

8

Serial 6
Box 5

Testimony in
way of establishing
subsistence with
Fidel Family during
WW II
(10)

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: NND 943078

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 883078

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
COUNTY OF CHAMPAIGN) SS.
MILITARY RESERVATION)

STATEMENT OF M/SGT JOSEPH W. DONAHY

JOSEPH W. DONAHY, Master Sergeant, RA 6249347, Squadron A-1, 3502d AAF Base Unit, TS, Chanute Field, being first duly sworn, on oath deposes and makes the following statements:

(Questions asked by 1st Lt. SCOTT E. WILLSON, Investigating Officer)

- Q. Were you in the Philippine Islands during the past?
A. I was.
- Q. When did you first go there?
A. I arrived in the Philippines on April 22, 1941.
- Q. At the outbreak of the War, where were you stationed?
A. At Clark Field, Fort Stotsenburg.
- Q. How long did you stay there after the outbreak of War?
A. I stayed at Fort Stotsenburg for three weeks. I left there on 24 December 1941.
- Q. Where did you go after leaving Fort Stotsenburg?
A. I went into the Province of Bataan.
- Q. Were you attached to a unit at that time?
A. Yes, I belonged to Hq. & Hq. Sq. of the 24th Pursuit Group.
- Q. How long were you with this particular unit?
A. I was with that unit from the day of the War until the day that the American Army surrendered to the Japanese. That was April 9, 1942.
- Q. Where did you go when you left your unit?
A. I was on the march going into prison camp under the jurisdiction of the Japanese Army.
- Q. How long were you a prisoner?
A. For seven (7) days.
- Q. What was your status after that seven days?
A. My official status was "Missing in Action". I was an Escapee.
- Q. Where did you go?
A. I escaped in the Municipality of Batis, in the Province of Pampanga.
- Q. Where did you go when you escaped?
A. I lived for two weeks in that Municipality about 2 miles from the road in a little house in the fish ponds.
- Q. During that two weeks' time, did anyone help you and furnish you equipment and clothes?
A. We had some money. I met another group of Americans the first night after I escaped at noon. Our money was pooled together and we bought quite a bit of food with that money. Then we were helped by the Mayor of the Municipality of Guagua. His name was Jose Sarano.
- Q. How did he help you?
A. He gave us food, clothing and shelter. I was under his care for about 99 days.

- Q. You say he "gave us", who is "us"?
- A. There were some other Americans. Three of them died. I don't know their names right now; I don't have my list with me, but I was with a Colonel Merrill during this 99 days. That's what I mean by us.
- Q. After that 99 days were up, where did you go?
- A. I went from the fish ponds over to the sugar cane area into a barrio. The next place I stayed for 14 days at an individual's home. During that time we were still under the supervision of the Mayor of Guagua as he supplied us food by having someone come into his store and get it. It was really over 100 days of care that this mayor was entitled to. It was 110 days or so.
- Q. Did anyone other than this mayor furnish you food and clothing for this hundred day period?
- A. Yes, we were given some supplies from Manila. The food came in from all corners of the province from different natives. Duri
- Q. During this 100 day period, do you recall the name or names of any individual or individuals other than the mayor that furnished you anything?
- A. I recall a Mrs. Harris, an American, sent us a considerable amount of medicine from Manila through various runners. I was with this Mrs. Harris's brother who was a lieutenant, and who later died. I was with him during this 14 day period. She sent us quite a bit and the Catholic priest from Manila sent us out a considerable amount of medicine. From time to time, during the next two weeks this priest sent us things. No one would ever give their right names over there. The priest was under the jurisdiction of Archbishop O'Daugherty of Manila, but I don't know his name.
- Q. After this 100 day period, what happened.
- A. I kept moving around in the Province of Pampanga. I lived for about three months in another small barrio getting food at that time from people around there and occasionally the mayor would send me out a few things as I was living in a home at that time. I don't recall the name of it, but it was in the Municipality of Louva. I lived in the vicinity of the Town of Louva for a considerable time. I was compelled to move because of a collaborator that reported me, and I left town and went to Santa Rita and stayed there quite awhile. In Santa Rita I stayed for three or four months and our food was given to us by a wealthy family called the Hinkels. Their names were Exeall Jinkel. I am not at all sure how that name is spelled, but that's the way it sounded. That particular family gave us everything we wanted in that particular area.
- Q. You were in the Santa Rita area for three or four months?
- A. I believe I was in Santa Rita for that period. I am not sure of the particular dates.
- Q. Did anyone other than Exeall Jinkel furnish you with anything during that time?
- A. Occasionally the mayor of Guagua would send out some cigarettes and things, and there was someone else in there by the name of Ralph Villiquarte (I don't know how to spell that). In Santa Rita I was with some other Americans. There was Major Henry Clay Connors, Jr, a Lieutenant Ed Ramsey and a Robert Mailheu. I don't know if Lt. Ramsey is still living or not. Connors is in East Orange, New Jersey, and Mailheu lives in Los Angeles.

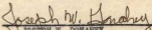
- Q. Were you getting any food or equipment from anyone else besides Jinkel and the mayor?
- A. This Villequarte man acted as a runner. If we wanted something, he would get it for us.
- Q. Do you know where he got it?
- A. He'd get it from the wealthy families that wanted to contribute to our support, but at that time the families that were contributing to us didn't want their names to be known because of vengeance that the Japanese might take on them. Therefore, I don't know their names.
- Q. Where did you go then?
- A. We went into the Municipality of Porac in Banaba. Banaba is a little town or municipality.
- Q. Did you know a man while you were there by the name of Fernando Elpanti, who was about 40 years of age and was a farmer by occupation?
- A. While I was in the Municipality of Porac I was, more or less, for a time under the jurisdiction of Alfredo Lumina. We had an organization set up at the time whereby we were keeping the food in the little towns rather than to have the people sell it and getting it into the larger cities where it was picked up by the Japanese for useless money, so the rice and other food was usually left under the Tientes (equivalent to a lieutenant as we know it) of the barrio and, of course, we would get supplies from him.
- Q. Do you know where he got his supplies?
- A. He was a wealthy land owner in that particular area. The Tientes are like an alderman here, but have a whole barrio under their jurisdiction. Usually they own the land that the others are tenants on. They would all chip in, but it would still all come from him as he owns the land. During that time I stayed with a farmer about a mile up in the mountains from the town. He had a small piece of land and I slept with the family. They had such tongue-twisters for names that I can't remember them all. I couldn't carry any papers with me to record their names.
- Q. How many were in the family?
- A. There were several children. They had three girls that I know of and about the same amount of boys.
- Q. Have you ever seen this before? (Hands letter dated February 3, 1944, to affiant).
- A. Yes. (Pointing) This is the mother's name. I gave them this so that they could turn it in later. Of course they live back in the woods and they probably didn't turn it in for awhile. We would give the families a sort of recognition note. If a person didn't belong to some organization he was considered as a collaborator. A paper like that was quite a keep-sake for a family during that particular time. This family was very worthy of anything the American Government would give them. That is the Elpanti family. They at one time had Connor, Mailheu, another American and myself living right with them.
- Q. They were farmers?
- A. Yes, living in the mountain area of this Bonaba barrio.
- (Referring to claim of Fernando Elpanti, the letter dated February 3, 1944, signed by one Joseph W. Donahay, United States Air Corps, Fort Stotsenburg, Pamp., was handed to the witness and the witness identified it as a copy of a letter he had written and signed.)
- Q. Have you ever heard of Eliong?
- A. It sounds familiar. That is evidently a first name.
- Q. His full name is Aurelio Palo.
- A. That is the father of Jose Palo.

- Q. How long had you been with the Elpanti family before you gave him this letter?
- A. I had left the family already and we were being pushed back further into the mountains. I had already completed my stay and only came later to visit. On one of my visits they asked for the paper. I wrote it out at the time and I saw them bury the paper that day.
- Q. This letter is dated 3 February 1944, is that date right?
- A. I know a year later I was back in America.
- Q. When were you back in America?
- A. In 1945.
- Q. What were you doing between 1942 and 1944.
- A. I was all over that place there. I walked thousands of miles around there. I was still on the island. I lived with that Elpanti family for a long time. I came there on a Sunday and Ramsay went into Luzon. I stayed in Bonaba. Three days later I went to this family's home. They built me a little house in the mountain about 200 yards from their farm. I traveled around with one that is listed there. His name was Seriocco. He was my guide. During that time I visited various barrios along the edge of the mountain as we were setting up the guerrilla movement. The other Americans went up north but were in so many Japanese raids that two of them, Connors and Mailheu and another American, came back and we lived in and around that particular barrio for quite a while. This Seriocco gave us several of his guns, rifles, that we needed.
- Q. While you were living with this Elpanti family what did they furnish you?
- A. We had rice, the usual fare was rice and tomatoes and beans. They constituted the regular diet but occasionally we would go out and get a cow back in the mountain, and we had cow then for about ten days. We had eggs and some milk occasionally and fish that was caught in the mountain streams. There were no delicacies of any kind. The food was simple but adequate.
- Q. Did they furnish any equipment?
- A. Yes, this Seriocco got me a pair of shoes one time and I would occasionally use his rifle altho I had my own pistol. His rifle and ammunition were available for us Americans to use at any time when we wanted to travel. They were definitely with us.
- Q. What about clothing, anything else other than shoes?
- A. To be frank I wore anything I could get and if they had a pair of pants I'd just wear them. I was one of the family. I stayed with this family longer than any of the other Americans and they treated me as one of the family. They washed my shirts,--I had two,--and built my house, etc. As for actually giving me anything, I know of the shoes and they gave me tobacco.
- Q. Do you have any idea approximately how much this particular family spent upon you in American dollars and cents.
- A. We Americans once added up what we felt the people were giving us. As individual Americans we felt it was about \$3.00 a day. They were working and if they were to work cutting down trees and what-not for this lieutenant of the barrio they would earn the equivalent of 3 lbs of rice, and an American would normally eat half of that. They seemed to need more rice than other people. We figured it averaged about \$3.00 a day, under the old standard of exchange.

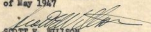
- Q. Does that include everything they did for you?
- A. We figured it would be about \$3.00 a day. They built me a couple of homes. They did everything they could for me. I'd say my time with them should be \$5.00 a day. I believe that would be a fair sum for them to receive. I don't know the exact time I was with them, but it was quite awhile.
- Q. Could it have been a year with this Elpanti family?
- A. Well, it wasn't a year.
- Q. Could it have been six months?
- A. That seems to be a logical time. In September 1944 I cleared this whole area and went into northern Luzon. There should be no claim of any kind after September of 1944. I left Santa Rita in March of 1943 and stayed around there from March 1943 until September 1944 but I was not under the jurisdiction of this family for quite a while.
- Q. You were only with this Elpanti family for about four months, is that right?
- A. I believe so.
- Q. During that four month period you figure it cost \$3.00 a day to keep you going?
- A. I believe at the most, considering the building of the houses, etc., that \$5.00 a day, considering the prices, would be more fair. They would have to go into town and it seemed there were other things they had to do for me that they didn't do for themselves. They could go several days without rice, but with me there they thought they had to get it. Of course it was for themselves too, but they went to a lot of trouble for me.
- Q. Did you ever request any of this subsistence from the Elpanti family?
- A. I didn't specifically request anything of them. I got from them anything they would give me. They gave me the best they had under the circumstances.
- Q. You never asked for anything?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. Did you at any time tell them they would be reimbursed for their trouble?
- A. Yes, sir, I did.
- Q. Did you tell them who would do the reimbursing?
- A. I told them the American Government would pay them for their care that they gave me. I had authority to do that. It was given to me by Captain Barker.
- Q. Who is Captain Barker?
- A. He was an American officer connected with the 26th Cavalry Philippine Scouts.
- Q. When did he give you this authority?
- A. On August 15th of 1942. I met the Captain and was with him for three days at that time.
- Q. Did you make any agreement with them to pay for the supplies that they gave you, for this subsistence?
- A. No agreement. No talk of repayment of any kind took place during my stay except the time that I came back to their place and gave them the receipt for them to keep. They didn't ask for the receipt. I gave them this as I didn't expect to see them any more.

- Q. Is that the letter you speak of?
- A. Yes, we called the letter a receipt. It was for whatever they wanted to do with it.
- Q. Prior to the surrender of the American Army, did your immediate commanding officer give you any instruction as to obtaining subsistence if you escaped?
- A. Yes, sir. The American Army surrendered on April 9th. My organization had the news of the surrender during the night sometime. The Captain of the 26th called all the NCO's to his tent and we had a meeting for about three hours or so. We didn't know if the news was authentic or not, but he stated at that particular time that if anyone of us wanted to take off into the mountains he could if they desired as it was his belief that Americans would surely arrive in two or three weeks and that we could later rejoin the forces of the American Army.
- Q. Did he tell you how to live those two or three weeks.
- A. We had some extra food, not considered as extra food but two or three cans of milk were available and he said that there were Americans in the mountain somewhere, but he didn't know where. All he could say was try not to be captured. I was captured on the 12th, right in the vicinity of my organization.
- Q. Did the Elpanti family ever give you any chickens to eat?
- A. Yes, sir. I believe I listed them.
- Q. What about pork?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Sugar?
- A. We had sugar occasionally. That didn't all come into one meal, of course. Sometimes we would have rice and sugar, sometimes rice and tomatoes. And when they would get a cow we would have dried meat as long as it lasted. We had rice and tomatoes, sometimes those little tomatoes that grow in the mountains. Sometimes we would have some of their home grown beans, or a bowl of beans and tomatoes, or beans and fish, sometimes no rice. It was the best they could do and I got by very nicely on it.
- Q. Do you know if the Elpanti family ever bought any of the articles of food?
- A. Yes, sir, they bought them.
- Q. Where did the master of the Elpanti family get his money.
- A. He worked for Alfredo Velumina cutting timber in the mountains, and he operated his farm. The father of this man had a different name. He raised rice and sugar cane on his farm and cut timber in the mountains. That is how he gained his livelihood and that of his family. Before the war an individual could buy a ganta of rice for 40 centavos or 20¢ in American money. During the war, while I was living with this family, the price of rice went to fifty pesos.
- Q. What did fifty pesos amount to?
- A. Well it went up ten times.
- Q. What is 64 Philippine pesos worth?
- A. \$32.00 in American money.

- Q. Do you have anything else you want to say relative to the Elpanti family for their support and aid to you?
- A. I was quite satisfied with their support. I felt they did the best they could under the oppressed times they were living under.
- Q. Do you think their claim for \$64.86 pesos is a justified claim for your support?
- A. I think it is inadequate for them. They underestimated it I believe. At the time the people supported me, it was about ten to 1 and not 37 to 1. The currency went up after that.
- Q. Then do you think 240 Philippine pesos is a justifiable claim?
- A. I think that's pretty good for them. My estimation was \$5.00 a day. 240 pesos is only \$120.00 in American money. They are still underestimating it. If that is what they want, I believe they should get it, but it is my belief they are underestimating the amount of money for the work and help they gave me. I never collected any rations for this and I know someone should be entitled to this.


JOSEPH W. DONAHAY
W/Sgt, Sq A-1, 3502d AAFBU, TS

Subscribed and sworn to
before me this 7 day
of May 1947


SCOTT E. WILLSON
1st Lieutenant, Air Corps
Investigating Officer

DECLASSIFIED
Authority E.O. 13526

Dowdley Joseph W. 1/5/97