

#### CHAPTER IV

The invasion of the Davao area in Mindanao a few days before Christmas had apparently caught General Vachon short of ammunition also, (although he did, at least, have a few 2.95 mountain guns for his artillery regiment) for General Chynoweth now received orders to ship to Vachon half of the rifle ammunition and all of the artillery ammunition on Panay. Having no artillery pieces, and only the faintest hope of ever getting any from the sunken steamer, the loss of this ammunition was not too important, but to part with even half of our meagre supply of rifle ammunition was a wrench. However, at the moment, Vachon needed it worse than we did, so off it went (except for the 1500 rounds of artillery ammunition in the 61st Field Artillery magazines, which was overlooked) with our fervent prayers for its safe arrival. This time our prayers were answered.

For some time past, all of us on Panay had recognized the impossibility of defending the beaches in the event of a major enemy invasion, as called for in the original War Plan, and preparations were under way, without official sanction from Manila, to enable us to make a sustained stand in the mountain masses, to which we planned to retire after as prolonged a delaying action as possible.

On Christmas Day, General Chynoweth received two messages -- one from his family congratulating him on his promotion to brigadier-general, which he had received on 19 December -- and the other

from General Sharp containing copies of instructions from General MacArthur. This message from General MacArthur was our first knowledge (other than radio reports, which had been consistently optimistic) of the trend of events on Luzon. MacArthur stated, in effect, that his troops were fighting with their backs to the wall, and directed that if we were cut off from contact with Headquarters on Luzon we should continue to keep a locus of American-Filipino resistance on each island.

This was more depressing news, of course, yet we were glad to know that MacArthur realized the impossibility of carrying out the original War Plans, and it gave the stamp of his approval to the practicable solution which General Chynoweth had already formulated.

The mountain area of Fanay, which for the most part is extremely rugged, had been divided into regimental sectors. The movement of food and supplies back into these mountains was now intensified. "Baus Au", the slogan coined by Lt. Col. Fitzpatrick, commanding the 63rd Infantry, became the whip. "Baus Au"--the Filipino phrase meaning "Get it back!" It characterized the project, which became known as "Operation Baus Au".

All units were engaged in this operation in their own prescribed zone of action. The 61st Field Artillery was no exception. The food and supplies being carried up into the mountains would be securely hidden in small caches scattered over wide areas, to furnish the sinews of maintenance for the nuclei of

American military resistance, as MacArthur had directed. Given sufficient bases of this kind we would be enabled to sustain guerrilla operations almost indefinitely, even in the event of a major Japanese occupation of the Island.

This packing in of supplies was gruelling work, since these trails are passable only on foot--and I use the word "passable" loosely! I have seen, and clambered over, places along those rock walls that would scare the horns off a mountain goat. Yet those tiny Filipinos planted their bare feet with prehensile toes, on the narrow ledges and never missed a step.

The civilian populace was quite uneasy over our change to these guerrilla tactics. Many of them never did understand the reasons for our planned withdrawal into the mountains. They took great pride in their Army, and having been indoctrinated for years with the idea of American invincibility, were all for falling on the enemy tooth and nail and hurling him back into the sea. Which was a fine idea -- we'd have liked nothing better. But with our paucity of equipment and trained personnel even to have attempted such action would have served no purpose and could have resulted only in the mass butchery of our troops.

When and if we were forced back into the hills by Jap invasion, our troop strength was to be cut down from regiments and battalions to small bands of stalwarts. These few were to be picked for their physical stamina, their courage, their loyalty, and general soldierly aptitude. The others were to be discharged

when we reached the foothills. They would turn in all arms, ammunition and equipment issued to them and return to civil life. Caches for this equipment had been selected and prepared. Only those who had been chosen as the eventual "Robin-Hooders" were employed in moving supplies into the mountain areas. No others were to know the whereabouts of the supply caches, since the lives and effectiveness of such a band must depend upon individual and collective secrecy and loyalty.

Mountain fastnesses were being reconnoitred and the selected troops being intensively trained in guerrilla tactics. It was vital that every officer and soldier should know every trail, every stream and barrio like the palm of his hand. We must be capable of striking with fury and vanishing into thin air.

Lewis and I alternated, usually, in supervising "Baus Au". On 31 December he had been left at Cabatuan to keep up the impetus of regular training activities. When I came in about dark, pretty well fagged out, he poured me a stiff drink of Scotch. We were still able to get an occasional bottle at this stage of the game. He seemed to be in particularly good spirits. His morale was always way up, but I could tell he had some sort of revelation to make, so I said, "Out with it, Buck!"

He pulled a serious expression over his infectious grin. "Colonel Tark, Wald and I ran across some real G-2 today. We've talked it over and we've decided that you haven't taken one bit of time away from your command since this thing began. We kinda

think you're due for a little entertainment".

"What's G-2 got to do with time off and entertainment?" I questioned.

"We figured you're entitled to a little recreation -- maybe you wouldn't be such a damned grouch if you'd do a little carousin'", he grinned.

"Buck, you're a reprobate. What are you driving at? Come on, now -- spill it -- that's a command!" I replied. "But wait before you pull the lanyard -- another small dividend so I can take the shock standing!"

It was plainly apparent that they had concocted some sort of a lark. I took a sip from my replenished glass. "Now, you'd better let Wald talk. He seems to want to get to the point".

"It's just this", Wald said. "We've got a reliable tip on a damn' swell cabaret in full swing behind blackout curtains down in Iloilo".

"That's fine", I retorted. "You two go ahead on down. You're all slicked up and polished. And besides, there'll be no more than two of the five Americans away from this post tonight."

"But wait a minute", Lewis broke in. "If the Colonel doesn't go, no one goes -- you need it!"

"Nuts! Buck, I'm tired and dirty, and besides, I'd better stick around."

"Nothin' doin'", he objected. "we've decided you're going. So now on with your bath and make yourself pretty for the gals."

"Everything's quiet and under control. Price, Wald and Murphy will stay. I'm going with you, so get on your horse".

The upshot of it was that I went. It was too enticing to miss. Buck and I drove down to Ilo through the starlit night on the first non-official venture since the Japs ruptured the peace of the Orient. I felt uneasy about leaving the command, and I knew Buck wasn't too comfortable, either, but his usually ebullient spirits dominated the situation and we were soon engaged in an intensive search for the blacked-out cabaret.

We were not over-familiar with Iloilo, but after some cruising about discovered a knot of people loafing in front of a rather pretentious-looking establishment, and upon inquiry, discovered that we had arrived.

We were greeted cordially by the management and led across the huge, dimly-lit room to a balcony, where we were seated at a table immediately overlooking the dance floor.

The orchestra was good -- or at least it seemed so -- and the gracefully moving couples were a relief to eyes accustomed to exploring mountain trails and supervising the training activities of soldiers.

We were almost immediately joined by two of the dancing-girls. In the subdued light they appeared extremely well-dressed and quite attractive. At least they were gay, and amused us over rather mild drinks with a bit of humor and snit-chat. Even today the recollections of those few moments of diversion are very

pleasant -- the music, the girls and the decor. It was the last experience of this sort for more than four years.

Suddenly Buck grabbed my arm. "Look!" was all he said.

I followed the direction of his gaze and saw a determined Captain Wald, and the manager pointing in the direction of our table.

"That's Wald," I said in surprise. "What the hell is he doing here?"

"Something's happened", Lewis exploded, and stood up.

Wald came directly to the table. "What's up, Wald?" I asked.

"Wouldn't you know", he replied, "that things always break when you least expect them. Division called with instructions for you to report to General Chynoweth immediately. I told him that you were not in and I didn't know how to reach you. They said to find you and tell you it was urgent. Sorry!"

That was the end of the recreation. We settled the check and left the night-spot.

"I'm going with you", Buck said. I took it for granted and we set out for Lambunao, some sixty kilometers in the mountains, north of Iloilo.

(Map # 2)

Never having visited the Division Command Post in this new location, it took considerable inquiry before intelligible directions could be elicited from sleepy Filipino soldiers. The Division Command Post "at Lambunao" was not actually at Lambunao,

but in a wooded area some little distance to the southwest of Lambunao barrio. Also it was some little distance from the main Iloilo-Lambunao road, requiring the use of about three miles of so-called secondary road. This, as it neared the command post, became very definitely secondary, considering the fact that there were only two classes of roads rated higher than the foot-trail.

At the end of the secondary road a narrow foot-trail cut through a heavy jungle, and wound its way into the inner sanctum that was known as the command post. Other narrow paths tunneled through the same type of vegetation to the various staff sections and to sleeping quarters. I recall particularly being reminded, as we followed a guide with a flash-light through these Stygian labyrinths, of Theseus and the Minotaur, and wished that I, too, had a string tied to the entrance!

I remember thinking also that the location of the Lambunao Command Post was a hell of a place. However, it served the purpose for which General Chynoweth intended it -- it discouraged visitors. And it definitely discouraged frequent visitors, motivated by curiosity or by minor political considerations. Access to this location was too difficult to negotiate except for grave and important business. During the periods when the Division Command Post was located at Pavia and Santa Barbara, General Chynoweth and his staff had been overwhelmed with visitors, most of whom had no real reason for their call except that parking



facilities were somewhat convenient.

It was now about 2:30 AM as Lewis and I waited outside the Chief of Staff's nipa "sleeping bower" while our guide went in to awaken Christie. The dim light of a candle glimmered through the nipa fronds, and Christie called to us to come in. He slipped on his shoes, and we followed him to General Chynoweth's quarters. Christie went in and awakened him.

The General was not long in coming to the point. "Tarkington, I have bad news. At least it is bad news for me". He then proceeded to read to me a letter from General Sharp which in substance detached the 61st Field Artillery from the 61st Division and ordered it to Mindanao. The letter did not divulge the mission of the 61st in Mindanao, but did prescribe that the regiment would embark at Iloilo at dark on 1 January 1942, and proceed to Pula-panden, Negros, thence by motor transportation to Dumaguete, where it would await a courier from Visayan-Mindanao Force Headquarters with further instructions.

Both Lewis and I were greatly disappointed in being detached from General Chynoweth, whom we had learned to admire for his direct methods, his keen tactical sense and organizational ability. We told him so and we meant it, as we said our regretful good-byes.

The General complimented the regiment on its progress towards readiness for combat and seemed genuinely concerned that his Division was being deprived of its best-trained units. The 61st Infantry, under command of Colonel Eugene Mitchell, had already received

its orders, and was to sail for Mindanao 2 January. Lt. Col. Allen Thayer's 62nd Infantry would leave Panay on or about 5 January, also for Mindanao.

These three regiments, while "brand new" were, in point of service and training, veterans in comparison to the one infantry regiment left to Chynoweth -- the ink barely dry on its mobilization orders. This infant regiment and a battalion of engineers comprised the only combat troops left on Panay. Their combat efficiency could be measured by their less than 30 rounds of ammunition per rifle, and half a dozen machine guns, with a limited supply of ammunition. Nothing else. No mortars. No pistols. Very few bayonets. No uniforms at all. No entrenching tools. Almost no shoes.

As Lewis and I drove back to camp discussing these things a most apropos phrase from a silly little verse stuck in my mind -- "No shoes for he toes -- No hanky for he nose. Poor little fly on the wall!"

We remembered also an Associated Press dispatch we had seen in one of the papers before leaving the States, which quoted General George C. Marshall, then Chief of Staff, as having told a Congressional Committee in September, 1941, that the Philippines were getting "No. 1" priority on arms, presumably on aircraft as well as other weapons. Well, maybe so. Maybe the arms and the aircraft were like our mail, which was sent but never arrived. But the Battling Eastards on Bataan

weren't the only ones who felt that they had no Uncle Sam these days!

Just before daybreak we arrived at our own command post. There remained about fourteen hours before our scheduled sailing time. Much was to be done prior to the movement of the first echelons at 11 AM. Regimental staff and battalion commanders were assembled and preparations begun for our departure from Cabatuan.

The first elements of the 61st Field Artillery arrived at Santa Barbara about noon of New Year's Day, 1942, from which point we were to go by train to Iloilo. During the afternoon the Division Finance Officer appeared bearing with him a grain sack full of pesos, for the regiment's expenses. Ten thousand pesos, mostly in bills of small denomination, as this was, is a bulky item. The regiment had no safe -- not even a finance officer. But we needed food. Needed it now and would need it more on the trip. We had been on half-rations and less for some time, and were going into an uncertain situation in Mindanao.

I called my American officers and a few selected Filipino officers together and explained the situation. The money was divided into equal amounts and stuffed into pockets, musette bags and into the fronts of our shirts until we had more the appearance of a group of portly dowagers than military figures. In the short time remaining before our train was due the surrounding countryside was scoured for palay (unhusked rice) and

other non-perishable foodstuffs to augment the travel ration of the regiment. (Later, in Mindanao, every centavo of this fund was accurately accounted for, and more than half of it turned back to the finance officer.)

The afternoon wore on, but the special troop train from the north which was to take the regiment to Iloilo failed to appear. Embarkation orders specified that the regiment sail that night, and there was much concern about the missing train. Drastic measures were in order.

Shortly before dusk a train arrived from Iloilo, north-bound, with troop replacements for the Capiz area. There being no immediate urgency about the time of their arrival, I ordered the troops unloaded and the engine reversed. The 61st Field Artillery had its transportation for the troop movement to Iloilo. General Chynoweth's Chief of Staff, Colonel Albert F. Christie, has never missed an opportunity to rib me about being the only officer who ever stole a train and got away with it.

While in the midst of supervising the details of entraining the regiment and loading equipment, Colonel Christie came up, and after critically watching the loading operations, said quietly, "General Chynoweth is at Mr. Marshall's house and would like to see you before you leave Santa Barbara."

"Hell, Christie," I retorted, "I've got a sailing schedule to make, and my officers are inexperienced in this sort of troop movement."

"Your sailing is going to be delayed", Christie replied,

"due to some difficulties encountered in preparing the vessel for departure. The General is anxious to see you."

"Does General Chynoweth know", I asked, "what it might mean if -----?"

"Listen, Tark, Christie quipped, "you have already stolen a complete railroad train and kidnapped the crew. You don't want to add disobedience to your crimes, do you? General Chynoweth wants to see you and Lewis. If I were you, I'd consider it an order. Turn over this movement to the next senior officer. You and Lewis can go to Ilo by motor and be there before the train arrives".

I called Lewis and told him what was up, and asked that he and Captain Jacinto Gavino join me for additional instructions regarding this movement to Iloilo. Gavino was competent, and assured me that my instructions would be carried out to the letter. He saluted and departed to take over command of the troops.

Lewis and I deflated our bosoms of the cached pesos, to the care of two additional carefully selected officers, tapped our helmets to a more rakish angle, and I said to Christie, "Lead on -- we follow!"

In about ten minutes we arrived at the fine home of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, which overlooked the beautiful Santa Barbara Club golf course. Present also were Mr. and Mrs. Baigros. These were charming people and the ladies lovely and gracious.

Mr. Marshall said, "Colonel, General Chynoweth had been

speaking of you and Major Lewis, and has consented that we invite you to our New Year's dinner this evening, so that at least you may leave us with the recollection of what we believe will be a good meal. We are delighted that you have accepted our invitation."

I assured them that I was most happy to be there and felt sure that the efforts of Lewis and myself would not cast any discredit on the cook.

I turned then to General Chynoweth and said, "Colonel Christie informs me that you want to see me."

"That's right," he replied. "When the opportunity presented itself to offer you the hospitality of these gracious people prior to your leaving my command, I couldn't resist. You know I hate to lose my best outfit. Now relax -- here are the cocktails. And here's to a safe voyage!"

This was a real send-off, and after an extremely pleasant hour and a half, and a beautifully-appointed meal by candlelight, Lewis and I departed to assume our duties at the Guimeras dock. We arrived there some twenty minutes ahead of the train.

As the train pulled slowly out onto the quay, the wheels of the locomotive suddenly lost traction and began to spin, as if on ice. Actually, the wheels were spinning in syrup, which had flowed out onto the tracks from the still-burning sugar in the warehouses on the dock, set afire by recent Jap bombing.

When the troops arrived at shipside, we found that further delay in preparing the ship for departure would be encountered, because her last cargo of empty oil drums were still in the

holds. There being no stevedores available, it was midnight before unloading by soldier labor was accomplished and the first of the troops could go aboard.

Fifteen hundred rounds of artillery ammunition, including fuzes, had been the albatross of the regiment since its arrival on the island. We still had no guns with which to fire this stuff, but we carted it with us just in case. This ammunition was to be moved to the ship by truck after dark. The ammunition trucks arrived, but somehow the truck loaded with the fuzes failed to show up. Was this incident going to further delay our getting away? No one seemed to know anything about the truck. Was it sabotage? The convoy commander could not account for losing one of his trucks -- he apparently was most sincerely alarmed at this turn of events. He was dispatched in a light vehicle to find the missing truck and bring it back. Ammunition without fuzes is of slight value.

Just before midnight the truck column commander returned, with the truck, and reported to me that he had found it wandering down a little-used street in Iloilo. I had the truck driver and his assistant brought to me.

"Where in blue blazes have you been playing around?" I demanded.

"But, Ser, we do not play!" protested the driver, breathlessly. His assistant remained discreetly silent. "We cannot have light. I cannot see truck ahead. I cannot see road. I take wrong road.

"I look for dock. I am lost. And then -- is Lieutenant Jimenez, and we come back!"

Well, anyway, we had the fuzos.

Before the war, the Princess of Negros had been one of the fleet of interisland ships designed for moderate passenger and freight trade, but certainly never intended to accomodate 1250 people, plus all the impedimenta which even our meagrely-equipped regiment possessed. Colonel McLennan, the Navigation Head Officer, and I, watching the loading, became concerned as the little ship settled lower and lower into the water, with much equipment still to be put aboard. Consulting Captain Jaime, a skipper with many years of experience in these waters behind him, we were assured that "if you oan get 'em aboard, I can take 'em where they're going." We did, and he did, but if ever a ship was overloaded, that one was! There was scarcely room to breath, and as we finally pushed off into the silvery path of a full tropical moon, I touched the St. Christopher that I always wore attached to my belt and whispered a fervent prayer that Captain Jaime knew his business, and that neither rough seas nor enemy patrols would come our way this night.

It had been arranged that in the event of any enemy interference a sustained blast of the ship's whistle would sound the alarm. We were well out into Guimaras Strait, where we might expect to encounter Japanese patrol launches at any time, and I



was on the bridge with the Captain, scanning the sparkling water, when suddenly the silence of the moonlit night was ripped to shivering shreds by the raucous screech of the whistle! Its ear-splitting ululations continued, while the Captain and I vainly searched the skies and seas for the enemy.

Then, over the wailing of the whistle, came the staccato bark of the two machine guns, which had been placed in the bow and stern of the ship for use against surface craft and low-flying aircraft. I made my way as rapidly as possible along the crowded decks, stumbling over prostrate humanity, to one of the gun positions. The gun crew was firing frenziedly at ----- nothing! They had no target. They had seen nothing. But the whistle was supposed to mean enemies, therefore they were shooting! And so two hundred rounds of precious .50 caliber ammunition was lost to us forever.

Lewis, meanwhile, had hastened to the spot from which the hideous shriek was still blasting. The whistle cord came down along the stack to the top deck, where, by means of a small pulley it was diverted to the pilot house. Endeavoring to contrive sufficient space to lie down comfortably for a nap on this crowded deck, a Filipino soldier had inexplicably contrived to get one of his feet entangled in the whistle cord, thereby creating a near panic. No one jumped overboard, but it took some little time before complete quiet and order were restored.

Fortunately, the rest of the night passed without mishap, and Captain Jaime lived up to his reputation by docking the Princess at Pulapandan, Negros, just before sunrise the next morning.

The docks were deserted. There was no sign of the transportation which was supposed to have been provided to move the regiment to Dumaguete, where we were to await the arrival of General Sharp's courier with further orders. The absence of the trucks was annoying, but not surprising, since lack of coordination was the rule, rather than the exception, these days. Contact was finally made with the local transportation officer, who explained apologetically that the Army had no motor vehicles on the Island. For any troop movements it was necessary to requisition, from local civilian sources, such trucks, busses, or taxis as were still in operating condition, as well as drivers familiar with the sometimes obscure routes.

Fortunately for the Army, civilians throughout the Islands were at all times most cooperative. However, it would not be possible to muster a sufficient number of vehicles to transport over 1250 men at one time -- they would have to be moved in relays -- and it was doubtful if the first section could be started before nightfall.

Food for the regiment for the day, therefore, became the immediate consideration. Since the food situation throughout all the Southern Islands was equally desperate, we had been informed that rations for the regiment sufficient not only for the trip but for the initial period in Mindanao, were to accompany the troops. Colonel Carter R. McLennan had received orders to arrange transportation for the 61st Field Artillery and the 62nd

Infantry from Iloilo Province to Mindanao at about the same time. The orders stipulated that ten days' rations would accompany the troops. It was estimated that the ships which would carry the troops from Panay to Negros would not have sufficient capacity for both the troops and the amount of food ordered to be provided. And further, the time required for the loading of these food supplies would too greatly delay the sailings, since the program called for the completion of this movement between dusk and dawn. Colonel McLennen, therefore, decided to ship the food by barge to Negros on the day preceeding the first troop movement, which would assure these supplies being readily available to the troops upon their arrival in Pulapandan, and would accompany them the rest of the way.

In accordance with this plan, a barge was loaded and dispatched, with a letter of instructions to Captain Dick Jones, Navigation Head Officer in Pulapandan, advising him that the food was the property of the 61st Field Artillery and the 62nd Infantry, and what proportion was to be delivered to each regimental supply officer upon the arrival of the regiments. The barge arrived safely and was unloaded according to schedule, but the supplies, instead of being held as ordered for delivery to our regiments, were stored in Jones' bodegas. Upon our arrival in Pulapandan, Lt. Lapastora, the regimental supply officer, made inquiry of Jones and was informed very definitely that no food for the regiment had been received from any source. Intensive efforts on Lapastora's part to trace the ship-

ment were fruitless, and my own personal interview with Jones brought only his positive statement that he had received no shipment of food for the regiment had had heard nothing of such a consignment. Since there was no way of knowing that the barge had arrived, and every likelihood that it had not, due to the vigilance of the Japanese patrol boats, the statement was accepted at face value.

Some months later, on 7 April, when Colonel McLennan went over to take command of Negros Island, some of these food supplies were still in Jones' bodegas. McLennan commented on this fact and Jones admitted quite frankly that it was the same stuff that had been shipped to him for the use of the 61st Field Artillery and the 62nd Infantry. He seemed to think he had been extremely clever in building up his own food stock by the simple process of appropriating that which had been consigned to him for the use of these two regiments, and told McLennan with considerable pride how he had foxed these two outfits out of their rations. When McLennan strongly disagreed with the ethics of this transaction, Jones attempted to alibi himself by saying that he "didn't know who the food was for". He admitted receiving the letter which stated that the supplies were to be delivered to the designated outfits, but claimed that since neither of them were on his island, that he "thought it was a mistake" and therefore appropriated the food. His alibi further alleged that there was nothing in the letter to indicate that these regiments were being moved to Negros. This statement was true,

because any indication of troop movements had been purposely omitted from the letter, for security reasons. But it would appear obvious that when a shipment consigned to a specified regiment was received, and the designated regiment arrived, requesting delivery of the shipment, less than 50 hours later, that there should be extremely slight basis for misunderstanding.

Certainly, had I known that these food supplies had arrived in Pulapandan, that part of them destined for the 61st Field Artillery would have accompanied the regiment!

Needless to say, this unexpected turn of events was another monkey-wrench in the machinery, necessitating considerable searching in order to purchase adequate supplies to subsist the regiment until its arrival in Dumaguete.

When this was finally accomplished, leaving Captain Gavino in command in Pulapandan, Lewis and I proceeded to Dumaguete in a commandeered taxi, to see to facilities at that end, arriving after a very rough trip around three in the afternoon. For a large part of the way the road lay along the southern slopes of the Kanloan Volcano, noted for its steep grades, sharp curves, sheer precipices and deep canyons. Parts of the route were, theoretically, under construction. Actually they were barely passable for motor vehicles, being similar to American country roads at the beginning of the horse-and-buggy era, and the heavy troop movements of the past few months had not improved them.

In Dumaguete we found that no preparation had been made for

billeting or supplying food to the troops during our indefinite stay there, which necessitated considerable high-pressure work on Lewis' and my part. We slept that night (after midnight) for the first time since 30 December.

Shortly after daybreak the next morning, 3 January, the first elements of our nondescript convoy were seen approaching along the shore road. They had been delayed, as usual, by breakdowns due to mechanical failures and shortages of fuel, which had prevented their reaching their destination before daylight, as planned.

Just as the last truck of the long column emerged from the jungle, which ran almost to the sea at this point, the ominous thunder we had been listening for, but hoping against, began to vibrate. The unmistakable, desynchronized throb of Japanese airplane motors.

From the little eminence where Lewis and I stood, watching through our glasses, the convoy looked like a huge, dark, slowly-writhing snake against the white road. The surf rolled almost to the road's edge on the east, while a level, treeless plain stretched away to the west, presenting no cover of any sort.

The leading V of the bombers was almost over the column now, and I held my breath unconsciously, waiting for the first bombs to drop. Thoughts flashed through my mind -- of the weeks of arduous training these youngsters had gone through, of their eagerness to learn, and to avenge the rape of Luzon -- and now, for many of them, certainly, it was to end like this!

---

And then as we watched in impotent anxiety, the bombers passed over the convoy, turned slightly out to sea, and were lost in the distance.

Not a single bomb had fallen!

To this day, I cannot imagine how the regiment escaped destruction, but as Lewis and I stood that morning, weak with relief, I know both of us were inwardly giving thanks to whatever Guardian Angels were responsible.

## CHAPTER V

Battalion billeting area had been selected and as the convoy straggled in the battalion commanders were acquainted with the boundaries of their areas, the location of the Regimental Command Post, the Regimental First Aid Station, and the supply dump for Class 1 supplies (see Appendix No. II); this last usually being the first question asked by subordinate commanders.

Other supply dumps had lost importance because we had long since become accustomed to the phrase "Not Available". Clothing issues had ceased before the completion of mobilization. All available rifle, pistol and machine gun ammunition was carried on the person, or in a meagre regimental or battalion reserve. Illuminants and fuel for cooking were catch-as-catch-can, and automotive fuels and lubricants were now of no concern since the limited regimental transportation that had at one time been available to us had to be left on Panay due to lack of shipping.

There was plenty to do besides sit and wait for the instructions which would indicate our eventual destination. A series of inoculations, which had been initiated a week before at Cabatuan, against typhoid, cholera and tetanus was to be completed, and the due date fell during our stay in Dumaguette. This occupied the doctors beyond their normal duties of sanitation inspections and conduct of sick-call. Equipment had to be checked constantly for serviceability and readiness. This period also was a breather to



catch up on and correct infractions of discipline, and above all, to carry on training in tactics and hand-to-hand combat.

The problem of inculcating the fighting spirit into the docile but excitable Filipino is one to which time alone, perhaps, holds the answer. Assiduous efforts were made to encourage the untrained Filipino officer to assume the responsibilities due his subordinates and his position, and to instill in him by repetition, explanation, and demonstration, the qualities desired in a leader; but again, time was a second enemy.

This is no place for a discussion of the psychology of leadership, except that, in justice to the Filipino, one point should be remembered. For nearly four hundred years they were a subject people. Crushed under the Spanish heel from 1565 until 1898, when the Islands were ceded to the United States, these people were without opportunity to develop the initiative, resourcefulness and pertinacity essential to successful commanders. It cannot be expected that qualities which have been determinedly suppressed by a conqueror for generation upon generation can suddenly be brought to flower again overnight.

In the past thirty years great strides have been made in educating and instructing the young Filipino in his responsibilities of citizenship. The Philippine Scouts, the only prewar native military organization in the Islands with any considerable progressive training, furnishes an epic example in the development of outstanding soldiers and leaders. It has been said that the guerrilla

operations of the later war years developed many more. But the untrained, or partly-trained soldier of 1941-42 as I knew him, was definitely non-aggressive in character, and lacking in the American concept of responsibility.

Yet, I shall always cherish the memory of many of my officers and men, who, because of their integrity, loyalty and devotion to duty so admirably met and overcame discouragement and inspired their brothers to greater performance. I count among my very best friends those of my regiment who never shirked a duty or failed in an obligation. I predict the Philippine Democracy will develop many great leaders.

On the evening of 5 January 1942, Captain Floyd Forte called on me in my room at the Dumaguette Hotel. He very carefully identified himself as a member of General Sharp's staff and stated that he had information of top secret character to divulge to me.

At his insistence we minutely inspected the premises to make sure there were no spying eavesdroppers and after satisfying ourselves that we were entirely alone, he began to talk in a low voice.

"You know, Colonel, I am not the special messenger from General Sharp. But that messenger, according to plan, was to contact you today. You say you have received no instructions from General Sharp since your arrival here. Frankly, Colonel, I'm worried for fear something may have gone wrong. A little foul play at this

stage could gum up a lot of important troop movements".

I let him talk. I knew we were headed for Mindanao, but when and where we were to land was still a staff secret.

"To be reasonably sure there is no hitch in the movement of your regiment according to plan", Forte continued, "I am going to make known to you the details as to your date of departure, the ships which are to transport you, and your destination".

This he proceeded to do, in some detail. He assured me that two vessels would be at the Dumaguette dock on the morning of the 7th. That my destination was Bugo; that I would be attached to General Vachon's command at Malaybalay, and would join him by marching, upon my arrival at Bugo. He repeatedly warned me that this was secret; that I would under no circumstances divulge this information to anyone. Not even the ship's skippers were to know their destination until we were well out to sea; that we would travel blackout and under radio silence.

(Map # 1)

I was ready and I understood. I understood also that in order to comply with that part of the secrecy pertaining to the destination, in view of radio silence someone on the ship on which I was not a passenger must know where we were to land. That detail was handled without recourse to discussion with this self-appointed messenger.

Forte left. I have never seen him since. His subsequent activities are reserved for a later episode.

The following day, about 2000 hours, Captain Bucher found me

at the hotel. He introduced himself as the emissary of General Sharp and stated that he had a message for me. He, too, was concerned with the secrecy of the interview and again we went through the business of looking under beds and in closets. Captain Bucher presented his credentials and identified himself as being, in fact, the person represented. He handed me a sealed envelope, within which was a second sealed envelope marked "SECRET" in red ink. The enclosed letter of instructions was marked likewise top and bottom. The letter contained essentially the same information imparted by Captain Forte, to which Bucher added the oral caution that no one was to know the destination of the regiment until after we had put to sea. There was no discussion. None was needed. I had been twice briefed.

On the morning of the seventh, I called all my officers together and acquainted them with the fact that the regiment would embark at sunset, and that precautions would be redoubled to see that none of our soldiers became "evacuees". Plans were perfected as to space assignments on the vessels and the order of embarking, and all necessary instructions issued.

The ships Lepus and Dumaguette were tied up to the dock. I had taken the battalion commanders over the ships to acquaint them with the layout. Now it was a matter for the individual subordinate commanders to make their own arrangements and issue their instructions.

This business was gone about without revealing to the curious

civilians the fact that the regiment was leaving. There were no idle moments, so the interval of waiting for evening was not burdensome.

As the sun dropped down behind Cuernos de Negros mountain and the quick tropic darkness fell, the troops were moved in small detachments to the pier and embarked as rapidly and as quietly as possible.

(Map #2)

"The best laid plans of mice and men -----!" In spite of careful briefing of subordinate commanders; in spite of posting selected guides at critical road and trail junctions; in spite of the extra vigilance of my staff, some of the detachments succeeded in taking the wrong route during the move in the darkness from bivouac area to ship-side. This necessitated an energetic search for the missing elements, occasioned a great deal of annoyance and concern, and delayed getting under way for almost an hour. Finally, we had all aboard and slipped out into the Mindanao Sea.

About thirty minutes out I gave Captain Medina his destination. In the dim light of his well-shuttered cabin, I saw a knowing grin spread over his face. I have always believed that he knew our destination before I did. Whether he knew or not -- his course was already laid straight for Bugo and changed not one degree.

It was a beautiful, star-studded night. The Southern Cross nestled low on the horizon to the south, and Cereus, the Dog-Star, more brilliant than I had ever before observed it, lay off the port bow. The seas were calm. It was difficult, indeed, to feel

that war had entered the peace and tranquility of this beautiful area.

The occasional distant lights of the fishermen sent ruddy gleams across the water. Some uneasiness was felt, at first, that these might be enemy craft, but calm reflection would assume that the Jap traveled blackout, too.

The dark mass of Siquijor Island loomed and slowly fell astern on our port side, as Lewis came on deck to take over the watch. With confidence in the alertness of the lookouts, the experience and loyalty of the skipper and reposing complete faith in Lewis, I dropped off to sleep for the first time in 48 hours.

When the skipper roused me a few hours later, the brilliance of the stars had faded slightly in the gray of approaching daybreak. The command was alerted to prepare for debarkation. A cup of steaming black coffee that the skipper had contrived did wonders to chase away the last vestiges of drowsiness.

Mindanao lay dark and forbidding, dead ahead. In the pale light of dawn, the precipitous slopes that rose up from the narrow coastal strip that is Misamis Oriental, to the Bukidnon plateau, came out in clearer detail, and the January eighth sun, peeking over the eastern rim of the Mindanao Sea, found the little Lunaquette tied up to the Bugo dock. The Lepus was visible on the horizon to the north, an hour's sailing distant. The multitudinous details of disembarking troops and moving them into covered areas, and of unloading equipment, was placed in the competent hands of Buck Lewis.

MAP # 3 WESTERN MINDANAO

A telephone was located in the Philippine Packing Company's pineapple cannery nearby, and contact was finally made with General Vachon at Malaybalay. This single-wire, ground-return, long-distance medium was filled, even at this ungodly hour, with screaming, screeching demons, all speaking different languages. It seemed to me that if General Vachon were able to screen my message out of this babble, that he was a real Houdini. That he actually did understand that the Sixty-first had arrived, and was about to set out by marching and use of "all available motor transportation" (non-existent), I was never sure until I met the General, much later.

(Map # 1)

The ordeal of this overland movement in the hot, tropical sun was spared us by the arrival of Lt. Col. (then Major) John H. McGee, an emissary of Colonel Morse. Who Colonel Morse was we had not the vaguest idea, but a change of orders, emanating from General Sharp's Headquarters, and of which General Vachon was apparently in ignorance, had set in motion a long sequence of changes of sectors and troop dispositions.

We were conducted by McGee to a dense and shady coconut grove extending up from the beaches of Macajalar Bay in the vicinity of a defunct barrio (whose name escapes me) and instructed to dig in as protection against Jap air nuisance, until further instructions from Colonel Morse, to whose command, McGee informed us, we were now to be attached.

On New Years' Day the trim but damaged S. S. Mayon had limped



into Cagayan with a cargo of 670 American Air Corps officers and men under command, for the duration of the voyage, of Colonel William F. Morse and Lieutenant Colonel Wade E. Killen. This contingent had been caught off Mindoro by Jap air and given a thorough going over. While a direct hit was scored on the after part of the vessel, most of the casualties were sustained among those who had jumped overboard, and resulted from the crushing effect of water pressure generated by near-misses exploding in the sea.

(Map # 1)

In spite of the panic created by this attack, the dead were taken from the water and the injured given such medical attention as could be provided. All personnel were then debarked and put ashore until darkness provided a blanket of protection for further travel. Order and discipline were quickly restored through the example of cool, calm leadership displayed by Morse and Killen.

Upon arrival at Cagayan this contingent, less 200-odd sent south to General Vachon, constituted the first unit to garrison the newly-created Cagayan Sector. Major McGee was designated commanding officer of this provisional battalion which was assigned an area near Del Monte.

On 4 January, Colonel Morse was ordered by General Sharp to assume command of the Cagayan Sector and Killen became his Chief of Staff. With this assignment Morse was designated military governor of Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon Provinces. At this time Major McGee's battalion and a cadre of about 600 trainees at

(Maps # 1,  
#3)

Cagayan were the only troops available to the newly-appointed sector commander. Colonel Morse, in announcing his appointment, referred to this command as the "Cagayan Brigade". The designation stuck until it was later expanded into a division.

On January sixth the 61st Field Artillery, commanded by my very good friend Lieutenant Colonel John H. Woodbridge, came in from Bohol and was assigned positions in the vicinity of Tagaloan. He had already moved into these positions when the 61st Field Artillery docked on the 8th.\*

The Cagayan sector extended from the Tagaloan River on the east to the Cagayan River on the west. The Brigade now had two regiments (about 1080 men each) in the front line covering a mere 23 kilometers of water front -- approximately 15 miles -- which would have taxed the capabilities of a Corps.

When Colonel Morse visited the bivouac area of the 61st Field Artillery at about 1000 hours on the day of its arrival he seemed well pleased with the industry displayed in digging foxholes with mess kits and bayonets. Entrenching tools were in extremely short supply and larger shovels and mattocks, if available, had not found their way through supply channels to us. But the encouragement of frequent inquisitive flights of Jap fighter planes proved a powerful incentive to speed up excavations!

Morse and I started out to reconnoitre suitable positions in the vicinity of Cagayan, selected positions covering access roads to the town, and the mouth of the Cagayan River. As a result of

\*Both regiments were without artillery pieces and operating as Infantry.

MAP # 4 CAGAYAN SECTOR

this reconnaissance the responsibility for the shore line from the Tagaloan River to the Sagayan River was divided roughly in half. The boundary between the 31st Field Artillery and the 61st Field Artillery followed generally the Little Agusan River. It was numerically impossible to occupy these defensive positions and to maintain contact with the 81st Field Artillery except by patrols. In addition, periodic checks on beaches to the west, known to be well adapted to landing operations, had to be accomplished by small patrols. Woodbridge and I carried on further detailed study of the terrain with a view to establishing fortified centers of resistance covering most favorable landing spots. Characteristics of this defensive area, coupled with our meagre force and lack of heavy weapons, imposed drastic restrictions on even approaching the ideal of making these centers mutually supporting. A plan was adopted, which satisfied neither of us, but was the best that could be done in the face of the overwhelming unfavorable circumstances. Periodic patrols were instituted as a physical link between regiments, and look-out posts established on the cliffs which rose to Bukidnon. These served excellently to keep the entire area of Macajalar Bay under surveillance. These lookouts could detect approaching aircraft as well as surface vessels on the bay. Improvised bamboo gongs would sound the tocsin. We were still comparatively blind to the south, but in spite of our concern for a possible vertical (paratroop) attack on our rear, which would put us in an extremely precarious position, our energies

were directed more toward opposing a landing on the beaches.

As far as we knew these sectors were to remain as established. The estimated man hours to prepare these positions was a staggering figure. But we set to -- and made some progress. But men can accomplish only so much -- and without tools and material, much less. The situation was a decided challenge to ingenuity. Frustration stalked us day and night, but rarely did one hear a note of pessimism. Heavy brains and fagged muscles always responded for one more effort. Hope of assistance burned brightly in all our thinking. We KNEW that no matter how black or hopeless conditions seemed today, tomorrow would see the miracle of weapons, ammunition, food and the essentials with which to justify our fanatic belief in the infallibility of the United States.

Consolidation of defensive positions in the Macajalar Bay area, embracing abnormally wide frontages, necessitated a continuing study of terrain. The treeless plains of Bukidnon drop off precipitously to a very narrow coastal strip of dense coconut groves. Thus, a deployment in depth consonant with sound defensive tactics was virtually impossible. Lateral movement was almost entirely restricted to the narrow coastal strip. Access to the treeless plains could be found in only two or three places where precarious foot-trails clung to the escarpment; or by following the serpentine Sayre Highway from Tinao barrio upward; or through the

deep, sheer-walled river canyons, which cut the area generally from south to north, until access could be had to the plains by means of hazardous foot-trails. Lateral movement across the Bukidnon plateau was out of the question because of these deep canyons, which not only seriously jeopardized mutual support between units, but limited communication to visual means or extremely difficult and time-consuming courier service.

Initially, with our shallow deployment over wide frontages, there were sufficient field telephones and field wire to tie in the three battalion headquarters with regiment, and regiment with division. But in spite of extreme care in the use of telephones and constant attempts to revitalize worn out batteries or procure spares, this means of communication became unreliable and failed altogether with the invasion.

Shortly after the sectors for the 81st and 61st Field Artillery Regiments had been prescribed the First Battalion 101st Infantry under command of Major Reed Graves, CAC, took over a slice of frontage from Tinac Canyon west to the Little Agusan River, narrowing the sector of the 81st Field Artillery. Approximately a week later Major Graves' battalion was pulled out and sent south and the 3rd Regiment Philippine Constabulary Infantry was attached to the brigade, necessitating a further readjustment of sectors. About 15 February the 103rd Infantry, less its second battalion, arrived in Cagayan relieving the Philippine Constabulary Regiment. This Constabulary Regiment being then attached to Chastaine's Surigao sector took over the responsibilities of the

93rd Philippine Army Regiment on 20 February in the Anakan-Gingoog area.

Major Joseph R. Webb assumed command of the 103rd after a succession of commanders, none of whom remained with the regiment for more than a few days. During the first week of March Webb's second battalion, under Major Robert V. Bowler and Lieutenant William McLaughlin, rejoined the regiment from the Cotabato-Digos front. (See Appendix No. 3 ).

This shifting of sectors, while providing better overall troop dispositions, resulted in having to do over again the work which had been accomplished or was under way toward establishment of defensive measures. While this, from a training standpoint, was admirable, the threat of invasion was constant and time, like our other commodities, was at a premium.

We were assured now that our positions, barring unforeseen emergencies, would remain unchanged and that the protection of Del Monte Airfield, by defending the beaches of Macajalar Bay, would continue as our mission. With this mission, and the influences exerted on it by the nature of the terrain and the extensive frontage to be covered, coupled with a complete lack of supporting weapons, battalions were disposed abreast. In the Field Artillery regiments this left no regimental reserve except the Headquarters Battery, which furnished the communications details, including runners, and personnel for the staff sections of the Headquarters. Similarly, reserves were constituted for the battalions, from all available sources. These reserves rarely, if

ever, exceeded thirty effectives. Division had no reserves with which to bolster this "thin 'brown' line". Good defensive tactics demand depth. Neither men nor tools were available, but the thin line was established with forebodings and misgiving.

Work in establishing our defensive positions was speeded up. Intensive search was instituted for materials with which to construct emplacements for the few machine guns which had been issued or salvaged from wrecked airplanes. We managed to turn up a few sacks of cement, a few sections of a water standpipe which had not been erected, and a few dilapidated grain sacks for conversion to sand bags. These sections of iron standpipe served beautifully as the revetment of an excavation for .50 calibre machine gun emplacements and the cement furnished a dry floor for the gunners who otherwise, due to a high water table at flood tide, would have stood in water above their knees.

During this time persistent efforts were being made to get authority to send a detail to Panay to recover our motor vehicles which we had been compelled to leave behind at the time of our departure due to lack of space on our transport.

Since our arrival in Mindanao the supply situation had been decidedly imperfect. The system of ration issues as implemented within the policies of the Force Commander was something less than a system. Very little food supply found its way from the Force Supply Depots to the front line troops. This necessitated continuous organized efforts on the part of these troops to subsist



themselves from local resources, and forced commanders into time-consuming and unorthodox procedures. Some supplies procured by the front line troops found their way to rear areas to supplement the rations of other units. Frequently beach traps operated by a regimental detail of soldiers furnished fresh fish to less fortunate organizations. The military concept of the impetus of supply being from rear to front had undergone such drastic changes as to reverse the entire procedure. Supply conditions remained pretty much in this chaotic state until the arrival of Colonel Melville Creusere who took over the duties of Force Quartermaster and brought about an orderly system of issues.

Just about the time the situation became critical one of the inter-island vessels put into Bugo and unloaded some sixteen sedans of various vintages and states of repair, all requisitioned, apparently, from civilian sources, since none were dressed in the characteristic olive-drab of the Army. No receiving officer was present. No shipping document or other evidence of consignment could be found. They were simply unloaded and parked near the beach under the coconut palms.

Our urgent need for some means to cover the distances involved in food procurement efforts, in the maintenance of necessary reconnaissance and staff conferences enhanced the value of these cars in our eyes. And perhaps the memory of the theft of a railroad train made the appropriation of a few automobiles seem a bit insignificant. At any rate, the result was that six of these

sedans -- the best of the lot -- soon reposed in the area of the 61st Field Artillery.

The furor that arose over this "salvage operation", led, I am sure, to the final decision of Force Headquarters to arrange for my supply officer, motor sergeant and three mechanics to return to Fanay to recover our motor vehicles, and off they went on "Red" Ploughman's auxiliary-motored sailing vessel. On 25 January I received from Lieutenant Lapastora, my supply officer, a commercial radiogram advising me, in his characteristic phraseology, that he would return with not only our motors, but the detachment of men who had been too involved with "Baus Au" in the mountain fastnesses to sail with us.

On the morning of the 27th, Lieutenant Lapastora, unannounced, presented himself before me. He had the vehicles. He had the "Mountain Boys". But best of all, perhaps, he had brought back to us Jack Adams, Bill Railling, Schreiber and the crew who had been attached to us at Cabatuan and were left behind due to delay in the clarification of their status.

During this time the construction of CPY, General Sharp's Command Post, was under way. Initially the heavy detonations heard in the Macajalar area were associated with the frequent visits of Jap bombers, but proved upon inquiry to be the blasting out of a deep, wide trench, which was later timbered over and covered to a considerable depth with earth. Over this scar

(Map #4)

pineapple was planted in neat rows to blend with the surrounding area. Thus camouflaged and presumably protected, the Force staff could ride out the Jap air attempts to locate the Commander.