

THE GUERRILLA IN PANAY

By Juan V. Borra⁽¹⁾

INTRODUCTION

This is an account of the Panay Guerrilla from a higher perspective. It is intended to depict, as if from a distance, the philosophy behind it, the policies and changes thereof adopted in pursuance of the philosophy as well as the concrete steps taken to apply the policies in actual operation. Details of the resistance movement which could have been more interesting for the pathos, excitement, suffering, and triumphs that were experienced had been limited to the minimum and only to better present in bold relief the projections intended by the account.

This account is written, more or less, from memory. Documents which were in the possession of the author had long been lost, although parallel and confirmatory documents might be in the possession of others who, having the time to relate the incidents as near as possible to the time of their occurrence, might have had the good fortune of still preserving them. This notwithstanding, the author gives assurance that his own presentation here is as near the truth as is humanly possible to do so.

It is probably better that this account is written after more than twenty-five years. Perhaps there is thus more objectivity and less prejudice and the conclusions reached might be fair to all concerned.

The Resistance Movement in Panay involved two separate organizations, each headed by a man of unquestionable patriotism, with a knack for organization and exceptional ability of placing these qualities in the service

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of their country and people. That the heads of these two organizations did not see eye to eye on policies and practices are of little import now. It will be sufficient to recount how they were moved by identical philosophy, identical purposes and resolutions, and identical hopes and expectations.

This then is an account of the respective parts played by two personalities and two organizations in the Panay Guerrilla. The author believes that no history of the Panay Resistance Movement can be complete without taking into account their respective performances.

A word of warning here — the author was a member of the Peralta outfit as Judge Advocate and in spite of himself might have allowed unconscious biases to creep in. And, too, being a responsible public servant himself (congressman) at the time who thought he might only be defending his own record, if not the record of his own associates who were also then in the public service, he could be considered a most subjective judge of this part of our war history and, therefore, could be speaking self-servingly.

With that as a warning in fairness to all, I now relate my own version of this war account for what it is worth.

BY WAY OF BACKGROUND

CONGRESSMAN IN 1941

I was elected Congressman from the 5th district of Iloilo Province sometime in November of 1941. After my election, a very good friend of mine, Don Carlos Lopez of the famous far-flung Lopez family in Iloilo, took me for a week's rest and vacation to Manila in the only commercial plane then connecting Iloilo and Manila. On the way, one could see from the air army camps in the Southern Tagalog area. Arriving in Manila, I saw American soldiers mixing freely with Filipinos everywhere. American dollars circulated along with Filipino pesos in almost equal

abundance. I considered what I saw an ominous warning signal with frightening implications, and, in less than a week's stay in the capital city, I decided that the most expedient and wise thing to do was to go back home to Iloilo. I confided these fears to Don Carlos and he agreed with me, and both of us flew back posthaste.

AMERICA DRAWN INTO WAR

December 8 was the annual fiesta of the place of my birth, the town of Concepcion. On that day elaborate preparations were being made to honor a son of the town, one of the smallest towns in the fifth district. By accident I happened to be that son whom the townspeople considered as having attained one of the highest national positions in the country—as a Congressman. Nine o'clock in the morning found me delivering a speech in the town plaza and telling the people not too seriously that probably they had not made a mistake in electing a poor man like me to the exalted position in Congress since, in a war that seemed to impend, it was the poor who would fight in it and suffer most of it. The applause that followed was electric but short-lived, for almost simultaneously it was stilled by the sudden blaring of the radio announcing the attack on Pearl Harbor and the start of the American involvement in the second World War. The confusion that followed transformed the atmosphere of gaiety into one of dread and terror.

CONFUSION

The days that followed were nightmarish. Everybody of consequence or of no consequence in every town had a son or daughter or a number of them caught in the war announcement while in school in Iloilo City or Manila. And even the top military brass had not expected involvement in war that early. How to get the children home from Iloilo City and Manila was a serious problem, especially that the army was commandeering all means of transportation as well as all other public and private utilities and facilities. The man in military uniform was

transformed overnight into a man of great authority. Nobody else was now of any consequence. As a private citizen, a person, any person, was just ordered around. Even civilian public officials had to be subordinate to a man in military uniform. The term "civilian public officials" included even Congressman-elect, which meant it included me. There was no money to be had anywhere and even if by miracle there was, nothing to buy anyway. Hoarding became the rule of the day. This was the reason for the universal order of the Government to commandeer food and other necessities.

ILOILO CITY BOMBED

About a week before Christmas a squadron of Japanese planes flew over Iloilo City. They bombed gasoline depots and strafed houses for about thirty minutes. This was the people's first actual taste of war. Besides the gasoline tanks, the airport and army installations and a few houses were destroyed. A few people were wounded and some killed. Hysteria knew no bounds. In the afternoon of that day, a heavy cruiser showed up just outside the harbor. Everybody scrambled out and the city became a ghost town in no time. It turned out to be an American cruiser which probably was the object of a Japanese air-hunt. By nightfall, the city was practically completely abandoned by the people. I brought my own family temporarily to the outskirts of the city and made preparations for early evacuation inland, which I did a week later. We went to Banate, my wife's hometown, 54 kilometers away. We prepared an alternate hideout about two kilometers from the población, the seat of the town government. In less than a week, Iloilo City remained merely as a seat of the City and Provincial Government, with the bulk of the population already in hiding in the interior towns.

CIVILIAN-MILITARY LIAISON

By about the end of the year, that is, by December 31, 1941, it was decided by the Government that the men in uniform take the ordinary citizen into some sort of

partnership. A civil affairs unit was organized under an American attorney, Thomas Powell, who immediately donned a uniform (of the colonel), probably to impress both army and civilians and surely to effect a more expeditious way of performing assigned duties. Then an arrangement was made with the civil authorities to recognize the value and importance of Congressmen on consultative councils. It was thought to utilize the Congressmen best in getting the cooperation of the non-military.

Luckily for me, Oscar Ledesma, who was elected Congressman for the 2nd district of Iloilo, was designated Acting Governor and, later, concurrently Acting Mayor of Iloilo City. I had struck a close personal friendship with him in the short time that he had entered politics, as Mayor of Iloilo City and as Congressman-elect of the 2nd district of Iloilo. Col. Powell and he decided on expanding the liaison between the Civil Affairs Unit and the local officialdom, an arrangement approved by the Iloilo military command. As liaison man for the 5th Congressional District, Don Carlos Lopez was appointed assistant to Powell. Lopez, in turn, designated me forthwith as his assistant. Making me as Lopez' assistant did not mean much, except for such practical purposes as effecting the release of Don Carlos' Cadillac from the commandeering depot for our ready use. It also meant free gasoline and a minimum of harrassment at military checkpoints when men in uniform inflicted rough and degrading treatment upon the civilian passers-by.

CIVILIAN PROBLEMS

The first problem that came up was how to organize the civilian authorities so that they could give solid backing to the military. Gen. Chynoweth, commanding general on Panay, called all Congressmen to a conference and we proposed an organization of all civil authorities in Panay and Romblon under one responsible leadership. The commanding general was agreeable to my suggestion that

leadership be given to Oscar Ledesma. Somehow nothing came of the idea and at last it just died. Chynoweth was transferred to Cebu to take command of the whole Visayan region, and General Christie took over in Panay.

PRINTING MONEY

The second problem was money. There was no money available to pay the salaries, not only of the employees in the provinces, cities, and towns of Panay and Romblon, but also of national employees stationed in these places. More seriously, there was no money for the salaries of the soldiers. An idea was presented to print money, to which objections were raised on strong legal grounds. Everything seemed dark until Ledesma came out in favor of it. With his impeccable business logic couched in unmatched Spanish oratory, he elicited a thunderous approval. Because of the difficulties of communication with Manila, it took time to have the idea approved by the authorities there. In any case, the Philippine National Bank, headed by Cenon Cervantes, a close friend of Ledesma, started printing Philippine Bank money. That solved the problem. Nobody ever questioned the legality of the printed money when it was finally issued. All uniformed men and all civilian employees were paid their salaries regularly in that currency. The public also took it in stride.

FOOD PRODUCTION

The third problem was food production, especially rice. I suggested that the best way to make people plant more rice was to raise the harvest price of rice from ₱5.00 to ₱20.00 per cavan, but Col. Powell laughed it off. At any rate, the problem of lack of rice was never solved up to the time the Japanese landed in Iloilo sometime in April 1942.

ILOILO DIVIDED

Sometime before the Japanese landed, Governor Tomas Confesor, who had been appointed Director of the National Cooperatives, slipped out of the Japanese-occupied

Manila and escaped to his native Iloilo. He then resumed his position as Governor, a position he had vacated with his appointment to the National Cooperatives. That gave the leadership of the province to one who fully agreed with the American command in Iloilo on almost anything. Confesor's return to Iloilo reduced the rank of Oscar Ledesma to mere Acting Mayor of Iloilo City. All Congressmen of Iloilo, except Jose Zulueta, who was in Manila and who occupied some kind of position in the Japanese occupation, did not belong to the Confesor faction in Iloilo and did not believe in his leadership. These Congressmen were, of course, against Confesor and forthwith applied the brakes on the Army authorities.

SCORCHED EARTH POLICY

Since the Japanese landing in Panay was imminent, plans had to be made in advance to guide civilian behaviour upon the arrival of the Japanese. Confesor and the American command were in favor of everybody moving out and living in the mountains. The people must not leave the towns and Iloilo City without first totally destroying them on a pattern of the Russian idea of "scorched earth." No rice stock that could not be carted away should be left unburned. No livestock or any kind of foodstuff that could not be delivered to the Army was to be left undestroyed unless safely hidden. Nobody was to be seen with the Japanese.

PROTEST WITH U.S. COMMAND

Two days before the Japanese landed, a motorcycle policeman from Iloilo City, now Lieut. Col. Enrique Santiago, retired, fetched me from a fishing hole in Banate and told me that there was going to be an urgent conference with the Army Staff between the Congressmen (and that included Ledesma) on the one hand, and General Christie on the other, and that Ledesma needed my presence at the conference. So, in my khaki pants and dirty shirt, and looking more like a vagabond than anything else, I climbed onto his police office's motorcycle and

perched myself behind him. In this fashion, we rushed to Iloilo City, seeming to fly and yet feeling that my feet were now and then scratching the road because of my long legs and peculiar seating position. A 54-kilometer dirt road was negotiated in 35 nervous minutes in the thick of unspeakable dust. I arrived in Iloilo City and met Ledesma just as he was leaving his residence with Confesor, who was standing at a distance and did not see me. The Japanese planes were hovering low. Ledesma told me that he was waiting for the two other Congressmen, Tiburcio Lutero and Ceferino de los Santos, and that we were going up at Botica Boie a staff officer of Gen. Christie so, together, we could go and see the General and present our objections to the "scorched earth" plan. When I asked why Confesor was not joining us, Ledesma did not answer. We proceeded to Botica Boie and since time was precious and the staff officer was already waiting for us there, we decided to get into his car and drove straight to the headquarters of the Commanding General, without the other two Congressmen. One other Congressman joined us later, whether it was De los Santos or Lutero I cannot now remember.

PERALTA INTRODUCED

The staff officer referred to above introduced himself as Major Macario Peralta, Jr., G-3 of Gen. Christie's Staff, a law graduate from the University of the Philippines who had graduated valedictorian and took 2nd place in the Bar. He told us how grouchy the General was and that if we should have any objections to raise in regard to "scorched earth," we should not be too aggressive about it since Christie might resent it. We did not say anything to Peralta and reserved any statement of our feelings until we saw Christie ourselves. Our own common reaction to the Peralta's advice was something like this: "Who is this Christie anyway and who is this staff officer who should tell us *how* to deal with Christie?"

GEN. CHRISTIE ADAMANT

After going around the Army installations and seeing the war preparations on our way to where Christie was supposed to be, we came to a tree-house which must be the residence and command post of the General. And so it was. We were introduced to him and he certainly was grouchy, nervous, and irritable. When I greeted him and remarked that he "seemed to be all right," he answered with a growl and a snicker with light insulting words to match, which I did not consider proper to resent at the time. But we immediately presented our problem. We told him that we understood from reliable information that he intended to enforce the "scorched earth" policy in Iloilo upon the landing of the Japanese and that we were there so see him personally and lodge a strong protest against such a move. He confirmed our statement of the command's "scorched earth" policy and tried to justify it as a tactic or strategy intended to delay the Japanese and upset their timetable. At any rate, he cocksurely added that America was willing to pay for everything and that America was even capable of transferring Iloilo City and building it anew on Guimaras Island, the city's present site being old-fashioned and beyond redemption from its filthy condition. As a sort of *coup de grâce*, he triumphantly added, "After all, this policy has been adopted upon recommendation of your Governor Confesor." I promptly rejoined, "Oh, from one with a mind fertile for impractical ideas!" The General smiled and said, "Yes, he really has a fertile mind", and repeated with finality that he had enforced the scorched earth policy. Then I demanded that we appeal to President Quezon who was in Washington. He agreed. We framed a telegram for the record, but left convinced that the telegram would not be sent anyway. That night I slept with Ledesma who was a picture of dejection. He told me he was resigning as Acting Mayor of Iloilo City.

RETURNING TO BANATE

The following day, I wasted no time looking for transportation to take me home to Banate. A very good

friend, Judge Jose C. Divinagracia, who was himself going to Dumangas, his own hometown, happened along and took me in his car to Banate. Early in the morning of the day following, the Japanese landed in Iloilo City. The landing caught Christie's men with their pants down and Iloilo City was saved from Christie's "scorched earth." The pattern was the same everywhere and the "scorched earth" plan for the towns and cities, as well as for the food and animal stocks, was foiled or perhaps only postponed.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION

What happened in Iloilo Province was re-enacted in the provinces of Capiz and Antique and, I understand, later in Romblon. To sort of clinch their right to occupation, the Japanese forces visited all the towns of these provinces. The towns being empty, except the provincial capitals, the Japanese resented this cold-shoulder reception and reacted by killing and torturing the few people they could find.

THE UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT

Momentary Lull

For sometime after the Japanese landing on Panay on April 16, (1942), there was a lull. The municipal authorities in the towns continued to exercise their authority over the citizenry and nothing happened to interrupt or interfere with that authority from any quarter. After all, it was everybody's feeling that the Americans were coming back, at the latest, before six months were over. So life continued in the places distant from the seats of government as usual. And the peace and order situation was even better than before the Japanese landed.

CIVIL RESISTANCE

Start of Civil War

In no time at all, Governor Confesor, who was safely ensconced in the mountain fastnesses of southern Iloilo (he was said to be in hiding in an inaccessible part of the

town of Leon bordering on the province of Antique), proclaimed himself Governor of Panay and Romblon. He appointed deputies in the provinces, including the province of Iloilo. These deputies exercised powers for him. It took time before the citizenry was informed of this because of the difficulties of communication. The proclamation served notice to the citizenry that there was still an organized government, and although such government was operating underground, all citizens were nevertheless to take orders from it. The proclamation was known everywhere and given due recognition, albeit grudgingly in some quarters, especially from me.

The Underground Movement in Panay and Romblon thus started and Governor Confesor should be given full credit by history as the first high Civil Government official to challenge the powerful Japanese occupation officially.

GRUDGING ACCEPTANCE OF CONFESOR GOVERNMENT

USE OF DEPUTIES AND NO CONTACT

Confesor was a man of integrity, justice, and humanity. But he was closely guarded in his mountain hideout and no contact with him was possible. The only way one could see him was through his lieutenants who were not of the same mould. The insurmountable difficulty of contact with Confesor and the exercise of his authority through his lieutenants made it hard for anyone to expect the justice, humanity, and integrity characteristic of Confesor himself. The great necessity for personal contact with Confesor was imperative because of vast powers he wielded over life and death.

WAR AND POLITICS

Iloilo politics, probably like politics in other provinces throughout the Philippines, had not seemed to lose its primacy even if there was a war going on. The elections were just over. All of Confesor's candidates for Congress were

defeated by the candidates of Zulueta, and since Zulueta was considered a collaborator of the Japanese, it was not hard to imagine that the Zulueta men everywhere stood the risk of being tagged potential collaborators and subject to harassments from Confesor's lieutenants. The Confesor authority and its concomitant power could only be viewed with sheer dread by the followers of Zulueta of whom Tiburcio Lutero, Ceferino de los Santos, and I were probably the most important. As a matter of fact, when it was first announced that Confesor would assume all powers of the government, which included the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary powers, the announcement was accompanied by a warning notice that two of Zulueta's principal political lieutenants, the Iloilo Chief of Police Amando Perlas and the ex-mayor of San Joaquin, Jesus Diaz, were taken to the mountains" and "liquidated", two cryptic but ominous words which were frequently used during the whole period of the Resistance Movement. With Iloilo being overwhelmingly pro-Zulueta just before the war, one can just imagine how widespread and dire that grudging acceptance of the Confesor government could be.

THE PANAY GUERRILLA

ARMED RESISTANCE ORGANIZED

The Iloilo USAFFE command eventually surrendered, not only because of the overwhelming superiority of the Japanese forces, but also because of orders from the already surrendered USAFFE general headquarters in the Philippines. But either in tacit agreement from General Christie or in sheer stubbornness, a few officers refused to surrender, among whom was Maj. Peralta. After a few weeks of hiding in the mountains and upon the departure of the bulk of the Japanese forces for action elsewhere, these officers with their handful of men came out of their hiding. They came down from their mountain haunts and brought together an impressive quantity of arms and ammunition and organized themselves into a small compact unit to carry on the fight. A call to join was issued to

other army men who had refused to surrender, and in no time a guerrilla force was organized and eventually became widely recognized and supported by the people. It may be said that the Civil Government resistance organization of Governor Confesor did not draw so great an enthusiasm amongst the rank and file of the people as did the Army guerrilla organization.

ARMY GUERRILLA

I was sure there was some kind of misunderstanding between Confesor and Peralta at the start. Whatever it was, only Confesor and Peralta knew. But in the beginning, there did not seem to be any conflict between them. Each seemed to have exercised his own powers without objection or interference from the other. But in due course a fissure developed—and quite seriously. And so there were in Panay two underground organizations actually established, one a *civil* resistance movement and another a *military* resistance movement.

THE IV PHILIPPINE CORPS

Peralta, a la Confesor style, organized the IV Philippine Corps which was intended to be the rallying point of military resistance everywhere. Contacts in person and by message were sent to Mindanao, Cebu, Leyte, and Negros Occidental. In less than six months after its organization, it received the loyalty of the Negros command under Mata and Abcede, the Cebu command under Cushing, the Bohol command under Ingeniero and the Leyte command under Kangleon. Soon Masbate, Palawan, Mindoro come to rally to the IV Philippine Corps.

PANAY AS 61st DIVISION

The scheme or organizational set-up was envisioned to be something like this: With the Corps at the top of the guerrilla organization, there were to be divisions operating in the field, each division command adhering to and recognizing the IV Philippine Corps command and

taking care of the field organizations. Each division was to be composed of regiments and each regiment was divided into battalions, companies, platoons and so on down the line. The Panay Command of which I had some familiarity was placed under Lieut. Col. Reluña, with Lt. Col. Chavez as executive officer. Regimental commands were initially organized by provinces. It was called the 61st Division. I was not familiar with other resistance organizations in Negros, Cebu, Leyte, and other provinces.

CIVILIAN POPULATION SANDWICHED

With the armed military guerrilla setup thus organized, there were three authorities everywhere in Panay exercising absolute powers over the civilian population, each with the authority over life and death; namely, the Confesor resistance organization, the Peralta resistance organization and the Japanese occupation forces in Panay. The unlucky citizens who could not be members of any organizations (some had turned to the Japanese as spies or guides), were hemmed in from all sides of the vicious triangle.

To make the situation worse, the three organizations had a common policy. To be seen with any one of these organizations, however tenuous or casual contact, and more seriously to be helping any one of these organizations even if it was under duress or tortured compulsion, was considered a very serious offense which often meant imprisonment or death. Of course there was at first some kind of an unwritten agreement or understanding between the Peralta and Confesor groups, but even this could lead to complications because both groups had secret agents inside the Japanese-occupied areas who, by the nature of their work, had to conceal their identities from one or the other organization. The rank and file of the civilian population could only pray and hope for their survival. That was the situation when I joined the guerrilla movement in Panay.

I JOINED THE GUERRILLA

INITIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE RESISTANCE

I had very little participation in the underground movement before I joined the guerrilla. My activity at first was mainly running away from the Japanese to avoid being conscripted to serve them. Running away was not too difficult, considering that at the time I had only my wife and a son of three years and a maid to worry about. I would carry my boy in my arms over a long distances in the dead of night across open fields, and mountains over hills and through dense forests, with my wife and maid close on my heels. This we would often do as grape-vine intelligence brought the news that the Japanese were heading toward our hiding place five kilometers away. My other activity, which seemed to be more pleasant but dangerous, was fund-raising for both the Confesor and Peralta organizations. It involved no more than delivering speeches in which I seemed to have excelled, considering the inherent danger from the enemy. I would merely walk to a meeting, harangue the crowd for one hour, give first my own financial contribution within sight of everybody to induce others to shell out. Then I would go home—back to my hideout and family. My third activity was the hardest. I worried sick about the excesses of the underground resistance. I wanted to curb them, at least minimize them, but to no avail. I found myself helpless. People, mostly the pro-Zuluetas, were taken for a ride, that is, they were brought to the “mountains” (meaning investigation of the star-chamber type), to the “caves” (meaning imprisonment for an indefinite period and at hard labor), or “liquidated”, meaning executed.

PERALTA ASKED FOR ME

One day Peralta was reported being around, somewhere in the mountains of Lemery. He sent out word to see me. A certain Lieutenant Baldevieso from Barotac Nuevo was able to make the contact and told me of the “General’s desire.” Peralta was thought of as a “General”

and was so called at the time by many people, perhaps because he gave himself the title of a corps commander. I could not explain why Peralta sought me out. Probably it was because I was a Congressman and thus I was the highest national official living within the area of his command post. At any rate, I thought there was a chance for an airing of views and I readily agreed to see him. The following day, the contact officer came back in a car (of all things!) to pick me up. The Japanese garrison was 54 kilometers away in Iloilo City and everything was normal in the interior towns and in the hinterlands except for the excesses already mentioned. The travel overland was not bad at all. It was the 14th of November, 1942. We reached the perimeter of Peralta's post of about 12 o'clock noon, took something for lunch, continued to edge on to his command post for two more hours which was still about five kilometers away—so tight indeed were the security measures. At last we arrived at the command post. I was ordered to wait in the receiving room for one hour, after which I was ushered in before the presence of a Col. Cirilo Garcia, who subjected me to rigid screening questions. All my answers were to the effect that I did not know why I was there and that Peralta should know because he sent for me. Peralta must have been made aware at last of my presence because, at about four o'clock in the afternoon of the day I arrived, I was admitted to his room. I was already in close conversation with him when the note of the screening officer arrived and it read something like this: "Here is a gentleman who calls himself a Congressman. He is a philosopher. I cannot get anything from him." Peralta crushed the note in his hand and tossed it away, smiling. Anyway, it gave me a little satisfaction to know of the contents of the note.

FIRST LONG TALK WITH PERALTA

The lieutenant who had contacted me and brought me to see Peralta preceded me as we were guided to Peralta's "office." (Peralta had earned a reputation of being dreaded by soldiers and civilians alike.) The lieutenant announced:

"Sir, he is here. I brought him, myself," to which Peralta answered hurriedly: "All right you may step out." After the usual amenities which started with my "Hello, General", he answered with a sleepish smile, "They just call me that," then asked me to sit down and immediately we proceeded to business. He asked me if I was willing to join his organization and I promptly answered, "Why not?" When he complained about the conduct of the officials and prominent citizens, especially from Capiz and Pototan, who were kept at a detention area in San Enrique, a place about 70 kilometers away by dirt road or one day and a half distance by military hike from his hideout. He consulted me whether it would not be better for civilian morale that they should be liquidated, and I told him right off that he lacked the authority to do so. He asked me how he would be able to do it. Would a declaration of martial law be proper? I answered in the affirmative, but made the condition that there should be trial by military court. He complained against Ceferino de los Santos who was delivering speeches to his field officers warning them against the consequences of mock trials of his (de los Santos') people (all the important people in Pototan, including the parish priest, were being detained in the concentration camp). He asked me if he should not tone down his attitude, for his own soldiers might themselves do the liquidating. I requested him to tone down and pass the word down the line accordingly so that everybody would follow suit. "Well, at any rate," he added, "I am trying to force contact with General MacArthur and unless he recognizes me, I will do what I feel I should." He was trying to contact the Southwest Pacific Headquarters by radio, but out of security reasons, they refused to acknowledge his radio messages. So he had wired MacArthur that unless he received word from the latter on a certain date, he was going to liquidate Governor Hernandez of Capiz, a very close friend of MacArthur. That way he was forcing MacArthur's hand and he was sure Southwest Pacific would answer. After a two hour exchange of views and a whisper from somebody in the kitchen, he suddenly told

me, "I think you better be Judge Advocate of the 61st Division and report to Col. Reluña immediately. Tell him all we talked about and also please advise him well." With that we parted. He did not even invite me for supper and I was almost dying of hunger.

I was to know Peralta better as the guerrilla progressed, and I will later on make my assessment of the man and the way he ran the guerrilla outfit in Panay. But his designation of me as Judge Advocate of the 61st Division, the armed group that was operating in the Panay area, elicited my first admiration of the man. I thought all along that he was self-conceited, a boastful, irresponsible type of person. My impression of him on our first meeting was that nobody could or should entrust the life and liberty of about one and a half million people to such a character. Here was one who could not convince me to agree to any of his propositions regarding military justice and yet he readily entrusted its administration in the area to me. I found out later that even in the establishment of courts martial, which were essentially unit prerogatives of an army at war, nobody was to interfere with my decisions including Reluña and even him. Hungry but happy, I was taken home in the same car. There was, then, somebody who could look after the civilian population. He gave me the full responsibility to do it—of all people—by the most feared leader of the armed underground resistance movement in Panay.

ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND

It took me one week before I could report to the Division Headquarters in San Enrique, which was about five hours' walking distance from Banate. When I arrived and introduced myself to G.I (Personnel), I discovered that I had been commissioned captain and appointed Chief of the Judge Advocate Service. The rank did not bother me at all. I was treated as a very important person, and it seemed that I outranked everybody except Reluña and Chavez, who did not give any intimation that they outranked me. I did not know why it was so with Reluña.

Chavez was my pal in Manila during our college days and up to and until the end of the guerrilla days he always addressed me Johnny—it could only be expected of him.

FAMILIARIZATION WITH THE JOB

I immediately set myself to the job of organizing my staff. I chose an executive officer and started looking for other lawyers to join the staff. It did not take long. Many Zulueta followers outside of the armed guerrilla organization joined it when they knew I was in. Pending full organization of the Office, I tried to familiarize myself with the operation of the general and the special staffs. Then I visited concentration camps. To my surprise I found that everybody of consequence in the 3rd and 4th districts of Iloilo was there. The Governor of Capiz, Gabriel (Kuroki) Hernandez, ex-Congressman Federico Tirador and Asuncion Arancillo (both of the hometown of Congressman de los Santos), the influential citizens of the towns of Pototan including its parish priest, and that of Janiuay including its grand old man, Don Jose Locsin—simply because they were found in the poblacion or the municipal seat of Government at the time when the guerrilla forces drove the Japanese out. The governor of Misamis Oriental, Vivencio Villarín and Tomas Cloma, a businessman from Bohol, were also there. They were captured when they were on their way back to their respective provinces. The Japanese goods and money in their possession were confiscated. All of them desperately appealed to me personally, even to the extent of offering to give up a few costly belongings which they were able to hide from their captors. I assured them that they could expect justice from me but to bide their time since any rash action I might take could easily be misinterpreted, which would be prejudicial to them and to others who were similarly situated in other concentration camps.

“HIT AND RUN”

The tactic employed by both Japanese forces and the guerrilla was the so-called “hit and run”. On the Japanese side, it was for the purpose of notifying all and sundry

that they had the occupation well in hand. They might have fooled people in the occupied areas, but not the guerrillas and the people outside. Everybody in the hinterlands knew that when Japanese forces were retired from the Southwest Pacific area for rest and/or reassignment, on passing Panay which was considered the strongest guerrilla organization, they made it a point to go out for a week to impress the guerrilla of their strength. Every time a new contingent of forces was sent to the Southwest Pacific area, they stayed also for sometime in Panay for the same purpose or probably also for practice in jungle fighting. At any rate, the guerrillas always knew these things in advance and prepared for it. So when the Japanese were on the rampage, the guerrillas were on the run. As soon as the bulk of the Japanese left, the guerrillas came back to take over, and the local Japanese garrisons, which were naturally not strong enough for the guerrilla forces, in turn, did the running.

On the part of the guerrilla "hit and run" was the standard operating procedure until instructions came from Gen. MacArthur. The over-all purpose was harassment. So whenever and wherever the guerrillas had a chance for an even fight, they struck until they felt that they were at a disadvantage. Then they took to the run. This practice became hateful to the civilians, since each time one force or the other occupied their local area, some people had to face concentration or imprisonment and others had to be liquidated. As for those who were not thus molested, their possessions gradually dwindled. (Part of the tactic consisted in the destruction if not outright confiscation of the supplies, especially foodstuffs of the civilians.) So, those who suffered most were the civilians. Their familiar appellation of this tactic, especially with reference to the guerrillas whom they considered their protector by reason of kinship, race or nationality was "eat and run". But the civilians never revealed this attitude to the high command—except to me and other sympathetic officers in the guerrilla forces—in order to avoid overcrowding in our

concentration camps, or perhaps outright liquidation without benefit of investigation.

I was hardly installed in my job when I got a taste of this tactic. For one week after I had reported, the Japanese tried to capture our headquarters in San Enrique. But before they could even be at a shooting distance, we were on the move away from the principal roads and transferred to our alternate headquarters in Calinog, a place which the Japanese could not very well go to without danger of ambush. It was about a month later, when the Japanese, strafing and mortal shelling, drove us out of headquarters on the main roads and we took the mountains, just few kilometers away. For about one year after, the guerrillas were on the move from place to place, but always far from the townsite.

THE MACARTHUR RECOGNITION

In the meantime contact with Southwest Pacific Allied Headquarters was established but not before certain requirements were met. We were required to identify the last place where President Quezon was in Negros Island when he went elsewhere to the Visayas after leaving Iloilo Province to which he was ferried by submarine from Corregidor. An officer of the guerrilla from Negros Occidental immediately identified the place and MacArthur was satisfied. He immediately gave Panay his recognition naming Peralta as Commanding Officer of the 6th military district with the rank of Colonel. He did the same for Mindanao naming Fertig as Commander of the 10th military district that covered the whole island, also with the rank of Colonel. We were later on to transmit that message to Fertig. We were to operate as an intelligence unit and to avoid as much possible contact with the enemy and only in the course of an intelligence operation. MacArthur refused confirmation of declaration of martial law on the ground that we were operating under enemy territory. It also admonished against mock trials and required strict enforcement of military justice. Finally, it recognized Confesor's organization for civil government and

required respect for and cooperation with it.

DIVERSE REACTIONS TO MACARTHUR DIRECTIONS

Peralta circularized this information from the Southwest Pacific Headquarters, which produced a sign of relief from all the important officials and citizens in concentration camps. On the side of the Confesor group the message produced great rejoicing and derisive chuckles directed mainly against the Peralta military command. The Confesor group interpreted it to mean that they had superiority over the military command of Peralta. On the Peralta side, it was a decisive victory to be among the first to be recognized as a compact organization and to be able to communicate with Southwest Pacific Headquarters, which thereafter was contacted every afternoon at a designated time. On my part I took it to mean that military justice was to be meted out as long as I was in charge of its supervision and control.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

RADIO

Radio communication system was monopolized by Peralta. I started from the two units operating between Peralta and Reluña and expanded to as many as ten or eleven units. It was under the over-all command of Lt. Col. Amos Francia. Each regiment had its own. This was probably why Peralta had to set up his headquarters high up in the mountains of Antique. How they put together those radio transmitting and receiving stations, and more, how they kept them operating was something like a miracle to me. Then the packing, transporting and re-setting up after each enemy operation, over mountains, forest, turbulent streams exemplified an ingenuity that defied any explanation. And these did not seldom happen. By triangulation or whatever you may call a system of finding out an operating station, the Japanese could always pinpoint our regimental signal headquarters and, whenever they had ability to do it, they would raid our positions.

COURIER SYSTEM

This was one way of communication Confesor had ahead of Peralta. Having mayors everywhere and deputy governors over them, orders were transmitted in writing and sent by couriers. When the guerrilla set-up was organized throughout Panay and Romblon, Peralta had his own, which was faster and more effective than Confesor's. As a matter of fact the only contact with Confesor's headquarters was through this means of communication. Confesor was never able to set up his own radio communication system, either through lack of means or as a measure of security. Confesor knew that its disadvantages could easily offset its advantages. He did not take the calculated risk that Peralta did.

REORGANIZATION

As a result of MacArthur's directives, we were notified to converge in the mountains of San Dionisio for rebriefing. Also, there was necessity of reorganization in view of the change of strategy from "hit and run" harassing tactics to intelligence which reneged it. Panay was divided into regimental teams of which were seven, with three in Iloilo, two in Antique and two in Capiz. Each was to operate under the ordinary command line technique but always for the purpose of intelligence. Each had to have its own radio communication system to Peralta's headquarters, a courier system with other regiments and Peralta and its own internal courier system. There was therefore the Peralta headquarters, which only top officers knew, the Reluña headquarters for divisional operation, the regimental, batallion and company headquarters, and so on down the line. Staff conferences were to be held as much as possible. I was to be under Reluña as his staff judge advocate.

MILITARY JUSTICE

HANDBOOK ON MILITARY JUSTICE PROCEDURES

In no time, I was ready with my reorganization and procedural plans. I cannot now remember how I did it, but

some way or another, I got hold of a book on court martial proceedings which included pre-trial investigations. From that book, I outlined in a nutshell, proceedings leading to court martial, and the court martial itself. The pamphlet was in outline form including drawings of positions of the respective officers in court martial proceedings and the duties of the legal member and the presiding officer, the prosecution and the defense. For a guerrilla organization it presented in concise and understandable form all proceedings that had to be undertaken from the time a man or a soldier under military discipline committed a punishable act to the time a judgment was rendered on him up to review and approval. When presented at a staff meeting of the Reluña command, it was approved unanimously. (How I wish I could have copy of that pamphlet). It was typed in many copies and distributed to the entire field command of Reluña.

ASSIGNMENT OF LAWYER-OFFICERS

Then I asked that all lawyers under the command that I could use be placed under my staff, except the inspector general's lawyer officers, and this was also approved in spite of protests from other staffs. I also asked for authority to form courts martial in all regimental commands and I got it over the objections of the regimental commanders. One commander got so mad he threatened to imprison any member of the court martial appointed to operate in his area. I countered by appointing him president of the court martial of his command and from that time on, that court martial was conducting the most orderly proceedings in his area. This was all accomplished in less than two months' time. Less than six months after I joined the guerrilla, the machinery of military justice was well recognized and organized in all regimental commands in the 6th Military District and in full operation. My own staff could devote its time to reviewing investigations and court martial decisions for transmission to the district commander, through the division commanding officer.

PROMPT JUSTICE IMPERATIVE

The central idea behind the set-up that I organized was to mete out justice and do it fast. Complaints from the civilian population were mounting and since we were living a hunted life, civilian cooperation and sympathy was indispensable. To me this was vital for our intelligence mission, and also the most expedient and proper thing to do under the circumstances. Our concentration camps were growing in size every day and when it came to Peralta's attention that we had around three thousand people in all our concentration camps, he "blew his top" and called Reluña's attention to the seeming impotence of our military justice set-up.

MORE TROUBLES WITH OFFICERS FACING
COURT MARTIAL

I immediately got into trouble with the operations of the courts martial. Since key and important officers were involved and these officers could not get protection from their respective higher echelons, they had appealed to me personally. They were always accompanied by men carrying BIR's to plead their case. Under the circumstances it was easy for an armed staff officer to be cowed with some show of force. But it was not so in my case. Even if I did not know everybody, they all knew that I was not only a staff officer but also a Congressman, who was reputed throughout the province to be one with a fighting temperament. Besides, they did not meet someone, to their surprise, dressed as one of importance but one only in shorts and polo shirt. In the majority of cases, they always came to me personally to ask if they could see the Judge Advocate. Invariably, they would be shocked to find out that the man they were looking for was not even dressed better than their soldiers. They would be disarmed, as it were. And to add discomfiture to an already disarmed opponent, I would ask them to eat with me, tell them with conviction that we were going to win the war, and that these crimes would eventually be investigated anyway. And, as a coup de grace I would ask, "Would you rather be tried by the

Americans or by your own compeers in the guerrilla?" Then there was the cordial withdrawal and the sincere thanks for my helpfulness. Thus I escaped harm or the slightest harassment from the people who felt that I behaved very much unlike a guerrilla.

FAST INVESTIGATIONS AND COURT MARTIALS

With an army hiding, there is hardly time to spare or opportunity to sit down in formal proceedings from day to day. For this reason, I realized that organization of the court martials alone was not sufficient. So, disregarding instructions outlined in my military justice proceedings pamphlet completely, I went from concentration camp to another and conducted investigations. I made on the spot decisions in the name of the Division Command. The visit was always short but decisive. Assisted by the judge advocate assigned to regimental command and the provost marshal officer who was considered the jailor, I lined up from four to seven hundred prisoners in a camp. As I went from one prisoner to another, I would ask the question, "Why are you here?" Then I checked from the provost marshal if he was telling the truth. I then said either "detain" or "release" by order of the "Division Commander" or the "District Commander". That finished the hearing. When I got through with the proceedings hardly fifty or one hundred were left. These answers would normally be sufficient reason for release: I was in town when the guerrillas drove the Japanese out;" "I was caught in a boat that was coming back from the Japanese occupied area;" "I came from Bataan Concentration Camp;" I was in the Japanese PC and had to go out to get away from them." These answers would normally mean retention: "I was in company of the Japanese raiding party;" "I was captured when fighting with the Japanese PC;" "They said I pointed out a guerrilla to the Japanese and he was imprisoned or liquidated." When I got through with my visits, hardly five hundred were left in our concentration camps, for which Peralta was glad.

FINANCING THE GUERRILLA

PRINTING OF GUERRILLA NOTES

Late in the 42's, there was felt an urgent need for money. Peralta decided on continuing the Currency Committee created before the Japanese occupation, substituting members who were unavailable. Authority therefor was asked from Southwest Pacific Headquarters, but it was slow in coming. We proceeded, anyway. Soldiers had to be paid and commandeering goods from the citizens who were themselves hard pressed for money was a continuing irritant. Then the Confesor outfit was in dire straits. At first the printing was a very slow process. Money was printed in small denominations for easy spending. Paper and ink had to be sneaked out of Japanese occupied areas. Also our printing equipment was very inadequate and had to be installed in a very secure place that was very inaccessible. Initially, it was under the charge of Maj. Castillon, a high school teacher from the Iloilo Provincial High School. When the need for this currency became very acute, printing in bigger denominations, including the 500-peso ones was authorized. By that time printing was placed under Col. William Gemperle, a very well known millionaire businessman of Swiss descent, but already an American citizen. When the printing was finally stopped, money printed in Panay reached the staggering total of 42 millions! MacArthur was so frightened that he warned us that we had to assume responsibility for this after the war. And assume, we did. It was to be one of my serious tasks, later on, upon my reelection as Congressman for the 5th district of Iloilo in 1946, to press Congress for the redemption of money printed, not only in Panay but in other parts of the Philippines. I sweated it out in Congress but finally succeeded in having all such guerrilla printed money redeemed at reduced rates and at delayed intervals. I doubt if, at this time, any amount of such currency has remained unredeemed. As for the money, authority for the printing of which was secured before the surrender to the Japanese, very little, if any, has been done for their redemption. The United States recognized only guerrilla currency for the

purpose of deducting from backpay intended for guerrillas. The FAR EAST director of the American Foreign Liquidation Commission agreed to set aside only between 15 and 20 million pesos for the money thus printed and at that, Senator Pendatun, representing the Senate and I, representing the House, had to sweat it out to get him to agree.

SUBMARINE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHWEST PACIFIC

CPG AREA FOR SUBMARINE RENDEZVOUS

About mid-1943, arrangements had been made for submarine contacts with Peralta. An area in Panay in the general vicinity of Pandan in northwestern Antique was designated for the purpose. Each time a contact was to be made, guerrilla operations were scheduled somewhere to deceive the Japanese. The first shipments consisted of carbines, TG's, ammunitions, medical supplies, especially the sulfas, signal equipment and a few flattering propaganda materials like candies and chocolate bars, American cigarettes with MacArthur's "I shall return" labels. But the area which was named CPG for identification purposes and which also stood for the initials of Cirilo P. Garcia, the area commander and Peralta's trusted man, was inaccessible to everybody, including guerrilla outfit not under Garcia's command. On its return, we loaded the submarine with reports of our activities, including a complete roster of officers and troops for the approval of MacArthur. Many such contacts were made. In one of the return trips we shipped Americans to Australia, including Gemperle himself. American flyers shot down in Iloilo were similarly sent to Australia. When the Japanese finally learned of these contacts and pinpointed the area, they could no longer penetrate it because the area had so grown in defense power that only a Japanese contingent with superior force could overcome it. The Japanese eventually knew our strategy and could tell almost definitely the arrival of the submarine in the area. It was enough that the guerrillas started to attack them elsewhere to convince them that some

submarine was having a rendezvous in the area. No matter how much they tried they never succeeded. The area become impregnable.

I was one of the lucky recipients of the supplies sent through submarine. On one of my visits to Peralta high up in the mountains of Antique, I was given a complete jungle type uniform, with cap and jungle boots. That the articles had been used and might have been worn by a war casualty and that they were actually over-sized for me were no reasons for rejecting them. I accepted them with genuine gladness and appreciation. Anyway, they could be made to fit at the proper places. Then, too, I got a TG and a few rounds of ammunition. As for cigarettes, I probably had a total of about ten pieces until I accompanied Peralta to Leyte, early in 1945.

INTENSIFICATION OF JAPANESE OPERATIONS

By 1943, the Japanese intensified their operations. It seemed that they had come to realize Panay to be the very sore spot south of Manila. Because we were under superior orders to avoid clashes, and because there was a rather large contingent of Japanese soldiers especially in Iloilo, with superior equipment and facilities, prudence became the better part of valor. We had to disperse all over the island. Headquarters were located always on temporary basis, with courier service intensified. I, too, had to disperse my small staff of about five officers, fifteen non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men into three groups to avoid capture of all and to insure continuity of service in case one group was captured. We maintained courier service between ourselves. My own quarters was easily found by my men through my dog, which they named "JAS" for Judge Advocate Service. When they saw the dog they knew I could not be very far. I personally hated being in the mountain hideouts. I preferred stationing my units near the Japanese garrisons since they could easily be seen when they went out and their operations

were always directed to places far from their security areas.

As the end of the year approached, the Japanese were operating everywhere and even our intelligence units could not determine the main direction of their operation. It was the diversionary. They burned, they killed, they tortured. I became one of the heaviest hit from this operation. My wife and two small boys, one four years and the other six months, including two dependents, were killed. My two brothers suffered the same fate. My father was tied to one post of a house which they burned, from which he miraculously escaped. How I escaped with the whole headquarters personnel of the chief of staff was something I could attribute to God. But the chief of staff was out in conference with Reluña, the commanding officer, and all his staff could do was to place itself under my disposal. Following our previous agreement with the assistant chief of staff, Maj. Cornelio, who at that time outranked me, all my orders and instructions were followed. My orders were to push through the Japanese command posts and outposts, pierce through their lines and move towards their rear. At one time we had to pass at night through two burning Japanese outposts, one hardly one hundred meters from the other. We rushed headlong into a river stinking with the smell of dead cattle and people decomposing on the river bed. After a short pause for a drink, we climbed the opposite bank and rested when I was quite sure that we were on a safe zone. After two days of such gruesome adventure, we were behind Japanese lines, temporarily safe. We could, at least, snatch a little rest.

CHANGE OF GUERRILLA ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CIVILIAN POPULATION

CIVILIANS ALLOWED TO DEAL WITH THE JAPANESE

The Japanese savagery, which resulted in the loss of many civilian lives and destruction of their possessions, was not without its silver lining. Because of this, we seriously considered allowing civilian cooperation with the

Japanese without reprisal from the guerrilla. I, myself, started this. In the midst of Japanese operations and atrocities, I was requested by the important elements of the municipality of Barotac Viejo, where I had a half day's sleep after two day trek from the area of Japanese operation. I allowed them to negotiate with the Japanese operation chief to form a civil government that was to be under Japanese sponsorship. The officials of this local administration must, however, continue to keep contact with the guerrilla forces in the mountains and whenever possible to keep identity of these forces from the Japanese. If guerrilla positions had to be revealed, messages should be sent in advance so that safe withdrawal could be effected. I gave the authority in the name of the Panay Division Command. One month later, I was called by the Division Commander himself, Col. Reluña, to put this proposition down in writing. I did. Then this proposition was taken to Peralta himself by Reluña's Chief of Staff, Col. Chavez. After two days of deliberation which, according to Chavez, was accompanied by much heated discussion, it was approved by the district commander. One of principal arguments raised against the policy was the possibility of antagonizing the Confesor group, which had not been previously consulted. But, since time was the essence, lives had to be saved, and foodstuffs and other necessities had to be spared. The decision had to be made as a calculated risk.

JAPANESE APPOINTED OFFICIALS SUBJECT TO GUERRILLA APPROVAL

The scheme was to operate this way. Long before any Japanese units could reach any town, there was to be a complete set-up, previously approved by any guerrilla unit operating in the area, to be chosen by the citizens of the town. This local organization was to have an agreement with the officer in charge of the Japanese garrison not to patrol areas outside the town site or garrison without previous notice to the mayor, so that the mayor could accompany the patrolling unit. The mayor could thus identify people found in places of operation. Should the area in-

tended for operation be the command post of any guerilla unit, a runner was to be sent by the mayor to give the warning.

I was to try this myself personally. The Japanese had occupied Dueñas, a town just the other side of the river where I had established my temporary command post. One morning, the Japanese visited a barrio just on the edge of the river on the other side. Since the standard Japanese operating procedure was not to revisit a peaceful barrio they had visited, I immediately crossed the river and established my CP in the barrio just visited, and, in the afternoon of that day sent for the mayor. He agreed with me that the Japanese would not revisit the barrio but, just in case they did without notifying him, I must give a certain name and give my occupation as a teacher so that when brought back as prisoner, he would know how to identify me. On a previous occasion when there was to be some kind of celebration in the townsite, I sent all my junior officers there and, identified as teachers, they got into revelry complete with speeches in the dialect attacking the Japanese, with the Japanese participating in the clapping. All the Japanese understood, and very little at that, was English. Two days later I received a rush note from a courier of the mayor that the Japanese might revisit our area. All I did was to move across the river, where we were very much nearer the Japanese garrison than before.

GUERRILLA SUPERVISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SUCCESSFUL

By and large, the scheme worked out very well. There were isolated cases when, an army unit moving into a placed and without knowing the existing arrangements, refused to take the mayor's message at their face value. On being surprised by the Japanese in their area, some of them took vengeance against the mayor and killed him. This happened in Pototan. Raving mad, Peralta demanded drastic measure against the officer responsible. In another instance, a barrio lieutenant who was supposed to be the

executive of his barrio, sent out word to an army unit bivouacking in his area that the Japanese would be there the following day. Instead of believing the courier, the unit commander ridiculed him. Sure, as indicated in the advance notice, a Japanese unit accompanied by the barrio lieutenant, visited the place and everybody had to scamper for dear life. They had the barrio lieutenant arrested and insisted on his court martial. I vetoed the proposition and that was the end of it. Except for his and a few other minor incidents, the scheme worked out very well and, in the end, it really paid dividends for all concerned.

THE PERALTA-CONFESOR CLEAVAGE

REASONS FOR THE BREAK

The existence of two independent anti-Japanese organizations in Panay and Romblon was unfortunate, not to say disastrous, to the cause of resistance movement. It did not require too much rationalization to expect that sooner or later, there would be a break. Under normal circumstances, this could be avoided. Effective liaisoning, frequent dialogues and frequent interchange, even just by written communications, could have minimized, if not prevented, the break. Their absence could result in misunderstanding and make the break inevitable.

CLEAVAGE EXPECTED

Suspicious of the growing cleavage was not local. Even MacArthur must have heard of this. He sent an officer under the name of "Capt. Cruz" to Peralta. He sent Col. Villamor, the Filipino flying ace of World War II renown, to Confesor. There could have been something to this, but I am afraid, only Peralta and Confesor, the latter of whom is already dead, could give proper enlightenment. And even at that it is entirely possible that they would have different versions.

My own suspicion of the imminence of the break came when I was called by Peralta early in 1942 and asked to join his outfit. Why should he call for me, when I was

openly against everything that was being done in the areas unoccupied by the Japanese and vehemently against the stand of Confesor in case of enemy occupation? Peralta was the only Filipino officer present in our conference with General Christie before the Japanese landed and possibly knew my attitude towards the Confesor stand. Then the proposition for a declaration of martial law could have been directed precisely against the Confesor group, which was running Panay under the martial law. That explained the derisive celebrations in the Confesor camp when MacArthur considered the Peralta declaration of martial law illegal and the recognition of Confesor's superior authority over the civilian population.

The break came about slowly and almost unostensibly. Everybody felt it. For one thing, the attitude of the Confesor group on civilian conduct of dealing with the enemy was never known. Each time a guerrilla unit wrested control of a town from the Japanese, the civilians could be exposed to arrest by his followers and to investigation. So, the Peralta group adopted a policy of investigating everybody found in a place taken from the enemy and given clearance papers from further investigations. These clearances were respected by the Confesor followers and the people flocked to my representative after each town has reoccupied. My staff officer had already a form clearance prepared and all he had to do was to enter the name of the person investigated and to sign the clearance. Hence, it took him time to clear almost everybody. On the other hand, clearance papers issued by the Conference group were accepted in guerrilla circles and in this way, the civilian population was spared trips to the mountains, investigations, detention in concentration camps or perhaps death.

SECOND CONFERENCE WITH PERALTA

By about the middle of 1944, I was called to report to Peralta in Antique. I did not know he had promoted me to Major until he greeted me to join Col. Jurado, who was having a hard time getting his command recognized in

Mindoro. I immediately turned down the proposition and offered a counter-proposition that I be assigned to a fighting unit, if only to even up the loss of my family with the Japanese. He brushed aside my counter-proposition and so the result was for us to be together. There was nothing to do but to study each other for sometime. He said he called me for consultation about a question I was asking myself. At that time also, an adopted son of Confesor, who had the rank of a lieutenant, was there as sort of liaison officer. I had to go over the highest mountain peaks of Panay walking from six in the morning to six in the evening to reach him after four days. He must have had something very important for me. From our conversations and the casual random remarks from either of us, I was able to piece our thoughts into something clear and definite. At the time there was discontent, all Ilongos in Panay who had dealings with or who were in the Confesor bandwagon were under suspicion. It seemed that Confesor was trying to organize them into an effective fighting group so that he, too, could have an armed organization. Those who commanded his regiments were Ilongos close to him. I was the best person to deal with the Ilongos then. Besides, Col. Chavez, the highest ranking and most respected guerrilla officer in Iloilo, was a very close friend of mine. Then, too, my executive officer, Captain Celso, was a very close relative of the Chavez's. It was, therefore, decided that I set up my central office with Col. Chavez. With this agreement reached, I got up early one morning and hiked back to the mountains of Iloilo without even saying goodbye to Peralta. I did not want to give him the time nor the chance to change his mind. I was afraid he might decide to keep me for some time in his headquarters, a thing everybody dreaded because nobody could stay in his headquarters without getting sick of diarrhea, what with the meals consisting mainly of rice-coffee and water boiled with a sprinkling of rice. All the time I was in his headquarters I noticed that the cowbone which was boiled with the rice never seemed to have been removed from the cooking can. Of course, Peralta's food was not always like that.

At that time there were plans for a general organization, and so my stay with Peralta was not without some good turns for me. In the first place, when I got hold of a telegram of Reluña recommending me for the position of Chief Judge Advocate of the Peralta outfit, I appointed myself to the position. Forthwith, I instructed Reluña to circularize the appointment to the Field Command, signing the telegram in Peralta's name. The following day, when Peralta asked me who sent the telegram, we just had a good laugh. In the second place, disobeying standing orders of Peralta meant only one full meal a day for me; but Mrs. Peralta, whom I met for the first time, always had merienda for the officers, which she concocted from many things and which when taken together tasted like fruit cocktail or sugar plum. In the third place, whenever Peralta was not looking, I would go to the enlisted men in charge of food procurement and enjoy a full rice meal, vegetables, dried fish, and all. I did not tell the other officers in the headquarters about this for fear that they might follow suit. In the fourth place, I became so personally close to the Peralta's that I could enjoy the privilege of watching him eat his single meal of the day, which he took at about nine o'clock at night. His meals were special complete with one fried egg and fried rice and some sugar-ed peanuts. So close were we that, without being invited to share his sumptuous meal, I would just help myself to some of the delicacies. I recall how he would eat very fast every time I had the chance to be near him when he was eating, so he would have the lion's share of the food. Finally, I had occasion to endear myself to the officers who were close to him and to his wife and child, who could not communicate with Peralta, since all the boy spoke was Ilongo and his father spoke nothing but English. The only word both could mutually understand was "kalayo" (fire). When his father shouted out the word, the boy would immediately bring a lighted splinter with which to light his cigarette. It seemed that from then on, I was considered a personal member of his staff, both official and family, and enjoyed many privileges, as well as the confidence of everybody.

Back in the lowlands of Iloilo, I started looking for my wife (I had married the younger sister of my first wife), whom I had to leave with a deputy of Confesor, Mayor Arenga of Dueñas, a very close friend of mine. Under the circumstance, when the Japanese were on the rampage killing and burning houses in the area, this was the most prudent thing to do. Besides I had to comply with Peralta's order to report to him, and it was not safe for a woman to be tagging along. I found her safe and sound, as well as the remainder of my staff. Without letting anybody in on vital decisions in Antique, I tried to observe, with my periodic trips around, the veracity of Peralta's fears about the attempts of the Confesor camp to woo some of our important officers. There was nothing to it the way I looked at things. In the first place, upon intensification of the Japanese operations, the Confesor group became very scarce. In the second place, the seeming discontent of some officers rose from the fact that Chavez had the fullest confidence of Peralta. In the third place, with the common enemy having the upper hand, there was little time for intrigue among groups who fought for the same cause. So, I postponed joining the Chavez headquarters, which was in the high mountains of Panay and which I did not exactly like as a hideout. Finally, the guerrilla policy of allowing civilian intercourse with the Japanese on conditional basis was finding acceptance and was working well. The guerrillas, who were getting credit for that, were winning the cooperation of the civilians except in few isolated areas. Furthermore, we learned from our radios that the island hopping tactics of MacArthur were producing results and that liberation was coming in just a matter of months.

THIRD MEETING WITH PERALTA

I hardly settled in the lowlands when a call for me, which was relayed to all headquarters in Iloilo, was again made. I decided to take my wife to the Chavez headquarters and leave her there to spare her the long trip to Peralta's headquarters in Antique, which had to be negotiated

in four days. In less than four hours after my arrival at the Chavez mountain hideout, he was able to make a tree-house for my wife, assigned her a maid and an orderly. The following day I was on my way.

This time our meetings were business-like. Every indication pointed to the early coming of the Americans and the fighting units had to be organized for battle. The first question taken up was on the authority I had exercised in recruiting lawyers to my unit without consulting G-1 (Personnel). As I was closeted alone with Peralta, he tried to convince me to yield, since upon request, G-1 would accommodate anyway. I refused. So, the staff was immediately convoked for decision. Everybody was at attention except me. (I simply put my feet on the table in front of my chair). Everybody outranked me. The decision was finally made to my satisfaction. My orders were going to be respected and I could use the name of Peralta in connection therewith. G-1 was to be immediately notified or furnished with copies of the orders and was to issue corresponding orders to legalize them. This settled once and for all a very ticklish situation. From then on, the personal staff of Peralta began to consider me not inferior to anybody, except Peralta.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT REORGANIZED

The other conferences were matters between me and Peralta. It appeared imminent that the Americans were coming back to the Philippines and were not to "frog leap" over it. There was, therefore, a necessity for reorganizing units, not only the civil government but also the guerrilla outfits. It was not simply a matter of army strategy but an over-all one intended to convince many quarters of the general effectivity of the guerrilla forces under the 6th Military District. First, there must be effective civil governments in the provinces of Panay and Romblon. Since Confesor was actively engaged only in most portions of Iloilo, and at most, could be governor only of his province, we decided to appoint governors for the provinces of Antique, Capiz, and Romblon. Calixto Zaldivar, ex-rep-

representative from Antique, who was serving as Judge Advocate in the CPG area, was named governor of Antique; Cornelio T. Villareal, incumbent Congressman from the 2nd district of Capiz, was named governor of Capiz, and Capt. Mario Guariña, officer of the CPG area, was named governor of Romblon, who was ordered to proceed there to install himself and exercise the powers of governor. Confesor was to remain governor of Iloilo Province. All these were immediately implemented.

FIELD COMMAND REORGANIZED

As for the regimental commanders, I insisted on the removal of Col. Pedro Serran from the northernmost part of Iloilo, which embraced part of my district. Serran was a very able officer and one of Peralta's closest associates. But public relations-wise, there were so many killings in his area, including that of the mayor of Carles, a councilor of Estancia, a prominent citizen of Concepcion who was the father-in-law of the mayor of San Dionisio. These did not augur well for civilian cooperation. But because of his capabilities, he was to be called to headquarters to organize a striking force for Iloilo City upon the coming of the Americans. Dator, who was from the fifth district, was to remain as commanding the whole northern part of Iloilo and Chavez was to take over the southern portion. The main argument for Chavez was that besides his proven capacity for organization, administration and leadership, he was also in good terms with Confesor. Braullo Villasis was to remain in Capiz, Cirilo P. Garcia in the CPG area, and Grasparil in Antique. Reluña was to be the Chief of Staff of Peralta. All these were to continue the work of intelligence until further orders.

As for the notorious Confesor deputies who were reputed to have boasted of killing civilians after a mock trials they were going to be ordered arrested. These included Benedicto, Confesor's chief lieutenant and alter ego, Diasnes of Dumangas and Buyco of Anilao. My only request with regards to the deputies of Confesor was that they be detained in a camp very near me so that they could

be safe from harm or liquidation. All these were implemented immediately while I was still in the Peralta headquarters.

As for the army reorganization, I remembered how one day, Serran breezed into Peralta's headquarters, shook hands with everybody except me. Obviously he did not know me — I was dressed in shorts and polo shirt. He barged immediately into Peralta's office and shouted his protests against his relief and asked, "Who is this Borra, anyway?" All those around, including me, heard his protestations. In a short time, there was almost sepulchral silence and Serran came out to shake my hands. Then he pleaded that, to save his prestige, he should be returned to his command. But I countered nicely that with the imminence of the American landing in the Philippines, there was a necessity for organizing a striking force that was to take over Iloilo City. The decision had been made, I told him, that he was the one most fitted for the job, and that if it were prestige he was after, there could be no better evidence than to be chosen among a group of many other competent officers. He simmered down and even relished the idea. That ended any protest from the guerrilla group.

As for the Confesor group, with the reorganization of civil government in Panay and Romblon and the order of arrest of the chief Confesor deputies, the break came into the open. The cleavage between the two — Confesor and Peralta — was no longer a secret.

At about that time, too, Colonels Nicanor Velarde and Manuel Salientes reported back to Peralta. Velarde was among the top staff officers of Gen. Christie and Salientes was a West Pointer. They were initially given the ranks of Captain, to be later promoted to Major, but they took it in good grace. After all they joined the guerrilla late, when they probably realized that, although victory was not yet near, the Americans were surely coming back. And with those, in the Peralta Headquarters, rank did not mean much. Velarde always went under the title of Nic and Salientes, either Sally or Manny (for Manuel). There were,

therefore, no resentments nor loss of prestige, at least, it so appeared.

BACK TO ILOILO

After all these conferences, it became just a matter of waiting for Peralta's good nature to show up (it seldom did) to allow me to return to Iloilo. His good nature did show up, and early one morning (he always woke up 9:00 o'clock) I hurriedly left before he changed his mind. I was on my way to Iloilo again. But this time, for no reason at all, I decided to pass through the Confesor area. The officers and enlisted men who were with me were terrified! They knew that I was not exactly liked by the Confesor people and only they could guide me and supply me with means for travel. Army units had been removed from that area, including the southern part of Antique, to avoid frictions between the two groups. But the fears of my companions were more imagined than real. Being very well known to the Confesor people, because I had served as senior board member during part of his incumbency as governor, we were not even harassed or ignored. On the other hand, I was accorded almost special privileges.

No wonder Governor Confesor chose that portion of Panay for his security hideout. It was almost inaccessible, what with stiff cliffs and mountain ridges passes plus an almost ever present corps of flying leeches which made our normal route over the central Panay ranges look like picnicking trails. In less than four days I was back in the Col. Chavez hideout. Two days later I joined Col. Chavez on a trip to the lower mountain regions, where he was to establish his advance headquarters, and I to make my routine trips to the lowlands.

THE LAST MAJOR JAPANESE OPERATIONS

All of a sudden, the Japanese concentration in Iloilo became heavy. The scant Japanese garrison must have been reenforced from forces being withdrawn from the Southwest Pacific, where the Allied Forces under MacArthur had almost complete control, to the Philippines,

which the Japanese assumed could be the next MacArthur target. On one of my visits to the area of Col. Dator, Maj. Inocencio Fallaria was able to raid a Japanese advance headquarters and take from a senior officer who was killed in the raid, a map of the Japanese operation. From the signal corps of Col. Dator, I wired Peralta informing him about the Japanese sweep, including his own area. The Japanese forces were finally to converge in the CPG, which was considered by the Japanese to be the stronghold of the Panay guerrillas. When the Japanese combed through his command post, Peralta was quite prepared to sneak out and cheat the Japanese. As for the CPG area, the Japanese became discouraged after two weeks of operation and had to abandon the hinterlands to prepare for defensive positions in the perimeters of the provincial capitals of the province of Iloilo, Capiz and Antique. I myself spent some time trying to force my way to the Japanese cordon, upon being informed that my second wife and that of Col. Chavez were missing from his mountain CP. But on insistence of guerrilla units and civilian friends, I finally acquiesced to wait for news about them, but sent an enlisted man anyway to accompany a group of finance people who were to bring money to our beleaguered forces in the mountains. When news finally came of their safety after ten days and nights of hide and seek, I resorted to my old trick of going back to the lowlands, passing very near Japanese garrisons I worked my way back to the advance headquarters of Chavez, where I was reunited with my wife. It seemed that their mountain outposts were captured by the Japanese and when Chavez sent his aide with a contingent to help them out, the aide was killed and his unit had to withdraw. The women had to scamper for dear life and led and/or dragged by soldiers, reached the area of safety after ten days of hide-and-seek and were escorted by an army unit back to the Chavez advance headquarters. My own man, whom I had sent one week ahead to help out, arrived at the Chavez headquarters one week after I did. He was haggard, pale and emaciated, because of their harrowing experiences and

narrow escapes while on their way to the Chavez units. But at any rate, that was to be the last Japanese major operation in Panay and we were to inch our way back until heavy bombings announced the MacArthur landing operations in Leyte. Parenthetically, I cannot refrain from reminiscing how I saved the family of the Chavez aide at the expense of mine in a previous Japanese operation and how this aide, Capt. Agustin Dicen, lost his life in an attempt to save my wife. The irony of fate!

GUERRILLA IN CONTROL OF PANAY

THE LEYTE LANDING

We were not exactly caught by surprise about the Leyte landings. The MacArthur instructions came in a short alert to all recognized guerrilla units that landing was imminent and that everybody should be prepared in his respective area. It could be, we surmised, Mindanao, the Eastern, or Western Visayas. So, for one or two days, everybody in Panay was on the alert. Then one afternoon, American planes were everywhere, at least on Panay Island, and the sound of the bombings could distinctly be heard even from our advanced CP's on the fringes of the mountains. There were wild and delirious celebrations everywhere. I was on my way to the Chavez headquarters, where I had set up my own. As I passed market places and cockpits, I saw exuberant exhibitions of such spontaneous rejoicings. I was to learn, upon reaching our area, that the landing operations had started in Leyte and that our strategic outposts were strictly on a twenty-four hour watch for any Japanese movement. As a matter of fact, it was the information relayed from Panay to the MacArthur headquarters which warned him that the Japanese fleet was passing western Antique on the way to Leyte. It could have been that warning which enabled the MacArthur headquarters to lay a trap for that fleet, as it turned east towards the Surigao Strait on its way to Leyte. I felt some kind of personal satisfaction that the Panay outfit had something to do with the total annihilation of

that Japanese Fleet in the second battle of the Philippine Sea.

STRIKE!

It must be remembered here that the first strategy adopted by the Panay guerrilla was one of harassment which went under the name of "hit and run." When the first MacArthur instructions came, it was one of intelligence and survival so that the intelligence mission could go on uninterruptedly. Now, with the landing operations in Leyte in progress and its success not assured, the strategy was one of "strike." As the MacArthur instructions came by radio and leaflets dropped and scattered everywhere, everybody was to go out and strike the enemy wherever he was. And so, units, some on specific instructions, others on their own, moved towards the lowlands. Mine moved to the townsite of Calinog, hometown of my executive officer, Captain Celo. On the main artery of the forces moving towards the City of Capiz, the CPG contingent and the headquarters of the striking forces under the command of Col. Serran, prepared themselves for action. Before we knew it, Peralta had established himself in the outskirts of Cuartero, Capiz. Chavez moved his command post very near the shore of southern Panay. Through couriers, Peralta called for all staff officers to converge in his CP on a certain day. Major Salcedo, a few other staff officers, and I were to assemble at the town of Passi in Iloilo, and take the train there to Cuartero, for the conference. It was amazing how the guerrillas could place automobiles and trains in operation in a week's time.

The conference was short and business-like. All headquarters were to move towards Iloilo. The question of having Confesor under custody camp up, but I vetoed it on the ground that it could result in shooting and even his death and that would have been just too bad for the guerrillas. There were valid reasons for doing it, the foremost of which was that he would poison MacArthur against the guerrillas, blaming them for every unfortunate event that happened in Panay, thereby reaping the honors for himself

for everything that turned out well for the underground movement. This did happen, a thing for which I was to be blamed by the guerrilla command later on. But I argued that if that was to happen, it would be at most a temporary victory for him and, in the end, the guerrilla would be accorded the honor that it richly deserved. Rightly or wrongly, even until now I flatter myself with the thought that my idea proved to be the correct one, since, long after Confesor's outfit was forgotten, the guerrilla organization in the Islands still enjoyed the respect and admiration of the majority of the people of Panay. The following day, carrying as much propaganda supplies as we could, we went back by train to our respective areas. I was to take with me a 20-gallon can of shredded potatoes which, though bulky, was easy to carry, especially considering that I had only one enlisted man with me. Our train ride most heart-warming for many of us. Actually it took us hours to reach our destinations.

CONFESOR ESCAPES TO LEYTE

The headquarters of Confesor was surrounded by a battalion to prevent his sneaking out to Leyte. In my CP was the Chief of Intelligence of Peralta, Maj. Federico Salcedo who, like me, was recently married. One day, he informed me that a "batel" or sailing boat was seen anchored in the vicinity of the Confesor hideout and that it was possible that it was standing by to take him to Leyte. So he asked me if it would not be best to warn Peralta about this. I told him not to complicate the matters by reporting it. We were to learn later on that the "batel" really took Confesor to Guimaras Island, where a submarine was waiting for him and took him to Leyte. Since Osmeña was very much for Confesor, the latter was to actually run the Government of the Philippines when Osmeña went back to the States for medical treatment, with Arturo B. Rotor as his secretary. Those were the unhappiest moments for the Panay guerrilla. In so far as Civil Affairs Unit headed by General Courtney Whitney, (he was in close contact with Confesor) was concerned, the Panay guerrillas were just

organized bandits, whom the Americans could not altogether disregard because they still had to take Panay and needed the help of the organization.

PERALTA TO LEYTE

Peralta asked for permission to go to Leyte and this was granted. Whether he decided to go there to defend the prestige and integrity of his organization or to ask for advance instructions on the proper conduct of his troops upon the landing of the American forces in Iloilo, I could only conjecture. So, one afternoon, he passed by me to take me to Leyte. He was then with Capt. Mario Guarina. It seemed that, on short notice, a landing field was prepared in the general vicinity of Cuartero and on the day designated, we were there. Former Speaker Villareal was around with shining whiskers and goatee to match, looking very much more like Fu Manchu than my old friend. Congressman Arnaldo of the 1st District of Capiz was also there. It, therefore, dawned upon me that men holding important national positions who were alerted for the Leyte trip. Luterero could not be there having fled to Manila on learning that the Confesor people were out to liquidate him. Ledesma was either in Manila or Baguio. De los Santos was judge of the Court of First Instance of Iloilo by appointment of Confesor. But a hitch had developed and I could almost guess why it did. The pilot told Peralta that his trip had been cancelled. Peralta insisted on going. The pilot could not very well argue his way out in the face of armed people, so he finally agreed to take Peralta and army officers among whom were some of Peralta's enlisted men. Civilian officials could not go. That left Villareal and Arnaldo behind, but as Judge Advocate, I had to be allowed. So to Leyte we proceeded, flying so low I thought most of the time we would hit mountain or tree tops. The Americans were not yet in full command of the air. After a three-hour trip in an unarmed C-47, we were treated with an air sightseeing trip of the Leyte fleet. From the way ships were distanced from each other, we thought to ourselves that one could not drop anything without hitting

any boat. Such was the concentration of supply boats, landing barges, and warships in the Leyte Gulf. Upon landing, we were loaded in two command cars and whisked to the Headquarters of Tanauan or Tolosa, I could not remember exactly which. Since Peralta was an officer with a field rank and we were not, we were separated both in our quarters and in the mess. That did not matter much to us who had been used to and contented with one meal a day. There we had three regular meals. With bread, eggs and bacon or ham, butter and jam to boot, we got a complete breakfast, something we had been missing since 1941. We had regular American luncheons which did not differ from a Filipino luncheon. Supper, too, was as good as regular Filipino supper, perhaps better. Then there was an after-supper show (we were entertained with cinema pictures, except when sirens announced the presence of enemy aircraft). We were given snacks, consisting of bread, butter, jam and coffee. We were also given PX privileges, the most important of which, for our purposes, were the one pack of American cigarettes per day, toothpaste and toothbrushes, and soap. While I could have gone to the Civil Affairs Office and get ₱1,000 which was advanced to all Congressmen who went there, I contented myself with borrowing ₱200 in pre-war money from Peralta and bought the much needed necessities. After one week, we were again airlifted to Panay with the bare necessities we could buy. Our enlisted men each brought home at least three duffel bags of supplies. The American enlisted men were kinder to our guerrilla soldiers than the officers were to us. They brought back blankets, uniforms, cigarettes and even TG's which were all listed down as lost in combat, according to the enlisted men themselves.

PERALTA BACK TO ILOILO

Peralta moved his headquarters to our area and, two weeks later, advanced farther between Pototan and Iloilo. Since everything became a matter of military strategy, he kept all matters pertaining to plans and preparations for combat to himself and to those very close to him.

AMERICANS LAND IN ILOILO

Early one morning, Peralta's car came to fetch me with instructions to join him. I was to see his executive officer, Col. Reluña, with him. The Americans were landing in Tigbauan in the command area of Chavez and Reluña and I were to meet the American commanding officer to represent Peralta. Personally he gave an armed squad with instructions to stop arresting civilians, but that they should be taken to the headquarters of the American striking forces. We were also instructed not to spare our guns should my orders be disobeyed. We went on a very round-about way from his Pototan headquarters to the landing point of the American striking forces in the vicinity of Tigbauan. Chavez was there ahead and after the introductions, we marched between American lines moving north on each side of the road as though we were part of the forces entering Iloilo City. But we were to leave the Americans at Oton to report back to Peralta. There we stayed for two days, when the Japanese fled Iloilo to the mountains of Maasin, sneaking through guerrilla lines in the dead of the night. Then we entered Iloilo City to celebrate the decoration of Peralta. For my part, I had to go back to my headquarters in Dueñas to personally escort to Iloilo the Confesor deputies who were held there near my command post.

CONFESOR IN FULL CONTROL OF ILOILO

PERSONALLY ESCORTED BY ME

I said before that I made it a condition to have all arrested Confesor deputies detained near my CP. This I considered necessary because of the cleavage between Peralta and the Confesor groups. Besides, the detained deputies were known to have ordered the killing of important citizens, and it was possible that, on the pretext of attempting to escape, these citizens might be "liquidated." The organization as a whole, and I, personally, might be blamed for their killing. For the same reason, I insisted I should personally escort them to the Americans so as to obviate

the possibility of blaming the guerrillas and me should any serious incident happen to them on the way. I took full command of the contingent, using two jeeps all the way from Dueñas to the Army headquarters somewhere in Oton. We arrived there at about five o'clock in the afternoon. After I had delivered the detainees to the Americans I looked for Peralta. When we met, he asked me to wait and so we waited.

MEETING WITH GENERAL COURTNEY WHITNEY

An American officer, rotund and apparently jovial came out and Peralta saluted him with a remark, "Here is your man." He introduced himself as Colonel Whitney. When I learned he was MacArthur's aide, I did not introduce myself as "Major Borra," which would make me inferior to him, but as "Congressman Borra." From that time on, Peralta always addressed him Sir, and he (Whitney) always called me *Sir*. I did not "sir" anybody. Whitney asked me about the Confesor aides whom I had escorted. I mentioned them by names. He asked about the others, having consulted probably a list that Confesor had given him, but I assured him they were not even ordered arrested, since only those that had record of killing were detained. After a few seconds of doubt, Whitney decided to take me at my word and that ended everything.

BRIEF RESPITE IN POTOTAN

I returned to my headquarters in Dueñas and moved forward to Peralta's in Pototan, where I bivouacked with a unit of the signal corps. Peralta himself had set up his headquarters in Iloilo. I decided to starve it out there, living on rations of rice, salt and ten pieces of "dilis" ("baliñgon" we call them locally) and rice-coffee. Peralta in Iloilo was not so well fed, I learned later, considering that all we had was guerrilla money, which was accepted at the rate of twenty or thirty to one "liberation" peso. But, he did seem to have trouble with Civil Affairs Unit of the American forces and so he forced me to go to Iloilo. On his invitation, I stayed with him in his quarters.

All the Confesor people were immediately placed in position of power and authority, but this time, within the strict limits of the law. Confesor's brother, Patricio, was made Governor; Benedicto, our erstwhile prisoner, was made Mayor of Iloilo City; and all the other prisoners and deputies were placed in positions of importance and authority with the American Civil Affairs Unit in Iloilo. As for the guerrillas, they were treated more or less as bandits and immediately disbanded. Their only distinction from real bandits was that they were not hunted down and some of them had to be used to help the Americans mop out the few Japanese stragglers that still remained in the mountains.

MUSTERED OUT

I got myself mustered out but still continued to wear my uniform, this time one that really was an army uniform complete with insignia of Judge Advocate and the gold clover leaf for majors. Since I did not want to be called at American Headquarters for conferences, I made arrangements with Peralta to turn over my staff command to Major Arenas, to whom I turned over all staff papers. I contented myself with biding time in the Peralta Iloilo Headquarters until I decided I must move around. I observed that my friends who were in the Japanese occupied area were better treated than we who had suffered in the mountains. They had better food, although it consisted mostly of canned goods and were allowed better means of transportation. When my father, who lived ninety kilometers away from Iloilo died, the messenger sent to me was not even granted the privilege of hitching a ride to notify me and when he finally arrived after three days in Iloilo City, I had to borrow Peralta's staff car to get home, which took two days after my old man was buried.

TIFF WITH AMERICAN CIVIL AFFAIRS UNIT

Then I started asserting myself. A call for congressional session was made in Manila for June, 1945. I went to the Iloilo Civil Affairs Unit Officer and demanded a

plane, not only for me but also for all Congressmen of Panay. He hedged so much that the following day, bringing all the congressmen of Panay with me, Villareal and Arnaldo of Capiz (Reyes was drowned when the *Corregidor* sank at the start of the war), Nietes of Antique, and de los Santos and myself from Iloilo, I demanded a plane within 48 hours or I would file a formal protest with MacArthur. He grudgingly consented and, the following day, we were on our way to Leyte, staging point in the South, after passing Puerto Princesa, Bacolod, and Cebu. Peralta rode with us. We landed at a place in Leyte far from the headquarters of the Civil Affairs Unit and unceremoniously left there. Using again my title as congressman, I bluffed our way to Civil Affairs in Leyte and, seeing the people whom we had seen when Peralta and I went to Leyte, we were immediately afforded a plane for Manila the following day. We enjoyed a short shopping spree in the PX, where I introduced every congressman, a title which immediately elicited respect from the PX people at that time. Upon arrival at Manila airport, we were again left to ourselves. We somehow secured a ride to Pasay and from there, we proceeded to Manila on foot, carrying our duffel bags over our shoulders. How we got to Zulueta's temporary home I could not remember, but, by about seven o'clock, we were able to eat supper and sleep in one of the rooms—twenty of us—of the house of Arsenio Villanueva, who was the original owner of the *Chronicle* and who, it turned out later, was a good friend of mine. The following day, on offer of a few of our friends, we were able to get accommodations. De los Santos, Nietes and I got ourselves quartered in the house of Capt. Enrique T. Galan, who was a member of my staff, until he was sent to Manila on intelligence mission. Then we reported to Congress and from that time on, I considered myself as having been separated completely from the Panay guerrilla. Peralta reported to MacArthur where he was assigned, with Capt. Galan, as his aide, until he was sent to Port Leavenworth.

PERALTA VS CONFESOR AND I

Many people have wondered what part I played in the quarrel between Peralta and Confesor. To this day, some insist that I was the man who poisoned Peralta's mind against Confesor, since there had been a perfect team-up between them before I joined the guerrillas. The initial frictions and misunderstandings between them came about only after I was with Peralta, they claim.

Long before the war broke out, I had had many contacts with Confesor, first as a pupil under him in the Jaro Elementary School; second as one of his Board Members when he was Governor of Iloilo; and third as a political opponent in many a political campaign. He knew, as well as other Ilongos did, that I had always been an independent thinker and a fighter for what I considered right and just.

I first met Peralta at the Botica Boie, Iloilo, when Congressman and City Mayor-designate Ledesma introduced me to him. As I have intimated earlier, I was not quite impressed by the man. In fact, after that conference, with General Christie, I just dismissed him from my mind. But after he had asked me to join the guerrilla and that memorable meeting with him at his headquarters, I realized that, perhaps, I had been wrong in my impressions about him. In fact, that started a change of attitude towards him. The war years were to build a relationship with him which, even to day, is one of a brother to brother.

I joined the guerrilla principally because I sincerely believed that the civilians were getting the worst of everything. From the Japanese, from the Confesor outfit, and from the guerrillas, they suffered, some even unto death. Someone had to come to their help, to attend their needs and to the protection of their rights. It had been my obsession to meet Confesor personally, if only to afford him due consideration or protection and to explain things to him about the growing rift between him and Peralta. Had I succeeded in contacting him, I would have done the same things which I did when I was with Peralta, with whom I had had frequent contacts.

Even so, the cleavage between the two groups respectively headed by these two patriots has resulted in immense benefits for the civilian population. One was to serve as a check of the excesses of the other. Since each must win the admiration and support of the people, each tried, as much as possible, to court them to their respective sides. When at last the work of the underground movement came to a successful conclusion, the civilian population had grown to be respected by both sides, and both sides had become respected by the entire civilian population.

The question of whether I was responsible for the break between the Peralta and the Confesor resistance movements should, then, be of little moment. The incontrovertible fact is that the friction resulted in the liberation of the civilians from oppression from quarters which, by God and by reason, should have been their protectors and their liberators. This is not, by any means, an admission that I promoted the friction and eventual cleavage. Even at this very old age, I am quite capable of independent thinking and action. I have developed an obsession for or against situations and causes. But I have never come to detest men who stood for causes.

CREDIT TO WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Should the resistance movement in Panay be credited with something more special than certificates and citations? Or would it have been better if there were no resistance movement in Panay at all? This calls for as objective an analysis as possible, and I hope that my own can be objective, considering that I was actively involved in it.

First, from the over-all point of view of strategy, it was necessary to make the Japanese occupation as shaky and burdensome as possible, so as to disrupt the enemy's time table for the conquest of Southeast Asia. For as long as units of the Japanese striking forces were detailed anywhere in order to give semblance of the effectiveness of their occupation, there should always be some kind of harassment and disruption. Besides, it was imperative

that the people's morale be maintained, and this could be done by creating the impression that victory would eventually come.

CONFESOR TAKES CREDIT FOR INITIATING THE MOVEMENT

The Confesor outfit should take the initial credit. It was so well-knit and so well organized even from the very beginning that civilians everywhere became aware of the fact that the regular civil government established by the people's vote was intact and functioning. The excesses that were committed can detract but little from that distinction. Since that organization had to establish its authority, it was necessary to use a mighty hand. Under the circumstances then obtaining, it was absolutely necessary that the authority of the rallying point of the resistance movement be established firmly and fast. Otherwise, it would have failed. Confesor started the resistance movement in Panay, and establishing his authority, rallied the people behind him. That should be to his eternal credit.

PERALTA TAKES CREDIT FOR SUSTAINED RESISTANCE

The resistance movement of Peralta, which came to be known as the Panay Guerilla, was an armed movement, organized very well along military lines and operating with military precision. Since the organization was far-flung and well-knit, it should have been the operating unit of the movement. This was what Peralta was insisting on. Through the early operations of these units, the Japanese became aware of one capable of harassing them and giving them sleepless nights. When contact was finally established with the Southwest Pacific Headquarters, Peralta's organization became the best intelligence unit, in so far as the MacArthur headquarters was concerned. All along the civilian population was constantly made aware of the strength and capabilities of these different units. From all standpoints, Peralta's organization was considered the best guerrilla outfit in the Philippines. For constantly keeping alive civilian faith in eventual victory of the Allied

forces and for holding most of Panay under control all the time, and, finally, for effectively helping the liberation forces of the Americans in clearing Panay of the Japanese, Peralta holds the distinction, second to none, as the best guerrilla leader in the Philippines during World War II.

EPILOGUE

Peralta was later to be senator of the Philippines and so was Confesor. He helped Confesor in getting his civilian employees during the war recognized and paid by the Philippine Government. They were to be the best of friends. I even suspected that, at the height of their common fight in the Senate, Peralta was closer to Confesor than he was to me. And now the Peralta and the Confesor followers are the best of friends once more — which is as it should be. Oh, that that friendship could have been developed in Panay during the resistance against the Japanese. The two organizations, hand in hand, could have done much greater service to the country. The Panay resistance could have operated better and would have earned greater accolades from all quarters, the MacArthur headquarters included.

But that may have been too idealistic, unrealistic. I suppose situations like that do not occur in this world of ours. But with all their faults and deficiencies, with all their quarrels and differences, these two men will stand out anywhere, anytime as two of the greatest heroes of the resistance movement in the Philippines.