

To Desk, HQMC: This is almost certainly the only eye-witness account written of the Jolo invasion. No war correspondents were present, and the two other CC's who were there are still on Jolo. -D.C.S.

By Staff Sergeant David C. Stephenson, of 2232 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., a Marine Corps Combat Correspondent.

Zamboanga, P.I. (Delayed) -- Jap-held Jolo island -- More capital of the Sulu archipelago and center of Rehammedan and christian rivalry -- was invaded April 9, with all the flag-waving and fanfare on the part of the natives that characterizes an American Fourth.

While destroyers and Army and Marine bombers furnished the fireworks, 41st Division infantrymen under Colonel William J. Moroney, USA, Okmulgee, Okla., poured ashore from scores of landing ships. They landed on the northwest coast of the fertile volcanic island, a few miles east of Jolo, the port capital and zettal airfield, only 128 miles from Borneo, one of Japan's richest sources of tin, rubber and oil.

As warships belched smoke and flame toward inland positions of an estimated 3,000 Japs, Filipinos paddled their vintas perilously close to the maneuvering fleet. The stars and stripes --- bright in the early morning sun --- flew proudly from several colorful more sailing craft.

The native boats hovered near the convoy as if their crews would besiege the Americans at the first opportunity to bargain with verbally "souvenir-happy" Yanks.

These soldiers weren't on a pleasure cruise, but the natives were out for a "Sunday picnic".

From the lumbering Army PBV --- standing by to pick up airmen who
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might crash at sea --- the beachhead appeared to have been established without opposition. Later it was learned that an entire company had been pinned down by enemy fire. Most of the Japs, however, faded back without forming a defensive line. They contended themselves with taking "pot shots" at the invaders and then running.

A pall of black smoke spread across the base of dark green Mt. Dahoe, an extinct volcano brooding in the thunderhead above the capital. B-24's had been at work.

Aboard a destroyer Marine Captain Samuel H. McAloney, Cos Cob, Conn., Air support liaison officer, radioed directions to First Marine Air Wing bombers commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John L. Smith, USMC, Medal of Honor winner who shot down 19 Jap planes at Guadalcanal. ^{later} (Colonel Moroney/praised the efficiency of the air liaison party).

Dropping 35,000 pounds of bombs during four strikes throughout the day, Dauntless dive bombers ^{carrying 1,000-pounders} would peel off into the murky atmosphere ~~(much-bombed)~~ around Patikul and Bangkal Mountains. Minutes later they would emerge from the blackness and speed high above the convoy on the return trip to Zamboanga. Corsair fighters strafed and performed reconnaissance missions.

A Mitchell bomber flew low over the island, observing devastation wrought by the "Diving Devildogs". Aboard it was Colonel Clayton C. Jerome, USMC, of Burrton (Og), Kan., commanding Marine aircraft based at Mindanao, who subsequently received a dispatch from Colonel Moroney commanding Marine air support which, he said, prevented many casualties and caused the Japs to evacuate their troops before the Army could engage them.

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Major General Jens A. Doe (sq), USA, commanding general of the 41st, observed the landings from a Marine SBD shortly after nine a.m.

The flying boat -- a gay robin's egg blue -- cruised among the tiny neighboring islands, some of them nothing but sand spits, submerged trees, and coral lagoon. Above every village --- clusters of huts atop stilts high above the water --- waved Old Glory.

Natives cheered and waved. At one barrie the inhabitants had disigned in the sand a black circle containing a white star --- U.S. aircraft symbol --- and the words "U.S.A. VICTORY". Similar devices adorned many other islet.

Captain George A. Barnes, pilot, 313 A. Street, Taft, Cal., and Second Lieutenant Joyce R. Aly, co-pilot, Route 3, Box 18, Houston, Tex., took turns "buzzing" canoes. Diving straight at the little outriggers, they would pass about 10 feet above the heads of the excited occupants, who would invariably duck.

While the pilots put on their show, hot chow was served to the crew by Staff Sergeant Louis C. Hibbard, medical corpsman, 3572 Colerain Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio. There was fried ham and eggs (canned), peas, bread, cheese, and coffee. For breakfast aboard the crew had eaten toasted bacon sandwiches with coffee.

Along Jolo's shore sailed pearling luggers, with crowds of gayly-dressed people wildly waving whatever they held in their hands. Staff Sergeant R. B. Bean, 2435 23rd Street, Lubbock, Tex., radioman, pointed to their U.S. flags.

Turning inland, the PBY followed a single-lane dirt highway east-

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ward, along the gentle park-like slopes. A single truck headed toward Jolo. Spotting the airplane, it halted in a clump of trees.

First Lieutenant Frank Abele, navigator, of 1328 Gladys Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, thought it was Japanese. Circling back, the plane caught the truck standing in another clump.

Lieutenant Abele and Staff Sergeant Christopher Pavone (12216308), 8 Putnam Street, Rochester, N.Y., radio gunner, had unlimbered the waist guns and pointed them menacingly downward. They withheld fire until positive identification could be made.

On a second sweep, they saw it was a truckload of GI's, who, having advanced far into enemy territory, were returning to their own lines. The PBY crew waved reassuringly.

A destroyer was shelling a large enemy freighter beached near Jolo. Then the warship sent scores of shells into positions near the port. Minesweepers methodically cleared the harbor entrance preparatory to a second landing.

As shadows deepened on the grassy slopes of Mt. Patikul, on which the initial landing had been made, the Catalina turned back to Zamboanga, mission accomplished. Out of nearly 100 planes which struck Jolo on D-Day not one had been forced down.

Technical Sergeant Robert A. Pilot, engineer, 1631 South 12th Street, Milwaukee, Wis., remarked that it had been a dull day --- no ack ack, no rescues.

"Now yesterday," he said, "our sister ship picked up a B-25 crew off Borneo and got shot up by 40mm shore batteries when it landed at sea. The medic and radioman were hit pretty bad."

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The most remarkable feature of the invasion had been the equanimity and holiday spirit of the Moros. Their attitude may be traceable to the island's turbulent history. Jolo was invaded many times by the Spanish, who tried vainly to subdue its Mohammedans.

In 1578 the Spanish sent an expedition there to pacify the Moros. The latter retaliated by sending expeditions against both the Spanish and Filipino ~~theat~~ christians throughout the Philippines.

In the ensuing centuries peace treaties were made and broken, and the Sultans of Jolo continued their devastating piratical raids against Spanish shipping and settlements as far north as Luzon ~~throughout~~ ^{Assuming} the entire Spanish regime.

After the Americans succeeded the Spaniards, the Moros remained belligerent, but attacks against Christians became sporadic and less frequent because of the presence of military force.

Since the Japs seized Jolo, a large guerilla force had resisted them. Today, as Americans land, guerilla friendly to us hold much of the island.

- USMC -

Note to desk, HQMC: ALL PBY crew members are Army.