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# The Philippine Constabulary

## A BRIEF HISTORY

By Captain Primitivo C. Milan, Inf



THE Philippine Constabulary will be fifty-five years old on August 8, 1956. Conceived by the masterly brain of Luke E. Wright, a member of the Second Philippine Commission, this national police force was created by Act No. 175 of the Philippine Commission soon after the inauguration of Civil Government in the Philippines.

It was on August 8, 1901 when Civil Governor William H. Taft appointed Captain Henry T. Allen of the 6th U.S. Cavalry and Captain David J. Baker of the 26th U.S. Infantry as the first Chief and Assistant Chief, respectively, of the Constabulary. With the aid of selected commissioned and non-commissioned officers who were graduates of U.S. Army Service Schools, General Allen had all the first batch of officers undergo a prescribed training course. After graduation, all the officers were equipped and sent out to the field. A Captain and three or four Lieutenants were assigned in each of the provinces where civil government had been established. These teams recruited,

trained and equipped their own men and in three months the Constabulary became a well-knit and efficient organization.

The mission of the early Constabulary was to suppress brigandage, insurrection, tribal warfare, head-hunting, unlawful assemblies and other crimes, such as murder, kidnapping, slavery, and cattle rustling. Later on the Constabulary performed specific functions in connection with national epidemics, quarantine measures, and locust control.

To accomplish this mission effectively, General Allen first organized the Philippines into three Constabulary districts and placed them under the command of the Assistant Chiefs of Constabulary. On June 13, 1904, the number of districts were increased to five: First District, comprising the provinces of Batavia, Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Rizal and Zambales; Second District, consisting of the provinces of Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Masbate, Mindoro Sorsogon and Tayabas; Third District, comprising the provinces of

Cebu, Antique, Bohol, Capiz, Iloilo, Leyte, Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, Palawan, and Romblon; Fourth District, consisting of the provinces of Abra, Cagayan, Isabela, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Mountain Province and Nueva Vizcaya; and Fifth District, comprising Mindanao and Sulu. These five districts were later re-designated District of Northern Luzon, with headquarters in San Fernando, La Union; District of Central Luzon, with headquarters in Manila; District of Southern Luzon, with headquarters in Legaspi, Albay; District of Visayas, with headquarters in Iloilo, Iloilo; and District of Mindanao, with headquarters in Zamboanga, Zamboanga.

On October 15, 1902, Vice-Governor Luke E. Wright and Brigadier General Henry T. Allen got the approval of the Philippine Commission to organize the Constabulary Band. Lt. Walter Howard Loving, an American Negro of exceptional musical talent, was ordered to do the task of organization. Commanded successively by Lts. Navarro, Silos and Fresnido, and Captain (now Lt. Col.) A. Buenaventura, this organic unit of the Constabulary has existed through the years up to the present and has become world-famous.

In 1906, an Officers' School was established for the training of new Constabulary officers. Initially, the school provided only a six-month course. In 1914, the course was lengthened to two years, and in 1919, the school was re-named Academy for Officers of the Philippine Constabulary. The Philippine Constabulary Academy further lengthened

the course of three years which course lasted up to 1936 when the Academy was re-named Philippine Military Academy, by virtue of Commonwealth Act No. 1, otherwise known as the National Defense Act which created the Philippine Army.

The Philippine Constabulary became a division of the Philippine Army on December 31, 1935, but on June 23, 1938, the First National Assembly passed Commonwealth Act No. 343 re-activating the Philippine Constabulary and separating it from the Philippine Army. The newly re-activated organization was placed under the executive supervision of the Secretary of the Department of Interior. The Constabulary had the category of a Bureau under this Department up to the outbreak of the Pacific War on December 8, 1941.

During World War II the Constabulary units of Luzon and Mindanao were inducted into the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE). By virtue of General Order No. 46, of Headquarters, United States Army Forces in the Far East, all personnel of the Constabulary were called into the service of the USAFFE. The first, second and fourth Constabulary regiments were attached to the 2nd Regular Division, Philippine Army under the command of Brigadier General Guillermo B. Francisco. The fourth regiment saw service in Mindanao.

Some units of the PC were activated in November and December 1944 but the complete re-activation of the Constabulary was not pushed through. On June 7, 1945, units of

the PC were assigned to the newly-created Military Police Command, PA. It was, however, on January 1, 1948 when the MPC was de-activated and the Philippine Constabulary was again activated by virtue of Executive Order No. 94 of the late President Manuel A. Roxas. Under the new setup the country was divided into four zones: Northern Luzon Zone, with headquarters at Bamban, Tarlac under Colonel Liberato Littaua; Southern Luzon, with headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City under Lt. Col. Florencio Selga; Visayas Zone, with headquarters in Cebu City under Lt. Col. Angel Oppus; and Mindanao Zone, with headquarters in Iligan, Lanao under Lt. Col. Alejandro Suarez. These zones were abolished when the four Military Areas of the Philippines were activated.

Today, the Philippine Constabulary Provincial Commanders are under the immediate supervision of Area Commanders but are all under the overall command, control and direction of Gen Cabal.

The present mission of the Philippine Constabulary are as follows:

1. To preserve public order and enforce the law throughout the country pursuant to Section 9, Article XIV of the Constitution.
2. To intensify inspectional supervision over, and undertake the train-

ing of municipal police forces to make them more valuable auxiliaries in the maintenance of civil security, pursuant to Commonwealth Act No. 343; Executive Order 175 series 1938; and Section 837 of the Revised Administrative Code.

3. To assist the civil government and semi-government agencies in the accomplishments of their individual missions.

4. In time of emergency, to perform home defense in rear areas and such other services as the Chief of Staff, AFP may direct, pursuant to Executive Order No. 389 series 1950.

Since early this year, an additional mission has been given the PC—to continue the campaign against communistic dissidence and subversion, in accordance with Letter of Instructions No. 1 GHQ, AFP dated 13 February 1956.

The story of the Constabulary is—in the words of former Governor General William C. Forbes—one of heroism, endurance and loyalty to ideals under great difficulties. As guardian of the peace, law and order of the country "it has been instrumental to no mean degree in the social, economic, and political achievement" of the Filipino people. Every right-thinking Filipino should look with justifiable pride upon the accomplishments of the Philippine Constabulary.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Captain Primitivo C. Milan served as Public Information Officer and SGS, I-MA under Brig. Gen. Manuel F. Cabal. He is a graduate of The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, USA. He was an instructor in Company Administration and Infantry Tactics at the Philippine Ground Force School, AFP. He served with the 121st Inf. Regt., PA, USAFFE during the last war, and was Asst. Regt. Adj. of the 121st Inf. USAFIP, NL under Defense Secretary (then Lt. Col.) Eulogio Balao during the liberation campaign. A recipient of the Military Merit Medal for outstanding devotion to duty and superior performance as SGS, I-MA, he is at present Secretary of Constabulary Staff, Hq., PC, Camp Crame, Quezon City.

