

records that we had in the Engineer Section, and they took them out and concealed them in a garbage can and put them in a small cave on one of the roads.

Later on, when we got to Manila, we freed the prisoners who had been there. I found notes from Major Kircher, who had been one of my assistants, and also from Major Bill Gay, both very outstanding officers who were killed when the ships taking them and other prisoners from Manila to Japan were bombed, unfortunately by our own American aircraft. But they had left pencil notes for me, which I still have, relating where they had hidden certain records. So I sent a small task force out and we were able to recover them. They were the ones that secured them.

Q: The clearing of Luzon and the rest of the Philippine Islands took some months. But most of the significant engineering problems were in the rehabilitation of the islands and the development of a base for the coming attack against Japan.

A: As I say, Manila was a wreck. The water supply had been destroyed. The water lines were all shattered. When, for instance, during the reconstruction we repaired one section of the water distribution system and built up pressure, that in turn could create more breaks in some other parts. It was a long, arduous task to rebuild all of the utilities.

There was also the problem of clearing out all the debris, even before rehabilitating or constructing headquarters buildings and depots. There was a problem with revamping Clark Field in central Luzon, and also the other airdromes around Manila and elsewhere.

Engineer Organization in the Southwest Pacific Area

One interesting thing, as I said before, I had built the Caliraya Hydroelectric Project in my 1937-40 tour as engineer adviser to the Commonwealth government. And shortly after war broke out—at that time I was chief engineer, GHQ—I was the one that had to destroy it prior to the Japanese advance on Manila. Now that didn't mean destroy it, but to disable it from operation, because we were sure, at that time, that we'd just be out of there

for a matter of months and then, with reinforcements coming, we'd be able to take everything back over. So we didn't want it destroyed, but we did want it disabled from use by the Japanese.

So we had them empty the reservoir, open up all the gates, and also take out critical parts from the turbines and generators. It took the Japanese a long time to restore it to operation. Just prior to our advance to Manila, the Japanese decided they, too, were going to destroy it; and they weren't going to just disable it temporarily. They did a real job of destruction, blowing up turbines, generators, part of the huge penstock.

But anyway, I assembled the old National Power group, found out where they had hidden some of the critical parts and got parts from one unit to repair the others. We put in special orders to the States for other parts to get the turbines or generators back into operation; shortly after, we got all of them back in operation.

I thought the sequence of it all was interesting. I had designed it, built it, and then had it disabled. The Japanese came up and rebuilt it and later destroyed it. Then it was my role to reconstruct it. So it was up and down, up and down again, and finally up.

It was quite important to get hydropower. We had the large MERALCO fuel power plant after its reconstruction and a number of small diesel electric plants, but they added to fuel problems. We also got the Bureau of Public Works people, got them together, restoring and operating the various utilities. Even more important, we recruited large numbers of Filipino civilians and organized them into sort of semimilitary work units, somewhat like the CCC here. We had them organized into companies and battalions. And we used those, many of them, on the reconstruction projects that we had.

US Army Forces, Pacific, and Planning for the Invasion of Japan—————

Q: Did the establishment of the US Army Forces in the Pacific (AFPAC) under MacArthur on 6 April 1945 mean any really significant change in your duties at that time?