

EVACUEE REPORTS:

LUTHER, MARTIN

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SECTION GENERAL STAFF

Philippine Evacuee Report #234

18 May 1944

Subject: CUYO, TABLAS, and PANAY

From: Pfc Martin W LUTHER

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Name: Pfc Martin W Luther 11017279
Born: 1915, at Salem, New Hampshire
Education: High School
Civilian
Occupation: 8 years as chemical laboratory technician in rubber factory
Service: Enlisted in Air Corps in November 1940
In PI: Since November 1941
Assignment: Chief Carpenter in 48th Materiel Squadron

Interrogated by G-2 GHQ SWPA

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Luther is intelligent and more alert than most of his comrades, and his scientific training has made him more curious and mentally enterprising. He is somewhat nervous and shows the effects of his sickness, particularly a disposition to be hasty about details, which consequently may not be completely accurate. His information is otherwise considered reliable.

CHRONOLOGY

8 Dec 1941: At Nichols Field with 48th Materiel Squadron.
late Dec 1941: Left for Mindoro with a group of 50 volunteers under Lt. BAGGETT.
Jan - Feb 1942: Group operated airfield and serviced planes at San Jose Central in southern Mindoro.
5 Mar 1942: Japanese landing at Caminawit Point. Group burned their aviation gasoline and evacuated to the mountains.
Mar - April 1942: Group lived in the mountains with Manon natives.
7 Apr 1942: Radio message received from General King, stating that Bataan was surrendering, and the group was on their own.
Apr 1942: Group evacuated to Panay by 61st Division. Waited at Caticlan, Capiz, for evacuation to Mindanao, in charge of Major SAYE.
17 May 1942: Surrender of 61st Division on Panay. Group left in sailboats for Mindanao with Major Saye.
20 May 1942: Group arrived on Cuyo Island.
21 May 1942: Japanese transport and cruiser came in to Cuyo. Both officers and half of the group surrendered with all guns. Rest of the group dispersed on Cuyo and northern Palawan.
21 May 1942: That night Luther started for Manamoc Island in the Cuyo group with three others. Stayed there over a year, seriously sick with pneumonia, and treated occasionally by Dr. "Sandoval", an American mestizo from Cuyo. In intervals of good health made soap and salt for the islanders.

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early June 1943: Luther received a letter from Captain WHITEHEAD on Cuyo saying that Lt. GLEW (formerly of 48th Materiel Squadron) had been shot, and it would be wise to try to evacuate to Australia.

12 June 1943: Arrived Cuyo, met Captain Whitehead and others of the group. Shortly thereafter started for Panay.

18 June 1943: Arrived at Santa Fe on Tablas with Captain Whitehead and 16 other Americans. The men stayed at civilian homes while Captain Whitehead went to see Major HARADA. In subsequent weeks, relations with Major Harada were unsatisfactory, and rumors of a Japanese occupation grew stronger.

17 Sept 1943: Whitehead left Santa Fe for Australia with four other Americans. In the following weeks other parties of Americans left the island at intervals.

20 Nov 1943: Japanese penetration began in southern Tablas. Luther a fugitive, in hiding.

11 Dec 1943: Escaped by boat from a small island off southern Tablas. Landed near Caticlan in Capiz and evacuated to the mountains back of Mahay.

Feb 1944: Started for evacuation to Australia.

Japanese Four-Engined Bomber In August 1943 Luther saw a four-engined bomber over Tablas. It flew over very low and the Japanese insignia was easily recognized. It resembled a B-17C with radial engines which Luther remembered were much smoother and quieter than the usual Japanese engines. He believes it might have been a captured American aircraft. Others later told him that they had seen it over Panay at the same time.

JAPANESE AT CORON In August 1942 two Japanese in civilian clothes came to Manamoc in a sailboat from Coron accompanied by two Filipinos. They tried to recruit labor for the manganese mines at Coron but had no success and left for Cuyo. The two Filipinos were left behind on Manamoc, and according to their statements, guerrillas at Coron had attacked the mines and killed 15 Japanese. The mines had been blown up with five boxes of dynamite, and these two Japanese were the last remaining at Coron at that time.

Japanese Penetration on Tablas Luther was living across the bay from Loooc on Tablas on 20 November 1943, when he saw three launches with about 150 Japanese each land at Loooc. He immediately went to Santa Fe and hid in a place about five kilometers away.

A trusted friend and other civilians later told him that between the 20th of November, when the Japanese landed at Loooc, and the 9th of December, when they left Santa Fe, the Japanese had killed all Chinese (about 500) between Santa Fe and Odiongán. There were looking for Americans, and terrorized civilians in order to have them reveal the Americans' hiding places. They killed about 500 civilians. They locked between 50 and 60 women of all ages in the school house at Santa Fe and raped them at will, killing some.

The "bamboo" wife of an American mining engineer was stripped and hung up by her feet in the plaza at Loooc for one day in an unsuccessful effort to make her reveal the whereabouts of her husband and Luther. She subsequently miscarried.

Filipino civilians in the Loooc area were thoroughly terrorized by a Japanese threat to kill ten civilians for every American they sheltered. They captured four Americans and subsequently gave three of them into the custody of the Japanese. The fourth was beheaded, the head smoked and salted and later given to the Japanese.

CAPTAIN FUJI Of the Fuji Bicycle Company in Manila and Iloilo, was said to be the leader of the Japanese mobile unit on Tablas. He was easily recognized, as he was the only Japanese wearing black leather boots.

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Japanese Mobile Unit During January 1944 while Luther was hiding behind Malay in Capiz, he followed Colonel Garcia's guerrillas when they made a night raid on Captain Fuji's unit near Buruanga in Capiz. The Japanese left, leaving 13 partially burned Japanese bodies.

A few nights later another raid was made and Captain Fuji was killed. He was buried by his men. Civilians later dug him up, cut him into small pieces with their bolos and buried him again in another place. Luther says there is no doubt that this is the same officer who was on Tablas. He is well-known to the civilians in both areas.

GUERRILLAS ON TABLAS AND PANAY From his contact with Harada, Garcia and their men, Luther feels that the guerrilla army is more interested in money and political power than in fighting the Japanese. They were not friendly to Americans and would not give money, arms or medicine to Luther and his comrades.

MAJOR HARADA ✓ Guerrilla commander on Tablas. A Tagalog, he has difficulties with his men and with civilians. Has 710 men according to records Luther saw at Santa Fe. He has little control over his men, who confiscate goods freely from civilians, sometimes giving receipts but never paying. Major Harada does, or can do, little about it. Shortly after the arrival of the American group, Major Harada unsuccessfully tried to disarm them. Again in August 1943 he charged all the Americans with sedition for having murdered the two Japanese captured on Cuyo and also "fifth columnists" on Cuyo. These papers originated from the Mayor of Cuyo who had shot Lt. Glew.

LIEUTENANT "COLOSON" ✓ Stationed at Malay in Capiz under Lt Col Garcia, 6th Military District. "Coloson" hates Americans and had a dispute with Garcia over the murders of MACKIE and OAKLEY. "Coloson" wanted papers to prove that he had shot them on orders, and Garcia claimed that his orders had been to disarm them.

Security of Rendezvous Luther says that on his arrival in the rendezvous area, the date, hour and location of rendezvous was a matter of common knowledge to many civilians. Boatmen are hired in advance and have an accurate knowledge of all supplies received. One of these boatmen lives in Ibayay in Capiz, where there is a Japanese garrison. Luther says he pointed out this lack of security to Lt Col Garcia, but got no reply.

Native Medicines Luther was seriously sick with pneumonia on Manamoc Island for many months and was forced to improvise medicines and make use of native remedies. He reports the following remedies as efficacious:

Guava - Boil about 15 guava leaves (waxy, long and narrow) until the solution is thick and red in color, and use the resulting solution as a disinfectant on wounds or ulcers. Will not hurt the eyes or delicate tissues. Smells like lysol or free phenol.

"Malave" - This wood can be scraped into a powder, which when packed into wounds or ulcers has a beneficial healing effect.

Banana - Hold a banana shoot 2 inches or less in diameter over a fire and squeeze out the juice. Luther drank this for pneumonia and reports it has a bitter taste, something like quinine.

"Bita" - Steep the red bark of the bita tree in hot water and drink three times daily as a substitute for quinine to cure malaria. It tastes very bitter, but is efficacious.

Coconut - To stop dysentery, eat the white center part of a coconut sprout about three feet long, three times a day.

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PI-ING GOMEZ ✓ Mayor of Santa Fe on Tablas. Had spent 15 years in the US. Was harrassed by guerrillas, who would take goods from his people, and by the Japanese, who cut him in the chest with a knife and threatened to take his daughters to Iloilo. Luther describes him as not bad at heart but unstable.

Gomez wrote a letter to Luther on 1 December 1943, during the Japanese penetration, saying that all Americans had surrendered to the Japanese and suggesting that Luther do likewise. When Luther ignored this, he sent a messenger on 9 December 1943 with the same message. Luther temporized, saying that he would come in, and that night the barrio Teniente led in a patrol of 50 Japanese looking for Luther. Luther escaped and hid that night under the mayor's house in Santa Fe. Next night he stole the mayor's boat and went to a nearby island. On the 11th of December 1943, Luther met Gomez on this island. Gomez was surprised but friendly and said that he would not force Luther to surrender. Shortly afterwards, however, Luther overheard him making a speech to the natives and telling them to capture soldiers and Americans and turn them into the Japanese.

ROBERT "STIBILUS" ✓ A Russian, about 36 years old, staying at Malay in December 1943. Believed to be an evacuee from the Russian Revolution, about 1921, and had been a miner on Pansy. He called himself a "Lieutenant", although he was not in the army. Quick-tempered, eats no meat, and belongs to some peculiar religious sect.

MARK HUBBARD ✓ English-born American citizen, mining engineer who worked at Major Harada's message center on Tablas. Reported to have been captured by civilians on Tablas in 1943 and turned over to the Japanese. Reported beheaded by the Japanese later in Iloilo.

HANK LINDBLOM ✓ American mining engineer from Mindanao. Luther knew him on Mindoro and later at Looe on Tablas. Reported to have been captured by civilians on Tablas in 1943 and turned over to the Japanese. Reported beheaded by the Japanese later in Iloilo.

COOPER ✓ American mestizo at San Jose Central in Mindoro. Reported with the guerrillas on Mindoro around September 1943.

ALFRED COBB ✓ American mestizo, cattle rancher from Palawan. American citizen and educated in US. Left Tablas for Australia with Captain Whitehead in September 1943.

CAPTAIN RAVAL ✓ Filipino officer of 61st Division on Pansy, had been a dentist on Luzon. He met the group of Americans on Mindoro in April 1943 and brought them to Caticlan in Capiz. Luther saw him again in July 1943 on Tablas. He said he had been in Manila as an intelligence man for Peralta, and had reported on the Manila docks.

MAJOR SAYE ✓ Met the group of Americans at Caticlan. Surrendered to the Japanese on Cuyo on 21 May 1942. According to Lt Glew, Saye was an ORC 2nd Lt and was wanted by Christie for Court Martial for reasons unknown.

ERROL T GLEW ✓ 48th Materiel Squadron. Left Mindoro before the rest of the group and was commissioned a 2nd Lt on Pansy. Killed at Cuyo on 18 May 1943 by the mayor.

PVT ARMOND TOUSSAINT ✓ 48th Materiel Squadron. Left behind on Mindoro, sick with malaria. A letter from Cooper said that Toussaint had been captured by the Japanese on Mindoro in April 1943. His eyes were kicked out. The Japanese Commanding Officer apologized and asked him what he wanted. Toussaint requested that the Japs kill him, and they did so.

PVT PALMER ✓ 48th Materiel Squadron. Left behind on Mindoro, crippled with ulcers and could not walk. Reported captured by the Japanese at Concepcion on Tablas late in 1943. Though still crippled, he killed three Japanese before he himself was shot.

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PFC GEORGE E LEAR ✓ 48th Materiel Squadron. A nephew of General Lear. Reported captured by civilians near Loco on Tablas in late 1943 and given to the Japanese. Later reported beheaded by the Japanese in Iloilo.

PVT WILLIAM F YOUNG ✓ 48th Materiel Squadron. Reported captured by civilians on Tablas in late 1943. Beheaded, the head smoked and salted and given to the Japanese.

CPL ELEDWERT ✓ 48th Materiel Squadron. Left Cuyo for Palawan in 1942 and is reported to have died of malaria on Palawan sometime before June 1943.

M/SGT WILFON ✓ 48th Materiel Squadron. Went to Manamoc Island with Luther and left there in December 1943 for Panay for evacuation to Australia.

CPL W J ALLEN ✓ 48th Materiel Squadron. Surrendered at Cuyo on 21 May 1942. On Manamoc Island Luther found a pair of GI trousers washed up on the beach. One leg was gone and there were cuts and blood and considerable flesh in the other leg. The trousers bore an army serial number which Luther recognized as Allen's. He tore out the piece of cloth bearing the number and gave it to Wilfon. During interrogation Luther again recognized Allen's serial number (6970907) as the number on the trousers.

SGT DAVID MACKIE Medical Corps, attached to 48th Materiel Squadron. Left Mindoro with Glew. Later shot at Malay.

CLARENCE T OAKLEY 48th Materiel Squadron. Stayed behind at Caticlan on Panay in May 1942. When Luther arrived in Malay in December 1943, he heard that Mackie and Oakley had been killed there sometime before. They were shot down without warning in the center of the barrio by Lt "Coloson" of the guerrilla army on the pretext that they had been obtaining money under false pretences. Both men were favorites in the barrio, and were buried the next day by the inhabitants. The barrio priest and the teniente know the whole story and are anxious to give it to the US Army when they arrive.

CALVIN HOGG ✓ 48th Materiel Squadron, air mechanic. Left Tablas with Captain Whitehead in September 1943 for Australia.

PVT WIGFIELD

PVT MARQUEZ

CPL MACHEE

PFC WILLIAM H HAMMONDS All of 48th Materiel Squadron, left Santa Fe in Tablas in September 1943 for Palawan.

NATHAN TALBOT ✓ Radio operator, joined the group on Mindoro. He came to Manamoc Island with Luther and left in December 1943 for Panay for evacuation to Australia.

CPL McMUARRY About 35 years old, from an Aircraft Warning detachment on Mindoro. Joined the group there when his supplies ran out in late December 1941. Left behind on Mindoro sick with malaria. Reported he later died.

CPO ROBERT PRYOR ✓ USN Escapee from Puerto Princessa who joined the group on Cuyo. He came to Tablas in June 1943. Luther heard that he had died of starvation at "Budhost" on Tablas during the Japanese penetration in late 1943.



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