

Contributed by Carl Kracht

A VARIED HISTORY

The Philippines have had many names and many masters. No one can say where or when their strange, unwritten history begins. The earliest people left no records and only a few speculative facts remain to link the islands with a past that is almost incredibly ancient. We know that the Ming emperors called them the "Islands of the Luzones" and that they sent them trading junks with brassware, porcelain, silken cloth, and little copper bells. Returning to China, these junks carried pearls and precious woods. Ptolemy, the Egyptian geographer, charted the Philippines as the "Maniolas," and the Phoenician traders skirted their coastlines in quest for gold. In their turn, the wandering Portuguese, greatest of all ancient navigators, called them "The Islands of the West."

Then Magellan came in 1521 as their official "discoverer" and gave them their first historical title. The "Archipelago of Saint Lazarus," he called them, a name that fell into discard when Magellan went down before the poisoned arrows of the natives of Mactan Island, near Cebu. In 1543, Ruy Lopez de Villalobus named them "Islas Filipinas" in honor of Don Felipe, crown prince of Spain. And so the name remained "Philippine Islands" while Dutch, Portuguese, Javanese, Bornese, Chinese, Japanese, Spaniards, English, and Americans scrambled for a foothold through centuries of constant warfare.

In 1898 they became the property of the United States and the development began that was stopped by the southern advance of Japan. The transfer of the islands to us by Spain did not end the strife in the Philippines. Active warfare persisted for almost four years and guerilla fighting continued in certain areas throughout the entire period of American occupation. Some of the bloodiest jungle war of our military history was waged by the Philippine Constabulary and the regular army of the United States who undertook jointly the pacification of the Mindanao jungle.

The net result of the American occupation of the islands was a plan for independence for the 80-odd tribes of Malays who inhabit the islands.

In December, 1941, overwhelming Japanese forces struck treacherously at the Philippines, bringing to a temporary end the wardenship of the United States over these islands. The United States had promised independence for the Philippine Islands in 1946. This, too, was interrupted by Japanese aggression.

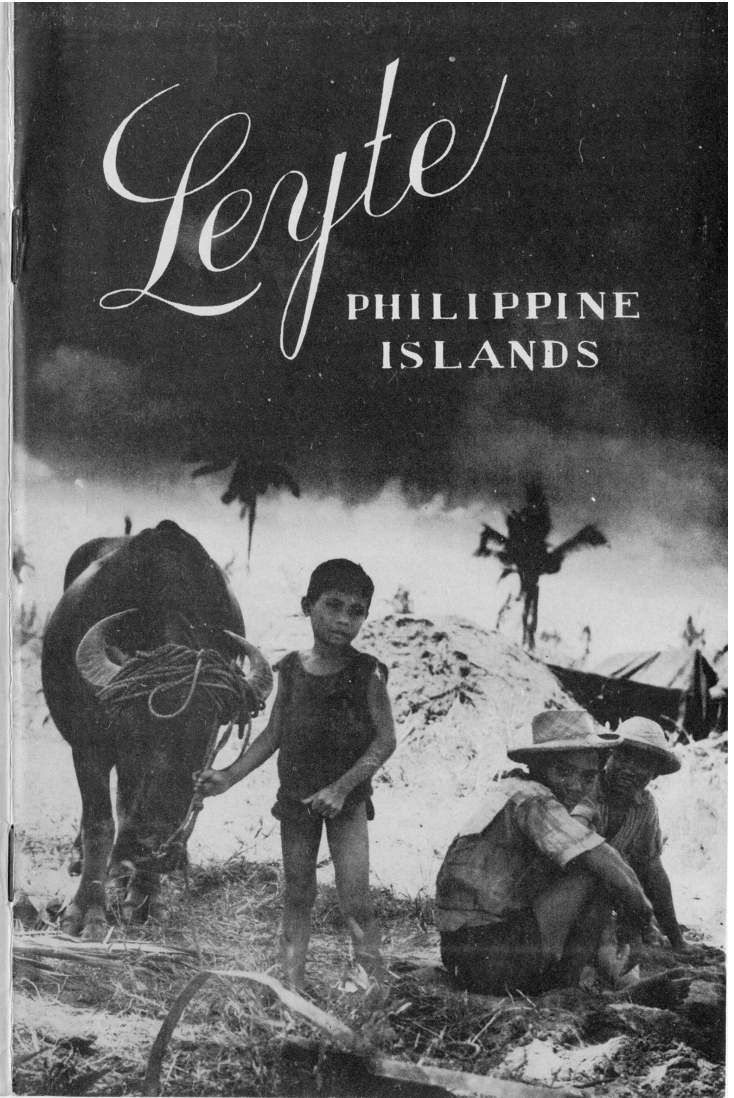
Now we are on the way back.

Taken from  
GUIDE TO THE WESTERN PACIFIC

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHOTO LAB  
LITHOGRAPHED BY MAP REPRODUCTION  
U. S. S. ROCKY MOUNT

# Leyte

PHILIPPINE  
ISLANDS





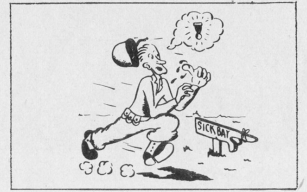
Improvised shelters were put up over pits dug for protection.



Shelter was scarce and utilized by many.



First-aid station takes care of all comers.

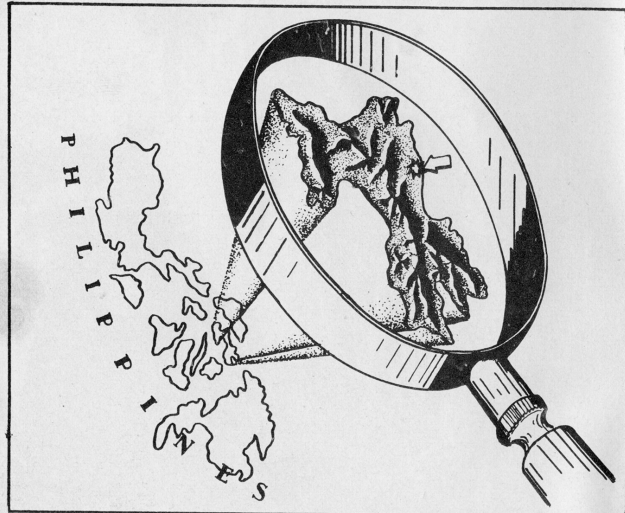


On October 20, 1944, American troops landed upon the Japanese held Island of Leyte in the Philippines. This was the first major invasion of previously American held Philippine territory.

The Island was defended by approximately thirty-five thousand Japanese troops. These troops were not expecting a large scale invasion, so the fortifications were comparatively weak. Progress became more difficult further inland as enemy reinforcements were brought in.

The fighting is still in progress as this booklet is being printed. The complete story will have to be told later.

These photographs were taken in the area near and south of San Jose on the east central coast of Leyte.



Village of San Jose; at the right is Catmon Hill, from which stubborn resistance was encountered.



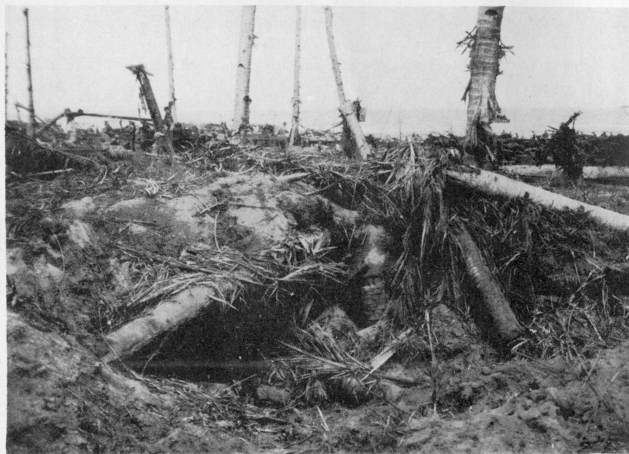
Troops keeping under cover; in the background is an old Spanish fort.



Japanese pillbox set to enfilade the beach; anti-personnel barriers and unloading operations in the background.



A small portion of the work preparatory to the handling of large quantities of supplies.



Japanese pillbox showing effects of pre-invasion bombardment.



This native home was in an unfortunate location.





These are the people.



Even the natives must go underground for protection.



Everything possible was salvaged from demolished homes.



Looking forward to a brighter future.



Native girls wait to receive their share of the food supplies shown in the background.



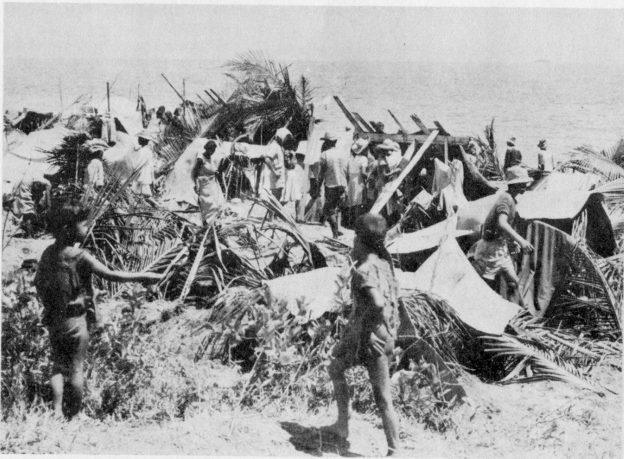
Although poorly clothed, these, as well as many others, assisted in all types of work.



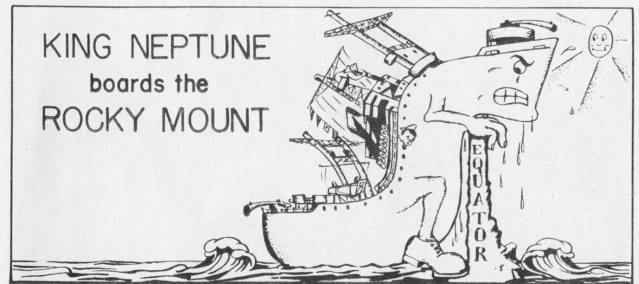
A Civil Affairs officer distributes food among the natives.



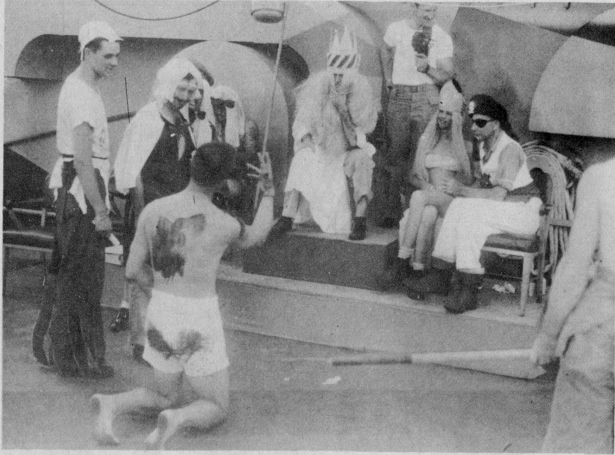
Pure water for civilians and troops.



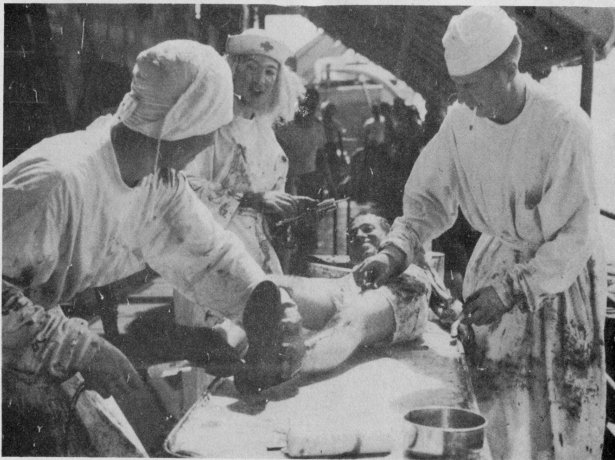
Improvised shelters erected by natives behind our lines.



"Make them clean", said the King. "Take them, and wash them in the pool of the mermaid tears", and his word was done.



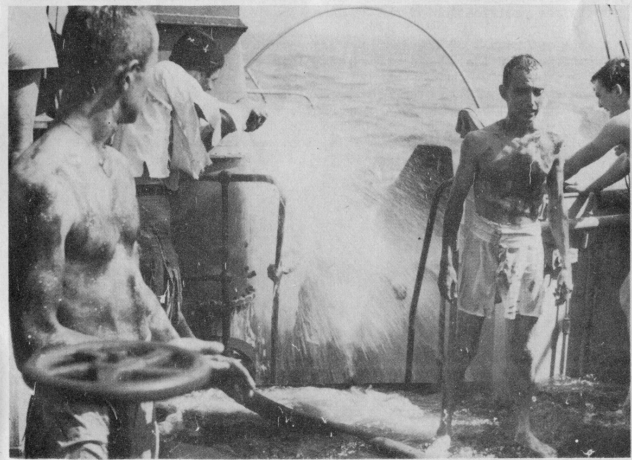
The ear of King Neptune was deaf to the pleas of a lowly pollywog.  
And the Royal Court ordered the full torture.



And the King said, "Oh Royal Surgeon and nurse make them fit so that  
they will be strong and brave shellbacks".



The King demanded them to dance the Royal Ballet, and so they danced.



"Hail, ye trusty shellback," cried the king, "for thou art now a brother."