

# Constabulary Reminiscencies

By COL. FRANCISCO OÑATE

Former Chief Surgeon and Lieut. Col., P. C.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Philippine Constabulary, I send my greetings to all former comrades and to the young officers as well.

It is very gratifying for all the members of the Constabulary in and out of the service, that this organization after thirty-two years has survived and rendered valuable service to the country.

If I am not mistaken, Colonel Eustaquio Bactat, who enlisted as a private, is the oldest officer and member, in point of service, of this great institution.

One day while I was at the Headquarters, P. C., I happened to see an official who is in some way connected with the publication of the *Khaki and Red*. Being one of the stockholders of the corporation, I inquired of the progress of the business.

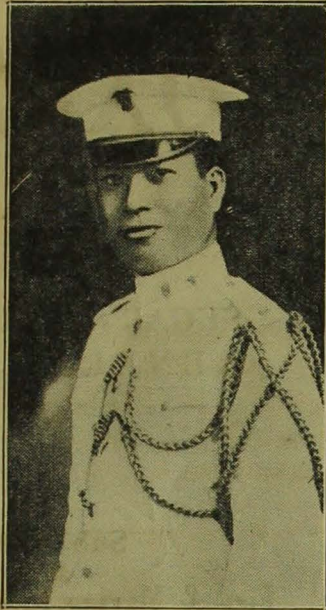
The official referred to above, in his answer, made me understand that as a business, *Khaki and Red* was a losing proposition. He said that the majority of the officers, stockholders and non-stockholders, are indifferent to the *Khaki and Red*. He invited them to send articles for their publication in the monthly issues specially for the Anniversary Number, and that, with the exception of two or three officers, all of them have not answered the call.

Then, the official asked me why I did not write some articles for the magazine.

I was glad to accept the invitation. I have, however, a certain doubt, that this publication might again have the tragic end that it had during my incumbency as president of the board of directors of the magazine.

Without apparent good reasons the publication was immediately suspended by verbal order of the then Chief of Staff. Until now I am at a loss regarding that unexpected and peremptory ukase.

Let us turn back to some historical facts. The pronoun "I" shall often and necessarily be used in these writings.



Col. FRANCISCO OÑATE, Retired

Not knowing that some day I was to be the president of the board of directors of the *Khaki and Red Co.*, I accepted with reluctance the position of vice-president, when this post became vacant due to the changes of stations of the ranking officers of the organization, at that time. The president had to resign for he was assigned outside of Manila, the vice-president succeeded him and all members of the board present elected me to take the latter's place. I served as a director, vice-president and president of the corporation for a period of not less than four years. I am only writing from memory for I have not the official data right now. So, I am speaking, rather writing with certain authority of my experience with the *Khaki and Red Co.*

It was a very thankless and unprofitable task. There was no salary nor pecuniary compensation whatever for the position of president or vice-president. The work was full of responsibilities of different kinds.

The usual philosophy of: "Let the others cook the food, as soon as it is prepared and cooked, you and I and all of us will eat it" was the prevailing mental attitude, and it seems that it is still now.

I may have been mistaken in attributing the cause of the indifference of the majority of officers to the welfare and success of the *Khaki and Red Co.*, to that common mental attitude already mentioned in the preceding paragraph. So I soon substituted it for this.

Other causes may be found in the following thought: "A magazine that can not publish any constructive criticism against the Chief, or other higher-ups in the Government without endangering the future of the sender or writer, does not deserve the support of the entire organization." Their support will mean a conscious, intentional and willful consent of the injustice or unfairness committed.

I submit to the readers of the *Khaki and Red* what I believe are the apparent causes of that indifference complained of and they themselves can appreciate and judge as to whether the first one, or the second, is, or both of them are, true statements of facts.

The actual publishers are in a critical and embarrassing position, they are fighting against great odds, they do not receive any moral nor material support from the high ranking officers. The junior officers, are somewhat resentful. But all of them, seniors and juniors, receive the benefits

that *Khaki and Red* magazine has been, and is still, fighting for in their behalf. The situation is pathetic, exactly the same as that of the "National Unity" preached and not practiced by our leaders.

Each and all of the members of our Legislature and other high officials in our government receive a copy of the *Khaki and Red*, it is immaterial as to whether or not they pay their subscription. The pertinent point is that they read regularly and systematically editorials and articles of the magazine containing petitions for the improvement of the organization, informing them of the efficient and constant services performed by this and that constabulary unit scattered all over the Islands. All this publicity serve as a propaganda for the whole institution. That they have favorably acted on them, no body can deny.

The *Khaki and Red* Magazine has done and is still doing a great deal of good for the organization in general.

If some one else is doing this work, "why should I worry in wasting time, money and energy." This idea was already expressed above and is the one maintained by many.

A long article tires the reader. Let us be satisfied at present with this short story. We will continue in following articles to unriddle several enigma or tell anecdotes or stories of the past.

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