

THEY DID NOT FORGET THEIR GOD

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IN THE DAYS of the occupation, the men of the underground, especially the guerrillas who had their headquarters in the hills, were notoriously branded as "outlaws," and "bandits" by the Japanese, and many of the inhabitants in the occupied zones believed that it was so. They were portrayed as lawless elements, unprincipled ruffians, men who disregarded the conventions of society, who forgot their God.

On the contrary, however, it can be maintained that the men who joined the resistance were they who loved peace and order, who were steadfast in the embrace of the principles of liberty, and who believed that the Almighty is ever on the side of the just, the meek and liberty-loving.

The men in the resistance

did not forget God during those days, perilous and dark though they were. In fact, knowing that they were on the cause of justice, freedom, and peace, they were confident that God was their squad leader.

The higher headquarters of guerrilla organizations did not neglect the moral welfare of each and every man either. For as in any military organization, there was constituted a service to take charge of it. Taking specifically the Panay guerrilla organization headed by Brig.-Gen. Macario Peralta, Jr., there was in that outfit a unit, the Chaplain Service, which took care of the moral and religious obligations of the men. There were chaplains assigned for the various regiments of the military organization.

So that, it was not uncommon then during the guerrilla days of masses being said in the middle of the wilderness, the priest saying the service on an improvised platform for an altar, the universe for the cathedral, the blue firmament for the cathedral dome, the huge trunks of trees for the cathedral columns embellished by nature's prodigiousness.

And the chaplain's job was just as difficult as an infantryman's or an aidman. His weapons were the edifying words, his paraphernalia were as heavy as those of the common soldiers. The various units of his organization being situated several mountains away from each other, the priest had to trudge through long mountain distances to accomplish his mission. A mass is scheduled to be said in the bivouac area of "B" Company one Sunday; an invocation is to be delivered during the program in a

troop school in the 3rd Battalion on Tuesday, the patients in the collecting hospital will be visited Friday, etc.

Nor did the chaplains just stay in the rear areas during combats. When the Panay guerrilleros conducted the all-out offensive against the enemy entrenched in Iloilo City in February 1945, the chaplains marched with the men up to the line of departure where just before the H-Hour they gave words of encouragement and helped to bolster up the morale of the men. They visited the men in the trenches, helping the officers buoy up the spirits of the soldiers under heavy stress and strain.

And when the fight was thickest, they were there, too, at hand to extend words of comfort to the sick and the wounded, and to administer the last rituals on the bodies of them who gave the supreme sacrifice.

SAFETY FIRST

Renaud, a French Senator, registered at a hotel and paid a month's rent. The owner asked him if he would take a receipt.

"A receipt is unnecessary," said Renaud; "God witnessed the payment."

"Do you believe in God?" sneered the hotel keeper.

"Most assuredly," replied Renaud. "Don't you?"

"Most assuredly not, Monsieur!"

"In that case," said Renaud, "please make a receipt for me."