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Tragic Mountain: Manung-gal a Year After the Crash

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

With Photographs by Rodolfo M. Villarica S.J. and Dr. Wilhelm Brüll

I

MANUNG-GAL was an obscure mountain known only to few until it crashed into world-wide publicity on 17 March 1957. On that day it became the scene of a disaster of international import, one which has changed the course of Philippine history.

The details of that disaster are known to everyone and we ourselves have written about it in an editorial published in this Quarterly,¹ but it may help to review them briefly. On Saturday, 16 March, President Magsaysay flew to Cebu City aboard the presidential aircraft, a converted army plane of the C-47 class renamed the "Mt. Pinatubo" after a mountain in Magsaysay's home province of Zambales. With the President was a large entourage, including two men who were prominent in education: Gregorio Hernandez Jr., secretary of education, and Jesús Paredes Jr., executive secretary of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP). After a round of commencement addresses, of parties and official calls, the President and his retinue proceeded back to the Lahug airport shortly after midnight. It was a moonlit night. The

¹ PHILIPPINE STUDIES V (1957) 119 ss.

"Mt. Pinatubo" took off for Manila and was never heard from again. It disappeared in the night.

By afternoon of Sunday, 17 March, the extensive air search for the missing plane had yielded no results. But late that day a man suffering from burns in face, feet and hands was carried in a hammock to a hospital in Cebu City by men who had walked for hours from a distant mountain-top. He turned out to be a newspaperman, the lone survivor of the presidential plane. He and the flaming wreckage of the "Mt. Pinatubo" had been found in the forest atop Mt. Manúng-gal by Marcelino Nuya, who carried him on his back down the steep slope to his house, and thence, with the help of neighbors, in a hammock down the difficult foot trail to Cebu City.

The country's attention now came to be focused on Manúng-gal. By noon of the following day (the 18th) the hitherto silent mountain-top became noisy with activity. A clearing was made for a helicopter landing. Officials came and went, the charred remains of the crash victims were carried away, a guard was posted, an investigation was made, a statement was issued ascribing the disaster to "metal fatigue"; then the guard was removed, Marcelino Nuya was awarded a medal in Cebu City, his dog a medal in Malacañang Palace (a higher distinction), and then silence once more descended on the lonely mountain-top. The elections and certain sensational murders occupied the front pages of the newspapers once again, and people began to forget about Mt. Manúng-gal.

But it did not deserve to be forgotten. It was a tragic mountain. Great and good men had died there. To it with the alteration of one letter the poet's words might have been applied: *Fies nobilium tu quoque montium*—You also shall become one of the great mountains.

II

We climbed Mt. Manúng-gal and said Mass on its summit ten months after the disaster, during what would have been the three closing days of the Magsaysay administration (27-29 December 1957). On that trip (and in a subsequent

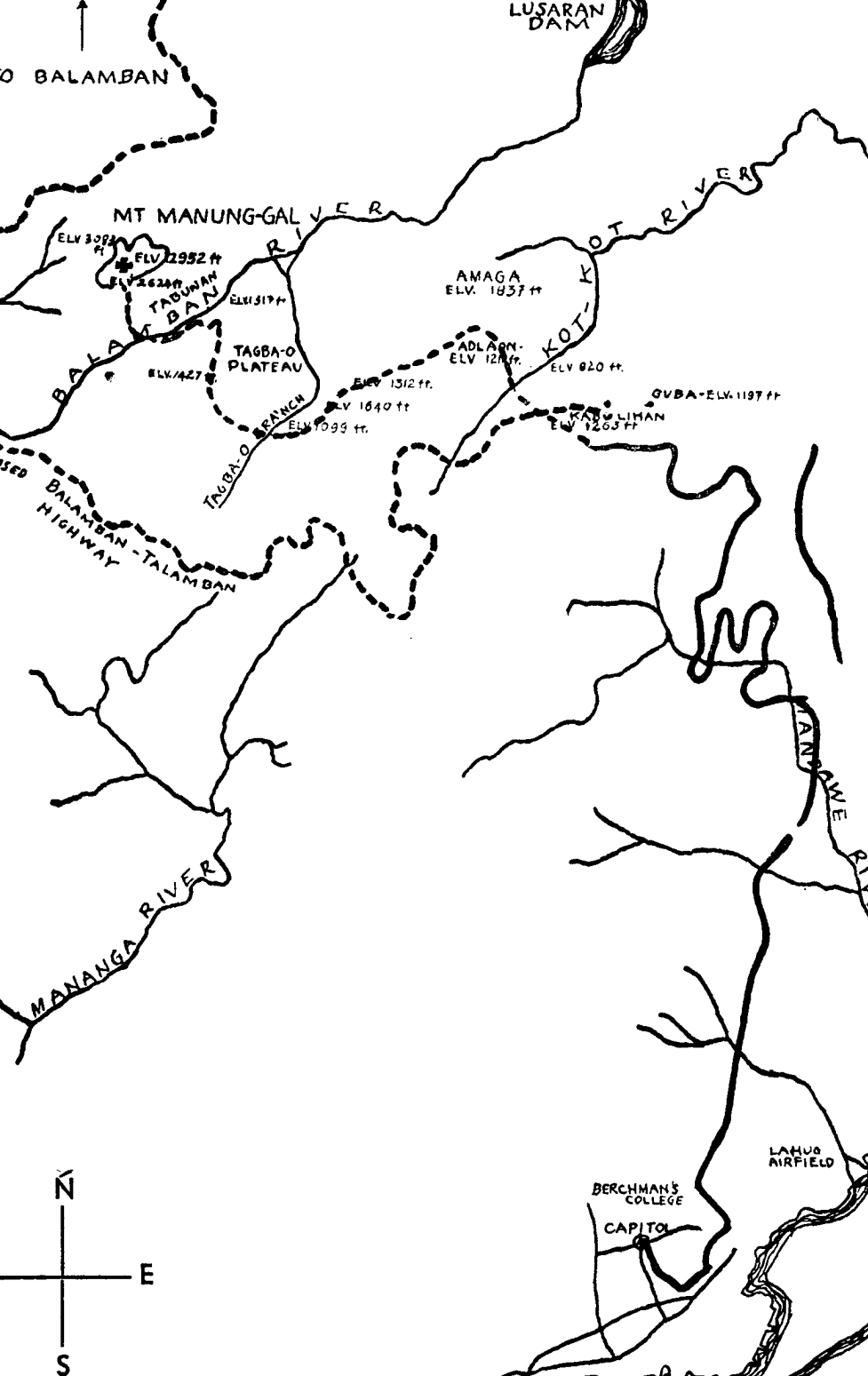
one which we made on 5th and 6th January 1958) we discovered a number of things. In the first place, the mountain's name is not *Manungal* as it is consistently spelled in the maps and by the press, but *Manúng-gal*, with the double *g* and the accent on the second syllable. That is the way the word is pronounced by the people who live upon its slopes and by all whom we met along the trail.

We also discovered that, contrary to what we had been told in the press and elsewhere, the wreckage of the plane is still there. We had been informed (and it appears to have been widely believed) that the essential parts of the aircraft had been transported to Sangley Point or elsewhere for minute examination to determine the cause of the disaster. But we found the various parts of the aircraft, including essential parts of the engines, right there in the forest on the mountain top.

We also discovered (a fact certainly of very minor importance) that the information given out to the public in connection with the disaster had not been in every respect accurate. To cite a trivial instance, Marcelino Nuya's dog has been given great credit for the discovery of the lone survivor. It appears however from our conversations with Nuya and his family that the dog's role in the rescue has perhaps been over-emphasized, perhaps by overenthusiastic members of the press or of the SPCA.

An amusing example of the misinformation given was the fact that when the dog was flown to Malacañang Palace to be awarded a medal (an honor not conferred upon Nuya himself who got his medal in Cebu), the dog was cited under the romantic name "Avante" and this name is inscribed on the medal which we saw in Nuya's house at Manúng-gal. But the dog's name is not Avante. Its owners do not know it by that name. The dog itself does not react when called by that name. The dog's name is "Serging." The name "Avante" appears to have been invented by those who wished to prevent possible embarrassment to a well-known political figure after whom the dog is called.²

² See page 75 for the dog's photograph.



We discovered other things, but there is no point at this late date in mentioning them. There are however two discoveries which we would like to broadcast and they have nothing to do with the accident. The first is the beauty of the Cebu countryside; the second, the admirable traits of character of the Cebuanos who live on Manúng-gal or along the trail thither.

These, if the reader will grant us patience, we shall try to share with him in the following account and in the accompanying photographs.³

III

Manúng-gal is a mountain range, long and narrow like a diaphragm, lying northeast to southwest across the island of Cebu north of Cebu City. The top of the range rises and falls wave-like in a series of undulations or ridges, the peaks of each ridge being more or less uniformly high—about 3000 feet above sea level. This is not exceedingly high as mountains go, but it rises rather abruptly so that the slopes are steep, becoming progressively steeper as one gets nearer the summit. The summits of these ridges are not sharply pointed peaks but rather irregular plateaus of alternating level land and steep promontories. At one time this entire mountain range must have been thick forest. Now the mountain sides are all denuded and are either cogon land or planted to corn. The undulating ridges however are still densely forested. The "Mt. Pinatubo" crashed upon one of these ridges, the third ridge from the western end, near the center of the range.⁴

To get to Manúng-gal from Cebu one has to climb two lesser ridges or plateaus: the Adlaon-Amagá plateau (1850 feet above sea level) and the Tagba-ó plateau (at an elevation of 1427 feet). This climbing up a plateau and climbing down to the river below (and there are three rivers to cross) makes the Manúng-gal hike quite exacting.

³ Photographs on p. 76 and the lower photos on pp. 77 and 80 are by Dr. Wilhelm Brüll. All the others are by Rodolfo M. Villarica S.J.

⁴ See picture on page 72.

We left Cebu City early Friday morning (6:15 a.m.), 27 December 1957, and motored northwards to where the road ends at sitio Kabulihan, near barrio Gubâ, along the proposed Talamban-Balamban highway. (See Map.) This road, when finished, will circle around the Manúng-gal mountain range, passing within two kilometers below the crash site but on the the northern slope of the mountain. (We climbed the mountain on the southern slope.) The road will twist westwards and come out at Balamban on the western shore of Cebu Island. At the moment however the road ends at Kabulihan, and it is there that, having picked up two guides, we started our hike at 7:55 a.m. Ten hours later, just before sundown, we got to the scene of the crash.

KABULIHAN

Kabulihan is 1263 feet above sea level. From there the trail goes down to a stream (the Kotkot) 442 feet below.⁵ The Kotkot, like the other rivers that we were to encounter along the way, has little water at this time of the year and it is not difficult to go across upon stepping stones. But the climb from the river bed to barrio Adlaon, 394 feet above it, is difficult on both lungs and legs and gives the hiker a rather ominous inkling of what lies ahead.

ADLAON

There is a neat wooden schoolhouse at Adlaon (up to sixth grade) which is the last outpost of the school system in this region. There are no other schools beyond.⁶ Beside the school yard is a ramshackle house with a tiny store below, tended, at the time that we got there, by a ten-year old girl and her nine-year old playmate.⁷ We were amazed that everything

⁵ Elevation readings were taken with three different altimeters. On the first expedition Father Schoenig and Dr. Brüll each had an altimeter, recording in meters. On the second expedition, an army barometer was used recording in millibars and convertible into feet. The readings given here in feet are based on the metric readings of Father Schoenig's instrument.

⁶ See page 69, lower photo.

⁷ *Ibid.* upper photo.

was obtainable at lowland prices. Soft drinks were sold at ten centavos the bottle, despite the fact that everything had to be carried on men's shoulders down and up from Kabulihan, half an hour away. In front of the store is a well-swept yard, with a table of bamboo slats and bamboo benches under a *datiles* tree. The people in the barrio do not go in for lawns, but keep their grassless yards cleanly swept.

AMAGA

From Adlaon the trail rides the crest of the ridge, going at first north and then westward to barrio Amagá which is perched on the brow of the ridge, overlooking ravines many hundred feet below. From Amagá one commands a view of the entire Manúng-gal range to the northwest.⁸

These barrios, incidentally, are not the concentrated clusters of houses that one finds everywhere in the Philippines. The houses are few and are quite apart, most of them cogon and bamboo huts, but some are of more substantial build. The countryside is sparsely cultivated. There are patches of tomatoes, a few coconut trees, some corn, but much of the hillside would make good pasture land though we saw only a few cows and goats.

From Amagá the going becomes really difficult. The trail at first skirts the brow of the hills, then it plunges downward along the face of a precipice⁹ (happily cogon-covered, which affords the inexperienced hiker something to grab as he slides clumsily down the precipice) to a glen and a stream 738 feet below. This stream we called the Tagba-ó, as the opposite ridge is called by that name.

TAGBA-O

This river flows eastward, and we found later that it has its source not far away to the west, and that it joins the Balamban River not far from where we were. It was only 10:30 in the morning when we arrived at the Tagba-ó river, but

⁸ See picture on page 72.

⁹ See picture on page 74.

the sun was hot, we had been walking three hours, we were exhausted and parched, and there were some coconuts nearby. So we bought six young coconuts and drank their juice, and lunched on bread and tinned meat and bathed our feet in the cool waters, and resumed the hike at noon. At that point we were 1099 feet above sea level.

It was of course a mistake to have lunched so early, and we soon realized our mistake when we began to climb the opposite hill to Tagba-ó, 328 feet above us. We were reminded of the wisdom of an elementary rule for hikers: never eat or drink before climbing a hill.

At Tagba-ó there is a little farm, fenced in, with a little wooden house, a granary, an open shed, and a chapel, all built around an open space. There on Saturday evenings a barrio dance is held and people come from the surrounding barrios to make merry. The owner's name is Doming. The chapel in that compound is the last outpost of the Church in this mountainous region.¹⁰

THE BALAMBAN RIVER

There is a river that coils around the Manúng-gal range like a snake. It has its source near the top, not far from the crash site. Then it flows downward along the mountain's western slope and wraps itself around the mountain's base,¹¹ first flowing eastward and then westward, coming out at last into the sea at Balamban on the west coast of Cebu Island. For this reason the river is named Balamban. From the Tagba-ó plateau¹² the trail descends to this river, following it upstream, first along a narrow ledge of arable land, then along the riverbed itself. At a spot directly below the crash site, the trail leaves the river and climbs the mountain side, the climb becoming steeper as one nears the top. It is a 1795-foot climb from river bed to mountain-top.

¹⁰ See picture on page 81.

¹¹ See picture on page 72 and map on page 56.

¹² See pictures on pages 70-71.

THE CLIMB

We made the climb in four stages, resting briefly twice and longer the third time at Nuya's house. The mountain side is almost entirely planted to corn, and as one gets nearer the top one finds more and more signs of the trees that have recently been felled to make way for the kaingins. These trees, crisscrossing the steep slope, made our climb a little less difficult than it would otherwise have been, though it was difficult enough as it was.

But the arduous climb is rewarded when one gains the top, by the awesome sight of a wrecked plane, splashed as by an angry hand against the steep slope among the trees. The wreckage is scattered over an area of about a hectare.¹³

NIGHT ON A MOUNTAIN

Night on a mountain-top, in almost total darkness, gives a feeling of awe, heightened by the realization that only a few feet away from where one is camping are the remains of a plane in which twenty-five men, including the President of the Philippines, had died. The feeling of awe was somewhat dispelled by the best coffee we had ever tasted, made by boiling water from a mountain spring, mixed with Sanka coffee and powdered Klim milk and served into our cups by someone holding a pot in one hand and a flashlight in the other. We were further brought back to earth by the stern realities of life, among which were the leeches which infested the place and which got at some of us despite precautions. After the stories of the camp fire and the rosary which was said for the dead, we slept, some on logs and some upon the canvas tents which we had brought (not setting them up but spreading them on the damp ground and sleeping on them). It was an eerie feeling to be awakened in the middle of the night (at 3:46 a.m.) by the roar of a plane passing almost directly overhead. It was (presumably) the "El Económico" in its early morning flight from Cebu to Manila, flying over the mountain in almost the same way the "Mt. Pinatubo" had done some ten months before—except that the "Mt. Pinatubo" had not flown high enough.

¹³ See pictures on pages 76-80.

MASS ON MANUNG-GAL

As soon as it was light we prepared for Mass. The ground slopes rather sharply in that region and no level place was found, but two pieces of wood that seemed to have been the partition walls of the President's cabin were found among the wreckage. One of these boards we wedged between the wrecked fuselage and a tree, affording a kind of table. The other board was placed on the ground, for the priest to stand on.

Upon this improvised table we set up the altar.¹⁴

We had brought all the materials for Mass from Cebu—chalice, vestments, missal, altar cloths, and the thinnest and lightest altar stone that we could find, which however was still heavy for the poor man who had to carry it in his pack. Upon this altar at 6:45 a.m. on Saturday, the 28th of December, I said Mass for the repose of the souls of those who died in that plane crash. My Mass was served by the other priest in the party, Father Henry Schoenig S.V.D., head of the biology department of the University of San Carlos in Cebu. The other four members of the party received Holy Communion. Father Schoenig then said his Mass. Nuya and his family and the people from the mountain farms and kaingins, about 25 all told, were present for the Masses. At the completion of these I gave a brief sermon in Visayan, explaining to the people the loving providence that guides even the fall of a sparrow, and telling them what a privilege it was for them to have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass brought up to them and offered in their midst up there on the top of their mountain. For some of them it was probably the first Mass they had ever attended.

Then we ate breakfast of roasted corn which Nuya had brought up. After breakfast we proceeded to examine and to photograph the wreckage.

NUYA'S STORY

From Nuya, and earlier from his wife and son, we pieced together the story of how the wreckage was discovered.

¹⁴ See pictures on pages 79 and 84.

Nuya's house (it is little more than a hut, with lumber siding and board floor but with cogon roof) is situated near the top of Mt. Manúng-gal, 2079 feet above sea level, and some 873 feet below the place where the wreckage of the plane is found.

On Saturday night, 16 March 1957, Nuya's eldest daughter had gone to some Saturday evening dance in some barrio near the mountain's foot (probably Doming's at Tagba-ó) and had returned late. Nuya and his wife were therefore still awake when about an hour after midnight they heard the roar of an airplane directly overhead and seemingly very low. Nuya's wife claims that the roar was irregular like the sputtering of an engine. Nuya however does not seem to have noticed anything peculiar in the airplane's drone. In any case, the plane headed for the mountain and the sound suddenly stopped. They heard no explosion. It was merely the sudden stopping of the engine.

"*Nahúug ang aeroplano!*" (The plane has fallen!) one of them said. But the other dismissed the idea as preposterous.

Before daybreak however they were awakened by one of the neighbors who claimed that there was a big fire (*nagdu-ub*) in the forest atop the mountain. By this time they could hear explosions, such as those of gun bullets. "It must be the airplane we heard last night!" said Nuya.

Losing no time, he and one of his sons and the neighbor all scrambled up the steep mountain side and through the forest on the top and out into the former kaingin clearing now overgrown with tall grass. There they could hear from the nearby forest the shout of a man who was calling for help: "Tao! Tao!" (Man! Man!) They went in the direction of the voice, breaking their way through grass and tree until they came upon the flaming wreckage of the plane. Near it, supporting himself against a tree, unable to walk was Nestor Mata, the lone survivor, frantically pointing towards the fire, indicating that the President was there. But there was no rescuing anyone from that inferno. Only Mata could be rescued.

THE WRECKAGE

We looked about us, at the wreckage and the forest. It seems that the plane did not collide against the mountain itself but against a tree which stands at the summit, at an altitude of 3083 feet above sea level. Nuya identified it as an Ibalos tree.¹⁵ The tree stands fifty feet above the ground. A few more feet and the plane would have cleared the mountain altogether. Near that tree, high up on the slope near the summit lies one of the plane's wings. The other wing and the rest of the plane are scattered down below, about 100 feet from the summit. Having hit the tree, it would seem that the plane immediately nosed down, exploding upon contact with the ground.

The extent and the manner in which the various parts of the plane have been scattered on the mountain side suggests some sort of major explosion. The major parts have remained where they were found, but the innumerable little parts scattered on the slope have been carefully collected by Nuya and placed in a pile. On top of the pile he has placed the parts of a cranium and some false teeth which have been found among the wreckage. Fortunately Manúng-gal is so inaccessible that the airplane parts have not been looted. They are all there and should be allowed to remain there *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*.

Apparently only the fuselage was burned. The fire must have been intense for it melted the metal and charred the bodies beyond recognition. On the other hand, the fire, though intense, was amazingly limited in extent for much combustible material in the tail and in the cockpit has escaped the fire. We found among other things a sheet from the pilot's radio message pad, though without message.

We are informed that in that part of the fuselage where the fire seemed hottest, seven charred bodies were found, one of them identified as that of President Magsaysay. (Reportedly, the identification was made from a wrist watch and a ring.) At this spot some one has set up a crude memorial, a semi-circular piece of Manila paper upon a frame of bamboo, with

¹⁵ See pictures on page 77.

letters pasted on, cut out of colored paper. The words are now not entirely legible.¹⁶ It was at this spot, on the other side of the burned-out fuselage that we said Mass.

A little lower down the hill, but only a few feet away, fourteen other bodies were found, similarly charred beyond recognition. A few other bodies partially burned were found nearby, one of them holding a gun. Farther away, by the engines, we are told, were found the bodies of General Ebuén and Major Pobre. They were not burned but had died from injuries in the head. We were told that one of them had a cracked skull and the other had his head sheered off above the ear. Lower down the slope, some distance from the rest of the wreckage was found the body of Major Nunag. The body was intact except for a head injury. The position of the body suggested that he had crawled out of the wrecked plane and then, feeling death near, had composed himself to die on the spot where his body was later found.

MARCELINO NUYA

The photographs taken, we made the difficult descent down to Nuya's house where we had lunch. We insisted that the lunch be provided not from Nuya's stores but from the ample supply that we had brought in our packs, and we invited all who were present to share the lunch with us, which they did to the tune of guitars for Nuya's children are talented musicians.¹⁷

Marcelino Nuya is a remarkable man in every way. He is 46 years old, from the town of Compostela. He has never been to school and he has lived in mountains or small towns all his life, but there is about him that air of good breeding and that note of authority which seems to characterize the man born to command. His wife, from Liloan, is homely and retiring, as are some of his children. But two of his sons (Francisco 16, and Glicerio 13) have that same ease in company and that same naturalness in speaking which mark the

¹⁶ See picture on page 76.

¹⁷ See picture on page 75.

well bred person. There are eight children. None of the children have been to school, and none of them have taken music lessons, though several of them can play the large and the small guitars like experts. All of which confirms the often forgotten truth that education is not synonymous with schooling, and that literacy though a splendid acquisition, is often a misleading standard.

We stayed at Nuya's a couple of hours, taking photographs, admiring his medal and the dog's, leaving the house for the descent at 2:29 p.m.

NIGHT IN A CORNFIELD

At the Tabunan ford, at the edge of a cornfield, we encamped for the night, being disturbed now and then by Saturday night revelers returning in merry mood from Doming's in Tagba-6. Through these merry men we sent word to the neighboring farms that there would be Mass at our camp the following morning.

I find in my diary an amusing bit of conversation that occurred at this time between Rodolfo Villarica S.J., the organizer of our expedition, and one of the more convivial passers-by internally lit with *tuba*. When the passerby was informed that there would be Mass the following morning, he was all in favor of it and asked if he should get firecrackers. "*Pabuthan ta ba, Padre?*" (Literally: "Shall we let things explode, Father?") When he was told no, he was amazed. "*Dili di-ay pabuthan?*" he asked in shocked tones, which might be rendered, "What? No fireworks?" He was doubtless thinking of the fiesta when people celebrate with fireworks and people get the only chance they have to hear Mass either in town or in the barrio chapel.

MASS IN A CORNFIELD

We had told the people that Mass the following morning (Sunday) would be very early—*sayó kaayo*. They took us quite literally. They came so early that they found us still asleep. We hurriedly woke up and washed in the nearby river

and prepared for Mass. The improvised altar this time was made of saplings tied together and placed against a boulder that stood at the edge of the cornfield. I said Mass at 5:43 a.m. The sun was not yet up. It was so dark that I had to read the Missal by electric torch. Father Schoenig followed with another Mass, the people staying for both Masses.¹⁸ After a brief talk to them in Visayan we dismissed the people, took our breakfast hurriedly and broke camp. At 9:40 we reached the Tagba-6 River. At 10:43 we reached Amagá. At 12:00 we were in Adlaon and could discern in the distance the *buli* (Tagalog *buri*) palms that gave Kabulihan its name.¹⁹ At 2:05 Cornelius Mahoney S.J. and Paul Limgengco S.J. came in the pick-up and brought us back to Berchmans College in Cebu. There we lunched on bananas and lanzones and went off to sleep the first good sleep after three days in the hills.

It was the 29th of December. It would have been the last day of the Magsaysay administration. The following day, the 30th, was Rizal Day and the new President was inaugurated.

RETURN TO MANUNG-GAL

The second expedition to Manúng-gal was undertaken because of a heart-breaking accident which occurred in the first. We had brought three cameras along—a Rolleiflex, a Leica and a Cannon—but the only shots taken of the Mass and the best shots of the wreckage were taken with the Cannon and we discovered on coming down from the mountain that the film had slipped from the spool and that we had been clicking the camera without film! The only thing to do was to seek new authorization from Manila to make a second expedition.²⁰ This was granted by wire from Father Cullum, acting vice-provincial

¹⁸ See pictures on pages 73 and 80.

¹⁹ See pictures on pages 82-83.

²⁰ For the first expedition authorization was sought from three governmental and three ecclesiastical authorities, viz. from the armed forces, the constabulary, and the mayor of Cebu, the Honorable Ramon Duterte; from Father Leo A. Cullum S. J., Jesuit vice-provincial in Manila; Father Hernando Maceda S.J., rector of Berchmans College, Cebu; and for permission to say Mass *sub divo* from Archbishop Julio Rosales of Cebu.

of the Jesuits, and on the 5th of January we hiked again to the mountain, returning the next day.

This time we started from Cebu City much earlier (5:00 a.m.), walked much faster, took fewer and shorter rests and reached our destination at noon, doing in seven hours what it had taken us eleven hours on the previous occasion. But the expedition was marred by rain. We were soaked during most of the first day, and although it did not rain the second day, the trails were muddy and slippery.

Nevertheless everyone got to the top—except the present writer who got only as far as Nuya's house 940 feet from the scene of the crash. There are at Nuya's two conveniences: one is a cold mountain spring, with the water funneled into a kind of bath house made of leaves and bark; the other is a good clean floor on which to rest one's tired legs. I availed myself of both and waited for my companions to come down.

Returning, we bathed in the darkness in the cold but shallow Balamban River, slept on the bark of trees in an abandoned hut without walls but with a roof, and returned to Cebu City richer by many feet of film containing excellent photographs.

THE PEOPLE

But we brought away an even greater treasure—a realization of the goodness of the people whom we had met. We were impressed by the friendliness of the people everywhere, particularly when they learned that we were priests. We hiked, of course, without our clerical garb though we put them on for Mass. But the people knew, wherever we went, that we belonged to the clergy. News travels fast in the countryside and everyone knew that we were the same group that had passed by that way and had encamped and said Mass in such and such a place during the previous week. Men offered us firewood for our fire, barks of trees for us to sleep on. A group of women offered to fetch water for us—a kindness which we declined. One woman during the hike offered us three eggs which we refused to accept because we could not eat



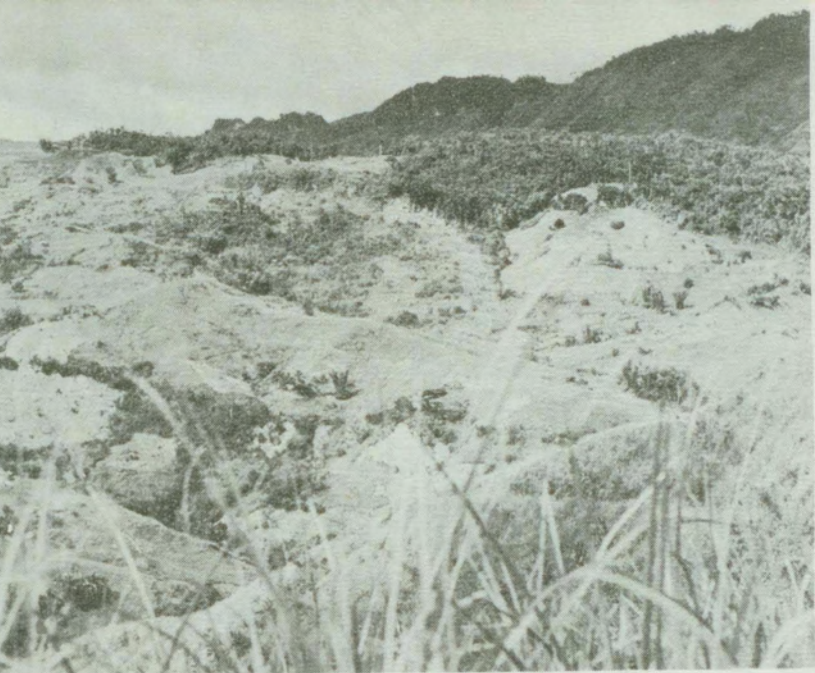
The store and the school at Adlaon, farthest outposts of modern life in the Manung-gal foothills. (Elevation, 1213 ft.)



The eastern end of the Manung-gal mountain range, seen from the Tagba-ó plateau. Beyond the line of trees in center of picture, the land drops down sharply to the Balam-ban River which flows along the southern base of Manung-gal.







The western end of the Manung-gal range, seen from the top of the Amagá hills (elevation, 1836 ft.). The "Mt. Pinatubo" crashed against the peak third from left.

the Balamban River at the foot of Mt. Manung-gal.







The western end of the Manung-gal range, seen from the top of the Amagá hills (elevation, 1836 ft.). The "Mt. Pinatubo" crashed against the peak third from left.

The Balamban River at the foot of Mt. Manung-gal.



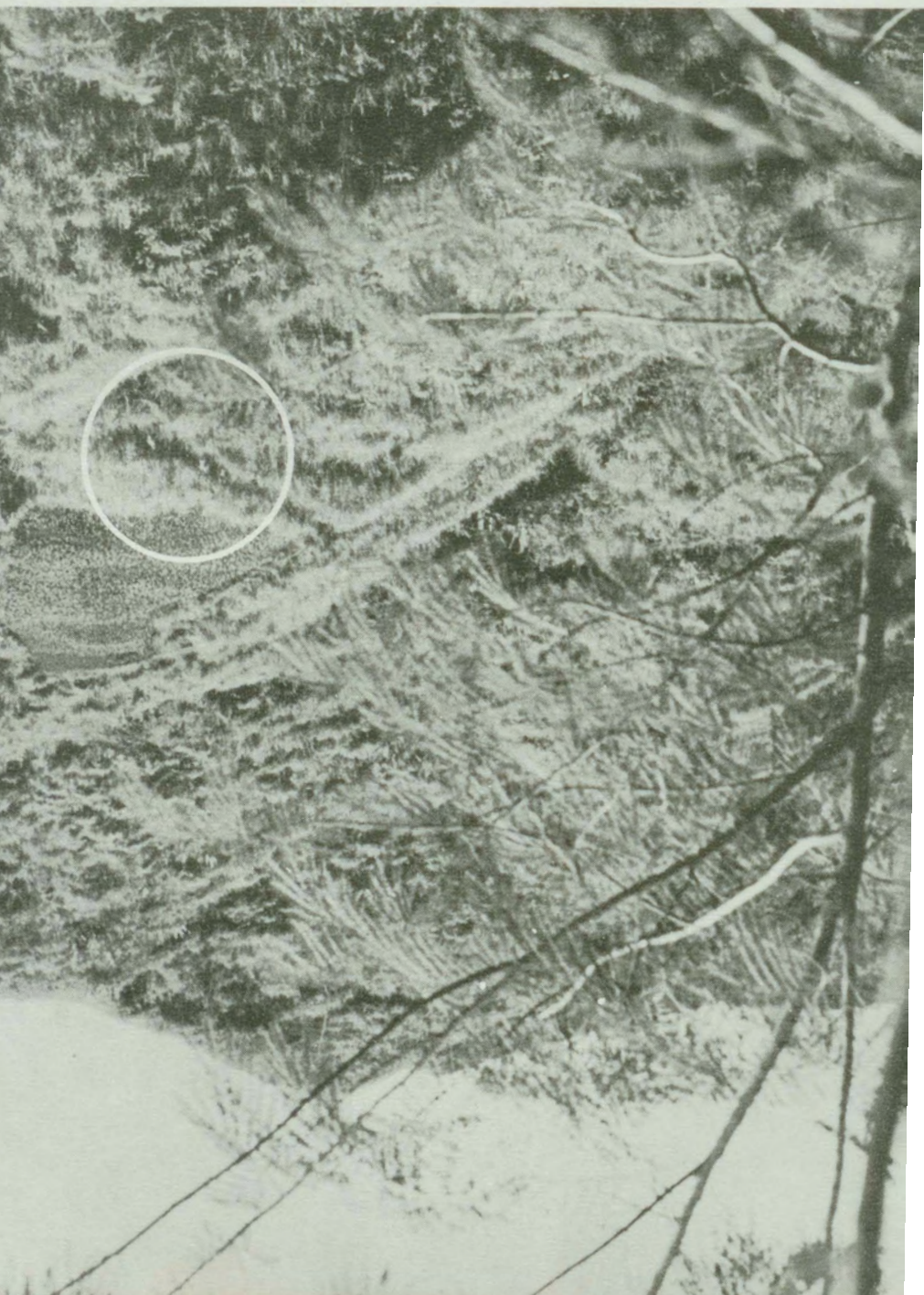
A member of the expedition admires a bent coconut tree, one of several along the Balam-ban River. Note "tuba" gatherer's bamboo tube aloft.



The hikers don their cassocks for early morning Mass among the coconuts and corn at the foot of Manung-gal.



Hikers crawl up steep face of Amagá hills from river bed 740 ft. below.



Marcelino Nuya and his dog "Serging" (alias "Avante") discovered the wreckage and rescued the lone survivor.



Nuya's sons, Francisco and Glicerio, self-taught guitarists, pose with the author.





Fuselage and tail of the "Mt. Pinatubo" lie sprawled among the forest trees.
(Elevation, 2952 ft.)

A paper marker indicates the spot where President Magsaysay's body was found.



The plane crashed against these trees, growing at the summit, 3083 ft. above sea level.

The burned out cabin. Fire was so intense that at certain places the metal melted.





Twisted propeller, like a flower petal, lies among the wreckage.

Members of the expedition examine parts of the aircraft's radio.





One wing lies among the forest fern.

Two boards, former partition walls of the presidential cabin, served as altar table and foot platform for the Mass offered on 28 December 1957. (Note wreckage engine beyond tree.)





A fire-extinguishing bucket is found among the wreckage, ironic reminder of the fire.

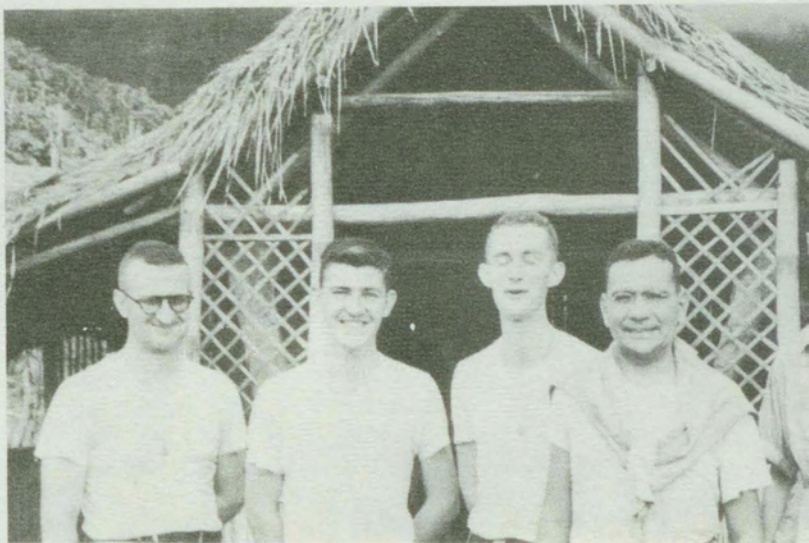
Father Schoenig raises the sacred host, as the people of the countryside kneel on one knee on the wet earth at early morning Mass in Tabunan. (Elevation, 1312 ft.)





The first Manung-gal expedition (27-29 Dec. 1957). (L. to r.): Rodolfo M. Villarica S.J., Father Henry Schoenig S.V.D., Percy A. Bonganay S.J., Father Bernad, José Bacatan S.J., Dr. Wilhelm Brull.

Members of the second expedition pose before the barrio chapel in Tagbarran (L. to r.): Father A. Nuñez S.J., Richard Croghan S.J., Frederick Strath S.J., Father Bernad, John Chambers S.J. (Not in picture: Rodolfo M. Villarica S.J.)







The hikers return from their three-day hike to the Manung-gal mountains. The "buli" palms in the picture give Kabulihan its name. (Elevation, 1262 ft.)



Two markers commemorate the two expeditions to Manung-gal.

them there and then and they would have been broken if put in our packs. She insisted, offering to boil them for us. We persisted in our refusal. But perhaps it would have been the better thing to accept the gift that was so heartily and so simply offered.

Above all we were impressed by the seemingly genuine delight of the people to have Mass said in their midst, and their seemingly genuine desire just to be with us, to talk, to sing, to play the guitar in our company—just to be around. Of course everyone accepted the candy which we gave away liberally.

It was friendliness of the best sort. There is a warm spot in every Filipino heart, but these Cebuanos in the hills, poorly fed and poorly clad, poorly instructed and lacking all the external helps of religion and education, have a very warm spot in their hearts for a priest.

THE MARKERS

We left two markers atop Manúng-gal.²¹ Both are of aluminum and had been lettered in Cebu by Brother Francisco Petilla, S.J. They are both set up at the spot where Father Schoenig and I said Mass on 28 December 1957. One of the markers reads:

TWO MASSES SAID HERE

28 Dec. 1957

then follow the names of the members of the first expedition. The other marker says simply: "Revisited 1/5/58" followed by the names of those who went on the second expedition.

THE HIKERS

The first expedition represented two nationalities and three academic institutions. There were two Germans from the University of San Carlos in Cebu, three Filipino Jesuit scholastics from Berchmans College in Cebu, and the present writer (likewise a Filipino) from the Ateneo de Manila. The Ger-

²¹ See picture on page 84.

man swere Father Henry Schoenig S.V.D., biologist, avid butterfly collector and tireless mountaineer, and Dr. Wilhelm Brüll, chemist, no longer tireless but still intrepid and a good companion. The Jesuit scholastics were Percy Alwyn Bonganay S.J., José Bacatan S.J., and the organizer of the expedition, Rodolfo M. Villarica S.J., a cousin of Jess Paredes who had died in the Manúng-gal crash.

The second expedition was even more international and likewise represented three academic institutions. There was one Spaniard, Father A. Nuñez S.J., biologist, of the Jesuit school for Chinese in Cebu. There were three American Jesuit scholastics from Berchmans College: John Chambers S.J., Richard Croghan S.J. and Frederick Strath S.J. Finally, there were the two members of the first expedition who also went on the second: Villarica and the present writer.

Thus we climbed Manúng-gal, and if there is a last word to be said it is a word of thanks to those who made it possible for us to make the climb.²²

²² The Editor of this Quarterly wishes to thank all those who in one way or another contributed towards the success of the two expeditions or helped in the preparation of this article; in particular Dr. and Mrs. Ismael Villarica for financial assistance, the District Engineer's office in Cebu City for the loan of a contour map of the Manung-gal region, Paul Limgengco S.J. for making the map used by the author, Johnson Leung of the Ateneo de Manila for simplifying and reducing the map for publication, and Ephraim Caedo, also of the Ateneo de Manila, for enlarging the pictures, helping in the lay-out and for other forms of assistance.