the September harvest the situation should be greatly improved. A much large crop is being grown this year than last year.

Relations Between Army and Civilians In addition to the names on the so called "black list" of the Army, each soldier has one or two civilians earmarked for killing. When the invasion comes it is believed that there will be a wholesale killing of innocent civilians just because they have been seen talking to the Japanese or because of some personal grudge.



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