

EVACUEES REPORTS:

JOHNSTON,

ROBERT T., JR.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SECTION GENERAL STAFF

APO 500
8 August 44

Philippine Evacuee Report #344

DECLASSIFIED PER JCS LTR O#
20 AUG. 75



Subject : PALAWAN and CUYO
From : Robert T JOHNSTON Jr, Pfc, ASN 11011125

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Name : Robert T Johnston Jr
Born : 18 September 1920 in Providence, Rhode Island
Education : High School 1935-38
Service : Enlisted 3 August 1940 in Providence, Rhode Island; 4 October 1940 left for PI with casual detachment; 1 November 1940 assigned to "C" Battery, 60th Coast Artillery; 14 Feb 1941 transferred to 28th Bomber Squadron, 19th Bomber Group
Assignment : Radio Technician
In PI : Since 1 November 1940

Interrogated by G-2 GHQ SWPA

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Although Johnston spent most of his time with the natives on the various islands, he was able to give some information concerning the guerrilla activities which is considered reliable.

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1 Nov 40 - Arrived in Manila, Philippine Islands.
- 8 Dec 41 - Attached to 28th Bomber Squadron.
- 30 Dec 41 - Left Mariveles on S S MAYON for unknown destination, bombed next day off shore of Ambulong Island, the troops were taken ashore during which time Johnston became separated from the others who returned to ship and sailed during the night.
- 1 Jan 42 - Reported to 48th Materiel Squadron under 1st Lt Warren C BAGGETT at the emergency landing field located at San Jose, Mindoro.
- Jan - Mar 42 - Performing usual work details around the field.
- 9 Mar 42 - Because of false rumor that Japanese force had landed at nearby point on Mindoro and was approaching San Jose, the gasoline, supplies, and main installations were destroyed and the group under Lt Baggett evacuated to the mountains.
- Apr 42 - Captain RIVAL, PA, advised group to go to Panay to meet planes from Del Monte, Mindanao.
- 5 May 42 - Arrived in Panay and met Major SAYE.



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- 15 May 42 - Entire group went to Cuyo on its way to Mindanao in sailboats after the planes failed to show up.
- 20 May 42 - Surrender of Major Saye, Lt Baggett and 28 enlisted men to Japanese forces which landed from a cruiser and transport. 22 enlisted men escaped into the hills.
- Jun - Aug 42 - Lived on small island off Cuyo.
- 13 Aug 42 - Started to Palawan with other Americans but returned to Cuyo after attacking Jap fishing launch.
- Sep 42-May 43 - Travelled around between the islands of Palawan, Busuanga and Dumarán, living with the natives and other American soldiers.
- May 43-Jun 44 - Lived with the natives on Cuyo.
- 21 Oct 43 - Married a Filipino girl on Cuyo.
- 20 Jun 44 - Went to Panay, carrying his wife.
- 21 Jun 44 - Evacuated by sub with his wife.

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Guerrilla Organization The development of the guerrillas in the Palawan area has been characterized by strife and political aspirations of the various leaders.

During the first few months after the fall of Bataan, there were several different guerrilla groups operating separately and independently of each other, each claiming to be the only organization officially connected with the U.S. Army.

Dr MENDOZA, Major MANIGQUE, Major MARAMBA, Lt Cirilo GARCIA, Lt GLEW, Alfred COBB, and Paul COBB were some of the early guerrilla leaders of different groups.

There was no unity of action among any of the groups. The American group, under Lt Glew, at one time succeeded in obtaining the support of the others, except Lt Garcia, in a plan to attack Puerto Princesa in an effort to liberate the 300 American prisoners located there. Lt Garcia blocked this plan at the last minute. As a result of this, hard feelings developed between Lt Garcia and Lt Glew which later resulted in the death of the latter.

During the summer of 1943, Major MUYCO was sent from Panay to unite the guerrillas into one organization. This was accomplished, not because of any desire on the part of the different groups to cooperate with one another, but because Major MUYCO was recognized as being the only officer who had the support of the 6th Military District, which, in turn, had been recognized by General Headquarters in Australia.

Guerrilla Activities Up until the time Johnston left Cuyo in June 1944, the guerrillas had accomplished little in the way of obtaining intelligence information or in harassing the enemy. There was no radio in the area and the only contact with the 6th Military District Headquarters was by sailboat.

The guerrillas spent most of their time convincing the people that they were part of the army and that as such they were entitled to appropriate their needs from the people. This resulted in undue hardship on the people at first because of the many different groups which were making demands upon them.

MAJOR MARAMBA : Former PC officer who was killed by Alfred Cobb. He was suspected of cooperating with the Japanese and was accused of plotting to turn over some guns to the Japs.

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MAJOR MUYCO ✓: Commanding Officer of the guerrillas in the Palawan area. He is responsible for uniting the different groups into one organization. He is regarded as a good man because he was friendly to the Americans and was instrumental in keeping the other guerrilla officers from imposing on the Americans more than they did.

MAJOR PEDRO MANIGQUE ✓: He was formerly Commanding Officer of one of the guerrilla groups. He is a weak character who is influenced by his wife more than by his own thoughts.

LT CIRILO GARCIA ✓: He is the Executive Officer for Major Muyco. He is definitely anti-white and did as much as possible to make life uncomfortable for the Americans.

DR MENDOZA ✓: Former Governor of Palawan. He was one of the early guerrilla leaders. He is pro-American and did all within his power to help the Americans. He is influential with the people and would be a good man to contact on the occupation of Palawan.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT : The Free Government of Palawan, as well as the different municipal governments, is attempting to carry out its usual functions. Emergency money is being printed and distributed, attempts are being made to collect taxes, and food and supplies are being collected and given to the army.

GOVERNOR ABORDO ✓: Governor of Free Palawan. He is living in the mountains and so far has been able to evade the Japs. He is strongly pro-American, was very helpful to the Americans, and is cooperating to the fullest extent with the army. He is honest, conscientious, and well liked by the people.

PEDRO PONCE DE LEON ✓: Mayor of Cuyo. The people are afraid of him because of the strong political connections that he has and because of relatives in the army who afford him protection. He is a close political friend of Lt Garcia. He is strongly anti-American and was one of the few in this area who was suspected of cooperating with the Japanese.

MORALE : The people have never lost faith in the United States. With a few notable exceptions, all of the natives were highly cooperative and generous to the American soldiers because of the friendly feeling they have for the United States. There was never any doubt in their minds about the ultimate outcome of the war.

PRESIDENT QUEZON : His name was not discussed too openly because it was known that he still had a few political followers. Johnston said that because he had married a Filipino girl the people were more inclined to talk to him. In these discussions it was apparent that Quezon had lost his popularity and was bitterly cussed by some because of the money spent on Quezon City.

INDEPENDENCE : Only the politicians want independence. The average Filipino wants to remain a part of the United States. A majority of the people are afraid of the political fights which will result if the Filipinos have complete control of the country.

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