



## The Igorots

*Gentlemen, when you tell that story, stand in tribute to those gallant Igorots.*

—MACARTHUR

These Igorots are nameless, but singly, or as a body, the exploit for which they are remembered will rank among the most valiant acts of heroism performed by men whose military feats have glorified them to the stature of deathless heroes.

In a Japanese offensive in Bataan, the 20th Japanese Infantry Regiment attacked a position held by a single Igorot company. The Igorots preferred to die in their foxholes rather than retreat; and they died to a man, fighting, exacting a terrible toll from the enemy.

The American High Command ordered a counter-attack. This assault was to be carried out by a tank unit supported by Igorot infantry.

The terrain, bristling with thick bamboo underbrush, and irregular undulations, would have been impenetrable but for the limitless resourcefulness which was characteristic of General MacArthur's troops.

Led by an Igorot commander who "hoisted" his men to the top of the tanks, the tank unit rolled into the jungle, the exposed Igorot soldiers guiding the tanks through the matted morass, by beating on the turret of the tanks with sticks while in their other hands they held automatic pistols with which they shot at the enemy.

"Bataan," General MacArthur is reported to have said, "has seen many wild mornings, but nothing equal to this. No quarter was asked and none was given. Always above the din of the battle rose the fierce shouts of the Igorots as they rode the tanks and fired their pistols."

Losses were heavy on both sides, but when the battle was over, "the remnants" of the tanks and Igorots were still there, but the 20th Japanese Infantry Regiment was nowhere in sight. It had been completely annihilated.

In recounting the story of this exploit to a group of his officers, General MacArthur is quoted as having said that although he knew of many acts of heroism in battlefields all over the world, "for sheer, breath-taking and heart-stopping desperation, I have never known the equal of those Igorots riding the tanks."

"Gentlemen," he continued, "when you tell that story, stand in tribute to those gallant Igorots."

## Buenaventura J. Bello

*... the Filipino school teacher who preferred to die rather than obey the Japanese order to lower the American flag and fly the Philippine colors above the "Rising Sun" over his little village schoolhouse.*

--QUEZON

For refusing to haul down the American flag which flew side by side the Philippine flag in front of the village schoolhouse, as it did in all school buildings all over the archipelago, Buenaventura J. Bello was shot down in cold blood. He fell dead at the foot of the thin bamboo pole which yet flew the American flag.

Bello could have obeyed the Japanese officer who ordered him to haul down the American flag. The Filipino flag was to remain flying in the breeze. It was but a simple matter of untying a knot and letting down the Stars and Stripes. His students were not there to witness the ignominious act. The classrooms were empty. All the children had remained in their homes at the news of the coming enemy. The rooms were littered with tinsel and bunting and silver stars—hastily abandoned Christmas decorations for the Christmas trees that stood in corners, shorn of gifts, and withered now. (Philippine schools celebrated Christmas about two weeks before Christmas time.) But even if they were there, those young people would have understood that their teacher was defenseless in the face of the armed aggressors. Yet Bello refused, and he was shot down like a dog.

"We have no quarrel with you. All I ask is that you pull down the American flag and you can keep your own still flying. I will give you two minutes to make up your mind. If you disobey my orders my soldiers will shoot," said the Japanese officer who now turned to his men, ordering them to load and take aim.

This was death. These many years he had been teaching his children the ways of democracy, instilling in them love for freedom, love for all the cherished ideals for which the American flag stood. Every Monday morning he had stood on those front steps of this little school house and sung with his pupils the *Star Spangled Banner* and the *Philippine National Anthem*, as two little boys hoisted up the thin bamboo pole the American and Philippine flags.

Bello answered, "I don't need two minutes. Tell your men to shoot me now, because I shall never tear down either of the flags."

The Japanese officer made a swift angry motion with his

nand and barked out a command. The leveled guns blazed, and the little, frail schoolteacher lay dead at the foot of the flag he tried to defend with his life.

Bello was 42 years old, and father of six children. He was well known as an Ilocano poet and declaimer. Humble and unassuming in appearance, conservative even in his way of dressing—the hard white collar and the black bow tie—yet he looked with an open mind at the Philippine youth who adopted the ways of the west, meanwhile retaining their own.

Now his children are fatherless but well may they be proud of him. Well may every Filipino teacher feel pride in his heart for this humble man who was a credit to his profession. Well may every Filipino remember and respect the memory of this man who was true to his creed, who was honest to himself, whose courage typified that of his brothers who remained at home because they were too old to join their sons who flocked to the colors at the approach of the enemy. But Bello stood for something more. In the words of President Quezon, Bello "was paying tribute to the solidarity between the United States and the Philippines—a solidarity that will live even when, one day soon, the Philippine flag flies alone over our school houses."

### Filipinos Can Now Own Land (Continued)

Section 101 (b) of the Nationality Act of 1940 provides as follows:

"The term 'National of the United States' means (1) a citizen of the United States, or (2) a person who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States. It does not include an alien."

Furthermore, in his letter, the California Attorney-General paid tribute to the intense loyalty of the Filipino to the United States when he stated that:

"Our nation has been impressed with the heroism and the loyalty of the citizens of the Philippine Islands. We Americans do not—nor do our courts—regard them as "aliens"—but as American Nationals, who rose as one, unflinchingly, to make our fight, their fight,—they are adding their full strength and effort alongside that of this country for the total defeat of our enemies."

Subsequently, on April 14, 1943, the Attorney-General of Arizona held that "Filipinos come within the purview of the definition of 'National of the United States', and therefore, are not included within the inhibitions contained in the Arizona Code Annotated, 1939. These provisions prescribe only aliens from acquiring, possessing, enjoying, transmitting and inheriting real property in the State of Arizona.

It will be recalled that in February 1941, the Supreme Court of the State of Washington ruled that Filipinos are not included in the provisions of the State Anti-Alien Land Law and may lease or buy real property in the State.

The Office of the Philippine Resident Commissioner, to whom credit is due in obtaining this liberal interpretation of the alien land law in these two states, has had this matter under consideration for some time now. At present, efforts are being exerted toward obtaining similar rulings in other states.

## HERE AND THERE

### Philippine Government Buys Bonds

THE Philippine Government, through its agency, the New York branch of the Philippine National Bank, has subscribed and paid \$2,700,000 to the second Victory War Bond drive, according to an announcement made recently by Auditor-General Jaime Hernandez at Washington, D. C.

"The Philippine Government," said the Auditor-General, "in wholeheartedly participating in the United States Treasury drive, is giving a good example to all Filipinos in America."

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### Awards

THE Michigan Daily, official organ of the University of Michigan, carries the news that Eduardo Salgado, a Filipino painter, was awarded a medal of honor for distinguished work in the field of art by the Fine Arts Section of the Michigan Academy.

The paintings that won Salgado the award were two panoramas of the Philippines and two portrait studies. A member of the committee on awards praised them for their realistic touches, their fine details and brilliant colors. "The pictures," she said, "are typical of his people, and illustrate their feelings well."

The same paper states that among six foreign women who received the Barbour scholarship for the 1943-44 school year, was a Filipina, Miss Pura J. Hernandez, who has attended the University of the Philippines, Columbia University, and George Washington University. She specializes in accounting.

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### A Letter

AMONG the many letters we have received so far from Filipinos all over the country, this one from Raymundo Lapitan of Taunton, Massachusetts, paints an almost heroic figure of a man humbly doing his bit in his own unobtrusive way in a country far from the homeland. He wrote:

"I am a Filipino—born in Cebu—am married and have five sons and daughters—the oldest, 16, is a welder in the Bethlehem Steel Shipyard. I myself work for the government at the Miles Standish Army Camp as a mason . . . I have been working on defense since 1940.

"I own a farm here in Massachusetts and have three acres to be planted, and I shall see to it that some of my less for-

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