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**HEADQUARTERS
PHILIPPINES COMMAND
UNITED STATES ARMY**



**U. S. ARMY
RECOGNITION PROGRAM OF
PHILIPPINE GUERRILLAS**

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 39471

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FOREWORD

This booklet is prepared with the dual intent of furnishing an overall picture of the guerrilla resistance movement in the Philippines and the mission of the United States Army to award those valiant members of this fraternity who contributed materially to the defeat of the common foe, official guerrilla recognition. This recognition is tantamount to induction into the Philippine Army which during the late war was in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States, thus establishing their entitlement to soldier emoluments and veterans benefits.

The material presented in this report has been secured from official records and the knowledge obtained in the investigation of over a million and a quarter claims for guerrilla recognition. The policies governing such a mission, problems incident thereto, and chaotic personnel problems experienced by an army undergoing the process of rapid demobilization are submitted for objective evaluation of such an unprecedented mission.

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Initially, recognitions approved from both sources were made a matter of record by the issuance of a letter of recognition to the Army Commander, who in turn published a list of recognized units for information and guidance of subordinate units. Unfortunately, and which later caused considerable confusion, early letters of recognition, as in the case of the southern islands, neglected to mention strengths or, if strengths were mentioned at all, they were given in terms of "to be announced at a later date" or "approximate strengths are as follows." In addition, as far as the Luzon guerrillas are concerned, numerous errors were made in unit terminology and in the proper designation of overall commands and commanders. Not only did these initial errors cause the loss of considerable time by the GAD in attempting to clarify the component units of the overall commands and their strengths, but also, left wide open the door for anomalies perpetrated by farsighted and unscrupulous guerrillas.

As more guerrilla units were recognized on Luzon and the fact became known that they were receiving current pay, food, and clothing, the clamor for recognition by unrecognized guerrilla units increased in volume and doubled in intensity throughout 1946 and early 1947. In mid-1945, when this clamor was but a muted whisper, the first complex problems appeared.

UNITS

The first attempt to systematize a procedure in the handling of attached guerrillas developed on paper in a letter from Sixth Army to

XI Corps on February 25, 1945 (Appendix 18). When recommending units for recognition, subordinate units were requested to submit the name, strength, inclusive dates of service, summary of service, and rosters with complete personnel data of the recommended unit. Of particular note here is the fact that only those individuals who actually participated in the activities of the unit during its period of attachment were to be included in the submitted strength and on the rosters. Furthermore, information concerning the service of women guerrillas was desired in a very specific form. By March 14, the first Luzon unit, USAFIP NL, was recognized by USAFFE. The letter of recognition gave no strengths.

Apparently to confirm the new recognition policy and to acquaint all major, subordinate commands with late developments, a conference took place in Manila on March 18, 1945 (Appendix 19), with representatives of USAFFE, Philippine Army, Sixth and Eighth Armies present. Amongst other matters Sixth Army received authorization to recommend guerrilla units to USAFFE for recognition, this recognition to be based upon military usefulness only. In addition all civilian guerrillas, that is, non-USAFFE, were to be released and returned to their homes.

A letter from Headquarters, Sixth Army, to subordinate units on March 26, 1945, infers that some units had already at that time been not favorably considered for recognition. A further elaboration on the status of women came with a USAFFE letter, dated April 8, 1945,

concerning personnel to be relieved from active duty or discharged, i.e., women guerrillas, excepting nurses, were to be discharged after recognition. Although not at this time barring women from recognition, the close scrutiny given the functions of women guerrillas ultimately led to the belief that, again excepting nurses, no women should be recognized. However, the unfamiliarity of American personnel with the spelling of female names in Spanish and in native dialect permitted the recognition of a small number of women.

A letter from USAFFE to USASOS, dated April 24, 1945 (Appendix 20), provided that a guerrilla unit whose services were no longer required but which had been recommended for recognition was to be quartered and rationed by the using American unit until action was taken on its request for recognition. (These instructions gave rise at a later date to a complex problem involving, notably, guerrillas of the Zambales Military District, LGF, and of the Manila Military District, ECLGA.) An indorsement from Sixth Army on April 24, 1945, which caused considerable confusion at a later date did not require the submission for recognition of additional rosters as guerrilla replacements for casualties were called or other elements of a unit already being employed were attached for the first time. These replacements and additional attachments were merely placed on the payrolls of the originally attached unit and consequently never appeared on a recognized roster. The effort required to solve this problem will be discussed later under the headings "Supplementary Rosters" and "Reconstruction

of Rosters." On May 3, 1945, Sixth Army in a letter to subordinate units covering procurement, recognition, supply, use, etc., of guerrilla units (Appendix 21), advised that it was preferable to use guerrilla units in their entirety before requesting the services of other guerrilla units; that guerrilla units would be considered military organizations, to be used in any military capacity to the limit of their capabilities, and could be moved from one sector to another; that formal published orders were required when attaching a guerrilla unit. To the second item, i.e., movement of guerrilla units from one sector to another, can be attributed the situation in which some guerrillas, recognized as replacements under a certain unit designation but originating from an entirely different unit, later requested reconstitution of rosters and redesignation of the unit name so that they be recognized under the designation of their parent unit. This did not become a problem until the guerrillas learned that, when recognized with one unit, revision of dates would not apply to them if their service records show recognition service with another unit whether that unit was recognized or not. The last item, i.e., attachment orders, created the erroneous impression amongst unrecognized, unattached guerrillas that recognition without attachment papers was impossible. (Thus was accelerated the anomaly of forged or altered attachment papers.) A memorandum from the GAS, USAFFE Training Group, May 12, 1945, to unrecognized guerrilla commanders (Appendix 22), laid down new ground rules for recognition of guerrilla units. Briefly, a

unit was investigated and, when it was determined that the unit was worthy of recognition, the unit commander was directed to "screen" his unit down in numbers and in ranks comparable to a PA table of organization, and at the same time submit a formal request for recognition in writing. The reasoning behind screening was that the unit would, after reorganization, proper training, and receipt of equipment, be incorporated into the Philippine Army as a standard unit (as differentiated from a non-standard or guerrilla unit).

In Circular 142 and 185, dated May 14 and June 27, 1945, respectively, (Appendixes 23 & 24) Eighth Army provided for the processing of southern islands guerrillas, the cessation of recruiting by guerrillas, the placing of limiting dates beyond which no processing would be continued in the southern islands, an unprocessed guerrilla to be processed provided that he submitted a written request to the nearest Philippine Army installation and gave cogent reasons for his not being processed, and the dropping of all unprocessed individuals from payrolls. Although processing was undertaken for the purpose of obtaining records of all guerrillas whose services might be required in the reorganizing of the Philippine Army, the GAD was forced to consider the processing records as also representing the maximum number of recognized guerrillas in any one guerrilla organization provided that they also received current pay, the cause again being the fact that in the southern islands and Luzon no strengths were given initially when the unit was recognized. An additional reason lies in the fact that the

original rosters submitted to GHQ SWPA, Sixth and Eighth Armies, have either been destroyed, lost in storage at various headquarters, or shipped to the Central Records Depot, St. Louis, Missouri. Another problem arose in connection with processing. Philippine Army processing teams, particularly in the southern islands, processed not only recognized guerrillas but also many unrecognized. In some cases those unrecognized guerrillas processed claimed they were recognized; in other cases they claimed they were expecting recognition; while in still other cases they merely claimed they were guerrillas. Precisely why the last two types were processed is not known but a possible explanation lies in the limited number of trained Philippine Army teams available, the large number of recognized guerrillas (approximately 95,000 in the southern islands alone) to be processed, the shortage of transportation, and the desire to complete each island in its entirety without the necessity of returning, and lucrative considerations. In any event, many unrecognized guerrillas, processed but unpaid, applied for recognition using as a basis for recognition the fact that they were processed.

On October 2, 1945, a rudimentary criterion of Five Points, comprising for the most part a compendium of previous policy for recognition of guerrilla units, was approved.

INDIVIDUALS

During this period the problem of recognition of individuals never became serious but the germ had been planted and the nucleus of

a policy laid. Radiogram (Appendix 17) dated February 16, 1945, announcing the resumption of recognition on Luzon, advised that it was desired to induct groups or individuals into the Philippine Army as rapidly as possible. Later, on March 26, 1945, Headquarters, Sixth Army, brought to the attention of subordinate units the fact that they were recommending individuals or small groups of from two to five individuals from much larger unrecognized units and advised these subordinate units that such individuals or groups of individuals be included on the payrolls of a recognized unit.

Meanwhile, there appeared the problem of confirmation of ranks and grades, subsequently to become a major item affecting individual requests for confirmation or correction of existing ranks and grades. Even though Headquarters, USAFFE, solved that problem on May 28, 1945, by declaring that grades and ratings held by members of a guerrilla unit were confirmed as of the date of recognition of the unit and that all promotions of officers subsequent to recognition were to be approved by Headquarters, Philippine Army, with the additional approval of the highest American Army headquarters in the Philippines; however, requests for such confirmation or correction continued to reach the GAD, not a few coming from HPA itself. This situation was further clarified on July 16, 1945, upon instructions from AFPAC, by Eighth Army (Appendix 25).

CASUALTIES

As in the case of individuals, little thought if any was given to

the recognition of guerrilla casualties. The only official documents showing awareness of guerrilla casualties are those of USAFFE, dated April 8, 1945, and Circular No. 142 of Eighth Army, dated May 14, 1945 (Appendix 23). The former merely specified policy governing the discharge of guerrillas physically incapacitated by virtue of wounds, illness or non-service connected disabilities, with the exception of nurses; the latter authorized the admission of guerrillas to American Army hospitals in the Philippines only.

DISCHARGE, DISBANDMENT AND/OR DEMOBILIZATION

Until the proclamation of Executive Order No. 68 on September 26, 1945 (Appendix 26), no positive nor official action was taken to dispose of guerrilla units, recognized or unrecognized. During a conference of March 18, 1945, in Manila, it was decided to encourage unrecognized guerrillas to disband. USAFFE letter of April 8, 1945, concerning relief from active duty and discharge of guerrilla personnel, provided for the discharge of individuals, except nurses, for failure to meet induction standards. For the disbandment of units no provision was made, and again the reorganization of the Philippine Army explains this condition.

Termination of the war changed the entire guerrilla picture and on September 10, 1945, Headquarters, AFPAC, advised the Chief of Staff, Philippine Army (Appendix 27) that the termination of hostilities with Japan and the surrender of the Japanese forces in the Philippines necessitated a complete revision of the organization of five PA infantry

divisions and supporting service troops. It further ordered the immediate discharge or relief from active duty of 50% of all officers and enlisted men then casualties unassigned, mostly recognized guerrillas, in PA replacement battalions. The report of a conference (Appendix 28) held two days later between representatives of AFPAC and AFWESPAC revealed the tentative formation of a demobilization policy which included the cessation of all further recognitions.

ARREARS IN PAY

The question of arrears in pay, i.e., that pay due recognized guerrillas prior to the time the unit to which they belonged came under the operational control of Sixth or Eighth Armies or the initial date of recognition, later became a contributing factor to the revision of existing recognition dates of guerrilla units.

References to arrears in pay appear continuously throughout official correspondence of this period (Appendix 29). As often as mentioned, however, the answer remained the same, "the question of arrears in pay is not settled at this time." The problem of arrears in pay did not become acute, nor receive any settlement, until November 1945.

In summary of the foregoing and with particular respect to recognition policy, the following stands out:

- (1) The recognition of guerrilla units was resumed.
- (2) Recognition during the liberation period was based upon military usefulness.
- (3) Guerrilla recognition was extended only to those individuals

within a unit who actively participated with the unit.

(4) Attachment to a using American unit was not a prerequisite for recognition.

(5) No rosters were required for replacements or newly attached elements of units already attached and recognized, personnel merely being added to the payrolls.

(6) Screening of units to comparable PA organizations commenced.

(7) Guerrilla ranks were likewise reduced to conform to comparable PA tables of organization.

(8) A new criterion, the Five Points for recognition, was established.

The following procedures led to problems complex in nature which required solving at a later date:

(1) The issuance of attachment orders and commendations by using American units.

(2) The retention by an American using unit of an unrecognized unit until action was taken upon its recommendation for recognition.

(3) The employment of elements of units rather than one entire unit and their movement from one sector to another.

(4) The processing of guerrillas.

(5) Orders to guerrilla leaders to cease recruiting.

The following represent a tightening up of requirements for guerrilla recognitions:

(1) The submission by using American units as well as by unattached,

unrecognized units of pertinent information relative to the unit, its members and its services, as well as the submission of rosters.

(2) The submission to the Commanding General, USAFFE, of a letter requesting recognition.

(3) The close scrutiny of the service of women guerrillas.

Insofar as individuals and casualties had not become a problem at that time nor had the question of arrears in pay which ultimately led to the revision of dates for recognized units, no policy as such had appeared.

Discharge of individuals, but not units, was provided for; demobilization was in the wind and the first indications were appearing that further recognitions should cease.

Period October 3, 1945 - June 30, 1948

Coincident with the introduction of the Five Points and the announcement of a deadline for the receipt of unit requests for recognition, requests ultimately approximating 1,300,000 poured into an unexpected and undermanned GAB. Heretofore, recognition policy had been concerned solely with units. In the latter part of 1945 the tremendous number of claims and the complexities resulting therefrom brought about a separation of claims for recognition into two general types: (1) unit (2) individual: casualty and non-casualty.

UNITS

Since the recognition of all types of guerrilla claims subsequent

This program, though in congruence with the many rhetorical promises by the late President Roosevelt to the Philippine people that the American nation would rebuild the Philippines "brick by brick" and that payment of losses would be made "to the last carabao", which received liberal magnification of interpretation by the Filipinos, was constantly hindered not only by chaotic conditions incident to a total war but also by such selfish acts of machination and to a degree that makes most questionable the possible value of such a program (Appendix 42). Under the most favorable reception the granting of guerrilla recognition to deserving Filipinos would have been extremely difficult to accomplish and hold the degree of error and injustice to an absolute nuance. Upon realization of the benefits to be derived from official recognition, the program became the constant target of persons most accomplished in artifice and chicanery. Detection by the division of each anomaly shattered the many vicarious plans of the unfortunate and gullible many, who in most instances had contributed monies to the personal aggrandizement of their more enterprising leaders or risk the probable fate of retribution by exclusion from the unit rosters. While many who were involved in such practices contributed to a cause that should it have resulted in personal benefit, knew they were not entitled to all that was claimed; nevertheless, many who had performed various sporadic patriotic services honestly reasoned that they were deserving of some form of remuneration. The shattered hopes of all these individuals who failed to receive favorable decision drew instant wrathful indignation

against the U. S. Army. This was capitalized to the fullest by the more gifted and tenacious aspirants by fuelling the public clamor through mass meetings, distorted press presentations, political pressure, etc. Add to this the fact that it was impossible to exclude error in recognitions, thereby exciting the deserving and spurring the undeserving to greater and more involved endeavor, and there is presented such a constant unsavory public issue as to tax the sagacious and strain to the utmost amicable relations.

Many responsible persons originally considered their patriotic efforts did not warrant remuneration, admitting that the turn of events occasioned by the length of the recognition program was most unfortunate and that a more tangible and permanent means of expression of appreciation for services rendered would have been in the construction of veterans' hospitals, libraries, and other permanent public benefits.

The magnitude of the task of recognition and the extreme care necessary in the execution of this mission may be derived from a statistical comparison of the total number of persons on the island of Luzon alone, according to the last census 8,542,000, as against the approximate number of persons on Luzon who requested guerrilla recognition, nearly 1,000,000, and the approximate number recognized, 200,000. Further consideration of the number of male personnel in the census subdivided into a military age group signalizes the hazards involved.

In the final analysis, if personnel were to be extended official recognition, it should have involved only those who were automatically