

"MILITARY TACTICS USED BY THE FILIPINO INSURGENTS".

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I have taken for my theme the mode of fighting conducted by the Filipino insurgents, and in order that the reader be not misled by the general belief that all the insurgents are uncivilized, I point out the Tagalos, the Visayas, the Ilacanos and others, all civilized tribes and very formidable enemies.

There is not as much difference in the methods of fighting employed by the civilized and the uncivilized tribes as one might think, as the civilized (so-called) are in reality only half so at best, and engage in many savage practices.

The chief distinction is that the civilized tribes use rifles, the Springfield, the Remington and the Mauser, all bought from the Spanish, while the savages are equipped with bolos - spears, and bows and poisoned arrows.

The uncivilized bands live in the mountains and are scarcely seen elsewhere. Of these hill dwellers I mention a few tribes - the Igorrotes (cannibals), the Manoboos and the Moros - all fierce but underhanded fighters. Especially so are the Moros, living in the southern part on the Islands of Mindanao and Jolo. Even the women, dressed like men, fight too. They are Mohammedans and believe they will surely go to Heaven if they only kill the white man. This is their religion and they are worked into such a frenzy by a few agitators that they will sacrifice great numbers of their own for the sake of killing a few whites. However, they will not give without some return. They are a shrewd and treacherous lot and very suspicious, and regard any act of the whites toward showing equality as a sign of fear. If they take a captive they show no mercy, letting him live only long enough to conduct their joyful ceremony over him.

They are very ingenious in fixing devices to out-wit the American soldier,

and are cunning in delaying and harassing him on his marches.

In civilized warfare poisoned bullets must not be used, but these civilized (usually) and the uncivilized tribes (always when they could get guns) used brass bullets throughout the insurrection.

One of their good and often used attacks is, with their bolos ready, to lie in hiding in paths cut in the tall cogou grass on both sides and near the trail. When the enemy arrives even with them the savages rush them with bolos. The best way of resisting these attacks is, having counted fours, the soldiers march in single file. At the first note of suspicion the odd numbers turn to the right, the even to the left, and the tall grass is combed with volleys.

False streets are often built which when crossed with sufficient weight on them suddenly give away and drop the victims onto sharp-pointed bamboo spikes sticking several inches out of the ground below. These spikes or spears, charred on the point to make them hard, are often hidden with the points just under the surface of the water in creeks underneath a false bridge or a log hewn away from the under side. With several men on them, these bridges break down, dropping the soldiers onto the spikes under the water. These spikes, hidden along the trail, are a continual source of trouble to the soldiers on the march, because the green bamboo will penetrate the foot clear through the wet sole of the shoe, and is very poisonous.

The natives often contrive dead-falls, great logs into the sides of which spikes are driven alternately, with points outward. The log is then raised and hidden in the dense foliage directly over the path. At a given time when the soldiers pass, a native, hidden a hundred yards away, cuts the cord and down comes the log, carrying the soldiers with it.

Another trick of theirs is to place a large bamboo pole, one hundred feet

long, directly across the trail, with one end fastened securely to a tree. Then the pole is bent until it is alongside and parallel to the trail, and this end is fastened. At the cutting of the cord the great bat springs back across the trail, sweeping everything before it.

Warnings are often given by the natives by means of a certain tree which when pounded gives sounds that carry for miles. Another method of signaling warning is the shaking of trees by relays of natives hidden high in the foliage. The signals when systematized can travel a mile in a minute or two.

Also their precautions against a surprise at night are cunning. Stretched in relays around their camp are cords, hidden in the entanglements near the ground. The enemy struggling through the brush pulls the cord, upsetting a bucket of water on the sleeping sentinel's head and effectively arousing him, yet making no noise.

But the best night watches are dogs, and every native has one or more.

It is probably a mistaken and unjust accusation to say that the Filipinos poison their springs. It has never been proved.

These people have ingenious incendiary devices, the most clever of which is the fire arrow. Around the shaft near the head is wrapped cocoanut husk fibre which is saturated in oil. Around this a sheath of matches is bound and a slow fuse tied on and lighted. When flying through the air, at a barrack's roof, it looks like a mere fire-fly. The first probable discovery of it is when it bursts into flames on the roof.

Oftentimes bows are strapped to trees and hollow bamboos act for tubes through which arrows are pointed at the trail. As the column passes in line the bows are all simultaneously sprung by a man concealed in the bushes.

It is not a rare occurrence for them to fire into the enemy's camp or garrison at night with surprisingly accurate aim. But if one were to examine

he would find they had placed sighting crotches during the day.

They have even made wooden cannon - bamboo poles arranged like barrel staves and wrapped with stolen telegraph wire - leaving a bore of two or three inches in the gun. Their explosive was the heads of matches and they fired dried balls of stones and mud, the effect of which, to a distance of fifty to one hundred feet, was similar to that of real grape shot.

They also brought into action the Latonka, an old brass unmounted cannon, used by the Spaniards during the 16th Century.

They formed their barricades of large bamboo poles on steep hills only approachable by one way - over a "razor back" (as the path was called). This razor-back was scooped out, numerous sharp spears of bamboo driven point upward into the ground, and the entire path covered by an entanglement of briars and underbrush. Soldiers charging the barricade would rush pellmell onto the spikes. Those that crossed in safety were hindered by barbed vines stretched across the path, and in their confusion would be met with a fusillade of shots aimed through hollow bamboo loop-holes in the stockade.

But all this was seldom done. The Filipinos rarely occupy a position with the intention of holding it against assault, and the chances are that if they offer any defense it will be done only to force a deployment, thus affording their men opportunity of making a bolo rush.

The most carefully planned feature in their arrangements is invariably the means of escape. A frontal attack upon them would be entirely futile.

The only method of beating them is by attacking them in the rear, surprising them and cutting off their means of escape.

This paper is not intended to be exhaustive. My only hope is that it may in a slight way help the soldier who for the first time goes to see service in the Philippines.