

The Siege Of Corregidor

Hardly had the Bataan garrison surrendered, those Japanese batteries that had reached Cabcaben opened fire on Corregidor to begin the final 27 day siege of the Island. The intermittent air attacks of the preceding three months paled into insignificance beside the massed artillery from Bataan. One day's shelling, remarked one officer, did more damage than all the bombing put together. Areas that had been heavily wooded were entirely denuded. In some places, not a stick, not a leaf was left. Deep craters, empty shell cases and huge fragments of concrete pockmarked the landscape.



American troops in Malinta tunnel on Corregidor performing administrative duties for the defense of the Philippine Islands.



With the fall of Bataan, the Japanese intensified its attack on Corregidor—firing approximately 16,000 shell at the fortress in a 24 hour period.



Air attacks on Corregidor increased with the Japanese forces using nearby Clark Field as a base.



Their largest caliber guns now concentrated on the fortress of Corregidor.



Balloons were used to spot targets on the fortress.



Japanese troops were trucked in for the landing on Corregidor.

[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)

Corregidor's Hospital Which Was Overloaded With The Sick and Wounded

With the increased intensity of the Japanese bombardment at the end of April, came a sharp increase in the number of casualties. Every day it seemed that the line of stretchers grew longer. The narrow hospital corridors were crammed with the wounded, sick, and the dying; the convalescents were hurried out to make room for fresh casualties. With the influx of patients, the hospital expanded into three more laterals until by the 25th of April, it had a capacity of 1,000 beds. Double and triple deck bunks were used for patients and hospital attendants alike.

[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)

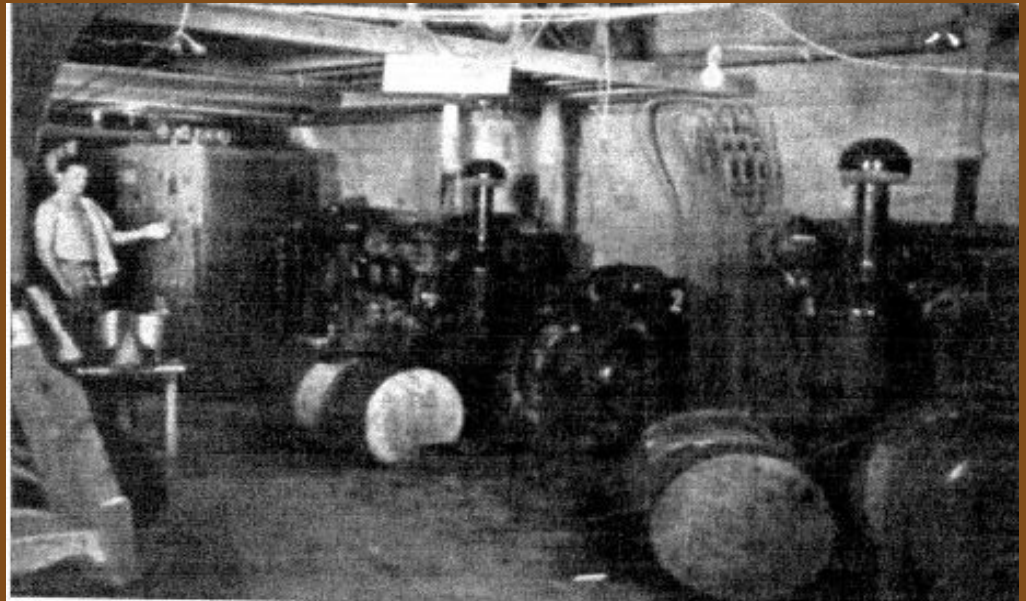


Casualties on Corregidor were mounting. Temporary wooden beds were constructed for the hospital ward to take care of the increased sick and wounded.



The beach defenses were demolished, the huge seacoast guns silenced, and the anti-aircraft batteries reduced to impotence during the 27 days. At the end of the bombardment, the island was virtually a shambles, a “moving picture version of No Man’s Land in World War I. At the beginning, Corregidor’s guns answered the Japanese barrage, however, the shelling from Corregidor had to cease temporarily because of the fear the American shells would fall on the hospitals, civilian camps, and friendly troops in Southern Bataan. The Japanese forces moved in a balloon company and thereafter, the shelling never really stopped, With 100 pieces ranging size from 75mm to the giant 240mm howitzers, the Japanese were able to fire almost steadily. However, the American batteries continued firing until they were destroyed by enemy fire.

[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)



The power plant that supplied Malinta tunnel with fresh air and light had been seriously damaged.



There was a serious shortage of food and water for the troops on Corregidor.

One of the large coastal guns on Corregidor demolished by Japanese artillery fire.

With their excellent observation posts and air reconnaissance, the Japanese soon had all the fixed installations pinpointed and could loose accurate and adjusted concentrations of fire on them at first sign of activity. The Japanese were able to fire almost steadily They destroyed gun emplacements, shelters, beach defenses, buildings-almost everything on the surface--at a rate that made repair or replacement impossible. Air attacks usually accompanied the shelling from Bataan and followed the same schedule.

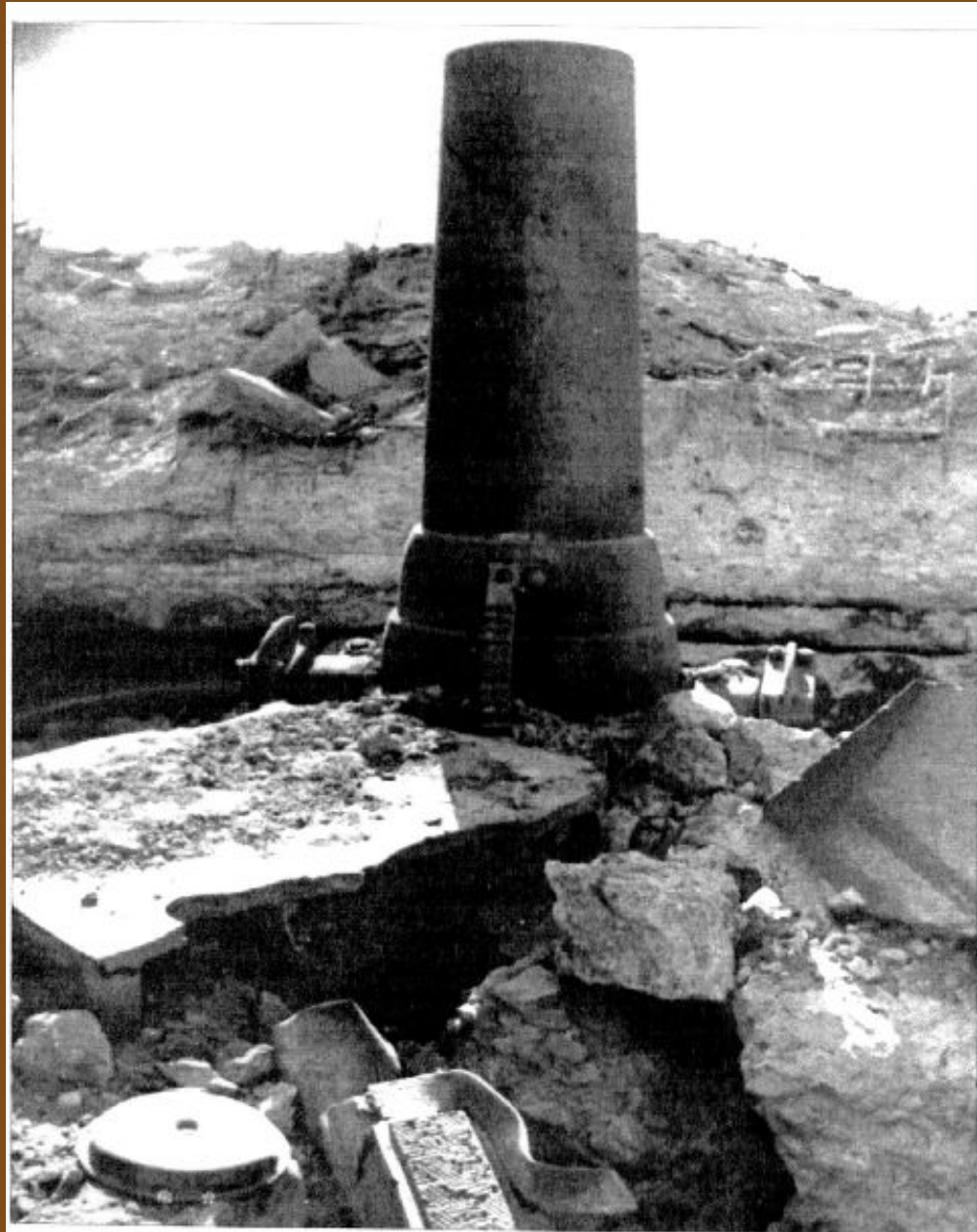
[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)



One of the large caliber guns on the fortress completely destroyed.

One of the large mortars on Corregidor destroyed by the tremendous artillery barrage of the Japanese forces.

Most of the enemy's attention was given to batteries Geary and Way which, with their high-angle fire and 670 pound personnel shells, represented the enemy's greatest threat. Battery Way was soon reduced to two guns, and on the second of May, Japanese 240mm shells penetrated Geary's magazine, which blew up with an explosion that rocked the island and hurled 10-ton barrels of the large mortars about like matchsticks. One was found 150 yards from its mount, on the island's cratered golf course. Another was blown through three feet of reinforced concrete into an adjoining powder magazine. Estimates of casualties varied from eight to twenty seven men killed, with many more injured.



A large mortar completely destroyed.

[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)

Battery Way's large mortars put out of action by Japanese artillery fire, and a multiple machine gun unit dislodged by the tremendous fire power of the enemy directed toward Corregidor..

[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)



Most weapons on topside were destroyed or rendered unusable from the consistent twenty-four hour bombing and shelling by the Japanese forces.

Topside on Corregidor was nothing but a mass of debris. Nothing was useable after the Japanese barrage of artillery.

Perhaps the most alarming consequence of the Japanese bombardment was the damage to the power plant which operated the water pumps and searchlights, raised and lowered the big guns, and supplied Malinta tunnel with fresh air and light. By the end of April, the main power plant was operating only at a fraction of its capacity and General Moore estimated that Corregidor would be without power in a month. In addition, the supply of water, already critical, became the most important single problem for the men on Corregidor.

[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)



Most of the vegetation and other facilities on topside destroyed.



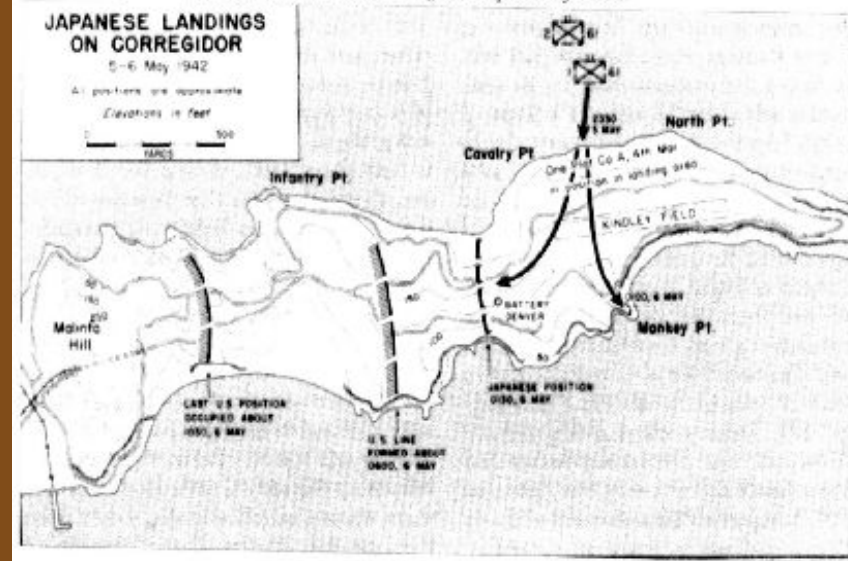
Japanese Landing On Corregidor

Although the situation on Corregidor was critical, matters would soon get worse. On the 5th of May, the troops on Corregidor could see landing barges approaching the island fortress. The Americans and Filipinos on the beach defenses met the enemy with every weapon they could muster. The shore guns on Corregidor immediately began to fire. At point blank range as they struck the surprised and confused Japanese, sank a number of boats, and caused many casualties. Casualties in the barges were estimated in the hundreds. Only 800 of the 2,000 that made the landing attempt reached the shore. The Japanese forces managed to establish a beach head on Corregidor and pushed the Americans toward Malinta tunnel. The final blow came when the Japanese sent three tanks they had brought into action.

[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)



On the night of May 5, 1942, the Japanese forces began their landing on Corregidor. The Japanese lost heavily during the landing. Although the 1st Battalion reached the shore on schedule it was estimated that they had 40 to 50% casualties. Only 800 men of the 2000 who made this attempt reached the shore. Between one-half and two-thirds of the landing craft leaving Bataan that night were put out of action.



The situation of the Americans on Corregidor was critical. After surveying the military situation on the fortress, General Wainwright decided to surrender, in exchange for several thousand lives. He had concluded that nothing was to be gained by further resistance.

The same day General Wainwright radioed the following message to President Roosevelt: “With broken heart and head bowed in sadness but not in shame, I report, that today I must arrange terms for the surrender of Manila Bay. Please say to the nation that my troops and I have accomplished all that is humanly possible and that we have upheld the best traditions of the United States and its Army. With profound regret and with continued pride in my gallant troops, I go to meet the Japanese commander.”

[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)



General Wainwright made a decision on the morning of May 6, 1942 to surrender to the enemy. Gen. Wainwright informed President Roosevelt of his decision that same evening by radio. President Roosevelt replied that “I have every confidence that whatever decision you may sooner or later be forced to make will be dictated only by the best interests of your country and your magnificent troops.” General Homa refused to accept Wainwright’s surrender of his troops unless all the troops in the Philippine Islands were included in the surrender document. It appeared that Gen. Homa threatened to massacre all those on Corregidor if Gen. Wainwright did not accede to the terms put forth by Gen. Homa. Gen Wainwright sent the message the next day by radio to all troops in the Philippine Islands.



JAPANESE SOLDIERS
INSPECTING THE
BELONGINGS OF
FIL-AMERICAN TROOPS
ON CORREGIDOR

[Listen to Mr. Jackfert](#)

