

Southern Negros: The Achilles Heel of the Japanese Occupation

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ABSTRACT

Negros, the last Visayan Island occupied by the Japanese during the War, served as the supply base for the Japanese forces because of its tactical and economic importance. Thus, the Japanese were heavily concentrated along the islands' coasts, leaving the southern area unoccupied for the whole duration of the War. The resistance movement thrived in the unoccupied area and successfully set up radio stations, command centers, logistics depots, and intelligence linkages. This paper examines the Japanese Occupation in the Visayas in the context

of the role of the seas in connecting the resistance movements in the Visayas. This link established the submarine route that enabled the delivery of the “Koga Papers” from Cebu to Negros Island, and eventually to the Southwest Pacific Command in Australia and laid the groundwork for the landing in Leyte and to the rest of the Philippine archipelago.

KEYWORDS

Negros Island, Koga Papers, Silliman University ROTC, Col. Salvador Abcede, bandit zone, Southern Negros, bolo guards, *USS Gudgeon*, *USS Crevalle*, *USS Nautilus*, Z Plan.

INTRODUCTION

The people of Negros first heard of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of the war over their radios in the early Monday morning hours of 8 December 1941. Others may have learned about the news by word of mouth. From the perspective of those who kept abreast of world events, the news of the war in the Pacific did not come as a complete surprise. By the late 1930s, the war had spread widely in Europe and Japan’s emergence as a power in East Asia was confirmed with the invasion of China, notably Formosa Island.

With the confrontation between the United States and Japan intensified, coupled with the dynamics and intricacies between the Axis versus the Allied Powers in

world geopolitics, the threat of a Japanese invasion of the Philippines became ominous.

Due to these developments, the Commonwealth government of the Philippines headed by President Manuel L. Quezon, with Gen. Douglas MacArthur as military adviser, started building up a Reserve Army in case of war and in anticipation of its full independence.¹ The Civilian Emergency Administration (CEA) was also set up to provide measures for civilian defense. Emergency committees were created in the provinces and various localities to draft strategies and to advise the people on what to do in the event of war.² Likewise, the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) was constituted in the Philippines on 26 July 1941. U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt appointed Gen. MacArthur as commander of the USAFFE.³

Subsequently, the Philippine reserve force began its mobilization efforts in August 1941 with nine training centers set up in Luzon and various parts of the country. On August 23, the first group of reservists in Negros Island reported to the camp in Fabrica, Sagay and constituted the 71st Infantry Regiment. Another group reported to Magallon and constituted the 72nd Infantry Regiment. These first two regiments were in Negros Occidental. In Negros Oriental, the reservists assembled in September at Camp Leon Kilat in Tanjay and formed the 73rd Infantry Regiment.⁴

However, the mobilization efforts were hampered badly by various factors such as the lack of transportation,

inadequacy of communication facilities, budgetary constraints, and a general sense of indifference of local executives.⁵ The general feeling was that although the war was inevitable, it would be quick and it would not come so soon.⁶

Historian Robert Silliman best described this sense of false security of the Filipinos and Americans in this manner:

It was generally assumed before this that in case of Japanese belligerency, allied counter-measures would immediately bottle up all avenues of attack: U.S. warplanes from the Philippines would stop the Japanese convoys from the east; Dutch aircraft from the East Indies would hurry them from the south; British planes from Singapore and the Malay states would attack from the west; those from Burma would handle the Indo-China Japanese offense—while simultaneously the combined US-UK-Netherlands submarine fleet would skewer the slow Japanese ships with their torpedoes, even as the swift allied destroyers moved in on the enemy's flanks.⁷

A few months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the subsequent bombings of the strategic airfields and key cities in the Philippines, the combined USAFFE troops were assigned to three regional commands.⁸ The heaviest concentration of forces was in Luzon.⁹ Meanwhile, the establishment of the USAFFE barely three months before the outbreak of the war and the immediate deployment of its units by the defense strategy laid down in War Plan

Orange resulted in the transfer of two Infantry Regiments (71st and 72nd) to Luzon.¹⁰ At the time, 73rd Infantry Regiment of the 71st division was still in the process of full mobilization.

Thus, when the war broke out, the island of Negros was only protected by the new 73rd Infantry that was partially organized, poorly equipped, and inadequately trained unit. This regiment was inducted into the USAFEE on 15 December 1941,¹¹ a week after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. However, the sudden full-scale attack in Southern Mindanao prompted the USAFFE officials to attach it to the 81st Division based in Cebu to beef up the forces in Mindanao.

The deployment placed Negros Island under the protection of a few officers who were left behind to take charge of the training camps and mobilization centers. This prompted Brig. Gen. William Sharp (Commanding Officer of the Visayas-Mindanao Force) to order Lt. Col. Gabriel Gador (District Commander of the 7th Military District) to organize one regiment for each province to garrison the island.¹² Immediately, the 74th Infantry Regiment was activated and organized in Magallon, Negros Occidental under the command of Major Sam Jones. The regiment in Negros Oriental became the 75th Infantry Regiment under the command of 2nd Lt. Uldarico S. Baclagon who was the aide of Gen. Guy Fort. It is interesting to note that in Negros Oriental only two battalions were mobilized. The first was composed of volunteers and teachers who were reserve officers and the second was made up almost entirely

of the cadets, officers, and enlisted men of the Silliman University ROTC unit.¹³

These two newly organized regiments known as the Negros Force was placed under the command of Col. Gador. By January of 1942, Col. Roger Hilsman took over the command of the Negros Force and Col. Gador was transferred to Mindanao.¹⁴ After assessing the situation in Negros and acting on the advice of his staff, Col. Hilsman decided that it would be futile to meet the Japanese head-on when the enemy landed on the beaches. Hence, the Kanlaon mountain area was chosen as a sort of second Bataan where the Negros Force established a defensive position. As work started to make the area impregnable, Col. Hilsman was assigned to Cebu because of his worsening health condition and was relieved by Col. Maclean in March of 1942.¹⁵

However, the failure of the Bataan defensive strategy caused Gen. MacArthur in Australia to instruct all USAFFE units to engage in guerilla warfare.¹⁶ Thus, Col. Maclean immediately ordered Majors Salvador Abcede and Francisco Gomez to prepare a “guerrilla defense plan” for Negros Island.

REACTION OF THE PEOPLE

The bombing of Pearl Harbor and the continued defiance of the USAFFE in Luzon and Mindanao caused anxiety among the populace in Negros. People thought that if Luzon and Mindanao would fall, a Japanese landing on the island was inevitable. On the other hand, the people kept their hope that the Americans would come reinforce

the USAFFE and to liberate the Philippines despite the retreats from all fronts in Luzon and Mindanao. One informant even confided that there were talks circulating that a mile-long American convoy was on its way.¹⁷

Moreover, the initial panic eased a bit with the formation of the 74th and 75th regiments or the Negros Force. It gave some feeling of security to the people of the Island who were anxiously monitoring the events in Luzon and Mindanao.

The air warning, block out and other drills conducted by the local government plus the rumored Japanese landings, sights of Japanese warships and planes, and news from Manila convinced the people that they had to do something. Hence, hoarding became the order of the day and unscrupulous merchants were at work.¹⁸

Many people left the key centers of the island and the coastal towns and evacuated to the interior. It was perceived that no town was safe, especially along the coasts. Rodriguez described the humor in this situation:

What was perplexing, and at the same time amusing, was that people already felt secure when they had moved a little bit inland. They occupied the nipa houses vacated by those who had also moved farther inland. We found ourselves evacuating in a 'marathon relay.' People from the lowlands evacuated to the hills and individuals from the hills evacuated to the mountains. At first, evacuation places were not so far from the town, and so most evacuees slept in

their evacuation places and went back to the town in the morning to do their regular chores, especially gardening the whole day, if nothing happened. They were faced with the dilemma (*sic*) of what things to bring and what things to leave behind.¹⁹

As the evacuation went on, there was always the temptation to go back to one's house. The continued back-and-forth movement to the towns and the evacuation places, prompted the local government in Negros Oriental to issue the following proclamation in case of an invasion:²⁰

Proclamation

To all Loyal and Patriotic Filipinos in the Province of Negros Oriental.

There is no indication of an immediate general invasion of the Visayas and Mindanao, but in case of any local invasion everyone will observe the following instructions which will deny food and transportation to the invaders:

1. If the Japanese come into or near your Barrio, leave at once with all food, pigs, carabaos, and other such livestock to keep the enemy from taking and using them;
2. You must plan now where you will go if the invaders should come;

3. In order that you may carry out your plan, and safely arrive there, visit the selected place as soon as possible; and
4. In moving your selected place (*sic*) use side roads, and trails for the National Roads must be kept clear for your troops who will be coming to destroy the enemy.

Evidently, there was an atmosphere of fear and tension. Upon seeing the Japanese warships and warplanes, the civilians believed that soon bombing runs would be conducted. Two issues of *The Sillimanian* included the following public reminders:²¹

Important to Remember

In case of bombings, one of the chief dangers is from flying splinters, glass, and shell fragments. Lying face down in a ditch, with the eyes protected is (*sic*) a safeguard in such an emergency.

1. Do NOT stand in the street and look up at places in case of an air raid. Run for a ditch; lie flat on the ground.
2. Do NOT expect some one else to feed you and your family in case of shortage.... Plant a garden of vegetables.
3. Do NOT believe any war report unless it is official. Look for the statement "Official

Communique.” This means that the report has been issued by the War Department of the U.S.A.

4. Do NOT spend so much time talking about the tragedies and the losses of the war...(sic) Be confident in the victory that is sure to come and keep busy of (sic) whatever civilian duty may be yours.

As the anxiety of the people heightened day by day, unverified rumors caused panicky situations. Widespread rumors especially in the major areas where the Japanese were supposed to have landed caused a “lot of people to fall down the stairs, fall in canals; thereby breaking their bones from many accidents because of haste.”²² An editorial of *The Sillimanian* entitled “Let us Stop Helping the Enemy”²³ warned that anyone who spread unverified rumors was a tool of the enemy.

The obstinate defense offered by the USAFFE against the Japanese offered a glimmer of hope for the Filipinos. Since most of the Visayas was not yet occupied, President Quezon and party decided to transfer the seat of government to Cebu thinking that it was well defended. However, the near capture of Vice President Osmeña and General Basilio Valdes in Cebu who were tasked to assess the situation diverted Quezon’s party to Negros. From Bacolod, Quezon’s party moved around the island in utter secrecy. Eventually, the presidential party arrived in Bais in the Oriental side and stayed at the Tabacalera sugar mill for almost three weeks, frequently transferring from place to

place. The safety of Quezon was paramount as the Japanese were looking for him. After General MacArthur sent an urgent message from Mindanao for him to leave Negros by following a detailed evacuation plan, Quezon finally departed Dumaguete on 19 March 1942. As planned, he left for Mindanao on 26 March 1942, on a Flying Fortress.²⁴

THE OCCUPATION OF NEGROS

After crushing the USAFFE forces in Luzon and Mindanao, the Japanese finally decided to occupy the island of Negros. The enemy knew the potentialities of Negros Island as a source of strategic raw material, particularly sugar from the centrals, lumber from the forests, and alcohol from the distilleries. Obviously, these would influence the Japanese to gain free and unchallenged access to these resources.

One of the last islands to be occupied by the Japanese, Negros became the temporary haven for people and survivors from the captured areas as well as the remnants of the disbanded USAFFE units.

With the capitulation of Gen. Wainwright, other units in the country also surrendered.²⁵ Despite the orders of their superiors to surrender, however, Majors Ernesto Mata and Salvador Abcede in Negros refused and moved their troops deeper into the interior. After the surrender negotiations, Col. Hilsman officially surrendered the island on 22 May 1942. However, the Japanese were disappointed because out of the 4,500 officers and men that they expected to surrender, only around 1,000 were present. They realized

that, obviously, the bulk of the force was still out there hiding and waiting to start the resistance movement.²⁶

Subsequently, the Japanese landed and occupied Bacolod on 21 May 1942, and later another contingent occupied Dumaguete on 26 May 1942.²⁷ Since the inhabitants had earlier evacuated, Bacolod and Dumaguete were practically deserted. However, few curious onlookers stood to watch. Some of those who stayed were looters who intended to ransack abandoned houses and stores. The Japanese occupied the deserted houses and used public school buildings as headquarters. They adopted the policy of attraction by showing their kindness, generosity, and friendliness. As soon as they had settled, the Japanese embarked on a massive information campaign stressing friendship and cooperation between Japan and the Philippines.

The Japanese later traveled to the different towns to restore the municipal governments. They summoned the town officials and instructed them to continue in their posts and to cooperate under Japanese control and supervision. At times, patrols were dispatched to the neighboring areas. Their policy of attraction was combined with threats to destroy houses that were left vacant, which compelled many people to return to their homes. They also tried to recover guns and to confiscate radio sets. The resumption of municipal and provincial offices also convinced others to return to their homes. Those who returned were treated well and allowed to buy goods from stores, and to share in the food rations.

But still others preferred to stay in the mountains in the name of freedom and for other reasons.²⁸ With them were the ex-USAFFE soldiers who refused to surrender and were just waiting for an opportune time to attack. They were later joined by those who have returned to their homes in the lowlands.

THE "BANDIT ZONE"

The initial Japanese policy of attraction did not last long. Despite the Japanese propaganda and threats, many people still had not returned to their houses, and the soldiers did not heed the call to surrender themselves and their guns. Before long, an all-out and vicious attempt to secure these guns resulted in atrocities. All those with guns and those who did not return to their homes were declared as outlaws and hunted down as bandits. To this effect, the Japanese issued a proclamation that read:

Proclamation

From now on, those persons having no identification card will be considered by the Imperial Japanese (*sic*) Army as outlaws. Therefore, if you do not have Identification Card, please go immediately to the nearest Japanese Garrison to get your card.

The expiration of the card is two months, therefore, you should go to the garrison and exchange your ID card with a new one prior to the expiry of the said period.

This proclamation takes effect at the time of the publication.

Commander in Chief
Imperial Japanese Army ²⁹

Thus, everyone was required to register at the Japanese headquarters in every locality in order to secure “passes.” Inter-town passes were issued by the municipal mayors subject to the approval of the garrison commanders.

Due to the refusal of most civilians to secure the pass, the Japanese were constrained to divide the whole island of Negros into “bandit” zones and “free” zones. Maps were posted in public places showing the demarcation line of the division. Areas within six to 15 kilometers of the coast were considered “free or safety” zones; beyond were “bandit” zones.³⁰ Accompanying the maps was a notification that read:

Notification

1. The premises in the following map will be regarded as “Bandit Zones,” so that all civilians within theses (*sic*) must evacuate not latter (*sic*) than November 30th, 1943. Any person who decides to live or abide (*sic*) within these Zones after the above mentioned date shall hereafter meet stiff shooting by the Japanese Imperial Forces and shall be the target of the incessant bombing and shooting by the Japanese airplane

(*sic*). The Japanese Forces will not be responsible for the casualties or damages cause (*sic*) by such campaign after the date specified above.

2. The civilians who are now residing within the “Bandit Zones” must go back to their respective homes or seek shelter in the places not indicated as “Bandit Zones” not later than November 30th, 1943 and must notify their respective Municipal Mayor (*sic*) or the commanders of the nearest Japanese garrison. Any land owner who defiantly ignores this notification and refuses to go back to his former address after the date specified above November 30th, shall be regarded as pro-bandits and his real estate and house shall be confiscated.
3. Mayors and commanders of the Japanese Garrison are hereby enjoined to help these civilians evacuate from “Bandit Zones” to the places indicated for their safety. Details regarding this matter must be held to (*sic*) their respective municipal offices and garrisons.

October 10, 1943.

I hereby certify to the authenticity of the above notification

The Commander in Chief Japanese Forces for
Negros Island ³¹

Further, the preceding notification was strengthened by Japanese propaganda stating that by December, they would send a mopping up force of approximately 10,000 and airplanes to attack these “Bandit Zones.” In effect, the soldiers and civilians who retained their guns became “outlaws” with the death penalty hovering over their heads. In addition, even those civilians who had no weapons and had refused to return to their houses were similarly branded. For self-protection, the so-called “bandits” banded together into small groups and formed the nucleus of the resistance movement of Negros Island.

It must be noted that only a few Japanese troops were stationed in Negros before MacArthur’s landing in Leyte in 1944.³² Over half of these forces were stationed in Negros Occidental because of the many important economic establishments in the area. The Japanese 172nd Battalion under Col. Matzuka Yamaguchi arrived in Negros in 1943 was divided into four sectors. Three of these sectors were all in Negros Occidental. The fourth was in Negros Oriental under Col. Mizunori Fukuda with its headquarters located in Dumaguete. The components of this sector were spread so thinly that many areas of southern Negros were completely unoccupied and many people had not seen the shadow of the Japanese forces.³³

TOO MANY COMMANDERS

Prior to the organization of the resistance movement, there was uncertainty among the evacuees in the mountains. Informants claimed that the Japanese labeled them just the same as the combatants. They also had to contend with

former USAFFE soldiers who had gone rouge. Worse, these so-called “wild units” or undisciplined brigands looted public and private property, and extorted money, guns, and valuable food supplies from helpless and innocent civilians. Civilian evacuees were continually terrorized and extorted from. They felt that these armed bands were more engaged in banditry and brigandage than in fighting the Japanese. They could not count on their civil officials who were coerced by the Japanese to stay on their sides, and those who were hiding in the hills were just as confused and helpless as they were.

There was lawlessness in the countryside because of the leadership crisis. Although the ex-soldiers harassed the Japanese, they lacked a coordinated plan of fighting the enemy. There was confusion, rivalry and disputes over territorial jurisdiction among the different bands of guerrillas. Moreover, these units did not know or recognize each other because of different passcodes and this sometimes led to incidents where the units mistakenly fired at each other. Soldiers could leave their units and return to civilian lives or join another group.

To help rectify the situation, civilians and military officers organized resistance movements in Negros.³⁴ Col. Salvador Abcede, Mayor Augorio M. Abeto of Binalbagan, brothers Alfredo and Jose Montelibano, Col. Ernesto Mata, and others formed units in Negros Occidental. The Presbyterian missionary and Physics teacher in Silliman University, Prof. Henry Roy Bell organized a guerilla unit with Maj. Placedo Ausejo, former officers who were

graduates of Silliman, ROTC cadets, and other American missionaries in the mountains.³⁵

In November 1942, Col. Abcede met with Col. Macario Peralta in Panay, commander of the entire Panay Force,³⁶ upon the latter's invitation and discussed the consolidation of command in Negros. He returned to Negros and consolidated his force with Col. Mata. Consolidating the Oriental side was more problematic under three different leaders—Major Ausejo; Col. Gador; and Captain Mercado.³⁷

As expected, Major Ausejo declined Col. Abcede's invitation to join the IV Philippines Corps under the 72nd Division³⁸ because of his connection with General Fertig in Mindanao. His letter of 11 January 1943 explained why he preferred to connect with General Fertig in Mindanao:³⁹

Geographically, the two provinces have their backs to each other and (*sic*) flow of communication, food, or reinforcements would be highly problematical. Administration now because of the inferior facilities of communications would be very difficult. Tactically, Negros Oriental operates with (*sic*) major enemy based at (*sic*) Cebu. It takes three days to contact Mindanao, and one day to contact Cebu; your mails reach us in three weeks and fast couriers make the trip in at least 10 or 12 days.⁴⁰

The terrains between the two sides of Negros made it more difficult for Major Ausejo to reach the camp of Col. Abcede in Occidental compared to the sea lane

between Negros and Mindanao. It was also easier to cross to Mindanao undetected by the Japanese because of the hidden coastal areas of Negros Oriental than to cross the shorter, but more exposed and frequently patrolled, Tañon Strait to Cebu.⁴¹ The route to Mindanao became the “sailboat run”⁴² transporting supplies and communications between the two islands.

Moreover, the rivalry between other leaders in Negros like Col. Gador and Capt. Mercado for control over the province⁴³ made Majors Bell and Ausejo to conclude that a more qualified commander was needed. Major Bell visited Mindanao with the contention that leadership in the province of Negros Oriental should be under the command of “General” Fertig, with Major Ausejo as the commander of the 75th Infantry Regiment.

Major Ausejo’s connection with Brig. Gen. Fertig⁴⁴ was established through an earlier proclamation:⁴⁵

**United States Armed Forces in the Philippines
Office of the Commanding General
in the Field of Mindanao and Sulu**

Proclamation

On September 18, 1942 our forces under Maj. L.L. Morgan completed the occupation of Misamis Occidental Province and Northern Zamboanga from the hands of Japanese Military Government; (*sic*) and raised American and Filipino flags therein.

In behalf of the United States of America, the Philippine Commonwealth Government is reestablished in these regions under the Military Authorities. All Civil Laws and regulations will be followed except in those cases where they conflict with Military Laws. In such situations Military Laws will prevail.

This procedure shall continue to be enforced until such time when it shall be declared suspended, or terminated.

/s/ w.w. FERTIG
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding Mindanao and Sulu Force

Following the proclamation, a regular courier service was established and emergency notes from Mindanao known as the “Fertig currency” were put into circulation in Negros Oriental. This money was used to pay the soldiers and later became the common guerrilla currency. It generally boosted the morale of the people in Negros Oriental and, with the exception of Col. Gador’s men, strengthened their alliance with the Mindanao guerrillas.⁴⁶

But the confusion and territorial disputes among the military leaders did not end. Voluminous correspondence between the contending parties attest that nobody was willing to be under whose command and each had a letter or memorandum to prove his point. The non-combatants were confused of the too many commanders in the island.

Col. Abcede was in command over all of Negros Occidental while Major Ausejo had for himself all of southern Negros Oriental as far north as Tanjay. In the remaining northern towns of Oriental, it was a tussle between Col. Gador and Capt. Mercado.

Consequently, this battle for command ended on 14 January 1943 with the arrival of an American submarine at Catmon point in Hinoba-an, South Negros carrying Major Jesus Villamor⁴⁷ and his party from Australia. He was Gen. Douglas MacArthur's personal representative with the mission to establish the intelligence network in the country and to rally the different commanders to hold the Japanese at bay until the return of MacArthur.⁴⁸

After setting up a powerful radio transmitter in Negros and establishing contact with Australia, Villamor soon found himself in the quagmire for leadership of the island. Within four months, Villamor realized that a consensus could not be reached so he secured an approval from Australia to solve the problem.

On 14 May 1943, Villamor issued General Order I which provided for his assumption of command of the 7th Military District comprising Negros and Siquijor islands as instructed by the General Headquarters in Australia. Although the contending parties were surprised that an "outsider" with a "junior" rank was designated, the backing of the Southwest Pacific Command was enough proof of Villamor's authority. This settled the problem once and for all,⁴⁹ at least from the military point of view.

THE QUESTION ON CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP

Apart from being split over territorial jurisdiction and military command, the island was also divided into four sectors, each having its own civilian authority. In Negros Occidental, this was not much of a problem because all of the unoccupied areas recognized Alfredo Montelibano whom Col. Abcede appointed in December 1942 as island governor. But in Negros Oriental, the contested zones of different commands also had different civilian officials. The northern towns remained loyal to Major Hermenegildo Mercado who chose most of the mayors. Col. Gador picked Alberto Furbeyre as island governor. The local town officials under the military jurisdiction of Major Ausejo in the southern towns looked to Henry Roy Bell whose position had been reconfirmed by “General” Fertig.⁵⁰

The absence of a strong civil government especially in the Oriental side and the confusion in the military jurisdictions resulted in anarchy. It further created the problem of procuring food supplies for the civilians. Moreover, since there were a lot of zones, there appeared multiple currencies that originated from various sources of authority. The money from one area was not accepted in another area and vice versa.

The conditions in the unoccupied areas were so deplorable that many evacuees returned to their respective homes only to face both the Japanese atrocities and the hatred of their friends who remained in the mountains. As Lolo Bentong⁵¹ puts it: “Wala gyud kay kapilian, luoy

gayod ang civilian.” (“You had no choice, the civilian was helpless.”)

Aside from disputes over commands that verged into civil war, Villamor was also confronted with problems such as the “wild units,” brigandage, food shortages, currency problems, malaria, and lack of medicines that compounded the despair of the people in the unoccupied areas. A week after assuming command, he installed Alfredo Montelibano as acting governor of Negros and Siquijor Islands to unify the civil leadership. His proclamation read:

**United States Armed Forces in the Philippines
Headquarters Seventh Military District
in the Field**

21 May ‘43

Proclamation No. 11

By virtue of the authority vested in me as District Commander, 7th Military District (Negros and Siquijor), by the C-in-C, of all unoccupied areas in the island of Negros and Siquijor.

Mr. Alfredo Montelibano is hereby charged with the responsibility of carrying on the normal functions of the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines in the unoccupied areas.

(Sgd) Jesus Villamor
Major, AF, (AUS),
District Commander ⁵²

Figure 1. Map of Negros Island showing the occupied and unoccupied towns



Source: G-2 files of the 7th Military District at the Silliman University Library

ORGANIZATION OF THE FREE NEGROS CIVIL GOVERNMENT

As commander of the 7th Military District of Negros Oriental and Siquijor, Villamor issued a letter to Governor Montelibano, giving him a free hand in choosing his officials to restore normalcy in the civil government and to cooperate fully with the army.⁵³ Likewise, a mimeographed sheet with the masthead, *Liberator*, was also circulated to the locals in the unoccupied areas urging them to help the resistance movement.⁵⁴

Villamor's appointment of Gov. Montelibano came from President Quezon as indicated in the radiogram:

NR ELEVEN-240 11 June '43

Rec'd 14 June '43

On June ninth President Quezon appointed you Governor of Negros both Oriental and Occidental pd You will therefore disregard my proclamation and henceforth carry on your duties Governor directly under President Quezon pd Please accept my sincerest congratulations pd Villamor.⁵⁵

Considering the vast extent of his area of responsibility, Gov. Montelibano divided the island into seven districts to ensure effective administration especially at the local level. Negros Occidental was divided into five administrative districts; Negros Oriental had two districts; and the entire island of Siquijor was made a separate district. Each district had a designated deputy governor. The deputy governors of Negros Occidental were Roberto Llantado for the 1st District; Tranquilino Valderama for the 2nd District; Aurelio Locsin for the 3rd District; Salvador Benedicto for the 4th District; and Miguel Gatuslao for the 5th District. In Negros Oriental, the deputy governors were Robert B. Silliman for the 6th District and Crispiano Limbaga for the 7th District. The whole island of Siquijor which comprised the 8th district was under Carlos Gamboa.⁵⁶

Gov. Montelibano instructed his deputy governors to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth in their respective

districts as reflected in his letter to Deputy Governor Robert Silliman (6th District):

...As such (*sic*) Deputy Governor, you will see to the enforcement and compliance of the laws of the Commonwealth; you will be directly responsible to me; you will have general supervision over all civil officials and employees appointed and acting in the said District. You will represent the undersigned in all your dealings with the public at large and with the officials therein. You will do all acts which, in the exercise of your discretion and judgement, are conducive to the general welfare.

As a matter of policy, you will extend full cooperation to all officers and men of our Army within your territory. At the same time you will attend to the needs and to whatever complaints the civilian population may have against any official, be he in the Civil Government or in the Army....⁵⁷

Henceforth, the deputy governors proceeded with the reorganization of their respective governments following the “Municipal Plantilla of Emergency Personnel.” Gov. Montelibano issued his first circular to all deputy governors and mayors instructing them on how to go about their official communications.

**COMMONWEALTH OF THE PHILIPPINES
NEGROS AND SIQUIJOR ISLANDS**

Office of the Governor

June 23, 1943

Circular No 1

To all Deputy Governors &
Mayors of Special Sitios
Kamingawan & Lusoc
In the Field

Henceforth, in line with the order of the President of the Philippines directing the resumption of civil governmental functions in the islands of Negros and Siquijor and for purposes of uniformity, all official communications shall bear the following caption:

COMMONWEALTH OF THE PHILIPPINES
NEGROS AND SIQUIJOR ISLANDS
Office of the _____

All communications addressed to the undersigned as head of the Civil Government for the Island of Negros and Siquijor, shall be as follows:

Hon. Alfredo Montelibano
Governor
In the Field

All Deputies of the Governor shall bear the title of, and shall be addressed as, Deputy Governor.

All heads of municipalities shall bear the title of, and shall be addressed as Mayors.

With the definition and separation of power (*sic*) between the Civil Government and the Army, the use of the word “Military” which henceforth was affixed to the official designation of the civil officials shall be dispensed with.

Circularize the foregoing to all concerned for their information and guidance.

(Sgd) Alfredo Montelibano
Governor

Copy Furnished:
The District Commander, 7MD
Co., 72nd Division
The Chief of Staff, 72nd Division ⁵⁸

Subsequently, the respective local leaders of the unoccupied areas were tasked with running the affairs of the municipal government. Each mayor was required to submit monthly reports that include the presence and activities of the Japanese, abuses of soldiers, and actions of the municipal council to address the needs and concerns of the community.

THE BOLO BRIGADE AND THE VOLUNTEER GUARDS

After filling up the various positions in the municipality, the civil government reorganized the Bolo Guards into Volunteer Guards. Prior to the establishment of the civil government, the Bolo Guards, composed of civilian volunteers, were formed in every barrio by the

different guerrilla units. As the name suggests, these volunteers had no weapons except their bolos and they were not registered with the armed forces. Therefore, they had neither salaries nor privileges which were normally given to the military.

In an interview, a former bolo guard⁵⁸ said that his principal job was to guard the outposts leading to the headquarters and civilian hideouts and to warn the group about approaching Japanese patrols. The warning system used was called “tultugan” (also called “tagultol”) and in some areas, “budyong.” The *tultugan* is a piece of bamboo cut on one side. Whenever a Japanese patrol was sighted, the piece of bamboo was beaten—*tultog* in the dialect—creating a sound that sent signals to the guerrillas and civilians in the vicinity. On the other hand, a *budyong* is a shell that produces a loud sound when one blows into its hole. If these signals were not used, a piece of colored cloth was displayed on the window, on the door, or on the clothesline to warn the people.⁵⁹

Aside from guarding and serving as lookouts, the volunteer guards also hauled food and equipment for the military units. As Lolo Johnny put it:⁶⁰ “Gitawag pud mi ug ‘cowboys’ kay kami ang tig pamulong ug ihaw sa baka.” (“We were also called cowboys because we were tasked to look for and to butcher cows.”) Oftentimes, they were asked to construct shelters to serve as headquarters and do all the menial jobs in the camp. They also escorted the special couriers and agents of both the civil and military officials. With the reorganization, the Bolo Guards were renamed Volunteer Guards and placed under the civil government.

Their functions were concentrated in guarding the outposts and sounding the warning systems that saved a lot of lives.

SUBMARINE LANDINGS IN NEGROS, THE THE Z PLAN OR THE KOGA PAPERS, AND THE "OTSU INCIDENT"

The situation in Southern Negros, being unoccupied and almost free of Japanese patrols, made it possible for Col. Abcede to establish his headquarters in the area, paving the way for the successful landings of American submarines. There were seven successful submarine landings in the vicinity of south and southwest Negros from 14 January 1943 to 16 July 1944. These landings facilitated the shipment of arms and ammunitions, the evacuation of civilians, the transport of soldiers, and the delivery of documents.⁶¹

Three of these significant landings involved the *USS Gudgeon* in 1943, and the *USS Crevalle* and *USS Nautilus* in 1944. The *USS Gudgeon* landed on 14 January 1943 with Major Villamor who established the Allied Intelligence Bureau and helped resolved the military leadership crisis in the island. Another essential outcome was the installation of a radio network among the various commands in Negros which enabled commanders to contact each other, receive instructions from SWPA, and relay intelligence information to support planning and operations. The *USS Crevalle* and *USS Nautilus* evacuated American missionaries and picked up valuable documents on May 11 and June 20.

Figure 2. List of submarine landings in Negros from January 1943 to July 1944⁶²

DATE	SUBMARINE	LOCATION	MISSION
Jan. 14, 1943	Gudgeon	Catmon Point, Negros	Landed six Filipinos, Maj. Villamor incharge, and 1 ton of special equipment
July 9, 1943	Thresher	Catmon Point, Negros	Landed commando party of four and 5,000 rounds of 30 caliber
Oct. 20, 1943	Cabrilla	Dogo Point, Negros	Picked up four men
Feb. 7, 1944	Narwhal	Balatong Point, Negros	Delivered 45 tons of cargo and evacuated 28 persons
May 11, 1944	Crevalle	Basay, Negros	Evacuated 48 and picked up the Koga papers
June 20, 1944	Nautilus	Balatong Point, Negros	Landed 4 men and supplies and evacuated 17 persons
July 16, 1944	Nautilus	Balatong Point, Negros	Delivered special cargo

One such crucial pick-up involved the “Koga Papers” which turned out to be the Japanese “*sho*” or Z Plan. The captured documents contained vital information on Japanese strategy in the Pacific. This information was key to the American victory at the Battle of the Philippine Sea. Historians acknowledge that the discovery of the Z Plan could be considered as one of the greatest single intelligence feats of the war in the Southwest Pacific area.⁶³

Admiral Mineichi Koga, overall commander of the Japanese Combined Fleet and his chief of staff, Rear Admiral Shigeru Fukudome who were based at Truk, the main Japanese mid-Pacific naval base in the Caroline Islands, planned to set up operations in Davao. Koga was preparing the Japanese fleet to engage the American Navy in a great decisive battle. From the very beginning, Koga insisted that their one chance for success depended on a crucial naval maneuver. Koga’s strategy was spelled out in the Z Plan document of 25 August 1943. It outlined defensive plans against Allied attacks on Japan’s South Pacific possessions and made provisions for engaging the American fleet in a critical encounter. In early February 1944, the General Staff authorized Koga to modify the plan by redistributing Japanese forces around a revised “last line of defense.” He was also allowed to command the fleet at Truk rather than to remain in Tokyo.⁶⁴

In March 1944, continued American bombardment forced Koga to transfer to Palau. But in the morning of March 28, Japanese reconnaissance planes informed Koga that the American fleet appeared to be heading toward the Palau Islands. He received the same report in the morning

of March 29 so that he was convinced that the Americans would attack the next day. He quickly ordered all warships and merchant ships away from Palau, with Admiral Fukudome taking charge of the leather pouch containing the Z Plan. Sustained attacks of the enemy forced Koga to withdraw to Davao, 600 miles to the west. At around 10 p.m. of March 31, two planes carrying Koga and Fukudome took off for Davao. Fukudome, who was in the second plane with 14 staff officers, carried in his briefcase the Z Plan documents (it was a bound copy, the red cover bearing a "Z"), an air staff study of carrier fleet operations, rules for code use, place-name abbreviation list, and other signals information. A third aircraft took off at 3 a.m. of April 1 with communications and clerical staff with their top secret codes aboard. It was the only one of the three planes to reach Davao.⁶⁵

But the inclement weather caused Koga's plane to crash into the Pacific. Fukudome's plane tried to skirt around the storm but it also crashed in the Bohol Strait, about two and a half miles from the shoreline of Magtalisay, a small village near the town of San Fernando, Cebu. The villagers rescued the survivors but two of them managed to swim to nearby Barrio Sangat where they were able to reach the office of Vicente Rabor, the Japanese-supported mayor of San Fernando. From there, they were taken to the Japanese garrison at Tina-an, Naga town. This was how the Japanese authorities were able to know about the crash.⁶⁶

The Japanese immediately launched a massive air, sea, and land search for Koga's plane and survivors from the Fukudome aircraft as well as the "relevant documents"

that may have drifted ashore. They indeed had reason for concern, for the documents carried vital information about their operations. Japanese patrols were dispatched in the vicinity of the crash site. This was followed by a frantic and ruthless search for details about Koga and the missing documents. The search resulted in the burning of villages and the killing of hundreds of civilians.⁶⁷

The wooden box blackened by oil floated and was carried by the current to Barrio Perilos, Carcar where it was found by Pedro Gantuangko and his neighbor Rufo Wamar. They opened the box and discovered that it contained the the leather portfolio with thick files of Japanese documents and six to seven batches of papers held by fasteners. All of the papers were written in Japanese characters. One batch had only blank sheets of paper.

Gantuangko suspected that these blank sheets might be filled with writings made in invisible ink that might become readable when heated. There was also a cloth bag with six rubber condoms inside. The last item in the portfolio was a small silk pouch containing pieces of white gold the size of corn grains. Gantuangko weighed the pieces and tried to estimate their worth. It took two days for all of the papers to dry. He put the portfolio with the papers back in the box and buried it. He marked the spot with dried coconut leaves. He also kept the portfolio's wooden box hoping to use it as a nest for his ducks.⁶⁸

Because of the increased Japanese patrols and tortures, Gantuangko paid his neighbor to hide in Bohol. After giving the documents to the guerrillas, he also fled and

brought his family to Bohol. Eventually, the Koga papers found their way to Tabunan, the headquarters of Cushing who immediately radioed SWPA headquarters in Brisbane, informing them about it and the ten Japanese prisoners, including Fukudome, en route to his headquarters. Subsequently, Cushing negotiated with the Japanese forces to spare the civilians in exchange for the prisoners. He noted that his small force of 25 soldiers was unable to stand against an attacking force of 500, and he pointed out that in southern Cebu some 2,000 Japanese were looking for the prisoners.⁶⁹

Cushing turned his attention to the recovered documents after releasing the prisoners. The plan's appearance—the red leather portfolio embossed with an elaborate emblem and papers stamped with seals—made him think that the documents were significant. He had them rolled tightly and placed them inside two empty mortar shells to protect them from the elements. On April 13, Cushing sent a message to Brisbane about the documents including Japanese operations maps showing air and naval bases, wireless stations, emergency landing fields, triangulation points, heights, and other possessions that were taken from the prisoners. The maps covered Palau, the Philippines, most of French Indo-China, Hainan Island, and South China. He informed them that the documents and the maps were to reach his superior, Lt. Col. Edwin D. Andrews in Southern Negros, in approximately two weeks.⁷⁰

As ordered, Cushing instructed two former American prisoners of war, Russ Snell and Jimmy Dyer, to take

the mortar shells containing the documents to Andrews' headquarters, where they could be shipped to Australia by a submarine. On April 15, the two, escorted by soldiers, set out and crossed Cebu and the Tañon Strait. They arrived on April 28 at Andrews' headquarters in the hills of Culipapa in Hinoba-an.⁷¹

On April 27 Cushing sent another message informing SWPA that with the help of fishermen, more documents had been recovered the crashed Japanese plane. These documents were also delivered to Andrews' headquarters.⁷²

Meanwhile, the Japanese were still concerned about the missing Z Plan. Their planes dropped leaflets in Cebu offering rewards for their return and at the same time threatening the civilians with severe retaliatory action. Suspecting that the papers were in Bohol, they sent 3,000 men to scour the island. The news of the missing Japanese papers and the reward of 50,000 pesos for their return also reached Mindanao. On May 17, leaflets signed by Colonel Takeshi Watanabe, the commander of the Japanese naval garrison in Cebu, demanded that Cushing surrender the papers unconditionally and all the belongings of the passengers of the crashed plane "stolen" by the guerrillas and warned of severe consequences if this demand was not met.⁷³

The Japanese actions in the Visayas, the hefty reward for the papers, Koga's death, and the intercepted dispatch of the Japanese about the "Otsu incident" finally convinced the authorities in Australia of the importance of the documents. Immediately, the nearest submarine, the *USS*

Crevalle, which was patrolling off the coast of Northern Borneo, received secret orders to proceed north to the eastern part of Sulu Sea and to be prepared for a special mission on May 11. Using the evacuation of American refugees as a cover for the submarine's real mission, instructions were radioed to the *USS Crevalle* to proceed to a position just north of Basay, Negros. At sunset on May 11, after observing security signals, the submarine surfaced and received from native sailboats about 25 passengers and the relevant documents. The day before, Salvador Abcede, commander of the 7th Military District of Negros, was told that SWPA wanted the documents delivered as soon as possible and asked what site would be used for the pick-up of the papers and refugees on May 11. Abcede was instructed to exercise great caution in executing the mission and to "preserve utmost secrecy concerning the documents." SWPA followed up the communication with precise instructions on how the transfer of the documents and the refugees would take place.⁷⁴

After a perilous journey that included being attacked by a Japanese convoy en route to Darwin, subsequently depth-charged and receiving substantial damage, the *USS Crevalle* reached its destination. The passengers and the essential package were delivered to the Commander of the Section Base in Darwin and the 40 passengers were sworn to secrecy about their voyage. The Z Plan and associate ciphers were immediately sent to Brisbane for translation. After copies of the documents were made in Brisbane, the original documents were put back into the box and then brought to the crash site by another submarine. This was

done to fool the Japanese into believing that the documents had not been discovered by the Allies.⁷⁵

Once the Z Plan documents had been decoded and translated, they revealed such details as Japanese strategies, the names of the various Japanese commanders and some of their personal characteristics, the names of enemy ships and their capabilities (e.g., firepower and range) and their vulnerabilities. They further disclosed that Leyte was the soft underbelly of Japanese defenses and it was not adequately fortified. Before the discovery of the documents, the Americans planned to retake the Philippines by landing first at Sarangani Bay, Cotabato in southern Mindanao on 20 December 1944. The decoding of the Z Plan hastened the American return to the Philippines from December 1944 to October 1944 and caused the change of landing site from Mindanao to Leyte.⁷⁶

CONCLUSION

Realistically, when the Japanese occupied Negros Island, they were only confined to the strategic areas and centers because of their small number. The lack of adequate Japanese manpower to control the captured areas effectively was manifested by the fact that only a few permanent garrisons were maintained in the island. Thus, the rest of the towns especially those far from the centers of commerce and transportation had apparently, no Japanese presence except for occasional patrols.

In areas seldom visited by Japanese patrols due to their remoteness and rugged terrain, life was comparatively

better than that in the occupied areas. This observation was corroborated by military reports. As early as August 1944, the army already indicated that “the high cost of living and the scarcity of food stuff in occupied towns are constant hardships to the masses whose situation in relation to food during this period is worse than that of civilians in the Free Areas.”⁷⁷ This situation enable civilians to go down to the coast to catch fish and to make salt. Moreover, it motivated the military and civilian officials to reopen some schools so that pupils could continue their schooling despite the raging war. The eventual abandonment of far-flung Japanese garrisons in Negros also made it possible for the people to plant and even to travel by sailboat to the other islands for supplies. Evidently, all of these crossings between the narrow straits and the open seas enabled people to survive the war and influenced an interconnected Visayan resistance movement.

On the same plane, the story of the resistance movement in the Visayas, particularly in Negros Island, would be incomplete without the vital undersea traffic created by the accessible and unhampered landing areas controlled by the guerrillas. These landing areas were chosen because of the harbor and sea-depth, open location, and particularly, their proximity to any Japanese garrison. Undeniably, the submarine traffic and the choice of the rendezvous points were important factors that quickened the end of the Japanese occupation. In essence, it demonstrated the significance of harnessing the potentialities of the bodies of water to achieve specific goals.

In Negros, the areas that the Japanese took for granted became the bastion of the resistance movement. The boats or *bancas* that regularly plied the seas were seen as vessels of ordinary fishermen hunting for fish. These were actually couriers of valuable intelligence information and mode of transport for the key resistance leaders. These small vessels became the arteries that connected the island for the food supply chain. In a sense, the seas offered the texts and subtexts that explained why people in their varying degrees of involvement during World War II acted the way they did.

In closing, southern Negros was indeed the vulnerable spot that became the “Achilles Heel”⁷⁸ leading to the downfall of the Japanese. Considering the area insignificant was their costly tactical blunder. Figuratively, the shape of the area resembles a heel that served as a safe, unguarded haven for the resistance movement and a secure rendezvous point for submarine landings and the logical site for setting up radio transmitters. Furthermore, the area suitable for the establishment of an intelligence network and tactically tagged by the SPWA as the best spot to pick up the “Koga Papers” in disguise of rescuing American missionaries. Indeed, as the Japanese occupation in the Visayas unfolded, the seas were always in the background providing the avenue by which the history of war evolved. On a deeper level, the situation in Southern Negros showcased the ability of the Negrenses to establish links beyond the confines of the island and their capacity to make the most of the unifying and transcendent role of the seas towards an interconnected Visayan resistance movement.

NOTES

- 1 Retired Lt. Gen. Douglas MacArthur (former chief of staff of US Armed Forces) was specifically hired by President Manuel Quezon to be the military adviser of the Commonwealth. Subsequently, the National Defense Act of 1935 was mandated to establish a citizen's army to be trained in each of the military districts in the country. See Modesto Sa-onoy, *A History of Negros Occidental*. (Bacolod City: Today Printers and Publishers, 1992),177.
- 2 Arthur Carson. "Sa Kabukiran," (unpublished manuscript 1956). The author was the president of Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental when the war broke out.
- 3 However, in addition to his logistic problems, he was governed by a timetable that was planned for the year 1946 when the Philippines would achieve independence. See Robert Benton Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance* (Manila: Phil. Edition, 1980),11.
- 4 Silliman, 11.
- 5 Under the National Defense Act, the local executives were to be the main implementers in the case of a national mobilization. Likewise, there were the approaching October 1941 elections.
- 6 Sa-onoy, 178. This seems to be the common feeling at that time.
- 7 Robert B. Silliman was a professor of history at Silliman University when the war broke out. He was later appointed as deputy governor of the 6th civil administrative district of the "Free Negros" government. See Silliman, 4.
- 8 They were the North Luzon, the South Luzon, and the Visayas-Mindanao command.
- 9 This was based on the assumption that Japan would strike first against the Philippines. So, the U.S. Army prepared the War Plan Orange. This war plan formulated in 1914 and continuously updated stipulated that in case of an attack, the USAFFE was to absorb the impact of the initial Japanese attack and then move on

to the Bataan peninsula for a protracted defense. Then in about two months, the U.S. would be able to dispatch re-enforcement to the Philippines to liberate the archipelago and attack Japan itself. See Sa-onoy, 177.

- 10 The three Infantry Regiments of Negros belonged to the 71st Division of the Philippine Army Reserve force under the 7th Military District which was initially assigned as a reserve force in Luzon upon orders by the USAFFE. The defense concept was originally for the entire division to be deployed in Luzon. See Uldarico Baclagon, *They Chose to Fight* (Quezon City: Col. Uldarico S. Baclagon, 1983), 8.
- 11 See The 71st Division Story (Appendix I) in Baclagon, 94–100. Interestingly enough, the actual military training of the 73rd Infantry Regiment took place in less than 15 days.
- 12 This was based on the recommendation of Brig. Gen. Guy O. Fort (Commanding Gen. 81st). His division was temporarily bivouacked at Negros Oriental before he received orders to proceed to Mindanao. See Silliman, 12–13 and Baclagon, 8–9.
- 13 They were inducted on 3 January 1942, by Lt. Stephens and Lt. Baclagon. See Rodriguez, 16. However, in one account, the Commander of the 75th was Major Tiburcio Ballesteros. See Sa-onoy, 185.
- 14 Col. Hilsman was the commander of the 101st Infantry Division in Mindanao that was defeated by the Japanese forces. He escaped from Davao to Agusan and finally reached Cebu.
- 15 Baclagon, 10.
- 16 As it turned out, Bataan was a “cul de sac” and Gen. MacArthur failed to foresee the destructive efficiency of the Japanese air power.
- 17 Interview with Venancia Macatiguib, 83 years old (Siaton) on Dec. 6, 1998 at 11:00 A.M.

- 18 Interview with Caridad Rodriguez, at Daro, Dumaguete City on 2 June 1998, at 4:00 P.M.
- 19 Rodriguez, 4.
- 20 *The Sillimanian*, no. 27, January 17, 1942, 2. *The Sillimanian* was formerly the official student publication of Silliman University. When the war started, it became the news medium of the province. This was printed at the Silliman University Press during the early months of the war with 10"x12" sheet of 8- and 10-point Roman fonts bolstered by some nice boldface caps and Italics. Its front page was given to propaganda, streamers, and radio reports; and the backside was a smattering of editorials, local items, and informative magazine reprints. See Abby R. Jacobs. *We Did Not Surrender* (Manila: A Memorial Edition, 1986), 23.
- 21 No. 7, December 22, 1941, 2 and no. 18, January 7, 1942, 2. The instructions had a Cebuano translation directly under the reminders.
- 22 Rodriguez, 5.
- 23 *The Sillimanian*, no. 24, January 20, 1942.
- 24 Rodriguez has detailed an account of Quezon's stay in Negros in Rodriguez, 13–14 citing Nat Floyd, "Flight With Quezon," *Colliers* (August 1, 1942), 44 and James G. Wingo, "The Last Days of Manuel L. Quezon, *Philippines Free Press* (vol. XXXVII, No. 7, April 6, 1946), 19. On the other hand, a different account is given by Saonoy, 188–190. However, Sa-onoy does not properly acknowledge his sources.
- 25 This was because the Japanese refused to accept the surrender of General Jonathan M. Wainwright and his men unless he surrendered all other USAFFE Units in the Philippines. Moreover, there was a threat that all captives in Bataan and Corregidor would be massacred if other units would not comply with the surrender order.
- 26 Baclagon, 13–14.

- 27 Rodriguez has a vivid account of the landing in Dumaguete from her interview with two eyewitnesses. See Rodriguez 24–26. For the landing in Bacolod, see Sa-onoy, 43.
- 28 In a letter of Deputy Governor Miguel M. Gatuslao to Pres. Manuel L. Quezon dated 9 December 1943, among the various reasons were: People were not sure what the Japanese would do next; some were families of soldiers who refused to surrender; families feared for their beautiful daughters; they were convinced that the Americans were coming back; and the love of freedom rather than life under the Japanese. See letter of Deputy Gov. Miguel M. Gatuslao to Pres. Quezon in *Manuel L. Quezon Papers*, Series VII, Provincial and Municipal File, 1917–1943. National Library. See Rodriguez, 98.
- 29 From the unclassified WWII Papers of the Special Filipiniana Collection at the Silliman University Library.
- 30 Report of special agent “J. WYE” to the Governor dated 9 October 1943 (handwritten).
- 31 Order from the Commander of the Japanese Forces in Negros Island dated 10 October 1943 from the Special Filipiniana Collection of the Silliman Library.
- 32 The occupation force (The Nagano Combat Regiment) left Negros on 9 October 1942. See Sa-onoy, 224.
- 33 Sa-onoy, 225. The interviewees of the researcher in these areas affirmed this fact.
- 34 Dominador Zaragoza, *Defiance: The Human Side of the Negros Guerrilla* (Bacolod City: Free Negros Printing Press, 1946), 39–48. See also Sa-onoy, 202–207.
- 35 His war exploits are well documented in Mills, Scott. *Stranded in the Philippines* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1994). See also the account of Benjamin N. Villoria. “Roy Bell—Hero of Negros,” *Philippines Free Press*, vol.39, no. 7, February 14, 1948, 8.

- ³⁶ For the details of the resistance movement in Panay see Florentino Ponan, *The History of the Resistance Movement in Antique During the Japanese Occupation (1942–1945)* (Unpublished Dissertation. Manila: UST Graduate School, 1968.)
- ³⁷ These were the combined forces of Abcede and Mata, Gen. Wendel Fertig's Mindanao-Visayas Force through Col. Placido Ausejo, and Col. Gabriel Gador's Negros Island Force.
- ³⁸ Virgilio de la Victoria, *A History of the Resistance Movement Against the Japanese Imperial Forces in Negros Island 1942–1945.* (Unpublished Thesis, University of San Carlos, Cebu City, 1971), 180. Also cited by Rodriguez, 83.
- ³⁹ Emphasis mine. Also cited in <http://su.edu.ph/updates/leadership-reflections/830-negros-history>. Accessed on July 27, 2017.
- ⁴⁰ Carson, 68.
- ⁴¹ This route became an effective vehicle for transportation, communication, and supplies for both South Negros and Northern Mindanao.
- ⁴² The full details are well discussed in Baclagon, 19–23 and Sanooy, 206.
- ⁴³ Actually, W.W. Fertig's rank was a Lt. Colonel. But the need for a rallying point to consolidate the scattered guerrilla units in Northern Mindanao prompted Capt. Luis Morgan and William Tate (guerrilla leaders) to float the idea that a "general" was present in the area. Eventually, the scheme worked and the resistance movement in Mindanao was unified. See Silliman, 151–160.
- ⁴⁴ Silliman, 153.
- ⁴⁵ Carson, 68 and Silliman, 158.
- ⁴⁶ Major Jesus Villamor was a Philippine air ace who had won fame commanding a Filipino squadron on Luzon Island during the first month of the war. A son of a former President of U.P., he

was evacuated to Australia and worked with Gen. MacArthur. See Zaragosa, 16–22.

47 The details of Villamor's landing aboard the *USS Gudgeon* are discussed in Silliman, 193–199 and his mission in Bacragon, 15–30. See also Rodriguez, 90–91 and Sa-onoy, 207.

48 Col. Gador, however, continued to question Villamor's authority for a while. See details in Bacragon, 57–64.

49 Silliman, 200.

50 Interview with Alberto Kinkito, 86 years old in Siaton, Negros Oriental on Dec. 6, 1998 (10:00 A.M.).

51 This is taken from the original copy typed in Grade I ruled paper from the Special Filipiniana collection of the Silliman Library. See also Zaragosa, 24 and Silliman, 217.

52 Rodriguez, 208 and marked Appendix H.

53 The full text of this mimeographed sheet is part of the preserved WWII Papers at Silliman University.

54 Zaragosa, 24. Various sources including Sa-onoy, 221, Rodriguez, 99, and Bacragon, 71 did not acknowledge where they got the text of this radiogram. Presumably, since Zaragosa had published his book in 1946 and being the Secretary of Gov. Montelibano, he must have been the source.

55 See Zaragosa, 211–234 for a complete listing of civil government personnel. Likewise he also provided brief biographical sketches of each Deputy Governor in pages 197–205.

56 Letter of Gov. Montelibano to Robert Silliman dated June 18, 1943 from the WWII Papers of SU. This letter is also cited by Rodriguez, 210 marked Appendix I and by Silliman, 219.

57 Circular of Gov. Montelibano to the civil officials dated June 23, 1943. Taken from the files of Col. Abcede at the WWII Papers of S.U. This letter is also cited in Rodriguez, 216–217.

- 58 Interview with Joselito Kinkito, 78 years old at Siaton, Neg. Or on Dec. 6, 1998 at 11:00 A.M.
- 59 Interview with Soledad Banay, 74 years old in Sagay, Neg. Occ. on January 23, 1999 at 10:30 A.M.
- 60 Interview with Johnny Lirazan, 66 years old in Sta. Catalina, Neg. Or. on Dec. 6, 1998 at 10:00 A.M.
- 61 See the full details in Benjamin N. Vilorio, *They Carried On!* (Manila: Veterans Federation of the Philippines, 1998), 201–204.
- 62 Higinio de Uriarte, *A Basque Among the Guerrillas of Negros*. Translated by Soledad L. Locsin (Bacolod: Editor of Civismo Weekly, 1962), 100–110. The information came from *The United States Submarine Operations in World War II*, published by the U.S. Naval Institute, 1949 ed.
- 63 De Viana, Augusto V. “The Capture of the Koga Papers and Its Effect on the Plan to Retake the Philippines in 1944,” *Micronesian Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*. IV:2 (December 2005): 124.
- 64 Greg Bradsher, “The ‘Z Plan’ Story Japan’s 1944 Naval Battle Strategy Drifts into U.S. Hands,” Prologue. 37: 3 (Fall 2005) n.p. as accessed at <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2005/fall/z-plan-1.html>. Dr. Bradsher is an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration, specializes in World War II intelligence, looted assets, and war crimes.
- 65 Bradsher
- 66 Manuel F. Segura, *The Koga Papers Stories of WWII Cebu, Philippines* (Cebu City: M.F. Segura Publications, 1992), 5.
- 67 Segura, 8. Also cited in <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2005/fall/z-plan-1.html>. Accessed on July 27, 2017.
- 68 De Viana, 128.

69 Bradsher

70 Bradsher

71 Their harrowing and perilous journey is well documented in my upcoming book “The Silliman War Diaries.”

72 Their harrowing and perilous journey is well documented in my upcoming book “The Silliman War Diaries.”

73 De Viana, 130.

74 Steven Trent Smith, *The Rescue: A True Story of Courage and Survival in World War II* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2001), 203–232. This book provides a very detailed account of the Z Plan story, focusing on the individuals rescued by the Crevalle. Another personal account is found in Lindholm. Also cited in <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2005/fall/z-plan-2.html>. Accessed on July 27, 2017.

75 Smith, 256–288. Also found in <http://www.ozatwar.com/sigint/atis.htm>. Accessed on July 27, 2017.

76 “It was almost not Leyte,” *Philippines Free Press*, 12 December 1953, 46–47. Also cited from http://marshall.csu.edu.au/MJHSS/Issue2005/MJHSS2005_205.pd. Accessed on July 27, 2017

77 DIO Propaganda Report No. 9 (Aug. 1 to 31, 1944), 2.

78 The use of “Achilles heel” as symbolizing an “area of weakness and vulnerable spot” dates back only to 1840, with implied use in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “Ireland, that vulnerable heel of the British Achilles!” from 1810 (Oxford English Dictionary). <http://www.oed.com>. Accessed on July 30, 2017.

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Interview with Venancia Macatiguib, 83 years old in Siaton, Negros Oriental on 6 December 1998.

Interview with Caridad Rodriguez, at Daro, Dumaguete City on 2 June 1998.

Interview with Alberto Kinkito, 86 years old in Siaton, Negros Oriental on 6 December 1998.