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Revisiting the Japanese Occupation in the Life of World War II Veterans

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Abstract

Aim: This paper explored the life experiences of war veterans from Camarines Norte during the Japanese Occupation. It reviewed and analyzed the accounts of five selected veterans through the lens of significant others and various sources. Specifically, the researcher sought to answer the following: (1) What are the narratives of World War II veterans' life experiences based on the accounts of significant others and other sources? (2) What are the commonalities and differences of accounts from the life experiences of World War II veterans? (3) What supplementary materials may be proposed based on the results of the study?

Methodology: This study employed qualitative research within a historical research design for data gathering and interpretation. It involved interviews, document collection, source criticism narrative and thematic analysis, and historical contextualization to extract meaningful perspectives from veterans' stories of the Japanese Occupation. Anchored in history from below, local history and Narrative theory, it focused on interpreting the stories of veterans often overlooked in the conventional textbooks and that aimed to contribute to local narratives of Japanese Occupation.

Results: The study analyzed the narratives of Godofredo Peteza Sr., Felicísimo Andrade, Alfredo Lorenzo, Lope Tabor, and Faustino Pancho, revealing diverse perspectives on the Japanese occupation and the transition of ordinary citizens into civilian military personnel. Their stories highlight challenges, survival, and significant contributions to the resistance. Nine common themes emerged from their experiences, describing the social context of the locality during the occupation: lack of basic necessities, sustenance planting, Japanese raids, banditry, resiliency, betrayal, joining the resistance for protection, pervasive fear, and brutalities. The study identified three major differences related to their personal contexts during the occupation: Japanese encounters, social background, and role in the resistance.

Conclusion: To preserve these memories and honor unsung heroes, a booklet titled "War Narratives: Revisiting Japanese Occupation through the Lives of Camarines Norte War Veterans" was proposed, aiming to enrich local history beyond conventional textbooks.

Keywords: World War II Veterans, Japanese Occupation, Local History, History from Below, Camarines Norte, Narrative theory, Supplementary Learning Material

INTRODUCTION

In revisiting historical events, the narratives are often centered on human figures considered to be the actors of historical phenomena. According to Thompson (2017), life stories, biographies, and personal accounts provide a detailed account of individual and collective actions and offer insights into the socio-cultural dynamics and prevailing attitudes of the time (Thompson, 2017). However, conventional history has a problem: it often merely highlights the grand narratives and significant turning points orchestrated by prominent figures. While this perspective is valuable, it can sometimes overlook the experiences of ordinary people who lived through these



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historical moments. This dilemma resulted in the emergence of history from below or the study of focusing on ordinary individuals and the masses. This democratizes the study of history by foregrounding the experiences and contributions of ordinary people (Linebaugh & Rediker, 2000). Aligned with this principle, this study tried to contextualize a historical period characterized by intense conflict, suffering, and destruction. This study explores the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines (1942-1945), part of the wider WWII conflict in the Asia Pacific. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Occupation led to widespread atrocities and economic exploitation (Agoncillo, 1990).

Filipino soldiers and guerrilla groups, such as the Vinzons Traveling Guerrilla in the Bicol Region, played crucial roles in resisting Japanese forces through sabotage operations (McCoy, 2006). Despite the significance of these resistance efforts, many local narratives remain untold, as most studies focus on prominent battles and figures (Jose, 2022). Efforts to preserve veterans' memories, such as the Veterans History Project in the U.S. and the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office archives, highlight the importance of personal accounts in understanding history (Library of Congress, 2010; PVAO, n.d.). Marles et al. (2016) and Prosser (2014) emphasize integrating veterans' stories into educational curricula to provide a personal understanding of historical events.

The initiative to document and preserved the personal accounts of war veterans and their experiences during historical events has crucial for part enriching our understanding of the past. Inspired by used of individual stories in history by highlighting the overlooked experiences of of local communities and lesser-known veterans. Drawing inspiration from studies such as those by Marles et al. (2016) and Prosser (2014), which emphasize the importance of preserving veterans' unique historical narratives and integrating them into educational curricula.

This study Revisiting Japanese Occupation in the life of World War II veterans, highlight the life experience of selected Veterans Camarines Norte through the accounts of the significant others and relevant available documents. This study employed qualitative research within the framework of a historical research design for data gathering and interpretation. This involved interviews, source criticism, narrative and thematic analysis, and historical contextualization to extract meaningful insights and perspectives from veteran stories of Japanese Occupation. This study is anchored in three philosophical principles: Thompson's History from Below, John Larkin Local History and Bal's Narrative Theory.

The first theory that anchored this research was E.P. Thompson's "history from below." Thompson advocated for examining the lives and experiences of ordinary people, such as workers, peasants, soldiers, and everyday individuals, highlighting their crucial roles in shaping historical events and societal changes (Port, 2015). By focusing on their struggles, contributions, and agency, Thompson's approach offered a richer and more inclusive understanding of history.

By applying Thompson's "history from below," this research on the World War II veterans of Camarines Norte provided an empathetic and comprehensive understanding of the veterans' lives. It honored their individual and collective contributions by placing their experiences at the center of the historical narrative. This approach not only enriched the historical record but also ensured that the voices of these remarkable individuals were heard and remembered.

The second theory was Larkin's local history, which studied past events, people, and places within a specific geographic area, typically a community, town, or region. It focused on understanding the aspects of a locality's history and its significance within the broader historical context. Larkin emphasized that local history often brought to light the experiences of ordinary people and everyday life, frequently overlooked in mainstream historical narratives. This approach not only enriched our understanding of history but also fostered a sense of identity and connection to the place (Larkin, 1967). This was supported by Republic Act No. 10086, also known as *An Act Strengthening Peoples' Nationalism Through Philippine History* which aimed to strengthen nationalism and social consciousness by promoting national and local history (NHCP, 2019).

This approach was particularly relevant to the research on "Revisiting Japanese Occupation: Through the Life of World War II Veterans of Camarines Norte." By focusing on Camarines Norte, the research highlighted how the Japanese occupation impacted this particular community. The study gathered and presented the personal stories of World War II veterans from the region, capturing their lives, challenges, and acts of resilience during the occupation. These narratives provided a rich, localized perspective that contributed to a deeper understanding of the broader historical context of the Japanese occupation in the Philippines.

This was also anchored to Mieke Bals, Narrative Theory, which focused on the structure and interpretation of stories, explored how narratives conveyed meaning and shaped understanding. Bal identified three primary levels: fabula (raw material of the story), story (organization and presentation of the story), and text (actual words and sentences) (Radhi, 2022). Analyzing war veterans' narratives through this lens provided a deep understanding of

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their experiences and the impact of their stories. The veterans' fabula included their lived experiences, while the story level looked at how these were presented through techniques like chronological order, thematic development, and flashbacks. Text analysis revealed the emotional context, using metaphors and repeated phrases to emphasize the remarkable experiences. These narratives preserved memory, shaped identities, and influenced public perceptions, reflecting cultural and social contexts.

By integrating these theoretical approaches, this study aimed to enrich our understanding of the Japanese occupation through real-life scenarios and underscore the enduring impact of ordinary people's experiences on the historical and cultural fabric of Philippine history.

By preserving their legacy and highlighting their vital role in the Philippine Liberation, this study also aimed to contribute to a more inclusive historical narrative, ensuring that these veterans' legacies were not forgotten and continued to inspire future generations, contributing to wartime stories of both local and national history.

Objectives

This study explored the life experiences of Cam Norteno war veterans during the Japanese Occupation through the accounts of their relatives and available documents.

Specifically, it sought to achieve the following:

1. Review and analyze the narratives of the life experiences of World War II veterans through the lens of their relatives and other sources;
2. Construct different themes highlighting the commonalities and differences in the life experiences of World War II veterans; and
3. Propose supplementary materials based on the results of the study.

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized historical research method. Historical research is a qualitative technique. It involves developing an understanding of the past through the examination and interpretation of evidence. (Mikszta et al., 2023, pp. 59-82). As a procedure of historical research writing, the researcher conducted systematics data gathering of documents and other sources that contains information and records related to life of selected war veterans from Camarines Norte.

As sources located and collected, the researcher evaluated source through historical data analysis. The historical data analysis is the evaluation of documents and other records using two method of sources criticism, the external and internal. External criticism is concerned with authenticity of the material sources which questioned the physical qualities of sources, like who is the author or creator material, when and where it was made and why did it survive, while Internal criticism pertains to the purpose and meaning of the material sources. External criticism analyzes the historical significance of the source in writing the narrative (Tosh 2000). Also, this research used interviews with key informants who are well informed and knowledgeable in lives of selected war veterans from Camarines Norte. Information gathered from key informant are transcribed and interpreted and corroborated with other sources. Purposive sampling was used in this study.

Key Informants of the Study

This research utilized key informants, including family members who possessed knowledge and supporting documents about the lives and experiences of their war veteran relatives. These family members were the veterans' children—Godofredo Peteza Jr., Fortunato Andrade, Melva Porbolan, Elmer Tabor, and Merly Cabajar—who served as significant informants. Aged 50-60 years, they vividly recalled the stories of their veteran relatives. The interviews focused on the veterans' life experiences during the Japanese Occupation, as well as their narratives of the pre-occupation and post-occupation periods that still have a connection to their wartime experiences. The personnel from the Camarines Norte Provincial Archives and the Veterans Federation of the Philippines Local Chapter played a crucial role in this study, helping access and trace these informants through documented lists of Camarines Norte veterans.

Instrument

In line with the principles of the historical method, this research study employed a semi-structured interview guide in the form of a questionnaire, and recording device was employed to accurately capture and transcribe the data gathered during the interview process. This was done to ensure that the narratives shared by the key

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informants were recorded accurately and that no important details were missed. In line with the principles of the historical method, the utilization of a semi-structured interview guide and a recording device ensured that the data gathered were thoroughly evaluated and analyzed.

Data Collection

The study followed systematic data collection methods, starting with securing approval and consent from participants. Secondary sources such as literature and digital materials are surveyed to develop an interview questionnaire, while primary sources, including military records and personal documents, are gathered to evidence veteran service. An expert validated interview materials for quality and reliability. Interviews were scheduled based on informant availability, recorded, and transcribed for validation by interviewees. Information from interviews, documents, and literature was corroborated to form a narrative, adhering to historical research methods that ensure data reliability and accuracy by cross-referencing multiple sources to resolve discrepancies.

Data Analysis

In this study, the data analysis incorporated both external and internal criticism to verify the authenticity and reliability of the sources. External criticism examined a source's origin, its consistency with known facts, and form, while internal criticism assessed the content's coherence, meaning, and potential biases (Tosh, 2000). Shafer (1980) distinguished between external criticism for determining authenticity and internal criticism for assessing credibility. The researcher applied these analytical methods to documents, literature, and interviews related to war veterans of Camarines Norte, using a checklist to ensure authenticity and reliability.

As described by Somer (2008), the study employed narrative analysis to interpret the data, aiming to understand how individuals constructed and communicated their experiences. The researcher situated the veterans' stories within the Philippine social, political, and economic landscape during the Japanese Occupation (1942–1946), thus linking these factors to the veterans' experiences.

Additionally, the study utilized thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), to identify patterns within the qualitative data. This process involved familiarizing oneself with the data, generating codes, collating them into themes, reviewing, refining, and naming them. Through thematic analysis, the study aimed to uncover commonalities and differences in veterans' accounts, contributing to a deeper understanding of their experiences during the Occupation.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured ethical and responsible data collection by first obtaining consent forms from the family members of war veterans. A separate approval letter, signed by one family member, granted permission for document collection and interviews, while also explaining the study's objectives and procedures. The researcher also sent letters to government and veterans' institutions to request access to additional data. Key informants had the option to decline answering questions if they felt uncomfortable, and the researcher guaranteed the confidentiality of their information. Before taking pictures or recording, the researcher informed participants and respected their choices. Throughout the process, the researcher strictly adhered to ethical guidelines, maintaining transparency and protecting participants' rights.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presents the analyses and interpretation of data obtained from the sources of the study. The information is presented in themes with interpretation and implication. The presentation is organized based on the order of the problems in the statement of the problem

1.The narratives of the life experiences of World War II veterans through the lens of significant others and other sources.

Godofredo Peteza's Account

During the Japanese occupation, Godofredo Peteza Sr., a 15-year-old grade school student, evacuated to a man-made tunnel to escape Japanese forces. His belief in an amulet served as a survival charm during his first enemy encounter. Having received military training, he joined Turko Boayes' guerrilla group as a spy, providing valuable intelligence from Japanese garrisons and witnessing the suffering of prisoners of war and Japanese



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atrocities. His contributions and experiences were supported by narratives from his son, Godofredo Peteza Jr., and other primary sources.

Felicisimo Andrade's Account

Felicisimo Andrade, a civilian volunteer trainee of the Philippine Scouts, became a planning officer for the guerrilla resistance in Paracale. As a college graduate, Andrade's educational background led him to a strategic role in the guerrilla units, which significantly disrupted Japanese supply lines and communications in Paracale, a region rich in gold deposits targeted by the Japanese. His story, enriched by the accounts of his son, Fortunato Andrade, highlighted his dedication to the cause of liberation.

Alfredo Lorenz's Account

Alfredo Lorenzo, a chief mechanic and driver, utilized skills learned from his father to support the American military resistance. Recruited to transport food and medical supplies to American headquarters, Lorenzo's story highlights the hardships of the occupation, including the scarcity of supplies and the danger from collaborators and Japanese captures. His experiences were detailed through the memories of his daughter, Melva Porbolan, and corroborated by historical records.

Lope Tabor's Account

Lope Tabor, a 19-year-old son of a cabeza de barangay, chose to join the resistance despite being protected from Japanese atrocities. Enlisted and trained under the 44th Infantry Regiment of the Philippine Scouts, Tabor served as a mechanic and driver, crucially supplying weapons and rations to Filipino and American troops. His narrative includes near-death experiences and his assignments in Okinawa, Japan, and Hawaii. His contributions were supported by the accounts of his son, Elmer Tabor, and other archival documents.

Faustino Pancho's Account

Driven by fear from the constant threat of Japanese atrocities, Faustino Pancho defied his parents' opposition and enlisted as a radio operator and mechanic. Assigned to various headquarters, Pancho's narrative includes escapes and techniques to outsmart the Japanese, including a near-death experience during a New Year's Eve raid in Cabanatuan. His story, as told by his daughter, Merly Cabajar, and supplemented by other sources, emphasizes his determination and bravery.

These stories, supported by the narratives of their descendants and various primary sources, collectively highlight the diverse experiences, hardships, and significant contributions of ordinary individuals who became civilian military personnel during the Japanese occupation. Their dedication, sacrifices, and resilience were crucial in the fight for the Philippines' freedom.

2. The commonalities and differences of accounts from the life experiences of World War II veterans.

Commonalities

The following commonalities described the context of life during the occupation: societal problems, the responses and reactions of people to the occupation, and the adaptation and character they displayed. These commonalities demonstrate that veterans' experiences share common depictions of life during the Japanese occupation

2.1 Lack of Basic Necessities

One of the themes revealed in terms of commonalities was the lack of basic necessities during the Japanese occupation, characterized by shortages of essential supplies like food, medicine, and other goods. Japanese soldiers often requisitioned resources, leading to severe food shortages for the local population (Jose, 1998).

A key quote from a transcription emphasized this common problem:

Andrade's Account: Life in Paracale was hard. They mainly ate root crops due to food shortages, and everything was rationed by the Japanese. Medicine was also scarce, but some had kept first aid kits and medicines before the war. Bandits posed another threat, pretending to be guerrillas and looting houses (Andrade, 2023).



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Lorenzo's Account: Growing up, he often talked about the hardships from food shortages. Despite this, people kept planting crops because if they didn't, they would starve (Porbolan, 2023).

Tabor's Account: Food was scarce, but they continuously planted crops and prepared for the Japanese raids (Tabor, 2023).

This aligned with studies on the effects of supply shortages during the occupation. Lem's study on the Philippine economy noted that the lack of basic necessities caused great hardship for Filipino civilians, leading to malnutrition, disease, and other deprivations (Lem, 2023). The resulting hunger and hardship damaged morale and strengthened resistance against the Japanese, causing widespread social and economic dislocation.

2.2 Importance of planting for sustenance.

With the breakdown of the normal food distribution system, growing one's own food through planting and gardening became essential for survival. Home and community gardens allowed Filipinos to supplement their meager rations and provide a reliable source of fresh produce. Planting staple crops like rice, corn, and vegetables helped offset the severe shortages caused by the disruption of commercial agriculture and food imports Jose (1998).

key quote from several presented accounts emphasized this common solution to the shortage of food:

Peteza's Account: "Life went on, and they continued planting rice. One day, Japanese soldiers arrived and the Japanese found his mother planting corn" (Peteza Jr., 2023).

Andrade's Account: "Life in Paracale was difficult. Food was rationed by the Japanese, and people survived on root crops. Bandits also raided houses" (Andrade, 2023).

Lorenzo's Account: "He always told me how hard life had been due to food shortages. People kept planting crops to survive" (Porbolan, 2023).

Tabor's Account: "Food was scarce, so they kept planting crops while preparing for Japanese raids" (Tabor, 2023).

Planting for subsistence became a common solution to food shortages during the occupation, allowing Filipinos to meet their daily needs. It fostered self-reliance, pride, and resilience. This aligns with Ricardo Trota Jose's study, which noted that growing food locally reduced reliance on the unstable economy and unreliable markets, while surplus crops could be sold or bartered, offering income and promoting solidarity (ibid).

2.3 Japanese raid in communities

Another common experience among World War II veterans was the Japanese raids on communities. These raids involved extorting resources from locals through brutal means.

Japanese soldiers frequently raided Filipino homes, confiscating food and supplies, and punishing those who didn't bow properly. Young women lived in constant fear of abduction (Lagman, O. P., 2020).

Peteza's Account : key quote from several accounts emphasized this common problem.

My father said that whenever the Japanese came to their place, his mother would give them whatever they wanted—whether it was corn, rice, or any other produce (Peteza Jr., 2023).

Tabor's Account: "Life back then was short on food supply. What they did was continuously plant crops... They also prepared whenever the Japanese came and possible raid (Tabor, 2023)."

Japanese raids during the occupation caused severe hardship for Filipinos by confiscating their limited goods, leaving many families facing starvation and deprivation.

The civilians were forced to surrender food, supplies, and valuables to the soldiers. Literature supports this, noting that the confiscation of resources, coupled with economic disruption, led to widespread hunger and suffering (Jose, 1998).



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2.4 Rampant Banditry

Rampant banditry, carried out by opportunistic individuals during the war, was a significant issue, with many bandits being locals. The Japanese invasion disrupted daily life, causing shortages of food and supplies. As a result, some Filipinos resorted to banditry and looting to survive (Kumai & Ibuki, 2014).

.key quote from several accounts emphasized this common problem in the community

Andrade's Account: "Back then, the bandits here pretended to be guerrillas, then raided and looted houses(Andrade, 2023)."

Lorenzo's Account: "My father said there were also Filipinos who were abusive, even more so than the Japanese. They pretended to be collaborators of the Japanese, then extorted their fellow Filipinos" (Porbolan, 2023).

Rampant banditry among Filipinos during World War II worsened wartime hardships, straining economic stability and community solidarity. Literature highlights how banditry undermined resistance efforts against Japanese occupation, adding to the challenges faced by local populations. Kumai and Ibuki (2014) note that many impoverished residents resorted to violent looting and banditry.

2.5 Resiliency and Perseverance

Another common theme in the life experiences of WWII veterans was resilience and perseverance. This included enduring hardships, adapting to hostile environments, and maintaining hope in the face of adversity. During the Japanese occupation, many Filipinos faced constant threats of violence and destruction but found ways to survive and support each other (National WWII Museum, n.d.).

key quote from all accounts of veterans emphasized this common traits.

Peteza's Account: "He got separated from his mother... He was very angry at the Japanese... But he instilled in his mind that he needed to keep on living... hiding in the mountains, where the Japanese couldn't reach them" (Peteza, 2023).

Andrade's Account: "He remembered how they used to hide... Many of his comrades were captured and killed... Despite that, he continued his work afterward" (Andrade, 2023).

Lorenzo's Account: "He always told stories about... the lack of food... Many people were killed... His father was captured... driving for the Americans... They went to Olongapo to get supplies..." (Porbolan, 2023).

Tabor's Account: "My father told stories about hiding in the roof... They would hide the women... Life was short on food supplies... He experienced being shot at by unknown people..." (Tabor, 2023).

Pancho's Account: "He joined the military... hiding in the gutter from Japanese soldiers... trained with the Philippine Scouts... almost got hit by a stray bullet on New Year's..." (Cabajar, 2023).

The resilience and perseverance of veterans during the Japanese occupation reveal profound insights into human adaptability and courage. These hardships not only tested their limits but also strengthened their ability to navigate uncertainty and maintain hope. According to literature, even after the war, the Philippines faced further challenges, yet the Filipino people consistently demonstrated resilience, which continues to guide the nation in its pursuit of peace, progress, and prosperity (Foronda, 1975).

2.6 Betrayal of among fellow Filipinos

Another theme also linked to the commonalities of life experiences of World War II veterans was betrayal among fellow Filipinos. This theme highlights the internal conflicts and faction within communities and even families during the war. Betrayal came in various forms, such as collaboration. with the Japanese forces, espionage, and informing on guerrilla fighters or resistance members.



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key quote from several presented accounts emphasized this common issues of betrayals during the occupation.

Andrade's Account: "My father said there were Filipinos who collaborated with the enemy, making it hard to know if people were friends or informants" (Andrade, 2023).

Lorenzo's Account: "My father recounted that Vinzons believed the person who betrayed them was from Paracale. Those people pretended to be Japanese and were the prime suspects" (Porbolan, 2023).

Betrayal by some Filipinos during the occupation intensified the suffering, creating distrust and fear within communities. Literature supports that such betrayals eroded trust, weakened resistance efforts, and led to increased casualties as informants exposed guerrillas and civilians (Jose, 1997). Unity was further undermined as suspicions spread, tearing apart families and friendships, with profound psychological effects (Lawson, 2013).

2.7 Pervasive Fear and Brutalities

Another common theme was "Pervasive fear and brutalities," referring to the widespread fear and acts of extreme violence during the occupation. Fear was ever-present, and brutal actions were common, particularly in territories like the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Japanese soldiers were notorious for violence, sexual slavery, and mistreatment of prisoners of war (Takeshima, 2020). Filipinos lived in constant fear, enduring torture, rape, pillaging, mass killings, and harsh rules with severe punishments (Jose, 1995).

key quotes from several presented accounts emphasized this common issues of betrayals during the occupation.

Peteza's Account: "He returned home with a fellow guerrilla, but Filipinos tipped off the Japanese. They raided them, beheading his cousin, imprisoning some, while others escaped. He ran to the mountains" (Peteza, 2023).

Gofofredo Sr.'s Account: "The following day, I saw nearly a hundred tied to poles under the sweltering sun, with a Japanese soldier pouring water over their heads. We suffered miserable atrocities" (Gofofredo Sr., 2017, as cited in Badaguas et al., 2018).

Andrade's Account: "They would hide when the Japanese were near, who would kill guerrillas immediately. During a mission in Paracale, many comrades were captured and killed, but they escaped with backup help. Despite the losses, he continued" (Andrade, 2023).

Pancho's Account: "They hid in gutters to avoid Japanese soldiers. My father said women and children couldn't leave, fearing beheadings. He joined the military despite his parents' objections" (Cabajar, 2023).

During wartime, pervasive fear and brutality deeply scar individuals and communities, shaping identities and societal attitudes towards conflict and peace. The Japanese forces' harsh punishments instilled fear, discouraging open resistance among Filipinos. All levels of society, including youth and civilians, experienced violence such as bombings, rape, torture, and murder (Griggs, 2020). Despite these horrors, Filipinos showed resilience by supporting each other, maintaining cultural practices, and preserving hope throughout the occupation.

2.8 Joining resistance movement as mean of protection

During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines in World War II, many veterans, students, and citizens joined resistance movements as a means of protection. Driven by a desire for self-preservation in the face of atrocities like the Bataan Death March and the abuse of "comfort women," these groups provided a sense of community and mutual defense, fostering hope and resilience amidst the chaos (Jose, 2020). By combining guerrilla warfare and formal military enlistment, Filipinos mounted a more effective resistance, fighting for both their survival and their nation's freedom.

key quotes from several presented accounts emphasized this common sentiment and reasons:

Pacho's Account: "He joined the military because of his experiences. They would hide in the gutter whenever there were Japanese soldiers nearby, staying there all day. My father also said that women and children couldn't leave



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when the Japanese were around. People were scared because they would hear about those being beheaded by the Japanese. That's why he decided to join the military, despite his parents' objections, he insisted (Cabajar, 2023)."

Peteza's Account: "He realized the war was real... They all ran in panic... He got separated from his mother and ended up in a different village. This forced him to become independent at a young age, and he harbored intense anger towards the Japanese. His decision to join the resistance was influenced by his cousins and the events around him. He joined and was away from his family for four years. Eventually, he also joined the guerrillas, which put him on the wanted list (Peteza Jr., 2023).

The accounts highlight how the suffering endured during the early occupation fueled the veterans' decision to join the resistance movement for protection. This suggests that human suffering pushed veterans to resist and find strength in solidarity, initially a personal decision, but later a significant contribution to liberation. This implication is supported by studies showing a correlation between suffering under occupation and joining resistance movements (Collard-Wexler, 2013). The severity of suffering imposed by occupiers, including violence, exploitation, and repression, increases the likelihood of resistance, as individuals seek to protect themselves and their families from atrocities.

Differences

The following differences describe how individuals perceived the occupation based on their personal context, leading to diverse experiences. These include their different interactions with the Japanese, their varied social contexts during the occupation, and the roles they played in the resistance, which varied according to task or assignment. This demonstrates that veteran experiences vary depending on their unique scenarios and personal contexts.

2.9 Japanese encounters

"Japanese encounters" refer to the diverse experiences of Filipino war veterans during their interactions with the Japanese, ranging from surprise attacks to fierce battles, tense negotiations, desperate escapes, and surveillance.

These interactions, shaped by the circumstances and nature of each encounter, influenced their perceptions of the enemy and their strategies for survival during the occupation (Jose, 1997).

key quote from several presented accounts the show different of the war veteran encounters with the Japanese.

Peteza's Account: Disguised as a Japanese teenager, he infiltrated a Japanese garrison in San Jose, Camarines Sur, witnessing the brutal treatment of prisoners tied to poles under the scorching sun. He conducted surveillance for almost 10 months, penetrating enemy lines and submitting intelligence reports (Badaguas, 2018).

Andrade's Account: He hid from the Japanese, fearing immediate death if discovered as a guerrilla. He participated in a mission in Paracale, where many comrades were captured and killed, but he escaped with backup. Despite the danger, he continued his resistance work (Andrade, 2023).

Lorenzo's Account: His father was captured by the Japanese, but was released due to a document provided by an acquaintance (Porbolan, 2023).

Tabor's Account: While driving, his vehicle was shot at by unknown assailants, believed to be Japanese (Tabor, 2023).

Pancho's Account: He narrowly avoided being hit by a stray bullet on New Year's Day when Japanese soldiers fired shots near his post (Cabajar, 2023).

The veterans' accounts highlight the varied dangers they faced when encountering Japanese forces, including witnessing atrocities and experiencing the harsh atmosphere of occupation. These encounters were often described as the most terrifying moments of their wartime experiences.

Literature frequently portrays encounters with Japanese forces during historical conflicts with vivid intensity, capturing the harrowing struggles and pervasive fear experienced by those involved. One poignant example is "Diary of the War" by Maria Virginia Yap Morales, which vividly recounts her family's evacuation, the arrest and torture of



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Col. Campo by the Japanese, and their eventual return to Davao City (Morales, 2006). This account vividly describes the harrowing experience of a family in the hands of the Japanese.

2.10 Social background

Social background, encompassing family, societal status, character, personality, and pre-occupation experiences, significantly influenced how individuals navigated the Japanese occupation. Personal experiences, beliefs, and values shaped resilience, coping mechanisms, and the ability to find meaning in adversity. Understanding the impact of social background on overcoming trials was essential for developing strategies for resilience and growth (Leading Effectively Article, 2020). In the case of the veterans, their social backgrounds played a significant role in how they survived and adapted to life during the Japanese occupation.

The interpretation and key quotes support experiences that plays important role in their lives during the occupation.

Peteza lost his father at the young learning the value of resilience and survival early on.

Key quote:

Peteza's Account: "I saw a group of men about a hundred yards away whom I suspected as KALABAPI or pro Japanese but since they carried infield rifles everybody surmised they were the Japanese organized Philippine Constabulary which was true. I walked briskly towards them and when about 10 yards away I executed about face and ran as fast as possible to test the effectiveness of one feature of the amulet that a bullet would not pierce through my body. Fortunately, they just laughed and did not fire their riffles to the chagrin of my friends. But, what if they fired their guns and hit me dead, I could not tell everybody today that my amulet saved me (Badaguas, 2018)."

Peteza's appearance as a young-looking Japanese became useful to disguise and avoid Japanese capture while performing intelligence tasks.

Key quote:

Peteza's Account: ginawa siya spy nila turko kasi mukhang batang hapon hindi sya papansinin ng mga hapon, palakad lakad siya doon sa garrison...(Peteza, 2023)

Andrade came from a sustainable family before the occupation that afforded him higher education, leading to his position and role as a planning officer in a guerrilla group in Paracale.

Key quote:

Andrade's Account: "He finished college, so after the war, he became a teacher here at Paracale National High School. Their life was good before the Japanese occupation."

Meanwhile, Lorenzo, having acquired driving skills from his father, became a driver and mechanic during the occupation.

Key quote:

Lorenzo's Account: "He used to accompany his father while driving until he learned how to drive himself. Then, an American asked who knew how to drive, and he said he did. He was recruited and trained to drive a 6x6 truck. He became a driver and mechanic for the Americans, transporting supplies like food, medicine, and guns. He was a member of the Philippine Scouts and trained with them. He told stories about their travels to Clarkfield, Olongapo, and here in our town (Porbolan, 2023).

Tabor's father's influence as Cabeza de Barangay during the occupation provided them with protection from Japanese atrocities and raids.

Key quote:

Tabor's Account: "During that time, they weren't bothered much by the Japanese because his father was a captain. His father was close to the Japanese and would then report to the guerrillas. That was the system back then."

Pancho's early experience of the occupation instilled fear and resilience, leading him to enlist in the military

Key quote:

Pancho's Account: He joined the military because of his experiences. They would hide in the gutter whenever there were Japanese soldiers nearby, staying there all day. My father also said that women and children couldn't leave



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when the Japanese were around. People were scared because they would hear about those being beheaded by the Japanese. That's why he decided to join the military, despite his parents' objections, he insisted (Cabajar, 2023).

These key quotes illustrate how the social background of veterans, including factors like resilience from early loss, appearance, education, relative position, skills, political influence, and fear, influences their interpretation of challenges, resource access, and coping with wartime hardships. Understanding veterans' social backgrounds offers insights into the diversity of their wartime experiences and the factors shaping their resilience, attitudes, and behaviors during and after the occupation.

A study examining the impact of social background on individuals' experiences during the Japanese occupation revealed that those from privileged backgrounds often had better access to resources and networks, aiding their ability to navigate the challenges of occupation. Conversely, individuals from marginalized or lower social backgrounds were at higher risk of exploitation and discrimination (Tanaka Y., 2015).

Role in the Resistance

"Role in the Resistance" refers to the specific actions, duties, and contributions of individuals or groups within a resistance movement against an occupying force or authoritarian regime. Veterans played significant roles in the resistance movement, influencing their experiences during the Japanese occupation and resulting in diverse personal accounts.

During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, Filipinos engaged in a diverse and courageous resistance effort. Spies and informants gathered intelligence at great risk, guerrilla radio operators coordinated activities, and individuals served as drivers, mechanics, and logistics support. Civilians provided essential aid like food and shelter, while some joined guerrilla combat units using hit-and-run tactics. Others fought alongside American forces in the USAFFE. This multifaceted resistance was instrumental in weakening Japanese control and setting the stage for Philippine liberation and independence, demonstrating the unwavering spirit of the Filipino people (Minor, 2009)

key quote from several presented accounts emphasized diverse experience in related the Role in the Resistance.

Godofredo Peteza served as intelligence/ Spy

Peteza's Account: "I was personally recruited by Turko as a guerilla. Turko told us that a squad of heavily armed guerilla would fetch me in December 1943 for the mass induction on December 25, 1943 to be held in the Caramoan Peninsula...In conducting surveillance for almost 10 months, penetrating enemy lines, submitting intelligence reports to the Intelligence Officer in the field and witnessing the exodus of surrendering Philippine Constabulary soldiers to the guerilla resistance movement, I was ordered again to report to Camp Denrica to decipher messages from the American Liberation forces"(Badaguas,2018).

Felecisimo Andrade as Planning Officer

Andrade's Account: "He became a guerrilla, but before that, he was a Philippine Scout, a soldier for the Americans. Then he joined Turko and Vinzons' guerrilla group. He joined because he was encouraged by our cousin, and they were all young men. He became a planning officer, so he was in the quarters and not in combat. He was assigned there because of his education. He didn't have trauma because he was in the office and not a combatant (Andrade, 2023)."

Alfredo Lorenzo served as driver and auto mechanic

Lorenzo's Account"...eventually he learned to drive. Then, an American asked who could drive, and he said he could. He was recruited and trained to drive a 6x6 truck. He became a driver and then a mechanic for the Americans, transporting supplies such as food, medicine, and weapons, always accompanying the Americans. He trained as a member of the Philippine Scouts. He recounted their travels to Clarkfield, Olongapo, and here in our area... He didn't really fight, but their lives were still in danger because they were transporting supplies and could be ambushed by the Japanese at any time (Porbolan, 2023)."

Lope Tabor served as auto mechanic and driver

Tabor's Account: My father was a driver and mechanic; that was his job in the military. He joined because his cousin invited him, and later, some recruiters approached him, and he joined because he really wanted to train. Back then, he left riding a 6x6 truck to Pasay and then enlisted directly in Pampanga at Camp O'Donnell. He

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became a member of the 12th Infantry Division, J Company, 44th Infantry Regiment of the Philippine Scouts. After completing the training, he served as an auto mechanic and driver, always accompanying both American and Filipino officers. Later, they were taken to Okinawa in Japan, and after the war, they went to Hawaii. He also experienced being shot at by unknown people while he was driving during that time, but he was sure they were Japanese. These are the kinds of stories he shared with me (Tabor, 2023)."

Faustino Pancho served as Radio Operator and Mechanic

Pancho's Account: "My father became a radio operator and mechanic in the motor pool back then. He joined because of his experiences. They went to Camp Vicente Lim at that time and then were stationed in Cabanatuan. There, he became a radio operator and mechanic. Later, in Tarlac, my father almost got hit by a stray bullet on New Year's because some Japanese soldiers were firing near where he lived (Cabajar, 2023)."

This key quote illustrates the diverse and essential roles individuals played in the resistance, highlighting the multifaceted nature of resistance efforts. It emphasizes the various ways individuals can support resistance efforts and the omnipresent danger faced by all resistance members, regardless of their specific duties.

This supported literature that the Filipino veterans were the backbone of the resistance, contributing through military action, intelligence gathering, logistical support, and personal sacrifice. Their diverse roles were instrumental in undermining the Japanese occupation and paving the way for the eventual liberation of the Philippines. (Obama White House Archives, 2013)

3. Proposed Supplementary Learning Material

"War Narratives: Revisiting Japanese Occupation through the Lives of Camarines Norte War Veterans" Introduction

This booklet takes readers back to the time of the Japanese Occupation in Camarines Norte, presenting the stories of courageous men who endured this era. It shares their remarkable accounts of bravery, sacrifice, and resilience. This 42-page booklet, divided into three chapters, allows readers to experience the occupation through the personal narratives of local war veterans, celebrating their indomitable spirit.

Aim and Purpose

The booklet focuses on the experiences of Peteza, Andrade, Lorenzo, Tabor, and Pacho during the Japanese occupation, enriching local history and honoring unsung heroes. By preserving their memories, it contributes to the collection of local history on the Japanese occupation, offering a deeper understanding of their contributions and sacrifices, while imparting valuable moral lessons.

Proposal Rationale

- Committed to preserving and promoting historical narratives of the Japanese occupation in Camarines Norte.
- Aligns with Republic Act No. 10086, which mandates the preservation and promotion of the nation's historical and cultural heritage.
- Embraces the "history from below" approach, emphasizing the importance of documenting the lives of ordinary people.
- Utilizes oral history to provide rich, diverse perspectives often absent from official records.
- Ensures recognition of the contributions of Camarines Norte war veterans, enriching the community's collective memory.

Conclusion

The collective narratives of Godofredo Peteza Sr., Felicísimo Andrade, Alfredo Lorenzo, Lope Tabor, and Faustino Pancho illuminated the diverse and impactful roles they played as military civilians. Their stories underscored their resilience, sacrifices, and unwavering commitment to freedom, portraying a vivid tapestry of experiences that enriched our understanding of this pivotal period in Philippine history. These individuals, from various walks of life, exemplified the indomitable spirit that fueled the resistance efforts and contributed significantly

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to the eventual liberation of the nation. The prevalence of common themes among World War II veterans' experiences suggests that the depiction of the social context during the occupation was consistent across different individuals. These commonalities indicate that, despite individual differences in background and specific roles, the veterans' experiences were shaped by a set of universal challenges and responses brought by Japanese Occupation. The narratives of the five selected veterans, used as a source for the creation of supplementary learning materials, contributed to localizing the experiences and memory of the Japanese Occupation. This made knowledge of a certain historical era more relatable and accessible to the public in different communities.

Recommendations

The study recommendation calls for continuing research on Camarines Norte veterans to preserved and deepen understanding of their contributions during the Japanese Occupation. Schools and local governments should organize oral history projects that engage veterans' families and community members to capture personal insights.

Historians and educators can collaborate on research, creating exhibitions and digital archives to broaden public access. Communities can take an active role in preserving their history through workshops and projects that document local stories. Schools should also integrate veteran narratives into curricula, while digital platforms will help ensure these stories are widely shared and appreciated by future generations.

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