HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez and
Representative Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.

House Bill No. 7251

EXPLANATORY NOTE

May 12, 1945 is cited in history as the liberation of what was then known as Cagayan, Misamis or Cagayan de Misamis. This later became the Charter City of Cagayan de Oro on June 15, 1950. This occasion has never been recognized nor celebrated by the local government.

According to the account documented in "The History of the Mindanao Guerrillas" by the American Guerrillas of Mindanao (AGOM) Cagayan, Misamis was wrested from the Japanese by Filipino guerrillas under the 10th Military District, US Forces in the Philippines (USFIP) on May 12, 1945 with American close air and naval support.

The three regiments of all-Filipino guerrillas involved in the general offensive included three battalions of the 109th Regiment, 109th Division, with headquarters in Talakag, Bukidnon, charged with the frontal attack.

These were led by Capt. Andres Bacal, 1st Battalion; Capt. Alberto Chaves, 2nd Battalion; and Capt. Marcelino Maagad, 3rd Battalion. Three battalions from 111th Regiment, 109th Division covered the right flank. These were led by Capt. Purito Rubio, 1st Battalion; Capt. Felix Arcaña, 2nd Battalion; and Capt. Ramon Onahon, 3rd Battalion.

Capt. Leopold Blanco was the Commanding Officer of 120th regiment, 108th Division based in Iligan, which supported the left flank with 300 enlisted men. Major Pedro Aquino was the Liaison Officer between the 108th and 109th Divisions, while Capt. Eugenio S. Vaquero, G-3, of 108th Division served as supervisor of the operation and representative of the Division Headquarters.

The battle started with the Dipnoan-Cagayan Operation on May 9, 1945.

Units participating in the operation were the 109th Infantry Regiment, composed of 39 officers and 350 enlisted men, and 120th Infantry Regiment, 108th Division, composed of one officer and 350 enlisted men. The 111th Infantry Regiment, 109th Division joined the operation on May 10, 1945. The attack began May 9, 1945 as planned and ended May 12, 1945.

The guerrillas started attacking Dipnoan at on the morning of May 9, 1945. They encountered slight resistance except at Iponan bridge where some 100 Japanese soldiers, possibly coming from Carmen or Calinogan, arrived around 10:00 in the morning and vigorously opposed the advance.

Around 11:00 of the same day, the 1st Battalion of the109th Regiment under Capt. Bacal captured the strip at Patag and the enemy was reported to have withdrawn to Carmen Hills.

Fighting continued at the Iponan River from early morning of May 10 then by 2:00 PM of the same day, the entire 120th Infantry Regiment was moved out West of Iponan River, per instruction of higher headquarters, leaving the three battalions of the 109th Inf Regt across the river without support from the left rear of the enemy.

By this time, guerrillas of the 120th Regiment started pushing forward to areas held by the enemy in Bulua, Patag, Carmen, Bayabas and Bonbon. The fighting continued up to the next day.

On May 11, 1945, the 109th Inf Regt was ordered to push toward west side of Cagayan road. Route of approach was made at three points: 2nd Battalion from beach to highway, 3rd Battalion and Combat Co. in National Highway, and 1st Battalion from highway to Patag.

Movements started at 8:00 AM in coordination with the 120th Regt with initial point at Iponan River. At 10:00 AM, the entire Regiment was at its objective - Cagayan River. The west side of the Cagayan River bank was occupied by this Regt without opposition.

The 109th regiment met up with 111th regiment in Carmen while the 120th regiment held Kauswagan. The Japanese numbered 300 at the west bank of the Cagayan River, stationed at Balulang, Carmen Hill, Carmen, Patag, Bulua, and Iponan. 200 of them immediately moved east of Cagayan River. They withdrew passing Balulang, Indahag, Kili-og, Libona and proceeding to Santa Fe.

On morning of May 12, the 109th regiment was ordered to occupy Cagayan. At 9:00 in the morning, three battalions crossed Cagayan river at three points: 2nd Battalion at Julao-Julao (present day Consolacion, present day Maharlika Bridge), 3rd Battalion at the Japanese wooden bridge (linking Yacapin street to Lirio Street in Carmen), and the 1st Battalion at the vicinity of the steel bridge (present day Ysalina Bridge at Carmen) which was earlier destroyed by retreating USAFEE forces in 1942.

By 9:30 AM the whole town was occupied by guerrilla forces.

Defensive points in strategic areas of the town were established to prevent any Japanese counter attack.

The 2nd Battalion was stationed from Macabalan to Old Provincial Building to Ateneo; while the 1st Battalion with the Combat Co attached was charged with the area from Ateneo de Cagayan to Macasandig to the east bank of Cagayan River.

Mopping up operations were ordered and after the search, Cagayan was declared clear from enemy occupants.

Cagayan de Oro has never celebrated May 12 as its Liberation Day from the Imperial Japanese Empire and the City has no existing memorial or monument that honors our World War II Heroes and Martyrs other than certain streets named after some of them such as Tiano Brothers and Antonio J. Montalvan.

This bill seeks to honor not only the guerrilla and other combatants who helped free Cagayan de Oro from the Japanese garrison troops but even more so pay homage to the sufferings, hardships and tragedies experienced by its civilian populace.

The Celebration of Cagayan de Oro Liberation Day on May 12 would help perpetuate and increase awareness about the sacrifice and valor of our World War II heroes from all sectors with the coming generations in compliance with the Department of Education's mandate to include Local History in its grade school curriculum.

In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this measure is earnestly requested.

RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ

MAXIMO B. RODRIGUEZ, JR.

TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
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AN ACT
DECLARING MAY 12 OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL NONWORKING PUBLIC HOLIDAY IN CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY TO BE KNOWN AS CAGAYAN DE ORO LIBERATION DAY

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Cagayan de Oro, previously known as Cagayan, Misamis during the Commonwealth Period and Cagayan de Misamis during the Spanish Period was liberated by Filipino Guerrillas from the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II on May 12, 1945.

SEC 2. May 12 of every year is hereby declared a special non-working public holiday in Cagayan de Oro City to be known as Cagayan de Oro City Liberation Day.

SEC 3. An annual program of activities for the observance and celebration of the "Cagayan de Oro City Liberation Day" shall be prepared and implemented, with the Local Government of Cagayan de Oro City as the lead agency. All heads of concerned government agencies and instrumentalities, including government-owned-and-controlled corporations, local government units, public and private educational institutions, employers in the private sector, and industry associations, shall support the Local Government of Cagayan de Oro City in all efforts to facilitate and promote related activities, encourage and afford sufficient time and opportunities for their employees or students to engage and participate in any activity conducted in celebration of the "Cagayan de Oro City Liberation Day".

SEC 4. This Act shall take effect immediately upon its approval.

Approved,