

THE FIRST FILIPINO GUERRILLA REGIMIN

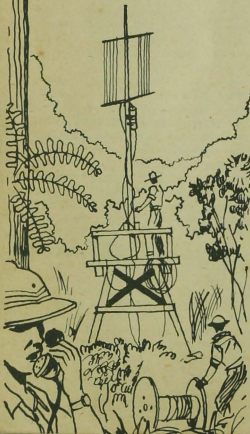
By Nieves Espiritu



ON 10 December 1941, elements of the Japanese Kanno Detachment swept rapidly southward following their landing at Vigan, Ilocos Sur. Twelve days later the main task force of Homma's Fourteenth Imperial Japanese Army landed on southern La Union rendering untenable the USAFFE positions in that province.

The USAFFE forces in La Union bore the brunt of the fighting. Stiff opposition was organized in the vicinity of Bacnotan, at Baroro Bridge and at the barrio of Lisqueb by elements of the 11th Division (PA). The veteran Kanno Detachment, however, broke through the 11th Division line at about the time that the main Japanese force was being landed in southern La Union.

Other elements of the 11th Division had been deployed at Damortis along with elements of the 26th Cavalry Regiment (PS). Meanwhile, the 71st Infantry Regiment, 71st Division (PA), under Colonel Donald Van Bonett, had been rushed to the Bauang area in La Union, where it occupied beach positions, generally from the barrio of Dili to the barrio of Paringao. In the Baguio area were two companies of the 43rd Infantry



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(PS) and one troop of the 26th Cavalry Regiment (PS).

To escape envelopment, the units in central La Union were withdrawn to Baguio from where they intended to move down the Kennon Road to Rosario, La Union, thence to Pangasinan. The enemy, however, following his landings in the Agoo-Damortis area, advanced rapidly toward Rosario and immediately set up a blocking force at the junction of Kennon Road and Highway 3. Other elements of the main Japanese task force, landed in the Bauang sector, followed after the withdrawing USAFFE troops to Baguio via the Naguillian-Baguio Road.

Activation

When Bauang became untenable, Col. Bonett withdrew his regiment to Baguio, thence to Nueva Vizcaya over the tortuous mountain trail across Benguet. Captain Guillermo Nakar's 1st Battalion, 71st Infantry, which had provided the covering shell, was closely pursued by the enemy. The battalion had barely passed Baguio when it was declared an open city, and shortly after was occupied by the enemy. Captain Nakar pushed on his battalion, but his rear was much harassed and could



not get to Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, until 8 January 1942. By this time, the escape route was already under the Japanese who had set up a strong road block at Balete Pass.

At Aritao, Capt. Nakar met Capt. Everett L. Warner of the Philippine Scouts, and Capt. Manuel P. Enriquez, G-2 of the 11th Division (PA), who, having been denied the escape route were already organizing stranded elements of the USAFFE into a single outfit. In the conference that followed, the three officers decided to conduct indefinite resistance against the enemy. With 800 officers and men, mostly stragglers from the 11th Division, the 26th Cavalry, the 43rd Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 71st Infantry, and some civilian volunteers, they formed a unit which they designated into the **1st Provisional Guerrilla Regiment** of two rifle battalions and a headquarters battalion.

Early Organizational Set-Up

Initially, the regiment by agreement of the conferees, was placed under the command of Capt. Warner, with Capt. Enriquez as regimental executive and, concurrently, commanding officer, Hq. Bn.; 1st Lt. Warren A. Minton was assigned regimental adjutant and S-1 and commanding officer of the 1st Bn.; and Capt. Guillermo Nakar was placed in command of the 2nd Bn. RCP and the aid station were established at the barrio of Santo Domingo, Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya. The CP's of the 1st Bn. and the 2nd Bn. were established at Dupax and Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, respectively. General MacArthur was subsequently informed of this organization and

of its plan of action.

Radiographic contact was made possible with the USAFFE headquarters of Gen. MacArthur through a radio set brought down from Camp Henry T. Allen in Baguio, by one Sgt. Jose Cabañero, with the help of native *cargadores*. In a return radiogram, Gen. MacArthur congratulated the officers for their initiative, and in recognition for what they did, Warner, Nakar, and Enriquez were promoted majors, while Cabañero was commissioned as 3rd lieutenant in the Philippine Army. General MacArthur also gave instructions for the **1st Provisional Guerrilla Regiment** to harass the enemy from the rear, but nevertheless to preserve its organization by discreetly avoiding direct contact with the enemy. The primary mission of the regiment was the gathering and dissemination of combat intelligence. For this purpose, on instructions from MacArthur, the 2nd Bn. was assigned the territory from Balete Pass to Bato Ferry, inclusive, while the Headquarters Bn. and the 1st Bn. were assigned the area from Bato Ferry to Aparri.

Not long after the organization of the regiment, Minton's 1st Bn., in conjunction with Capt. Ralph B. Praeger's Troop "C", 26th Cavalry, raided the Tuguegarao airfield, in Cagayan, and accounted for more than 100 Japanese casualties as well as the destruction of planes on the ground. Headquarters USAFFE was so pleased with the result and it commended all the officers and men who participated in the raid.

The subsequent raids conducted by the **1st Provisional Guerrilla Regi-**

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ment on Japanese dispositions in the rich Cagayan Valley enraged the enemy, especially so because he needed the rich food resources of the Valley. And these rich resources the enemy could not readily have.

Changes of Command

In the third week of January 1942, while Maj. Nakar's 2nd Bn. was occupying defensive positions from Bambang to Balete Pass, reports came from the RCP that the Japanese were pushing to the Cagayan Valley in two columns, one through Highway No. 5 and the other through the Baguio-Kiangnan Road. A message from the RCP followed instructing Maj. Nakar to proceed to Bayombong with all his troops, and assume command of the regiment in view of the illness of both Majors Warner and Enriquez.

Major Nakar, seeing the possibility of hitting hard the enemy from his vantage positions in Bambang and Balete Pass, requested deferment of the carrying out of the order. A second order was further ignored. A third order was subsequently issued, and so, Maj. Nakar pulled out, reluctantly, his headquarters and proceeded to Bayombong on 27 January 1942. A platoon under Lt. Januario Longno was left behind to cover the withdrawal.

The 2nd Bn. arrived at Bayombong on the morning of 28 January 1942. Major Nakar immediately assumed command. In a regimental conference that followed, it was decided that the troops would move to Isabela where better hideouts were available. A few available vehicles shuttled the troops to Isabela.

On 29 January 1942, the advance

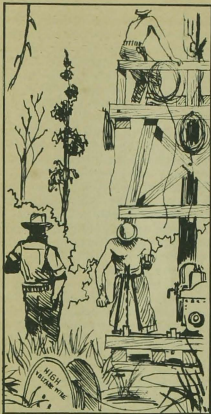
party of the Japanese column was engaged by the detachment under Lt. Longno destroying one truck and one command car and killing 49 Japanese soldiers. While this engagement was taking place, the movement toward Jones, Isabela, continued.

Upon arrival at Jones, Isabela, on 2 February 1942, Warner resumed his command of the regiment. RCP was established at Masaya, Isabela. The CP's of the 1st Bn. and the 2nd Bn. were established at Sinauangan and Daligan, Isabela, respectively. The radio set was installed and contact with Headquarters USAFFE was reestablished through which a message was received from Gen. MacArthur directing Warner (now a lieutenant colonel) to designate the 1st Provisional Guerrilla Regiment into the 14th Infantry Regiment, USAFFE.

On 15 March 1942, the following changes were made in the command: the 2nd Bn. became the Hq. Bn. under Maj. Nakar who was, in addition, assigned regimental executive officer; the original Hq. Bn. became the 2nd Bn. under Maj. Enriquez; RCP was moved to the barrio of Usol, Jones, Isabela, while the 2nd Bn. moved to Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. The 1st Bn. remained under Capt. Minton.

Warner Leaves Command

Between 15 February and 9 April 1942, the 14th Infantry maintained continuous radio contact with USAFFE headquarters. It was responsible for the recapture of Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya on 15 March 1942, and the killing of one Miyamoto, the Japanese Military Admi-



nistrator for the province. It also constructed an air strip at the barrio of Palacian, Jones, Isabela hoping that at some future date it may establish air communication with the main USAFFE force. Meanwhile, the 14th Infantry continued intensive training and maintained intense combat intelligence patrols. It raided the Tuguegarao and Aparri airfields and other points between Santa Fe and Aritao.

The uncertainties in the jungles caused much anxiety among the American officers of the 14th Infantry, especially after the fall of Ba-

taan in early April 1942. Colonel Warner, Capt. Minton, and some American officers of the 1st Bn. were particularly anxious with what the future had in store for them. On 12 April 1942 these officers left Casiguran, Tayabas, after Col. Warner had sent a radiogram requesting Gen. Wainwright, who had assumed command of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Philippines (USFIP), to send a submarine to pick him and his party at Casiguran Bay. General Wainwright radioed back directing Col. Warner to stay with his command. This message was rushed to Casiguran, but Col. Warner and the other Americans in his party had reconditioned a Japanese motor launch and had already sailed away.

When Col. Warner left, Maj. Nakar being the next senior officer, was assigned by Gen. Wainwright as CO of the 14th Infantry. He was consequently promoted to lieutenant colonel on 13 April 1942.

Upon the fall of Corregidor, no radiographic instructions were received from Gen. Wainwright. Lieutenant Cabañero, the Signal Officer, reported that the radio station at Corregidor was no longer in the air. Not long after, Japanese planes dropped surrender leaflets addressed to Col. Nakar. A few days later Gen. Wainwright sent a personal emissary, Lt. Col. Theodore Kalakula, to get Col. Nakar to surrender, but the latter decided to continue the fight.

At that time, Hq. Bn., less one company which was stationed at Tuao, Cagayan, was with the RCP at Quimbalbasa, Jones, Isabela, "A", "C", and elements of "D" companies were positioned in the surround

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ing barrios of Jones, while "B" Co., less its headquarters situated near Bayombong, was at the barrio of San Fernando, Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya.

In view of the scarcity of food, the lack of sufficient arms, munition and medicines, and in order to easily hide the men and at the same time facilitate the gathering and relaying of enemy information to higher headquarters, Col. Nakar ordered a tactical dispersion of the command into small groups, each of which was to be under an officer who was given a list of the men under him. The men were instructed to report secretly to their officers at least thrice a week or as often as the situation demanded. The officers, in turn, were directed to submit their intelligence reports at least three times a week to the nearest contact station. A series of contact stations were established to facilitate the transmittal of enemy intelligence to Col. Nakar's headquarters.

Contact With SWPA

On 13 May 1942, the regimental staff, the radio station, and about 70 officers and men moved up the Cagayan River. RCP was established in a small clearing about 5 kilometers from the barrio of Domabato, Pinappagan, Nueva Vizcaya, on 15 May 1942.

From 15 May 1942 to 15 June 1942, the 14th Infantry gathered intelligence information, destroyed bridges, and harassed the enemy who

had become careless with joy over the fall of Corregidor.

The radio transmitter was put up by Lt. Cabañero with the help of Capt. Robert Arnold, who was officer in charge of the U.S. Air Warning Service in Ilocos Norte at the outbreak of the war, and Sergeants Lebrojo and Domingo. On 16 June 1942, the set was ready for operation. It was then decided to contact MacArthur's headquarters in Australia.

After long and careful deliberation on the means of contact with the view of deceiving the enemy and at the same time insure positive identification of whatever friendly station is contacted, it was decided to assume a radio call name. A general call was then to be sent out, and upon contact with another station, the time would be asked after which an inquiry would be made for the name of a wife of an officer identified only with his serial number (the ASN was that of Capt. Arnold). It would further request that the word MABUHAY be sent over Station KGEI in San Francisco, California.

In the last week of June, contact was made. The hour announced by the station contacted pointed that it was located in Darwin, Australia. The men doubted, but two days later, in the evening, the name of the wife of Capt. Arnold and the word *Mabuhay* were sent over KGEI. The scheme worked. It was now positive that the 14th Infantry was in contact with a friendly station.

On 29 September 1942, the 14th Infantry received a radio message—through KGEI, which read:

"TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL NAKAR:
 THE COURAGEOUS AND
 SPLENDID RESISTANCE MAINTAINED BY YOU IN YOUR COMMAND FILLS ME WITH PRIDE AND SATISFACTION STOP IT WILL BE MY PRIVILEGE TO SEE TO IT THAT YOU AND YOUR OFFICERS AND MEN ARE PROPERLY REWARDED AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME STOP MY AFFECTION AND BEST WISHES STOP

MACARTHUR"

In a radio message sent to SWPA, Col. Nakar informed SWPA that the 14th Infantry had a strength of 62 officers and 960 enlisted men. In addition, there were attached to the regiment three officers and 140 enlisted men of the Philippine Constabulary.

Later on, Gen. MacArthur instructed Col. Nakar that the mission of the 14th Infantry, effective that date, was to obtain and to transmit intelligence information to GHQ, SWPA. Colonel Nakar informed SWPA that, at that time, he had no funds to run an intelligence net work in Luzon for the purpose of collecting enemy information.

In a return radiogram, Gen. MacArthur authorized Col. Nakar to employ civilian intelligence agents at the rate of P50.00 to P150.00 a month. With this authority, Col. Nakar embarked on the new mis-

sion. He sent agents as far north as Aparri and as far south as Manila to collect information about enemy concentrations, movements, and to gather data on the treatment of American and Filipino prisoners of war. Some of these agents, upon their return, brought with them newsprints of "THE SPIRIT OF BATAAN", a one-page mimeographed newspaper containing the latest news of world events as gathered from Station KGEI. These bits of news greatly bolstered the morale of the people in the Cagayan Valley.

On 14 July 1942, Gen. MacArthur recognizing the invaluable services of the 14th Infantry, offered to have the regiment incorporated with the Army of the United States, effective on the date of acceptance. In a return radio message the next day, Col. Nakar accepted the offer in behalf of all his officers and men who were henceforth to enjoy the same rights and privileges of the Army of the United States, effective of 14 July.

Shortly after a radiogram from SWPA requested information as to where personnel could be landed to contact the 14th Infantry, AUS. Colonel Nakar made a radiographic inquiry by what means these men would come. The inquiry, being too naive, was evidently ignored by SWPA.

Meanwhile, the Japanese massed a regiment, reinforced by Bureau of Constabulary units and *Ganaps* for the most intensive and systematic operations against Nakar's outfit. On 25 August 1942, the Japanese

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forces reached Pinappagan, Nueva Vizcaya, and occupied the town. Colonel Nakar whose CP was about five kilometers from the town had to evacuate all the sick and the wounded to a place farther east. The following day, the Japanese, guided by the *Ganaps* and spies, raided the CP of the 14th Infantry, burned all the buildings, and captured valuable records in the vicinity of the camp. Colonel Nakar escaped; he went further north to the barrio of Minuri, Jones, Isabela to contact a man named Lleaño whom he hoped would guide him to a safer hideout. Lleaño had guided Gen. Aguinaldo in his escape to Palanan in 1901, and Nakar was confident that Lleaño would again be of valuable service.

The Japanese played it smart, however. They followed close to the heels of Col. Nakar and at Jones, they held a rally early in September and appealed to the people for help to capture the members of the 14th Infantry and thus restore peace and order in the region. This appeal and the price money on the head of Col. Nakar and his men was too much of a temptation for the guislings of Jones. More than one man volunteered to point out to the Japanese Col. Nakar.

On 29 September 1942, Col. Nakar was surrounded and finally captured in a cave in the vicinity of Minuri, Jones, Isabela. The Japanese patrol, augmented by 300 Filipino *Ganaps*, was led by the chief of police of the municipality of Jones, one named *Sabaluca*.

Nakar's Capture

With the capture of Col. Nakar, a large number of officers surrendered to the enemy many of whom were later to escape and rejoin the outfit. Major Arnold who had eight other officers remained in hiding in the jungles of the mountains of Jones while the Japanese combed the hills for other officers of the regiment.

Colonel Nakar was captured, but the spirit that made the 14th Infantry the great organization that it was never died out. After Nakar came Col. Manuel Enriquez, who had to surrender when his family was apprehended and kept as hostages by the Japanese late in 1943.

Another personality came into the picture when Lt. Col. Rumolo Manriquez took over the command of the 14th Infantry, after the surrender of Enriquez. Under Col. Manriquez's leadership, the 14th Infantry now a part of the U.S. Army Forces in the Philippines, North Luzon (USAFIP, NL), liberated the big portion of the Cagayan Valley region. The regiment, along with elements of the Sixth U.S. Army, formed a part of the cordon around Yamasita's Fourteenth Army headquarters at Kiangnan, Mt. Province. It was a platoon of the 14th Infantry (AUS), USAFIP, NL, that first broke into the headquarters of Yamasita in late August 1945, during the liberation campaign in North Luzon.

Live up to the noble traditions of the people.

—Manuel L. Quezon