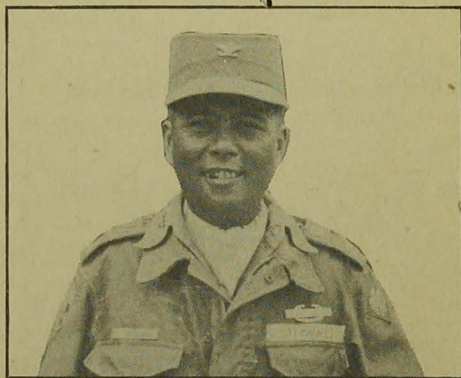


Letter from KOREA

22 June 1953



Colonel Nicanor Jimenez
CO, 14th BCT "Avengers"

MY dear Colonel Bziao:
Since the 14th hit Korea, I have been planning to make a report to you but when we were in the reserve area, I had nothing worthwhile to report about and when we moved to the frontlines more than a month ago, we were not allowed to announce our presence on the line. A couple of days ago, we received our clearance, so I hasten to put you up-to-date on the 14th.

While in the reserve area where we stayed three weeks, we received a commendation for our ordnance boys, one for the appearance of our CP, and one for the excellence of our training. The Commanding General, X Corps, personally walked our patrol course and came out of it full of praise for the conduct and efficiency of the boys.

When we finally relieved an American battalion on the line, we completed relief operations in twelve hours without a single incident. The whole operation was so smooth, both the X Corps and 45th division commanders who were present, spoke highly of the speed and efficiency of the relief. I sent my people up the line a couple of days before relief so coordination was perfect.

Two days after hitting the line, we received a company size probe and the boys beat back the Reds in the usual Avenger manner. Less than two days later, elements of our Able Company, captured a POW with arms. A week later, the same unit turned in another prisoner. Prisoners in this business count a lot because they are the most fruitful source of information. It requires real training and self-control to capture a live prisoner. For the month we captured the two

prisoners, the entire 45th Inf Division turned in only four prisoners and two of these were ours. We received a commendation for this feat from the commanding general, 45th Inf Div, a copy of which we are enclosing with this letter.

One of our boys, Pfc (now Cpl) Aquilino Agustin of Sta Maria, Laguna, received the first Silver Star to be awarded to a Filipino in Korea. We enclose a copy of his citation for your information. This boy confirmed once again the superior benefits of rigid training and the native fighting ability of the Filipino. Agustin was never an outstanding soldier. He was just an ordinary soldier doing things the Avenger way. All he had was the opportunity to prove his capabilities and he produced. I have no doubt any Avenger would have responded in the same manner under similar conditions. By the way, the Silver Star award was one of the fastest approved in Korea. Less than twenty-four hours after the award was initiated by the division commander, it was approved by General Clark and the award made at the hospital

HEADQUARTERS 45TH INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO 86^e

31 May 1953

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

TO: Colonel Nicanor Jimenez
Commanding Officer
14th ECT, FEFTOK

In less than fourteen days after being committed to the line, your spirited "Avengers" have captured two prisoners of war. A record achievement such as this prompts me to send you my heartiest congratulations.

The very evident enthusiasm of your hard-hitting combat team, coupled with the vital psychological warfare campaign being conducted, have produced superior results. By permitting safe conduct to enemy personnel who approach friendly lines in groups of one or two with probable intentions to surrender, you have displayed a full understanding of the problems facing United Nations troops engaged with the enemy.

Too often the inexperienced infantry soldier opens fire on potential prisoners of war thereby discouraging their surrender and depriving our units of valuable intelligence information. The conduct of the men of your command in the two recent instances illustrates their combat seasonedness, alertness, and good judgment.

Again I congratulate you and the men of your combat team for your splendid contribution to the mission of the 45th Infantry Division. You have accomplished, in the traditional "Thunderbird" manner, a job well done.


P. D. GINDER
Brigadier General, United States Army
Commanding

by the division commander. It was a more important: better men. I know it is good to get medals but I prefer to develop men rather than heroes. Some commanders impress heroism so much, boys get the idea that if they make good on the line they can do anything outside. Hero worship has destroyed the discipline of many boys because they get heady with pride. That situation is tragic. We'll get the heroes if we can; I'll take a gentleman any time.

The very next day after the award, the 14th and the Philippines received a signal honor when an American-built steel bridge connecting an artillery battalion with the MSR was named after Pfc Ambrosio Corpuz of Camiling, Tarlac, our first KIA from a mortar shell, while in his fighting bunker. All division brass attended the impressive dedication ceremony.

In the reserve area, on the MLR, forward of the MLR, the Avengers have earned a reputation for courage and efficiency that is hard to beat. I am positive that our thorough training in Mariquina and Korea, contributed largely to this solid accomplishment.

Effect of training is also reflected in the discipline of the boys. We did not have a single serious case of discipline since we hit Korea. Most of the disciplinary ills which plagued previous PEF-TOK units are absent in the 14th. This we attribute to healthful companionships enhanced by a strong sense of unit pride, fortified by constant training and a strong and abiding faith in God. Boys behaved not because of fear but because they were ashamed to put their unit and companions down.

Secretary Castelo, Gen Vargas, Capt Pargas, Col Sayson, and some other officers visited our positions recently. At our most forward platoon, Secretary Castelo and party were given a briefing by the platoon leader, Lt Garrucho. The most impressed visitors there were the division commander, Gen Vargas, and Capt Pargas who of course understood the beauty of the whole thing. The fighting bunkers, gun positions and living quarters of the boys on the line drew high praise from the brass. As to our battalion CP, we have long since earned the reputation of having the best battalion CP on the eastern sector. All we had to do was bring Mariquina to Korea including the hexagon which we dismantled and prefabricated, then rebuilt in Korea and you know what to expect.

From the very beginning, I had one objective for the 14th BCT. I insisted that all men of this battalion return to the Philippines better soldiers, and what is

In Korea, I estimate that only 10% of our time is spent in combat, the rest in reserve areas. As the Filipino soldier especially when he is well trained, has very few peers in combat, performance on the line is normally excellent for Filipino troops. It is when they get infected with the boredom of reserve area routine and exposed to the temptations of rest camps that the true test for men come to the fore. It is easy for weak men to degenerate while in training areas. It takes real teamwork, a stout heart, a proper frame of mind, and correct disciplinary training to make the boys toe the line. I believe we have succeeded in inculcating this idea to our men. God willing, we'll take this idea back home.

If we have recited here the accomplishments of the 14th BCT, it is less to blow our horn as to reaffirm to you what we have always said: That no IIMA unit has ever been identified with failure. We felt then even as we do now that the 14th had to make good if only to deserve the well-wishes and confidence of people like you and our comrades-in-arms of the IIMA.

Please pass on to the members of your command what few observations I have made here. In some way or other, they may gain some lessons from this letter.

The officers and men of the 14th BCT wish to convey to you and all the men of IIMA our sincerest fraternal well wishes.

Sincerely,

s/Nicanor T Jimenez
t/NICANOR T JIMENEZ
Colonel, Inf (GSC)
Commanding