



U.S. COAST GUARD

LORAN STATION

BATAN

**General
Information
Book**

1969

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CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF BATAN ISLAND AND STATION

1. Geography and Climate: Batan Island is the largest of the eleven islands comprising the Province of Batanes, the northern most province in the Philippine Archipelago. Batan Island is 120 miles southeast of Taiwan, and 135 miles north of the Philippine Island of Luzon. Of the eleven islands only three are inhabited - Batan, Itbayat, and Sabtang. Batan is 12 miles long 2.5 miles wide, and runs in a general north-south direction. It has four towns- Basco (the Provincial Capital), Mahatao, Ivana, and Uyugan. Associated with the towns are small villages called barrios. Ivana has one barrio, San Vicente, while Uyugan has three, Songsong, Itbud, and Imnajbu. With the exception of the last three, barrios, which are located on the eastern shore of the island, all the towns are located on the northwest shore along a 15 mile, single lane road. The road goes three-fourths of the way around the island with Basco at one end and Imnajbu at the other. The island is a series of rolling hills with narrow plains near the shore. There are two mountain peaks - Mt. Iraya in the north, and Mt. Matarem in the south. Mt. Iraya, the largest, is approximately 3500 feet high.

Sabantang Island is only 3 miles from Batan, and is the smallest of the inhabited islands. It has only one town, Centro, and four barrios.

Itbayat Island is about 20 miles from Basco, and has one town and one barrio. The only lake in the province, Lake Kayanan, is in Itbayat. The island has no shore line as it is in the shape of a bowl with high cliffs surrounding it.

Batan is located in an area of semi-tropical climate. The hot season is from April to July with the average temperature between 85 and 90 degrees. The typhoon season lasts from June to November, but most typhoons occur in July, August, and September. The rainy season coincides with the typhoon season. The months from December thru March are fairly cold and damp due to the northeast wind. The temperature ranges between 50 and 60 degrees.

2. Provincial History: The recorded history of the Province of Batanes began with the arrival of the Dominican Friars in 1686. Two missionaries came to Batanes to survey the Islands and to spread the faith. When they arrived, they found the natives scattered along the hills on the three largest islands. The greatest number were concentrated in the hills around what is now Basco on Batan Island. Finding that the natives referred to their place as BASAY, and sometimes BATAN the Spanish Missionaries gave the name Batan to the whole island.

In 1788, the government in Manila approved a petition of the Dominicans to establish a mission in Batanes. The King of Spain offered to help, and ordered the Governor General to take 50 soldiers, some carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, and mechanics to Batan to teach the natives. Several years after the expedition, the king bestowed upon Governor General Basco the title of "Count of the Batanes Islands", and the capital was named in honor of him.

The Philippine Revolution first reached the shores of Batanes at Ivana in September 1898. The Katipuneros landed and assaulted the convent and church. Upon hearing of this, the Governor shot his native guard and cook. The natives then took up arms against the Spaniards. The Katipunan ship moved from Ivana to Basco, and on September 25, 1898 the Spanish was replaced by the Filipino Revolutionary Flag. In 1899, an American ship dropped anchor in Basco, and the officials quickly signed an oath of allegiance to the United States. In February of 1900, the SS Princeton arrived in Batanes, with the first American Governor of Batanes.

Just as the purpose of the Spanish Colonization was the spread of Christianity, the aim of the American occupation was the spread of democracy and the democratic way of life through mass or popular education. Accordingly, the natives were introduced to the three R's and by 1917 Batanes High School was open.

On December 8, 1941, the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, they invaded Basco. This was the first island in the Philippines that the Japanese took, and it was occupied the longest. The invaders met with little or no resistance in their initial assault. They rebuilt the airstrip in Basco and planned to use it to take Manila, but before it was completed, Manila fell. They also rebuilt the road that goes from Basco to Imnajbu. The Japanese had some 5000 men on the island and a number of fighter planes. The natives formed a resistance group called the Bisumi Fighters. The islands and the towns of Uyugan, Mahatao, and Ivana where the fighters came from. The resistance movement was responsible for several attacks on the Japanese. One of the better known of these is the attack on the Sabtang Garrison. The Filipinos crossed the channel, surprised the enemy, killed every soldier, and returned before they were missed. The Japanese used native boats to cross to Sabtang, and many times they never made their destination. The people of Batanes are very proud of the fact that more Japanese were killed than Filipinos in this Province. The people of Batanes were liberated in 1945, and independence came to them as it did to the rest of the Philippines on July 4, 1946.

3. Station History: Loran Station Batan is located on the Southeast coast of Batan Island. The station is bounded on the north by the limits of the village of Imnajbu, on the west by the national road, on the east by the Pacific Ocean, and on the south by Imnajbu. The United States Coast Guard Transmitting Station on the Island of Batan originated as Mobile Loran Unit Number 7. ELMO 7 was placed in a precommission status at the Coast Guard Yard in Curtis Bay Maryland on 19 February 1953, and immediately departed for the Coast Guard Base at Alameda, California, where the unit was commissioned on 23 April 1953. The unit sailed for Batan Island aboard the USCGC KUKUI (WAK-186) on 25 April 1953 and arrived on 8 June 1953.

Construction was begun immediately to place the unit in operation, and the station went on the air for testing purposes on 20 July 1953. On 1 August 1953, the station with its paired masters, went on the air for full time navigational service. Throughout the time that the mobile Loran unit was being prepared for operation, and during the first two months of operation, the permanent station was under construction. The construction was completed and the Commanding Officer assumed custody of the entire station on 24 September 1953.

Erosion due to typhoons and sea conditions made operation of the elmo units impractical and construction of permanent signal and power buildings was completed in 1955. The ELMOS were sold and operation within the new building started. Continued erosion of station grounds made construction of retaining walls necessary, and the present walls were completed on 12 September 1958. In 1961, the replacement of temporary metal buildings by concrete structures was accomplished.

bedroom at the south end of the building. The center section contains the heads and other non-living quarters. Four men sleep in a room, each provided with a single bed, locker, shelves, and desk. The rooms are divided by a single bed, locker, shelves and desk. The rooms are divided by partitions into one man cubicles. There is a single room next to the chiefs quarters that is used by the next senior petty officer.

(c) Mess Deck/Recreation Building: The galley building is located immediately north of the barracks building and houses the galley, mess deck, and recreation area. The mess deck/recreation deck is used as a living room by the crew. The galley spaces include two large walk-in refer, electric over-stove, grill, ice machine, and ice cream freezer. The cook is assisted by one of two Filipino workers who rotate the duties of messcook. Meals are served cafeteria style and the men sit four to a table. A large recreation gear locker opens off the mess deck and adjacent to it is a dark room. The mess deck and the barracks are connected by a bar. There beer and soda are sold on the honor system.

(d) Power Building: The power building is located north of the galley building at the south end of the vehicle apron. It contains the main electrical switch board, and the station power plant, plus storage and workshop spaces. Two of the four 15 KW International Harvester Diesel Generators are in use at all times. One provides the power for the electronics equipment in the signal building, while the other supplies the electrical service for the station. Generators are normally run for 10 days before being shut down for servicing. The station is also supplied with 2 complete spare generators that are stored outside in hermetically sealed containers. The diesel fuel for the generators is stored in nine 4250 gallon capacity tanks on the hill above the signal building. Readings from the generators and refer units are taken hourly.

(e) Signal Building: The signal building, the heart of the loran operation, is located at the extreme north end of the station, and is equipped with blower systems for ventilation and exhaust. It contains all the loran, communications, test, and repair equipment. Loran and communications transmitters are located in the transmitter room. Also located in this room are the weather instruments used in the weather reporting program. The loran transmitter delivers 128,000 watts peak pulse power to the 125 foot antenna located some 300 feet north of the signal building. All loran electronic equipment is in duplicate. One unit is in operation with the other in immediate standby. Next to the transmitter room is the timer room containing the timers and switching units for double loran slave station operation. The communications center is in this room also. Primary radio communications with CG Radio Sangley Point and the other loran stations is via Single Sideband Radiotelephone. The station is also equipped with two receivers and a MF/HF transmitter. The front or south end of the building contains a heated spare parts room, and a combination workshop--office.

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CHAPTER III

COMMAND

1. Chain of Command:

(a) Commander, 14th Coast Guard District: The District Commander exercises operational and administrative control of all Coast Guard units assigned to the 14th Coast Guard District.

(b) Section Commander: Section Commanders have been established under the control of the District Commander to provide:

(1) Direction and coordination in the discharge of Coast Guard functions within the geographical limits of the section.

(2) Operational control over subordinate units within the section including authority and responsibility for supervising, directing, inspecting and exercising military jurisdiction.

(3) Administrative control of section units.

(c) Loran Station Batan Island: The Commanding Officer, USCG Loran Transmitting Station Batan Island is directly responsible to Commander, Philippine Section, Sangley Point, R.P., for the administrative and operational functions of the station. Reports and correspondence requiring action or comment by the Section Commander are routed through the section office. Other routine correspondence is sent direct with an information copy mailed to the section.

2. Collateral Operation:

(a) Weather Reporting: The station makes regular weather reports to the U. S. Naval Fleet Weather Facility, Sangley Point, R.P. This information is used to formulate weather forecasts and also aids in tracking the many typhoons that move through the area.

CHAPTER IV

LOGISTICS

1. General: Supplies and personnel are normally delivered via Coast Guard aircraft from the Air Detachment at Sangley Point once each week (usually Wednesday). Heavy items and fuel are delivered by the USCGC KUKUI arriving yearly logistic trips.

2. Source of Supplies:

(a) General Stores and Housekeeping Supplies: Standard Navy stock list items are requisitioned from NSD Subic Bay, R.P. and USNS Sangley Point, R.P. Some items are procured from NSD Pearl Harbor, NSC Oakland, or General Services Administration, San Francisco, (Coast Guard items are ordered from CGSD, Sand Island, Honolulu.

(b) Fuel: Gasoline, diesel fuel oil, and lube oil are procured by the Section office from USNS Sangley Point. It is delivered via CGC KUKUI. The KUKUI docks at Mahatao on the other side of the island, and the diesel oil is transported to the station via tank truck.

(c) Commissary Stores: All commissary stores are purchased at the USNS Sangley Point. Dry stores items are delivered in case lots via CGC KUKUI.

(d) Electronic Spares: Electronics parts are ordered from NSD Subic Bay, CGSD Sand Island, Honolulu, and CGSC Brooklyn, N.Y.

3. Mail: Mail arrives weekly on the CG Logistics flight. All mail is handled through the Navy post office at Sangley Point. Normal post office services are available to station personnel through the Philippine Section Canteen system. The Philippine Postal Service has offices on the island, and Philippine Airlines flies mail to and from the island twice a week. Postal rates, however, are high - approximately 75 centavos (\$0.19) for an airmail letter. Travel time for mail by either method is 5 to 7 days to the east coast of the U.S. The official mailing address of Batan LORSTA is:

Commanding Officer
USCG Loran Station
Box 10
FPO San Francisco, California 96652

4. Transportation: Primary transportation to and from the island for CG personnel is via CG aircraft (HU 16E). Except during bad weather the flights are scheduled weekly. Flying time from Sangley Point is two and one-half hours. Philippine Airlines makes scheduled flights from Manila twice a week.

(a) Vehicles: The station has two 3/4 ton Dodge M37 trucks, and one 1/2 ton trailer. The trucks are the primary means of transportation for cargo and personnel.

(b) Boats: Unfortunately, due to the exposed location of the station, lack of suitable launching areas, and the strong currents and rough water, the station does not have a recreation boat.

5. Medical Assistance: A hospital corpsman first class is assigned to the station. He has at his disposal a well equipped sick bay. There is a small hospital in Basco, and a doctor in Uyugan. In an emergency, these facilities are made available to station personnel. Serious cases are air evacuated to the hospital at Sangley Point. From time to time, the corpsman gives emergency first aid to local Filipinos, and the station provides transportation to the hospital for injured natives.

CHAPTER V

LOCAL AREA

1. Batan Island: The Island of Batan is a series of rolling hills and narrow plains. There are few flat places on the island. Even the airstrip is on a slight grade. The aircraft land uphill, and take-off downhill. The whole island is surrounded by a coral reef extending in some places to a mile off-shore. There are few harbors for ships, and Basco has the only docking facilities.

The hill terrain makes farming very difficult. Many of the gardens hug the sides of the hills. Despite this handicap, the people grow an assortment of fruits and vegetables. Sugar cane is grown and pressed into a wine called Palek. The people raise cows, goats, pigs, horses, and carabaos (water buffalo). The main source of income is the sale of cows, pigs, and carabaos to the other islands farther south. Manufactured goods such as fuel, dry goods, hardware, lumber, and rice must be imported. Shoes and clothes are stocked or ordered from Manila by the local stores. Many of the people make their own clothes.

The men and young boys do quite a bit of fishing during the hot season. They fish from small boats, spear fish, or use throw nets on the reefs.

Since Batan is frequently visited by storms and typhoons the houses are built quite differently than those of the rest of the Philippines. Whereas the other islands have bamboo or Nepa huts, the houses on Batan are made of a combination of stone, cement, and wood. They are rectangular in shape, have one room to a floor, and are never more than two floors high. The walls are 18 to 24 inches thick, and the roof is made of sheets of galvanized iron, native straw or cement. Floors are made of wood. There are shutters for the windows, but no glass. The kitchen is built separate from the main house, and is usually made of cogon straw or cement and stone. This building is called the smoke house. There is no electricity in any of the homes. There are a few portable gasoline generators in Basco for use in the hospital, school, and other government buildings.

2. Customs: The customs of the people reflect the Spanish Missionary influence. Dances are held quite often. They are semi-formal affair, and the men sit along one wall while the women sit along the other. Music is provided by a string instruments or records. There are no wind instruments on the island.

Each municipality or barrio has an annual fiesta, usually to honor the patron saint of the village. Every year there is a provincial meet held in Basco. The villages of the inhabited islands send teams to compete in the various athletic events. Station personnel are invited to participate. The teams compete for the provincial championship and the right to go to Luzon and compete for the national championship.

The people are friendly, fun-loving, and hospitable.

3. Loran Station:

(a) Laundry: The station has two ringer type washing machines, and employs a Filipino to do the laundry and ironing.

(b) Pay: Personnel are paid once a month in cash.

(c) Beer and Soda Mess: The station has a well stocked bar for serving beer and soda. Each man marks his purchases on a tally sheet. Bills are paid at the end of the month.

(d) Pests: The following pests are peculiar to the island: Ants; flies; termites; moths, cockroaches; beetles; lizards and snakes. The practice of educating personnel in environmental sanitation and the use of pesticides when practical eliminates any serious problem in pest control.

(e) Canteen: The section office has a canteen system to enable loran stations to purchase health and comfort items. Each man is required to deposit \$45.00 into the fund when he arrives at the station. The deposit is refunded upon transfer. Items available through the canteen are: beer, soda, small stores items, tailoring, shoe repair, postal services, toilet articles, film, cigarettes, and magazines. In addition any other items stocked in the Navy or Marine Corps Exchanges at Sangley Point can be purchased. The station maintains a small inventory of toilet articles. Orders are submitted monthly. Bills are paid at the end of the month.

CHAPTER VI

RECREATION

1. Recreation: The station recreation facilities center around the mess/recreation deck and bar areas. The mess/recreation deck is equipped with a pool table, ping pong table, dart board, and Hi-Fi record player. Records, books, and magazines are available. The district provides the station with two records and five pocket books per month. Outdoor activities include swimming, baseball, basketball, and volleyball. Recreation runs are made to Basco to enable the crew to swim in the harbor. Strong currents and rough water preclude swimming at other places on the island. Baseball is also played in Basco. The local people provide good competition in basketball, volleyball, and baseball. There is a tennis club in Basco that meets each afternoon and Sunday mornings. The competition is lively, but friendly. Movies are shown each evening on the lower sea wall during nice weather, and on the mess/recreation deck when it rains. Hiking in the hills and visiting the barrios are popular pastimes during off-duty hours.

WORK BELOW THIS LINE

CHAPTER VII

INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL

1. Indigenous Personnel: The station is authorized to employ indigenous personnel on a full time basis to perform various duties. The station presently employs one Filipino, who does the laundry and ironing for the station and personnel. Two men are employed as mess cooks and clean the living spaces, and one man who works as a carpenter. Members of the station crew are billed each month for these services.

From time to time, local labor is employed to assist in large projects such as building construction, road repairs, etc. Funds for these projects come from the section office.

