

# Report of B.J. Bordallo to Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson

June 15, 1937



*In 1937, Baltazar J. Bordallo and Francisco B. Leon Guerrero were sent to Washington D.C. by the Guam Congress to present the petition by the people of Guam seeking American Citizenship.*

*Before returning to Guam from this historic visit, Council Chairman B.J. Bordallo sent the following report to the Secretary of the Navy regarding conditions in Guam.*

*Since the annual reports of Guam's navy governors rarely included the comments, recommendations or sentiments of the Chamorro people or their elected leaders, Chairman Bordallo took the opportunity to present the peoples' concerns, suggestions and recommendations in the administration of Guam by U.S. Naval Governors whose superior was the Secretary of the Navy.*

*His report centered on the economic life and civil rights of the Chamorros.*

Dear Sir:

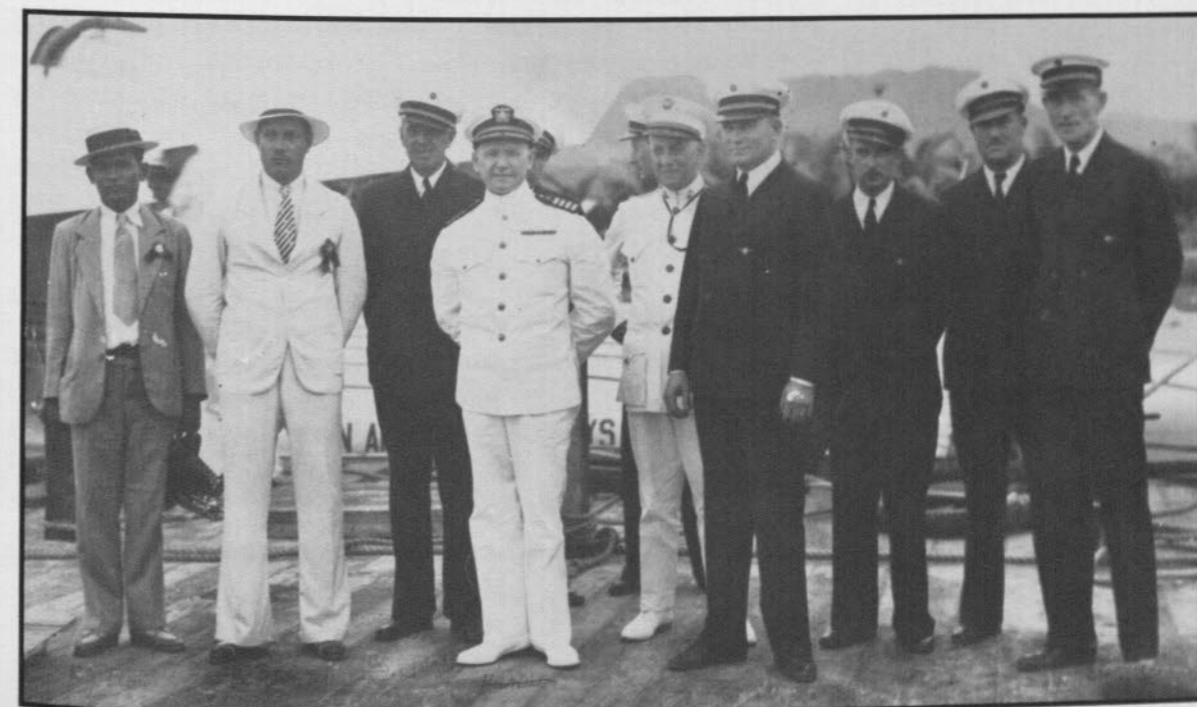
In review of my approaching departure from Washington for home and my people, with the approbation and endorsement of the Guam Congress, I take this privilege to submit herewith my report to the Honorable Secretary, embodying suggestions and recommendations pertaining to and relative to the administration of our Island, which I hope will receive your kind consideration and favorable action. I sincerely believe, that, if these changes and recommendations are effected they will elevate to a high degree a friendly spirit of cooperation and mutual respect between the service personnel and the people of Guam, and promote an intelligent understanding with their local government. This spirit had prevailed in Guam for many years but had somewhat waned, especially during the past years due to the inconsistent policy of the Naval Government and the lack of interest and consideration for our rights and privileges. Favorable action on this simple report by the the Honorable Secretary will restore our confidence and revive the high respect which we held for the Navy Department, and which had somewhat abated when it unqualifiedly went on record against any legislation conferring American Citizenship upon the natives of Guam. It will also reduce to a minimum that attitude of dominance and superiority-complex which seems to show in a marked degree among some of the Naval Officers officially connected with the Naval Government.

1. That the Budget Board (now composed of Naval Officers exclusively) be composed of the Chairman, House of Council, the Chairman, House of Assembly, Guam Congress, a merchant of Guam elected by a business association, and a Naval Officer selected by the Governor. The members of the Board are to elect their own Chairman.

2. That the practice of the Chief of Police in imposing fines, invariably high, upon first offenders for minor infractions of the law in general, and for traffic and sanitary regulations in particular, be discontinued. Our people are poor, peace-loving, law abiding, and cannot afford to nor is it justified for them to pay, heavy fines, for minor violations of the law. Petty offenders should be given warnings upon first offenders after which only small reasonable fines be imposed on them for second and third offenses.

3. That strict instructions be given District patrolman by the Chief of Police that District Commissioners (who represent the Executive Branch of the Naval Government) are vested with the power to overrule or supersede the district patrol, and it is their prerogative to give the orders rather than to receive them from the district patrol.

4. That the unwarranted privileges extended to aliens, including Japanese and Chinese, to bid on Government projects or contracts such as road buildings, bus concessions, cockfighting, purchase of supplies, etc. be withdrawn. Resolutions from the Guam Congress to this effect had been disapproved by the past several Governors. To deny aliens the special privileges is justified on the grounds that such privileges and concessions are not extended our people in alien countries.



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5. That Congressmen, elected by the people, should not be subject to dismissal by the Governor "for cause" (as anything can be a "cause") but only upon their conviction for malfeasance in office. Congressmen are elected by the people to represent them and work for their best interests, as it is practiced in this country, and they should not be subjected to risk dismissal and suffer disgrace when discharged "for cause". What would happen to the political structure of this country if the President were conferred the power to dismiss any Senator or Representative "for cause"? It is also to be borne in mind that Guam Congressmen receive no compensation for carrying on their congressional duties but do so only for the opportunity it gives them to help and be of service to their fellow-citizens. Such patriotic desire on their part to help and serve gratis is to be highly commended and has the sincere appreciation and gratitude of our people.

6. That the Governor of Guam refer to the Guam Congress for recommendations and advise before any action is taken by His Excellency on his following prerogatives:

a. Expenditure of public funds for schools, roads, public building or any other public improvement.

b. Naming of public buildings.

c. Appointment to important positions in the Naval Government.

d. Any and all public matters affecting the health, interest and welfare of the people of Guam. The time has come when all questions of public policy should be determined or initiated, with the approval of the Governor, by the Guam Congress rather than by Naval Officers as has been the practice in the past and still is, at present.

7. That the employment of prisoners at Libugon Farm for the purpose of raising vegetables and fruits to be made available only to the service colony be discontinued. The prisoners should be employed in road construction (of which we are badly in need) and in keeping them in repair. The fresh vegetables which the families of officers and enlisted men need can be purchased at the public market remain unsold due partly to the competition given by the prison farm.

8. That the Service Club in Agana be required by the Naval Government to pay the full liquor license fee of \$200.00 per annum instead of the \$25.00 annual fee which it now pays. This Club is supposed to cater exclusively to service personnel but there are times when civilians, American and Native, are served without discrimination. This works a distinct hardship on merchants who operate like establishments and have to pay the full fee of \$200.00 per annum.

9. That the present policy of the Commandant regarding the payment of legitimate debts by service personnel (see attached letter dated January 15, 1937) is inconsistent with the policy of the Navy Department and a direct invitation to a small portion of the military establishment to obtain anything on credit without fear of a disciplinary action. The merchants of Guam do not expect the Commandant to act as a collecting agency but do petition him to make it known to all service men that just debts should be honored as they are in the United States and that "dead-beats" will not be tolerated any more than would non-payment of bills at the Commissary Store or the Service Club. Business relations between business people and service men, if carried on an honest basis would result in a lower prices for commodities on the Island.

10. That the Navy Commissary Store ( a colossal organization for Guam) be made accessible to only those who are entitled, its privileges by law, and only in amounts proportionate to their salaries. For example, it's not reasonable to expect a service man with a family to support, earning \$100 per month, to spend \$75 on commissary bills. The amount left over after paying this amount for commissary bills would hardly be enough to pay his house rent, laundry, household help and other necessary expenses. The difference between \$75 he pays for commissary bills and what he can really afford to pay must come from his friends, for which they will receive commissary supplies in return. These abuses, if checked, would give the needed business to the merchants who contributed heavily toward the support of the Naval Government of Guam. We also believe that the local government receives little or no direct revenues by the existence of the Commissary Store or from the tremendous business which it is doing in Guam.

11. That the former Naval Government policy in retaining one Naval Officer in the courts as Chief Justice with native judges serving on the bench be resumed. The present system which calls for the services of several Naval and Marine Officers is very unpopular, undesirable, and unwarranted. A sufficient number of Judges can be found among the citizens of Guam who are qualified in every respect to fill these judicial posts would not fall short of the expectations of the people of Guam and the approbation of our law maker, the Governor of Guam. We concede to the Navy Department its right to vest unlimited power in the hands of our man, the Commandant of the Naval Station, but we are appealing to the Honorable Secretary's innate sense of justice and fair-play that, for the sake of our racial pride and human rights, to retain on the bench only native judges selected or elected from our people. If any on of us must receive "several lashes on the back", let one of our own blood mete out the punishment.

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12. That the license fees for motor vehicles (based on a sliding scale from \$15 to \$30 according to the make of car, now charged the civilian population) be made applicable to the Service personnel who are now paying a flat license fee of \$5.00 irrespective of the make of cars they operate. Such discriminatory fees, now in effect in Guam, are considered unfair and inequitable, and would tend to promote a feeling of antipathy and animosity among our native population toward the Naval Administration. Attention is called to the fact that the service personnel enjoy the same road privileges we do, and there seems to be no logical reason why this especially low license fee be extended to them only.

13. That license fees on push-carts, fees for slaughtering cattle, and that portion of the improvement tax relating to fruit bearing trees be abolished. The tax on coconut trees tapped for tuba is another unjustified tax and should be abolished. When a farmer taps a coconut tree for tuba, he loses the nuts with which to make copra. When he makes copra he sells it, but the government does not collect tax on it. Why then should the government collect a tax because the farmer taps his trees to obtain tuba? Farmers in this country do not pay a fee for making apple cider; why should the farmers in Guam pay the government taxes for making tuba, which they need to make vinegar, syrup, and other useful purposes?

#### Section II - recommendations

1. That the repeated recommendations by past Governors to the Navy Department to build government quarters for service personnel in Agana continue to be disregarded. One of the sources of revenues to the people in the city comes from the rentals of houses and to stop this sources of revenue would financially affect the house owners, as well as, the business interests of the Island. Living quarters now available in Guam are commodious, modern in design and are equipped with modern convenience, and cannot at all compare with living quarters that were available fifteen or twenty years ago. Houses in Guam rent for approximately one fourth of what anyone has to pay in Washington; the average being \$25 per month for a complete house with garage.

2. That the upkeep of roads by Federal funds which now only extends to Sumay from Agana, a distance of twelve miles, be extended to include Yigo, an addition of approximately fourteen miles. The roads are used extensively by Navy and Marine Corps cars and trucks on official trips, the heavy trucks being particularly hard on the roads. No license fees are paid into the Island Government for operating these motor vehicles on Island roads.

3. That Federal funds be made available to extend the road from Agat to Umatac, a distance of little over twelve miles, which would be a connecting link on the road around the Island, and would be of immense value for military purposes in time of emergency. It would be a god-send to the farmers between Agat and Umatac, and will help greatly in the economic life of our people and the development of this agricultural section of the Island.

4. That the Chairman of the Council and Assembly, Guam Congress, be provided with an office near the Governor's in which business matters connected with the local Congress can be transacted and attended to without interference with their private occupation. These Congressional positions now require a good measure of their time, as well as written work, to the extent that it interferes with their own private affairs. Attention is called to the fact that both chairman of the Guam Congress receive no remuneration but appreciate the opportunity offered them to serve in this capacity for the privilege it gives them to do something worthwhile for their people. And, if such an office be furnished them, will provide a quiet and restful place in which to perform and discharge the duties connected with the Congress, as well as furnish a place in which to take care of all Congressional papers and correspondence.

5. That the Naval Government take the necessary steps to make available by the Federal funds, water for drinking and washing purposes to every person in Agana and in the towns, who wish to make water connection on their homes.

6. That the Guam Militia, a compulsory semi-military organization from 1916 to 1936, but now put on a voluntary basis, be made to remain so, in all respects. The young men of Guam should not be compelled at any time to join it by an order of the Governor. This statement is made because it is feared that if the young men of Guam do not respond in great number to join this quasi-military organization as suggested by the Governor, His Excellency may put this organization back again on a compulsory basis, which will be contrary to the ideas and principles of American Democracy.

7. That Naval Officers who have custody of our public funds (the Island Treasury and Bank of Guam) be bonded in amounts sufficient to cover in full any possible losses by shortage, embezzlements, etc. This recommendation was given to a former Governor but was not approved because His Excellency stated that "a Naval Officer has his Naval career to think of and would commit no act which would cause his discharge from the Naval Service." The undersigned has heard that a Marine Corps Gunner had disappeared mysteriously some years ago in Guam because of a shortage of funds in his charge; also a certain

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Captain in the Marine Corps and formerly a Chief of Police in Guam, was dishonorably discharged from the service and sent to prison because he squandered post canteen funds. We also know of a certain Lt. Comdr. in the Naval service who was dishonorably discharged and was later sent to prison for revealing Naval secrets to a foreign country. As long as we are humans we are liable to err, and the fact that a person is a banker, doctor, or a Naval Officer does not make him immune to temptation. Therefore it is especially recommended that persons in custody of our Island funds be properly bonded to insure in full against possible losses, which is only right and fair to the people of Guam.

8. Paragraph deleted in the report by author of report.

9. That citizens of Guam who return to their native land, and have obtained adequate education, knowledge, and experience abroad, be employed by the Naval Government with adequate compensation to commensurate with their profession, ability and experience. It is to be noted that Guam citizens of such calibre are no less deserving of government positions and considerations than persons who were educated abroad at government expense in view of the fact that such persons have gone away without financial aid from their government and have obtained and gained through their own initiative, determination and personal sacrifices, their education and experience.

10. That U.S. Citizens permanently residing in Guam, who are employed by the Federal Government, be put on the same pay-status as is given Government employees in this country. It is a strange paradox that employees (on non-citizens status) of the Federal Government in this country, are paid two or three times more than the Government is paying its own citizens in Guam. If the Navy Department is sincerely concerned in the welfare of the people of Guam in general, and in the protection of the rights of its own citizens in particular, I respectfully suggest that the Department look in to this apparent miscarriage of justice at the expense and sacrifice to the United States Citizens permanently residing in Guam.

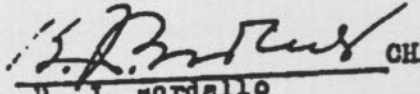
The disapproval of the Governor of Guam to the joint-resolution (copy enclosed) of the Guam Congress requesting an appropriation of \$1,000 from the Island Treasury to defray the Guam Delegates now in Washington, has been received with deep disappointment by the Honorable members of this body and their constituents. Such an uncompromising position as His Excellency has taken, I believe in my humble opinion, was a singular and true reflection of the policy and attitude of the

Naval Administration. Its apparent lack of interest and concern in the promotion and advancement of the economic life and civil rights of the people of Guam is a direct challenge to and inconsistent with, Paragraph (1) and (5) of the Hon. Secretary's memorandum transmitted to me by Commander Davis, U.S.N., which read as follows: (1) "That the Secretary of the Navy and the Naval Government fully appreciate the loyalty and fine characteristics of the people of Guam."

(5) "That the Secretary is pleased to meet and receive the "delegates" from the Guam Congress and requests them to take greetings and sincere best wishes to the Congress and to the Citizens of Guam, assuring them that their welfare and best interests are of great consideration to the Secretary and the Naval Department."

It is sincerely hoped that the Honorable Secretary will take this humble report in the spirit in which it was written. It was drawn and presented, not for the purpose of criticizing the acts of its Administration Officers in Guam, for the sake of criticism, but with my deep conviction and sincere hope that if these changes and recommendations are carried out, there will follow in the Island of Guam new era of prosperity, contentment and happiness for its people.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

  
B. J. Bordallo CHAIRMAN  
House of Council Guam Congress  
Guam Congressional Delegate

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