

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?

A: Well, with that we took over the Central Pacific area and command and they all came under our control. That meant that Okinawa, which had been under the Central Pacific, was now under our jurisdiction. So in addition to the Philippines and the areas that we had before, we expanded our operations to take in Okinawa, where fighting was still under way, and ultimately Japan.

Knowing the importance of Okinawa, particularly in connection with its use as a base for projected operations against Japan, I sensed its major importance. So even without instructions I promptly flew up to Okinawa. General [George J.] Nold was the engineer under General [Simon B.] Buckner, commanding general of Tenth Army, who was later killed-in fact, he was killed shortly after I was up there. He was killed on the very same spot where I had gone to do certain observations on our operations against Naha.

I noted the problems they were having in connection with their airdromes development program. I sensed that they needed additional engineer support. So on my return to Manila, I ordered either five or six engineer battalions (construction battalions or aviation engineer battalions) up to Okinawa under Nold to reinforce their engineer strength, even though we had problems, though of less strategic importance, down in the Philippines. I felt the need then for work up there was of far greater importance than reconstruction in Luzon.

Army and Navy Leaders in the War in the Pacific

Q: What was Simon Bolivar Buckner like?

A: I didn't have much opportunity to know him. I knew him during the few days that I was up there on my inspection tour when I was working with Nold. He seemed to be a very likable as well as able person. I thought he had the situation well in hand, with a fine headquarters and staff. Also, I don't recall who was in command of the large force of Seabees-a senior Seabee officer-but I had a good relationship with him, too. They were all functioning well as a team on this joint effort.