

The Anderson's Guerrillas and its Mission to Unify the Guerrillas and the USAFFE, 1942-1946

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ABSTRACT

The Anderson's Guerrillas was among the largest guerrilla units in the Philippines during World War II. Ironically, however, it was among those that seemingly gained less attention in history. By presenting the history of the Anderson's Guerrillas, this paper argues that its story and achievements should not be discounted in the study of the resistance movement during the war.

The Anderson's was created in 1943 from a previous failed attempt to unify the scattered USAFFE

soldiers after the Fall of Bataan. Its leader, Maj. Bernard Anderson, aimed to (1) contact the USAFFE headquarters in Australia for a coordinated plan to liberate the Philippines, and (2) unite the guerrilla units for the said plan. The Anderson's Guerrillas carried both missions successfully, which made it a recognized and well-awarded guerrilla unit after the war.

More than the unit itself, the study also reveals the complexities among rivaled and uncooperative resistance groups throughout the Philippines. On the other hand, it also shows the opposite, where many Filipinos and Americans, soldiers and civilians alike, banded together towards the common goal of liberating the Philippines.

KEYWORDS

Anderson's Guerillas, Bernard L. Anderson, United States Forces in the Far East, Luzon Guerrilla Armed Forces, Tayabas (now Quezon province)

INTRODUCTION

The year 1943 is identified often as the period of Japanese occupation in the Philippines, highlighted by the inauguration of the Japanese-sponsored government on October 14. On the other hand, that same year witnessed an upsurge of guerrilla activity. Many guerrilla units were formed in 1943, such as the U.S. Forces in the Philippines-

Northern Philippines (USFIP-NL) led by Maj. Russel Volkmann; the Luzon Guerrilla Armed Forces (LGAF) led by 1st Lieut. Robert Lapham; and the Anderson's Guerrillas formed by Maj. Bernard Anderson. The last-mentioned is the focus of this paper, not only because of its major contributions during the war, but also because of, and owing to, ironically, the relative scarcity of information on the Anderson's Guerrillas.

DISCUSSION

There are varying arguments on who initiated guerrilla resistance in the Philippines during World War II. In his memoirs, Gen. Douglas MacArthur recalled that he had devised plans for guerrilla operations before the Japanese invasion began.¹ On the other hand, some veterans and writers believe that some military officers and civilians independently readied guerrilla units, outside of Gen. MacArthur's directives.² In any case, guerrilla resistance started when the Japanese landed in Northern Luzon and began to invade towns while heading towards Manila. Several American and Filipino units were dispersed, and they escaped. At the time Bataan fell, units of the U.S. Army Forces to the Far East (USAFFE) in Luzon en route to Bataan as reinforcements were cut off.³ [The U.S. Navy was never a part of USAFFE.] Some soldiers in Bataan, such as Col. Claude Thorp, Lieut. Robert Lapham, and Capt. Bernard Anderson managed to avoid the Death March and chose to continue fighting as guerrillas. Many Filipino prisoners who were released from concentration camps joined or created guerrilla units instead of returning to civilian life.⁴

In north central Luzon, the guerilla movement led by Col. Thorp received specific authorization from the USAFFE Headquarters to organize his guerrilla unit.⁵ Despite Gen. Jonathan Wainwright's order that all Filipino and American forces in the country surrender on May 7, 1942, Col. Thorp issued his General Order No. 1 on May 15, 1942, assuming command of all guerilla forces in Luzon. He designated these guerillas, then fragmented, as the United States Forces in the Far East, Luzon Guerrilla Armed Forces (USAFFE LGAF). He then divided Luzon into four areas and appointed a commander for each:⁶

- East Central Luzon Guerilla Area (ECLGA), under Capt. Joseph Barker II
- Northern Luzon Guerilla Area (NLGA), under Maj. Ralph Praeger
- Western Luzon Guerilla Area (WLGA), under Capt. Ralph McGuire
- Southern Luzon Guerilla Area (SLGA), under Capt. Jack Spies

Unfortunately, USAFFE LGAF's solidarity never came into existence. Maj. Praeger never acknowledged Col. Thorp's authority and continued to exist as a separate guerilla movement. Capt. Spies died of pneumonia in Bulacan in August 1942, and the SLGA was never established. The WLGA disintegrated after the betrayal and murder of Capt. McGuire in April 1943. Only ECLGA under Capt. Barker survived. More tragically, Col. Thorp himself was betrayed, captured, and killed also. Command of USAFFE LGAF, which practically consisted only of ECLGA, fell to Capt. Barker. In the early dawn of January 20, 1943,

Capt. Barker was captured by the Japanese in Bulacan and was later executed in Manila.⁷ In February 1943, Capt. Anderson, Barker's chief of staff, assumed command of ECLGA by virtue of seniority.

Anderson, accompanied by several other American officers, refused to surrender on April 9, 1942 when Bataan fell. As mentioned earlier, he was able to escape from the Death March by travelling northward over the mountains.⁸ In May, he and Capt. Barker were able to reach Col. Thorp's camp and were assigned as officers of ECLGA. Anderson proceeded to Bulacan to organize guerilla units in the province. Intensified Japanese attacks in late 1942 forced Anderson to set up his mobile headquarters in Sierra Madre in January 1943. By March he moved to Infanta, Tayabas (now Quezon province), where his base remained throughout the war. It was here where he received news of Capt. Barker's capture, which left both the ECLGA and the whole USAFFE LGAF without a commanding officer.

The fragmented guerillas gave various reactions to Anderson's efforts to continue his predecessors' mission of unifying the guerillas. Many Filipinos persistently sought for Anderson's leadership. Despite the latter's constant transfer of headquarters owing to Japanese attacks, these Filipinos were still able to contact Anderson and express their desire to be attached to his command. For example, just recently after Anderson transferred his base to the Angat Iron Mines, he was contacted by Alberto Guerrero and Pedro Viudez.⁹ Guerrero reported that he had units organized in Nueva Ecija and northern Tayabas (now Aurora province) and that he desired to put them under

Anderson's command. Anderson would later experience similar friendly encounters throughout the war.

On the other hand, many officers, such as Lieut. Lapham and Lieut. Edwin Ramsey, recognized Anderson's authority but still virtually operated on their own because of lack of communications due to terrain difficulties and absence of radios. Leadership disputes and conflict of territorial jurisdictions further severed the internal rifts. After all, many of these officers were self-proclaimed leaders without the consent of other officers. Some large guerilla organizations, most notably the *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon* (HUKBALAHAP), refused to cooperate with Anderson.

Anderson grasped the gravity of the situation, and he realized that resistance forces needed to contact Gen. Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area General Headquarters (GHQ, SWPA), then in Australia, for all these guerilla activities to be useful.¹⁰ First, activities of the guerillas had to be coordinated with the future organized operations of the Allied forces. Waging disjointed skirmishes against the far superior Japanese forces would only exact punitive measures not only against the guerillas but also against the civilian population. These attacks needed to be synchronized in assistance to the hopeful return of the Allied forces. Information on Japanese bases, routes, etc. gathered by passive guerillas would be of more use to the returning Allied forces. Secondly, Gen. MacArthur had to be informed of the internal rifts among the guerilla units, so that he could better organize them as the USAFFE

commander, or at least give advice or send authorities to do the task.

Unfortunately, upon the surrender of Corregidor on May 6, 1942, only two radios remained in the entire Luzon with sufficient power to communicate directly with Australia. One of those belonged to the 14th Infantry Regiment under Lieut. Col. Guillermo Nakar, and the other to then Capt. Praeger of the 26th Cavalry.¹¹ Both Nakar and Praeger were captured by the Japanese on September 29, 1942 and in August 1943, respectively.¹² For Anderson, he had to search the coasts of Tayabas province (now Quezon) for a safe port and a boat to reach the GHQ, SWPA in Australia. Hence, Anderson, together with a group of four, left Angat on March 19, 1943; and on May 30, 1943, they reached a guerilla group at the Pacific coast of Infanta, Tayabas (now Quezon).¹³ They were welcomed cordially by Filipino guerillas under Capt. Ponciano Redor after weeks of tiresome trekking. Redor's unit was attached later to Anderson's command on March 10, 1943.¹⁴

Anderson's party, still looking for a way out for Australia, proceeded to the town of Mauban on April 9, 1943. There, he was visited on April 23, 1943 by Domingo Reyes from Tayabas, Tayabas (now Quezon). Reyes asked Anderson to initiate guerilla activities in the area, inhabited by loyal people who were willing to fight. Reyes reported that there were a number of USAFFE men there and with civilian volunteers built around them. All they needed was a responsible leader. Anderson was exhilarated by the picture presented by Reyes. Robert Lapham, commander of the Luzon Guerilla Armed Forces (LGAF), one of the

largest guerilla units based in Northern Luzon, recounted his talk with Anderson regarding the latter's change of heart: "Anderson said he became a guerilla for the same reason I did: Filipinos entreated him to lead them, which led him to conclude that he did not have to look further to find something useful to do."¹⁵

Hence, on April 23, 1943, Anderson set up his headquarters at Reyes' home at the Pinalinogan Mountain and prioritized organizing the guerillas in the Tayabas area over his trip to Australia. He assigned Filipinos as commanding officers in different towns and acquired great quantities of rifles and ammunition stashed by the guerillas.

On April 15, 1943, Anderson gave recognition to the existence of a Manila Unit and designated Sgt. Antonio Lantin-Bello as its Officer-In-Charge.¹⁶ Even before his appointment, and immediately after his release from the concentration camp in Camp O'Donnell, Capas, Tarlac, Bello had engaged already in propaganda activities and information gathering in Manila. Anderson had considered Manila always as a focal point of his operations. After all, Manila was still the political center of the Philippines; he had to be attuned to its pulse beats. Hence, he tasked the Manila Unit to receive and dispatch communications, contact and guide persons who wished to see Anderson or whom he asked to see and procure financial and material assistance from the Capital.

Anderson, continuing his mission of unifying the guerillas at least close to his command in Tayabas, established and maintained liaison with Gov. Salvador

Escudero's guerrillas in Sorsogon, Lt. Col. Lapus' forces in the Bicol, Col. Eleuterio Adevosio (alias Terry Magtanggol) of the Hunters ROTC, Col. Vicente Umali of the President Quezon's Own Guerillas (PQOG), Commander "Hashim" Villegas of the HUKBALAHAP, and others.¹⁷ In July 1943, Anderson was contacted by representatives of Col. Macario Peralta, commander of the 6th Military District based in Panay. They reported to Anderson that American submarines were delivering supplies and equipment to Panay.

Anderson eventually gained a reputation not only from his subordinates but also from other guerilla leaders. Yay Panlilio, second-in-command, and later wife, of Marcos "Marking" Agustin, leader of Marking's Fil-American Irregular Troops (MFAIT), wrote about her impression of Anderson:

Marking and I agreed that it would take an American to pull the local Americans out of the rut—one who knew his own people, and one from whom they could take orders without loss of pride. Andy [Anderson] was it, we said. He was a considerate person. He didn't wander in and out of the towns so that informers could tattletale that the Filipinos [allied with the Japanese] failed to catch him. He didn't park in the barrios for the same reason. He didn't backbite or curry favor by carrying gossip, and thus throw guerrilla outfits against one another. He didn't criticize or complain. In fact, what we knew about him was principally what he did not do that other

did, to the great danger and suffering of the people. Andy was no Statue of Liberty in occupied territory; he had the good sense, instead, and the compassion of heart to keep himself humbly hidden.¹⁸

In his memoirs, Lapham often mentions his dealings with Anderson, who is described as a “level-headed man,” “not a quarrelsome man by nature” and “not a good hater.”¹⁹ Lapham writes:

In my dealings with Anderson, he was invariably considerate, often generous. He had, after all, let me keep his officer, Harry McKenzie, and ceded to me a portion of his domain in Nueva Ecija. Yet there was an easy assumption on his part that he was commander in chief of Luzon guerillas and that the rest of us knew this and accepted it without demur.²⁰

Anderson’s calm and considerate character made him the perfect leader for different guerilla units in Luzon, which often had bitter conflict against each other. His guerillas continued to increase in number and territorial jurisdiction. On July 1, 1943, the former ECLGA, only one of the four areas of USAFFE LGAF, was re-designated as the whole USAFFE LGAF.²¹ On July 6, 1943, representatives of guerilla groups from Nueva Ecija arrived at Anderson’s headquarters.²² These guerillas, formerly under Barker, asked Anderson to attach them under his command. Hence, on that same month, the Southern Nueva Ecija Sector, “Birth of Victory” Command (SNES BV Cmd) was organized under USAFFE LGAF.²³ As before, Filipinos were appointed as sector commanders. In

early August 1943, the Batangas guerilla unit was activated as the Batangas Military Area.²⁴ Lt. Dominador Bello was assigned its commanding officer on August 7, 1943. His main priority was intelligence gathering rather than actual combat.

Now that the USAFFE LGAF was already on firm ground, Anderson returned to his long-delayed plan of contacting Gen. MacArthur in Australia. However, as he had already become an indispensable leader and hence could no longer leave, Anderson sought to establish contact through radio instead of a personal visit. In mid-December 1943, Anderson tasked Bello to go to Col. Wendell Fertig's 10th Military District, somewhere in Mindanao, where the latter's radios could reach Australia.²⁵ Bello was to give classified dispatches for delivery to Fertig, to wait for Gen. MacArthur's reply, and to return by fastest means to Luzon. Bello returned to Anderson's headquarters, then in Bantug, thirty miles north of Mauban, on April 15, 1944. Among the important communications delivered to Anderson were the "lie low" orders from Gen. MacArthur:

IMPRESS ALL LUZON FORCES WITH
THE NECESSITY FOR INTELLIGENCE
OPERATIONS AND UNDESIRABILITY OF
COMBAT OPERATIONS NOW WHICH
MIGHT REVEAL LOCAL INFORMATION
AND ENDANGER SECURITY OF NET²⁶ PD²⁷
THE TIME FOR COMBAT OPERATIONS WILL
COME LATER PD MACARTHUR²⁸

Gen. MacArthur's orders were clear: guerilla units had to prioritize gathering information and avoid combat against the Japanese as much as possible. Gen. MacArthur would later give the signal for a simultaneous attack. In fact, these guerillas, particularly the poorly-armed ones, had been gathering information even before MacArthur's orders came. They were experts in doing that. The problem, however, was its safe and speedy transmission to GHQ, SWPA in Australia.

In the same month of April 1944, contact was made with a radio station commanded by Lieut. Robert Stahl of the Allied Intelligence Bureau in Mulanay, Bondoc Peninsula.²⁹ Radio messages were hence sent to Fertig and to Col. Charles Smith, guerilla commander in Samar, to be relayed to Australia. Through Anderson's orders, Bello escorted two radio operators and their equipment from Stahl's station to Anderson's base in Bantug, to replace the perilous courier system between the two bases with a more convenient radio relay system. In his memoirs, Lapham comically recounted how Anderson was overjoyed by this "good fortune:"

Off to the south it was Anderson's good fortune to have with him some Philippine Scouts who were capable radio technicians... Andy was so overjoyed at his good fortune that he deluged Australia with messages, which at once created problems. One was that the Japanese intercepted so many that Andy had to move his transmitter after every orgy of broadcasting. Another was that there had been no prior arrangement between Australia and any guerilla

band that lacked an official transmitter; hence, SWPA headquarters was dubious about the authenticity of so many rapid-fire communications. So they sent Andy a list of a hundred personal questions such as "What was your mother's maiden name?" Only when he had answered all these correctly were they reassured that he really was who he claimed to be. Then they put him on a schedule.³⁰

In May 1944, a vessel dropped anchor near Anderson's headquarters. Lt. Vicente Ancheta of the Allied Intelligence Bureau with his party and several U.S. Army soldiers landed and contacted Anderson.³¹ Anderson received seven radio trans-receivers, medical supplies, food, and quantities of arms and ammunition. To put the trans-receivers into use, Anderson transferred his headquarters to some forty-five miles north of Infanta at Prueba Point, also known as Masanga (now at Barangay Canaway, Gen. Nakar, Quezon), where there was a better signal. From here, he established and maintained continuous contact with GHQ, SWPA until the end of the war.³² On June 21, 1944, the long-awaited call to Australia pushed through on a clear signal. MacArthur's first direct message to Anderson was:

MACARTHUR TO ANDERSON PD GIVE MY
CORDIAL GREETINGS TO THE MEMBERS
OF YOUR COMMAND CMA³³ TELL THEM
THAT AYE³⁴ AM DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR
THEIR SPLENDID EFFORTS PD AYE PLAN
TO INCREASE THE VOLUME OF SUPPLIES
TO YOU THROUGH THE CONTACTS OF
WHICH YOU ARE AWARE AND SUGGEST

THAT YOU ADVISE THE NATURE OF SUPPLIES MOST NEEDED PD YOUR DIRECT RADIO REPORT TO THIS HEADQUARTERS HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY ME WITH GREAT SATISFACTION PD AYE COMMEND YOU AND YOUR FOLLOWERS FOR THE COURAGE AND RESOURCEFULNESS AND RESOLUTE SERVICE AND ASSURE THEM THAT OUR FORCES IN GREAT STRENGTH ARE MARCHING STEADILY AND IRRESISTIBLY FORWARD TOWARD THEIR RELIEF PD MEANWHILE AYE SHALL MAKE WHICH HAD SUSTAINED YOUR RESISTANCE TO THE ENEMY UNDER THE MOST DIFFICULT CONDITIONS OF WHICH AYE AM FULLY CONSCIOUS PD FOR THE TIME BEING AYE DESIRE THAT YOU CONFINE YOUR EFFORTS AS POSSIBLE CONCERNING THE ENEMY SITUATION WITHIN THE AREA UNDER YOUR OBSERVATION PD³⁵

This message was disseminated extensively to Anderson's guerillas, which undeniably gave them hope and courage to continue persevering. Anderson's headquarters served as the only liaison of communications in Luzon (particularly Manila), Australia, and the United States.

Numerous queries and intelligence reports were dispatched through Anderson's radio station. Even personal messages from individuals with relatives abroad were relayed to the said station, such as those to the families of Sergio Osmeña and Carlos Romulo.³⁶

On more pressing matters, Anderson requested Gen. MacArthur for the latter's plans regarding the guerillas. The former revealed the infightings among the guerilla units, especially in Luzon near Manila, over leadership and territorial jurisdiction.³⁷ MacArthur's solution was to send two staff members from his headquarters to Luzon to coordinate guerilla activities. MacArthur repeatedly emphasized the importance of information gathering and delivery to Australia. Hence, reports on the activities and installations of the enemy air, naval, and army officers continuously flowed to Anderson's headquarters in Masanga, then evaluated, compiled, and lastly sent to Australia through radio and telegraph. However, maps and sketches of key bases such as Nichols Field, Clark Field, Lipa Airfield, and other installations could not be sent through radio and had to be delivered by submarine. MacArthur also promised to send operational funds, more signal equipment, medical and food supplies, battery chargers, generators, and other equipment that could increase the effectiveness of Anderson's organization. MacArthur advised Anderson that submarines were scheduled to unload at Masanga on September 1, 1944, and that he was to make the necessary preparations to receive the shipment.

Meanwhile, Anderson continued to organize his growing organization. With decentralization in mind, he dissected his command into even smaller military areas while retaining his headquarters at Masanga. In addition to the SNES BV CMD and the Batangas Military Area mentioned before, Anderson added the Salt Military Area (SMA) for southern Tayabas on July 1, 1944, and the Ball Military Area for Bulacan by late 1944.³⁸ On August 5,

1944, the Bonn Military Corps was established in Laguna, followed by the Ohio Military Area in the Bicol region. Manila and surroundings were divided also into Atlanta, Keywest, and Orlando York Areas, with York being the code name used for Manila.³⁹ Each of these areas was kept autonomous under respective area commanders, while they retained their connection to the Masanga headquarters to hand in their reports as well as receive supplies, equipment, and other needs.

Anderson's central command was re-designated as USPIF (United States Philippine Island Forces) Kalayaan Command on July 3, 1944.⁴⁰ Anderson's headquarters was established in the highlands of Sierra Madre, north of Piapi River and close to the Pacific coast.⁴¹ Bello, formerly in the Manila Unit but reassigned as Area Commander of SMA, describes the Kalayaan Command:

Thus the center of a unified command making up most of the Central Luzon and Southern Luzon provinces was at Masanga; from then on, it was to be known as the Kalayaan Command. Anderson called his headquarters Palace Major; Bello dubbed his Palace Minor. Because it was located almost two thousand feet up the Sierras, between the Twin Cascades, immediately north of Piapi River and dominating an almost one hundred eighty degree visibility across the Pacific, it was referred to also as "The Nest of the Winds," for very obvious reasons.⁴²

Civilians heavily supported Anderson's guerillas. At nearby towns such as at Cagsiay Primero and Rosario,

families played hosts to travel-worn couriers and visitors of Anderson, where they were provided food, water, and protection from Japanese patrols. Many civilians, both men and women, also worked as typists, couriers, and other supporting jobs. The scheduled arrival of the submarine *USS Narwhal* on September 1, 1944 was closing in. Its captain, Commander Jack Titus, wanted explicit plans for the unloading and wanted Anderson to be on hand to supervise the whole operation.⁴³ All types of boats belonging to the garrison and those owned by civilians were ordered to Masanga.⁴⁴ Dumps for the supplies were readied. Security parameters were set for a possible Japanese attack.

In the evening of August 31, 1944, Commander Charles “Chick” Parsons landed in the beach of Masanga from a rubber boat.⁴⁵ He introduced himself as the representative of MacArthur and handed over reports and documents to Anderson. Parsons came from GHQ, SWPA in Australia, and was sent to the Philippines for an “inspection trip” of the guerillas from Mindanao to Luzon. Before visiting Anderson, Parsons had visited Fertig’s 10th MD, and he would later visit other guerilla units in Luzon, handing out orders and other documents to their respective leaders. Other Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB) and GHQ agents would arrive later in the Philippines through Anderson’s headquarters to settle guerilla infightings. Capt. Bartolome Cabangbang proceeded to Bulacan with radio equipment; Lt. Col. Jay Vanderpool moved to Batangas and Cavite where he contacted Hunter’s ROTC;⁴⁶ Capt. George Miller reached the headquarters of MFAIT.⁴⁷

The day of the submarine's arrival, September 1, 1944, had finally arrived.⁴⁸ Anderson, together with his subordinates such as Capt. Jaime Manzano (Anderson's Executive Officer) and Bello, waited at the beach until five-thirty in the afternoon when *USS Narwhal* finally surfaced. Bello describes the event:

...the sea broke out at one point and the mighty fury of a dark object took shape and slowly headed to within a mile of the shore. A tremendous cheer came from the troops and the civilian population clustered along the beach. The general feeling was one of unbridled elation. Some shed tears. The coming of the submarine meant that the promise to liberate the Filipino people neared fulfillment. That one small black vessel on the surface stood for freedom and liberation. America had not forgotten the Philippines. A global war was being fought and the Philippines was essential to the conduct of operations against the enemy.⁴⁹

The boats reserved for the occasion were all used to full capacity. In less than two hours, eighty tons of equipment and supplies were unloaded from the submarine, enabling the *Narwhal* to leave before dawn. The men, Manzano and Bello included, never seemed to tire. Among the shipment were cigarettes, chocolate bars, uniforms, arms, ammunition, more powerful radios, medical supplies, even wine, and religious items. United States Army radio operators and demolition personnel also disembarked from the submarine. Submarine contacts continued until 1945 when airdrops from Leyte took their place.⁵⁰

Informed by the AIB and GHQ agents, groups from other guerilla units such as the Hunters ROTC, MFAIT, and USFIP-NL went to the Kalayaan Command, on what Bello described as “pilgrimages,” to request for needed items. For instance, Eleuterio Adevosio, leader of the Hunters, got his share of a full radio set and crew, as well as arms, ammunition, and other supplies.⁵¹ These enabled the guerillas to radio each other for coordinated activities and consolidation of gathered intelligence. MacArthur's postwar report recognized Anderson's efforts to establish communications with other guerilla units and with Australia:

Making the best of a difficult situation, Major Anderson succeeded in forwarding much valuable information from Luzon directly to SWPA Headquarters in Australia. In addition, he distributed some of the supplies he received, especially radio equipment, to other units in southern Luzon in an endeavor to increase the efficiency of the intelligence and propaganda network.⁵²

In addition to the agents sent to settle disputes, these submarine contacts also helped unite the rivalrous guerilla units. These groups, before barely having friendly contact with each other, were all gathered in Anderson's headquarters, realizing that they were all in the same predicament and were requesting for practically the same supplies and equipment. The dream of Anderson's predecessors of coordinating guerilla activities partially had come true. After all, the unification of the Luzon guerillas

would later be a crucial factor in the eventual return of the Allied Powers.

Despite the arrival of all these guerilla units (which caused food problems in the headquarters), Anderson never forgot to supply his own loyal guerillas and supporters. Regarding this, Lapham writes:

Andy was an especially generous man, phenomenally so for one in our straitened circumstances. When a submarine from Australia brought him...supplies in mid-1944, he promptly apportioned forty tons among his Filipinos aides and supporters.⁵³

The arrival of supplies and equipment eventually enabled Anderson to turn his headquarters, Palace Major, into a small city in the mountains. Bello writes:

There was an “officer’s club,” a chapel, barracks, parade grounds, athletic fields, and a hospital. A weather station for transmitting weather data was also installed there. The net control station housed twenty radios, in operation simultaneously. Cryptographers were kept busy. Electric lights illuminated the area at night. The whole camp was camouflaged from the sea... A line of outposts extended to Dingalan to the north and Infanta to the South.⁵⁴

The submarine contacts and the subsequent empowerment of the guerillas were merely the start of things to come; preparations for MacArthur’s return. On September 10, 1944, about a month before the scheduled

Leyte landings, MacArthur advised Anderson on future Allied airstrikes on vital enemy installations in Luzon.⁵⁵ Anderson's guerillas provided security and rescued the pilots and other aircrew forced to crash-land or bailout. Anderson gave out locations that were to be avoided by the aircrafts due to heavy Japanese presence. He also recommended towns, particularly rural areas, where crash-landed pilots could go to and then contact the leaders in charge of those areas:

- Alejo Santos in Bulacan
- Marcos "Marking" Agustin or Eleuterio "Terry" Adevosio in Rizal
- Bernard Anderson in Tayabas
- Robert Lapham in Pangasinan
- Russel Volkmann in Balete Pass and northwards

Reports of crashlands were relayed to Anderson's headquarters and the rescued pilots were immediately transported to nearby guerilla headquarters, where hospitals were available. Coordination among guerilla units was important.

Airstrikes of the U.S. Navy commenced on September 19, 1944.⁵⁶ Heavy bombings of Japanese bases were met with heavy anti-aircraft fire resulting to crash-lands and bail outs, followed by guerilla rescue operations. It was imperative for GHQ, SWPA to have Anderson remain on radio contact to keep it posted on the results of the bombings and rescues. The pilots were encouraged to fly, knowing that they had safety nets below them. Lapham cites an example: "Pilots engaged in the raids were much

encouraged when Anderson's men managed to rescue some seventy of them who had crash-landed in the eastern mountains or off-shore."⁵⁷ About a month after the airstrikes started, MacArthur had landed in Leyte on October 20, 1944 and the Battle of Leyte Gulf commenced three days after. While the main front was being fought in the Visayas, bombing raids continued in Luzon and sustained casualties. Proculo Mojica, a Company Commander of the Hunters ROTC, reports:

While the battle in Leyte raged savagely, Manila reeled under daily air raids. Unfortunately, some of the US raiders were shot down by anti-aircraft fire. Invariably, the airmen bailed out. Some were rescued by guerillas; some were either captured by Japanese or by Japanized Filipinos like the MAKAPILIs. Most notorious of these latter case [sic] were the MAKAPILIs of Sta. Rosa and Biñan, Laguna who rescued US airmen from the lake only to torture and kill them later on. Most were rescued by Filipino civilians and guerillas, fed, cared for, hidden, and then led to Hunter's GHQ in Nasugbu... At first those rescued were Navy pilots, later, more and more army pilots turned up. From them, Terry learned they had taken off from Leyte airfields.⁵⁸

The evident invasion of the Allied powers of the Philippines caused the Japanese to tighten their security along the coasts and to strengthen their suppression of the Luzon guerrillas. Japanese attacks, however, failed to strike down Anderson's guerrillas. Colonel Kobayashi, Japanese officer in the 14th Area Army, recounts:

About the middle of October 1944, we attempted to extirpate the guerrilla movement in Luzon. Unfortunately for us, however, Colonel Anderson was too good a leader and the American guerrillas continued to function...In recalling the final stage of the war in the Philippines...I remember how famous Colonel Anderson became among us.⁵⁹

The American pilots rescued by Anderson's guerillas were supposed to be evacuated via the submarines that were to deliver supplies and equipment to Masanga. However, the heightened alert of Japanese forces hampered the arrival of submarines. Hence, the planned arrival of a submarine on December 25, 1944, carrying with it forty tons of food to give the starving and overworked guerillas a pleasant Christmas, never arrived and was instead moved to January 1, 1945.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, a Christmas party was still held at Anderson's Park. There were dances, band music, athletic competitions, some local wine, cigarettes, a midnight mass, but no food.⁶¹ Other guerilla units, such as the Hunters ROTC, joined the humble festivities.

On December 28, 1944, GHQ, SWPA radioed Anderson that it was also impossible to send a submarine on January 1, 1945. Anderson requested for air contact instead, using as an excuse the evacuation of the pilots who were pitifully not accustomed to guerilla life. The pretext worked, and a naval plane landed at sea. Supplies and mail were unloaded from the ship in exchange for the rescued pilots. New Year's Day of 1945 was celebrated appropriately, welcoming the most furious phase of the war.

On that same day, January 1, 1945, USPIF Kalayaan Command was reorganized as Anderson's Command and went directly under GHQ, SWPA together with other guerrilla units which were previously under Anderson.⁶² On January 4, 1945, five days before the landing of Allied forces in Lingayen Gulf, hence their reoccupation of Luzon, and upon MacArthur's orders, Anderson gave the signal for action to the guerrillas. Now equipped with better weapons through airdrops, Anderson's guerrillas in Bicol, Polillo Island, Lucena, Batangas, Nueva Ecija, and Bulacan began combat operations by destroying roads and bridges, sabotaging supplies, and cutting Japanese communications.⁶³

On January 9, 1945, upon the landing of the Allied forces in Lingayen, Anderson received orders from MacArthur that guerrilla units in Luzon were to be attached to the U.S. Sixth Army, the American forces in charge of reoccupying Luzon. Over the next few days, Anderson and other guerrilla leaders such as Volckmann and Lapham met the Sixth Army's commanding general, Walter Krueger, and began to take orders from him instead from MacArthur's SWPA.⁶⁴ Anderson took the best personnel at his disposal to form the 1st Anderson Battalion, commanded by Manzano (Anderson's executive officer) with 2,227 officers and enlisted men and generously equipped with automatic rifles, mortars, and rockets.⁶⁵ Other units under Anderson were attached to various U.S. Army elements. Units in Tayabas and outside of the 1st Anderson Battalion were attached to the 1st Cavalry Division; units in Laguna operated with the Alamo Scouts; those in Batangas were attached to the 112th Regimental Combat Team, and units

in Manila and Rizal were attached to the 37th Infantry Division. Large guerilla units such as the 1st Anderson Battalion operated like separate regiments. Smaller groups served as guides to the military units they were attached to. They pinpointed pathways, garrisons, supply depots, and more notably, concentration camps.

Given the “lay low” orders before, the Luzon guerillas could hardly do anything to liberate the prisoners of war in Capas, Cabanatuan, and other camps. Lapham recounts:

I was not the only one to have pondered the possibility of liberating these prisoners; it had been much on the mind of Maj. Bernard Anderson too. Throughout 1944 we urged SWPA to let us try to rescue the POWs. We wanted especially to make the attempt in late October to early November when we thought the Japanese would be preoccupied with resisting the Leyte landings, but all we could ever get was assurance that when landings began on Luzon, rescuing the prisoners would be top priority.⁶⁶

They managed to rescue the POWs in their respective areas before they were massacred by the Japanese. Lapham's guerillas, for example, took part in liberating the POWs in Cabanatuan in January 1945.

During the subsequent reoccupation campaign, Anderson's guerrilla teams fought in coordination with American troops from northern to southern Tayabas, in the central Luzon plain, throughout the Batangas and Laguna area, and conducted amphibious landings against Alabat,

Polillo, and Batanes Islands.⁶⁷ An all-out offensive in Infanta was launched on January 31, 1945, where Japanese garrisons in Laur, Bongabong, Sabai, and Dingalan were all cleared of the enemy. Polillo Island was reoccupied by the 1st Anderson Battalion on February 24, 1945, followed by Alabat Island where an airfield was constructed by March 1945. From thereon, supplies came indirectly instead of from Leyte.⁶⁸

Anderson's guerillas assisted the Allied forces in fighting the Japanese forces along the east coast of Luzon. From March to April 1945, enemy garrisons along the Tayabas coast were bombed continuously by American planes, guided by information provided by guerrillas. In late March, Company A of the 1st Anderson Battalion was landed at Salanga Point. After several other battles along the eastern coast, the area of Infanta was captured by the 1st Anderson Battalion on May 25, 1945, four hours before the U.S. 7th Cavalry Division arrived in Infanta.⁶⁹ While majority of the Japanese forces fled west into Sierra Madre, some "stragglers" remained and waged skirmishes until late June 1945. By that time, the 1st Anderson Battalion accounted for 1,623 enemies killed in action and 770 prisoners taken.⁷⁰

Anderson's guerrillas continued to push northwards to pursue the Japanese. On July 12, 1945, Company A of the 1st Anderson Battalion and the 2nd MP Company routed the Japanese from Palanan, Isabela.⁷¹ Further north, Casiguran was occupied also by the guerrillas and Allied troops in that same month. For its outstanding service, the 1st Anderson Battalion was awarded the Unit Combat

Infantryman's Badge in late July 1945. Afterwards, they returned to Infanta, where security and mop-up operations continued until September 1945.

Following the ceremonial surrender of the Empire of Japan on September 2, 1945, Admiral Furuse Takasue, commander-in-chief of Japanese forces in Infanta, Dingalan, the Bicol, and Palawan, finally surrendered with his contingents to the 1st Anderson battalion on September 4, 1945. Some, however, refused to surrender and continued to fight the guerrillas in the jungles and mountains.

In summary, the 1st Anderson Battalion performed efficiently and valiantly throughout central and eastern Luzon and had built a battle record of 4,891 enemies killed and 2,951 prisoners taken from January 9 to September 4, 1945.⁷² The guerrillas, however, had the following casualties: 112 killed, 3 missing in action, and 48 wounded throughout the mentioned period. The battalion also became one of the most decorated; it earned Distinguished Service Crosses, Legion of Merit Medals, Gold Crosses, Military Merit Medals, Purple Hearts, Unit Combat Infantry Badge, and other campaign ribbons.

After the termination of hostilities and the surrender of Japanese forces, President Sergio Osmeña issued Executive Order No. 68 on September 26, 1945 which demobilized elements of the Philippine Army and other guerrilla units in the field.⁷³ Nonetheless, parts of Anderson's guerrillas continued to fight the "un-surrendered" Japanese in the Philippines. On December 15, 1945, in recognition of

their services, and by direction of President Osmeña, the 1st Anderson Battalion was activated into the 1st Infantry Battalion, Separate (PA) (Composite).⁷⁴ The battalion was sent to Camarines Norte from December 15, 1945 to May 15, 1946 to mop up remnants of the enemy in that area. Simultaneously, parts of the battalion were sent to Mindoro for the same purpose.

Service of the 1st Infantry Battalion and the rest of the Philippine Army was terminated at midnight of June 30, 1946, by virtue of General Order No. 168, AFWESPAC (June 25, 1946) which released the military forces of the Philippine Commonwealth from duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.⁷⁵ Included were organized guerrilla forces, such as the Anderson's Guerrillas, under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by MacArthur, or other component authority in the U.S. Army (e.g. Gen. Krueger). Approximately 7,100 members of the Anderson's Guerrillas were extended recognition.⁷⁶ However, many civilians who Anderson "hired" to work for his command, without being given titles or promised payment, did not receive compensation from the recognition program despite Anderson's protests. These Filipinos had said that they wanted to serve their country, after which many of them had done the work of commissioned officers and done it well.⁷⁷

CONCLUSION

Gen. MacArthur himself recognized the importance of Anderson's Guerrillas through various telegraphs and radio messages sent throughout the war. His postwar

report also stated that Anderson's Guerrillas was one of the "particularly outstanding [guerrilla units] in their growth and organization."⁷⁸ As mentioned earlier, other guerrilla units such as Lapham's, Marking's, and the Hunters also recognized Anderson's unit evidenced by their cooperation with the latter. Not only was the Anderson's Guerrillas significant in terms of strength in numbers, but the group also took a leading role in unifying the otherwise conflicting Luzon guerrillas and in keeping them coordinated with the plans and activities of the USAFFE. And, of course, the Anderson's Guerrillas played an important role in the reoccupation of eastern and central Luzon, from assisting and guiding the Allied forces with small attached units, to actual combat exemplified by the 1st Anderson Battalion. The combat record and medals garnered by the guerrillas further proved their significant role during World War II.

NOTES

- 1 Douglas MacArthur. *Reminiscences* (McGraw Hill, 1964), 202.
- 2 Robert Lapham. *Lapham's Raiders: Guerrillas in the Philippines* (Kentucky University Press, 1996), 14. In his memoirs, Lapham recounts that Maj. Claude Thorp already devised his own guerrilla operations in Bataan even before the Japanese attack. Lapham chose to go with Thorp, who later initiated a centralized guerrilla resistance in Luzon.
- 3 *Triumph in the Philippines* (Philippine Historical Association, 1972), 242. This book series was prepared by the Combat History Division, United States Army Forces Western Pacific (AFWESPAC) in 1946 and republished in 1972.
- 4 Filipino prisoners of war were released earlier than the Americans and were allowed to return home as civilians under surveillance.

Many American prisoners, such as those in Cabanatuan and Santo Tomas, were freed during the Liberation in 1945.

- 5 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas* (Declassified) (U.S. Department of Defense, Far East Command, Philippines Command, Guerilla Affairs Division, ca. 1949),15. This crucial report has been digitized by the Filipino Veterans Interagency Working Group (IWG) as part of its mission to “increase transparency and a thorough accounting of the process to verify valid military service for Filipino World War II veterans.” It is now available at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) <https://research.archives.gov/id/6921767>.
- 6 Lapham, 36.
- 7 Antonio C. Lantin-Bello. *The Story of the Anderson Guerrillas* (Veterans Federation of the Philippines, 1999), 21. Sgt. Lantin-Bello was one of those who surrendered in Bataan, survived the Death March, and were incarcerated in Capas. After his release, he was engaged in propaganda and intelligence gathering in Manila which was later recognized by Anderson as the Manila Intelligence Unit.
- 8 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas*, 23.
- 9 Lantin-Bello, 23.
- 10 Lantin-Bello, 25.
- 11 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas*, 91.
- 12 Lapham,140
- 13 Lantin-Bello, 27.
- 14 Letter of Col. L. D. Lott to the Chief of Staff, Philippine Army, regarding the revision of the recognition dates of the Anderson’s Command (September 3, 1947), p. 8. It provides a chronolgy of the expansion of the Anderson Command.

- 15 Lapham, 26.
- 16 Lantin-Bello, 29.
- 17 Lantin-Bello, 30.
- 18 Yay Panlilio. *The Crucible: an Autobiography by "Colonel Yay"* (Macmillian, 1950), 172.
- 19 Lapham, 20, 108, 112.
- 20 Lapham, 119.
- 21 Letter regarding the revision of the recognition dates of the Anderson's Command, 9.
- 22 Lantin-Bello, 32.
- 23 Letter regarding the revision of the recognition dates of the Anderson's Comman 9.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Lantin-Bello, 38.
- 26 Network, or a group of stations operating under unified control. In guerilla warfare, this usually refers to intelligence or supply nets.
- 27 Period, used in communication systems without punctuations, i.e. telegraphs.
- 28 Lantin-Bello, 44.
- 29 Ibid; *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas*, 24.
- 30 Lapham, 142.
- 31 Lantin-Bello, 46.
- 32 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas*, 24.

33 Comma, used in communication systems without punctuations, i.e. telegraphs.

34 Refers to “I”

35 Lantin-Bello, 47.

36 *Ibid.* The message to Pres. Sergio Osmeña reads: “TO HON SERGIO OSMEÑA QUOTE WE ARE ALL WELL AND STAYING IN RENTED BODEGA AS OUR HOME IS TAKEN BY THEM PD BEST REGARDS UNQUOTE SGD MRS OSMEÑA.” The message to Ambassador Romulo reads: “ROMULO FAMILY SAFE AND HEALTHY IN PAGSANJAN CMA LAGUNA PD OLDEST SON QUIT SCHOOL BEFORE MANILA RAIDS PD.”

37 Lapham, agreeing with Anderson’s observations, wrote that “the fiercest feud between rival guerilla groups on the whole island of Luzon was between the Hunters and Marking’s guerillas, who operated very close together near Manila yet hated each other so intensely that gunfights, kidnapping, and even executions frequently followed the desertion of disgruntled individuals from one group to other.” (Lapham, 108–109).

MacArthur’s postwar report in 1950 also recognized this predicament: “Major Anderson’s efforts to achieve co-ordination, for intelligence purposes, were enormously complicated by the concurrent existence of so many independently active organizations in the area to be covered. In addition to the Marking Guerrillas and the forces of Major Lapham, there were the Hukbalahaps in Pampanga, the East-Central Luzon Guerrilla Area (ECLGA) units of Colonel Edwin P. Ramsey in east-central Luzon, the Hunters in Cavite, the Fil-American Irregular Troops in Rizal, and President Quezon’s Own Guerrillas in Batangas. These units were of varying quality and effectiveness.” [*Reports of General MacArthur: the Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific*, Vol. 1 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), 320]

38 Letter regarding the revision of the recognition dates of the Anderson’s Command, 10.

- 39 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas*, 24.
- 40 Letter regarding the revision of the recognition dates of the Anderson's Command, 10.
- 41 Anderson chose this site owing to good radio signal and good visibility of the Pacific to spot allied or enemy ships and submarines.
- 42 Lantin-Bello, 54.
- 43 Lapham, 151.
- 44 Lantin-Bello, 59.
- 45 Lantin-Bello, 60.
- 46 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas*, 25.
- 47 Panlilio, p. 272. Miller, accompanied by Lt. Brooke Staddard, arrived in Marking's camp only on 17 November 1944.
- 48 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas*, 24.
- 49 Lantin-Bello, 62.
- 50 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas*, 24–25.
- 51 Proculo L. Mojica. *Terry's Hunters: the True Story of the Hunters ROTC Guerillas* (Benipayo Press, 1965), 106–107. Mojica was a Captain in the Philippine Army who later became a Company Commander of "A"Co., 1st Battalion, 44th Hunters Provisional Regiment.
- 52 *Reports of General MacArthur: the Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific*, 320.
- 53 Lapham, 70.
- 54 Lantin-Bello, 71.
- 55 Lantin-Bello, 68–69.

- 56 Lantin-Bello, 69–70.
- 57 Lapham, 156.
- 58 Mojica, 485.
- 59 Interrogation Files, G-2 Historical Section, GHQ, FEC. Quoted in *Reports of General MacArthur: the Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific*, Chapter X (Endnotes).
- 60 Lantin-Bello, 74–78.
- 61 Lantin-Bello, 78; Mojica, 425.
- 62 Letter regarding the revision of the recognition dates of the Anderson's Command. Major guerrilla organizations were considered independent commands under MacArthur so they no longer had to go to the Palace Major to receive MacArthur's orders, as many had already received their radio equipment from Anderson. These groups were the USAFIP NL, Hunter's ROTC, Marking's FAIT, LGAF, ECLGA, and Anderson's Command.
- 63 *Triumph in the Philippines*, 253.
- 64 Lapham, 172.
- 65 *Reports of General MacArthur*, 321; Letter regarding the revision of the recognition dates of the Anderson's Command, p. 11; Lantin-Bello, 95.
- 66 Lapham, 177.
- 67 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerillas*, 25.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 *Triumph in the Philippines*, 418; Lantin-Bello, 113.
- 70 Lantin-Bello, 90–120.
- 71 Lantin-Bello, 118–119.
- 72 *Ibid.*, p. 129; *Reports of General MacArthur*, 321.

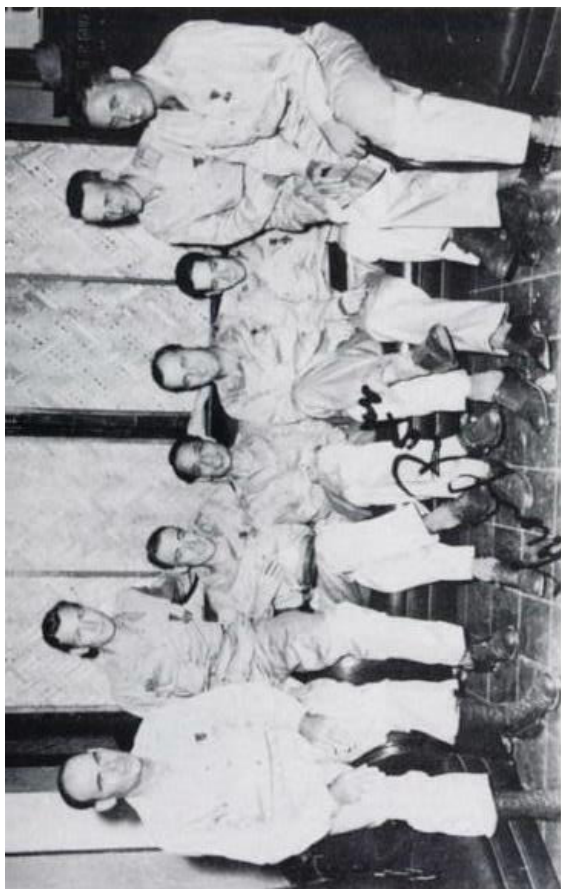
- 73 Executive Order No. 68 (September 26, 1945).
- 74 PA stands for the Philippine Army, also referred to as Philippine Commonwealth Army, founded on December 21, 1935 and later attached to the USAFFE during World War II (1941–1946). See “Philippine Commonwealth Army” (Appendix A), General Background and Miscellaneous Correspondence Procedures to the Philippine Army Records. Available at the U.S. National Archives and Administration (NARA) <https://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/memo-1865125.html>
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 *U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerrillas*, 25.
- 77 Anderson to CO of SWPA, August 25, 1944, cited in Lapham, 224.
- 78 *Reports of General MacArthur*, 318–319.

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Bernard L. Anderson. From the Reeburg History website.



Seven American guerrilla leaders shortly after being decorated by Gen. Douglas MacArthur with the Distinguished Service Cross, June 13, 1945. Left to right: Maj. Harry McKenzie, Maj. Robert B. Lapham, Maj. Edwin P. Ramsey, Brig. Gen. Manuel A. Roxas (first postwar president of the Philippines), Lt. Col. Bernard L. Anderson, Capt. Ray C. Hunt, Jr., Maj. John P. Boone, and Capt. Alvin J. Farretta. From the Reedsburg History website.