

EVACUEE REPORTS:

SNELL, JAY R.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA  
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SECTION GENERAL STAFF

AFO 500  
13 June 1944

Philippine Evacuee Report #294

Subject: NEGROS and CEBU

From : Pvt. Jay Russell SNELL

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Name : Pvt. Jay Russell Snell  
Born : 1916 at Brockport, New York  
Education : High School  
Service : Enlisted U.S. Army, Rochester, New York, 1940  
Assignment : Sternberg General Hospital, Manila, PI (Bataan)  
In PI since : 21 May 1940

Interrogated by G-2 GHQ

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Snell is intelligent and more alert than the average enlisted man, has a good memory, and tells a straight forward story of his experiences and observations. His information is considered reliable.

CHRONOLOGY

- 9 April 1942 - Taken a prisoner of war at Bataan. Taken to Cabanatuan.
- 21 May 1942 - Moved to Bacolod with 9 other Americans to drive American made trucks for the Japanese. Town surrendered without any resistance.
- May 1942 to July 1943 - Drove trucks all over the coastal roads in Northern Negros. Probably ambushed more than a hundred times by guerrillas. Sometimes two or three Japs killed and a few wounded.
- Sept. 1942 - Guerrillas ambushed two trucks and killed about 20 Japs.
- Oct. 1942 - Guerrillas, armed only with bolos, burned two trucks and killed 18 Japs.
- 4 July 1943 - Escaped in truck with 6 other Americans and joined Col. Mata's unit in the mountains. Was not permitted to go South to contact Col. Abcede.
- 25 Nov. 1943 - Accompanied Col. Cushing to Cebu
- Feb-March 1944 - 11 day Japanese campaign against guerrillas. Reported by civilians that 500 to 600 Japs were killed. Few casualties among guerrillas.
- 1 May 1944 - Returned to Negros to deliver papers for Col. Cushing.

Treatment at Cabanatuan There were several hundred American soldiers marched together from Bataan to Cabanatuan. Many were sick and fell by the road side from exhaustion. The Jap soldier kicked them in the ditch and left them to die. At the concentration camp, the Jap guards would hit the prisoners with their hands, bayonets, or guns without any provocation. They were not given enough food and no medicine. Snell said that he was treated better than most of the others because he was put to work driving trucks. The prisoners who worked were given the same rations of the Japanese soldiers and were given some medical care.

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Treatment at Bacolod Because the Japs could not seem to be able to drive the big American made trucks, they had Snell and his nine companions drive. At first the treatment was pretty good. After the guerrillas became active, the Japs became crueller in their treatment of the prisoners and the civilians living in the occupied towns. The prisoners were permitted to buy food and cook it in their rooms. At first they were paid 80 centavos a day for working. This was reduced to 10 centavos. This was augmented by stealing truck parts and having the shine boys smuggle them out to sell or trade for food.

Red Cross Supplies One shipment of Red Cross supplies was brought into Bacolod but everything was kept by the Japanese soldiers. For several months the Japs were smoking American cigarettes and using American toilet articles. Filipino sailors on the Jap boats reported that the same thing occurred in Manila and other places.

Japanese Supplies in Bacolod During the first few months at Bacolod, the Japanese were receiving supplies from the outside. Beer, canned goods, cigarettes, toilet articles and other items were received to supplement the supplies which were taken from the people on the Island. This was discontinued about the 1st of 1943 and the Japanese soldiers were dependent entirely upon what was taken from the civilians. Tires and gasoline were becoming scarce. Mostly alcohol is being burned in the cars.

Lt. Col. MATA: Very hostile to whites. Separated Snell and his companions. Refused to permit them to go south to talk to Col. Abcede. Regards Col. Mata as a good organizer but a poor soldier. Says that he has three hiding places in the mountains and was the first to run and hide when it was reported that the Japs were coming into the mountains.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT: In Negros Occidental the Government is running the Army. It is better respected by the people than the Army, which is regarded as a group of bandits operating as an Army for the purpose of doing legalized looting without giving any protection to the civilians.

Conditions in Cebu The situation existing in Cebu is exactly opposite to that in Negros. There are no cliques or politics. The organization of the army is more along Army lines, which results in better discipline and more dependability on the part of the soldiers. The Officers demand and receive respect from their men. Laxity on the part of the soldiers who act as guards results in a court martial. Because of this practice, which is well understood by the soldiers, it is seldom that the Japanese are able to surprise the guerrilla forces.

Lt. Col. CUSHING: Highly thought of by people and practically worshiped by the soldiers. Receives complete cooperation from the civilians. Personally plans all attacks against the Japanese. Too brave for his own good, apparently having no regard for his own welfare.

FOOD: The food situation is really acute in Cebu. The civilians share whatever they have with the soldiers. This usually consists of some corn, dried fish, and boiled bananas. Most of the food has been donated, though, lately Col. Cushing has been paying for some of it with script money from Negros and counterfeit Japanese money sent to him by GHQ.

MEDICINES: Since there is practically no malaria on the Island of Cebu, it is thought that the different forms of sulfa drugs and other medicines used in treating wounds and infections are needed most. As a whole, health conditions are good.

Prisoners of War Snell stated that at the time he was removed from Canbanatuan to Bacolod, 21 May 1942, the following American soldiers were still living and apparently were in fair shape:

Captain Harold W. Koschner  
James J. O'Keefe  
Gaylord Shores  
Almas Polk

Harry R. Browning  
Michael A. Sedlock  
George G. Sadler

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Prisoners Who Escaped From Basilod 4 July 1943

Jay Russell Snell  
James Fred Dyer  
Joseph R. Jenson  
Floyd Reynolds

Howard Tom Chrisco  
Robert Lewis Young  
Irwin V. Joseph

Prisoners Remaining at Basilod

Gavin White  
Ramon Corona

Joseph R. Jenson, Irwin V. Joseph, and Floyd Reynolds are presently in Negros or Mindanao. Jenson and Reynolds had an opportunity to leave Negros but refused. Joseph was sent by Col. Cushing from Cebu to Mindanao with the German Prisoner. It was thought that a submarine was going to land in Mindanao.

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