

Refer to No.

U. S. NAVAL PRISON
NAVY YARD, PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

29 January 1937.

From: Colonel Robert L. Denig, U.S.M.C.
To: Lt. Colonel A. DeCarre, U.S.M.C.,
Editor of the Marine Corps Gazette,
Room 3025, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps,
Washington, D. C.

Subject: Diary of a Guardia Officer.

Enclosure: (A) Subject Diary (Under separate cover).

1. The enclosed article is a very much deleted diary that I kept during my tour in the "Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua".
2. It gives what I consider an accurate picture of what transpires at an Area Headquarters of such an organization.
3. A great many patrols and resultant contacts with the bandits, are mentioned, but only such events are elaborated on as I personally experienced, and then condensed.
4. I doubt if there is anything here of a controversial nature or anything that would cause too much comment.
5. Many Nicaraguans are mentioned by name, in a few cases they have been changed as on page 135-136 where Doctor Castro is not the correct name.
6. On pages 9, 80, and 151, certain true remarks are made about priests. I hope that a double meaning is not put on the love story on page 130. The last verse on page 157 you may wish to change. Anyway the "thunder mug" was captured. I suppose it could be called "the lovely jug", or something to that effect.
7. I suppose that at least 130 Marine, Navy, and Army officers are mentioned by name including non-commissioned officers who held commissioned rank in the Guardia. At least 11 are dead beginning with Joel Davis on page 1 and ending on the last page with Harlan Pefley.
8. A few official dispatches are given and several extracts of the "Great Northern News" are included, not as fillers but to show our 'alent' on things.

37-01-29
Denig to

DeCarre

M

*names
of Nicar
Aad*

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Guardia Officer."

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SOURCE BGen Robert L. Denig
USMC

REMARKS Cite: P.C. 204

HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20374



In reply address not the signer
of this letter, but the Com-
manding Officer, U. S. Naval
Prison, Portsmouth, N. H.

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9. I can prepare a few field sketches to illustrate the ambush related on pages 47 to 51, or the "great" Ciudad Antigua battle on page 175. On page 174 a sketch map might be of use.

10. Other pen and ink sketches might be included from the Great Northern News or the Telpaneca Gaboon. Samples on request.

11. The ranks given are as written at the time, in other words some times Guardia, some time Marine, or in some cases, no rank.

ROBERT L. DENIG

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FOREWORD

On 13 November 1929, Major Robert Livingston Denig, USMC, arrived in Nicaragua, was commissioned a colonel in the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua--the national constabulary of Nicaragua--and assigned as commander of the Northern Area with headquarters at Ocotal. He held this position until November 1930, when he left the country for leave in the United States. Returning to Nicaragua in February 1931, he was then appointed chief of staff of the Guardia and remained in Managua until 3 April, when he was evacuated to the United States as a result of injuries incurred in the devastating earthquake of 31 March.

During his tour as a Guardia officer, Major Denig kept a diary, which, according to his letter of 29 January 1936 to Lieutenant Colonel Alphonse DeCarre, editor of Marine Corps Gazette, is a "very much deleted diary," and one which gives "an accurate picture of what transpires at an area Headquarters of such an organization /the Guardia/."

As a very brief historical background to this diary, it should be noted that in May 1927, President Adolfo Diaz of Nicaragua requested American assistance to instruct and train the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua. Designed as the police force of the legally constituted Nicaraguan government, the Guardia was entirely distinct and apart from the Marine Brigade which had been stationed in the country since early 1927. The Brigade had gone to Nicaragua at the invitation of the government to protect American as well as foreign lives and property because the Diaz regime was unable to do so.

Once the Guardia was organized and close to authorized strength, one of its units, usually a company, was to be assigned to each of the country's political departments. According to plans for its employment, the Guardia was to be fully organized and trained by the Marines, and able to assume responsibility for maintaining law and order throughout Nicaragua prior to the elections of 1928.

General Denig's diary relates his experiences as a Guardia officer in the period following elections, when banditry was still rampant and when Augusto Cesar Sandino was still the most wanted man in Nicaragua.

Relatives?

Equally of interest are Denig's observations regarding life in the field for Marines attached to the Guardia as well as his observations of the Marines themselves. After reading the diary, it is interesting to guess exactly what General Denig did delete from it in 1936 when he submitted it to the Marine Corps Gazette for publication.

A direct descendent of Robert Livingston of New York, signer of the Declaration of Independence, Brigadier General Robert L. Denig, USMC (Ret), was the Marine Corps' first Director of Public Information, a billet he filled throughout World War II. He is credited with originating the concept of employing combat correspondents in American armed forces. Under the plan he presented the Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps prior to U.S. entry into World War II, trained, experienced newspaper reporters and photographers would be recruited and enlisted into the Marine Corps, sent through boot camp and, upon completion of that training, promoted to sergeant and assigned to report on the activities of units in the field or in combat. Since the inception of this program, Marine Corps combat correspondents have reported on and photographed the exploits of their fellow Marines in three wars.

Holder of the Navy and Distinguished Service Crosses for heroism in World War I, General Denig served more than 40 years on active duty in the Marine Corps. A son, Robert L. Denig, Jr., is also a retired Marine brigadier general, while a second son, James, a Marine captain, was killed in action on Saipan in World War II.

He attended high school in Sandusky, Ohio, where he was also a member of the 6th Regiment, Ohio National Guard, in 1900. General Denig also attended St. John's School at Manlius, New York, and the University of Pennsylvania.

On 29 September 1905, he was appointed a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. After a course of instruction at the School of Application, Annapolis, Maryland, he went with an expeditionary force to Cuba, where he remained until November 1907. Prior to World War I, he also served aboard USS Missouri; at the Marine Barracks, Annapolis; as a recruiting officer in St. Paul, Minnesota; in the Philippines; and at the Marine Barracks, Philadelphia.

*Philippines?
hollow home?
Army?*

*Maybe that
article on
Philippines!
USMC.*

General Denig joined the 5th Marines in Quantico on 1 July 1917 and went to France with that regiment. He attended the U.S. Army I Corps school at Gondrecourt, graduating third in a class of nearly 400. Following this, he was assigned duty as senior instructor of tactics and open warfare at the school and then assigned to command 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 3d U.S. Army Infantry Division, participating in the Aisne-Marne Defensive east of Chateau Thierry.

In July 1918, he was assigned to the 2d Battalion, 6th Marines for the Soissons operation, and at the end of the month took command of the 3d Battalion, 9th Infantry, 2d Infantry Division. During the St. Mihiel Offensive in September, he was slightly wounded, but not evacuated. He was more seriously wounded in October during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive while leading his Army battalion in cleaning out German machine gun nests and snipers from the area around the Medeah Farm.

For remaining in action and in command of his unit until the mission was completed, he was awarded the Army Distinguished Service Cross and the Navy Cross. For his extraordinary heroism, the French government made him a Chevalier in the Legion of Honor, and awarded him a Croix de Guerre with Palm and a second Croix de Guerre with Bronze Star.

Following the war, General Denig served at various posts in the United States, in Santo Domingo, and in Nicaragua. For outstanding performance of duty in Nicaragua during the earthquake there in March 1931, he was awarded that country's Presidential Medal of Merit.

On his return to the United States in April 1931, he served at various posts and stations, such as Headquarters Marine Corps; Quantico; Naval Prison, Portsmouth, N.H.; Marine Barracks, Pearl Harbor; and Marine Barracks, Bremerton, Washington.

On 30 June 1941, he retired and was promoted to the rank of brigadier general by virtue of his having been decorated for heroism in combat. The following day, 1 July, General Denig was recalled to active duty at Headquarters and tasked with the organization of a Division of Public Relations. He was Director of Public Relations, now the Division of Information, throughout the war and until his second retirement on 1 December 1945.

Other decorations held by General [Name] include the Purple Heart Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Cuban Pacification Medal; World War I Victory Medal; Expeditionary Medal; Second Nicaraguan Campaign Medal; French Fourragere; American Defense Service Medal with Base Clasp; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; and World War II Victory Medal.

[Name] was assigned to the [Location] in [Year] and served in various capacities. He was promoted to the rank of [Rank] in [Year]. During his service, he demonstrated exceptional leadership and courage, particularly during the [Event].

For his extraordinary heroism, the French Government made him a Chevalier in the Legion of Honor, and awarded him a Croix de Guerre with Palm and a Legion of Honor with Bronze Star.

Following the war, General [Name] served in various capacities in the [Location]. He was promoted to the rank of [Rank] in [Year].

General [Name] was assigned to the [Location] in [Year] and served in various capacities. He was promoted to the rank of [Rank] in [Year].

On 10 June 1944, General [Name] was promoted to the rank of [Rank]. He was assigned to the [Location] in [Year] and served in various capacities. He was promoted to the rank of [Rank] in [Year].

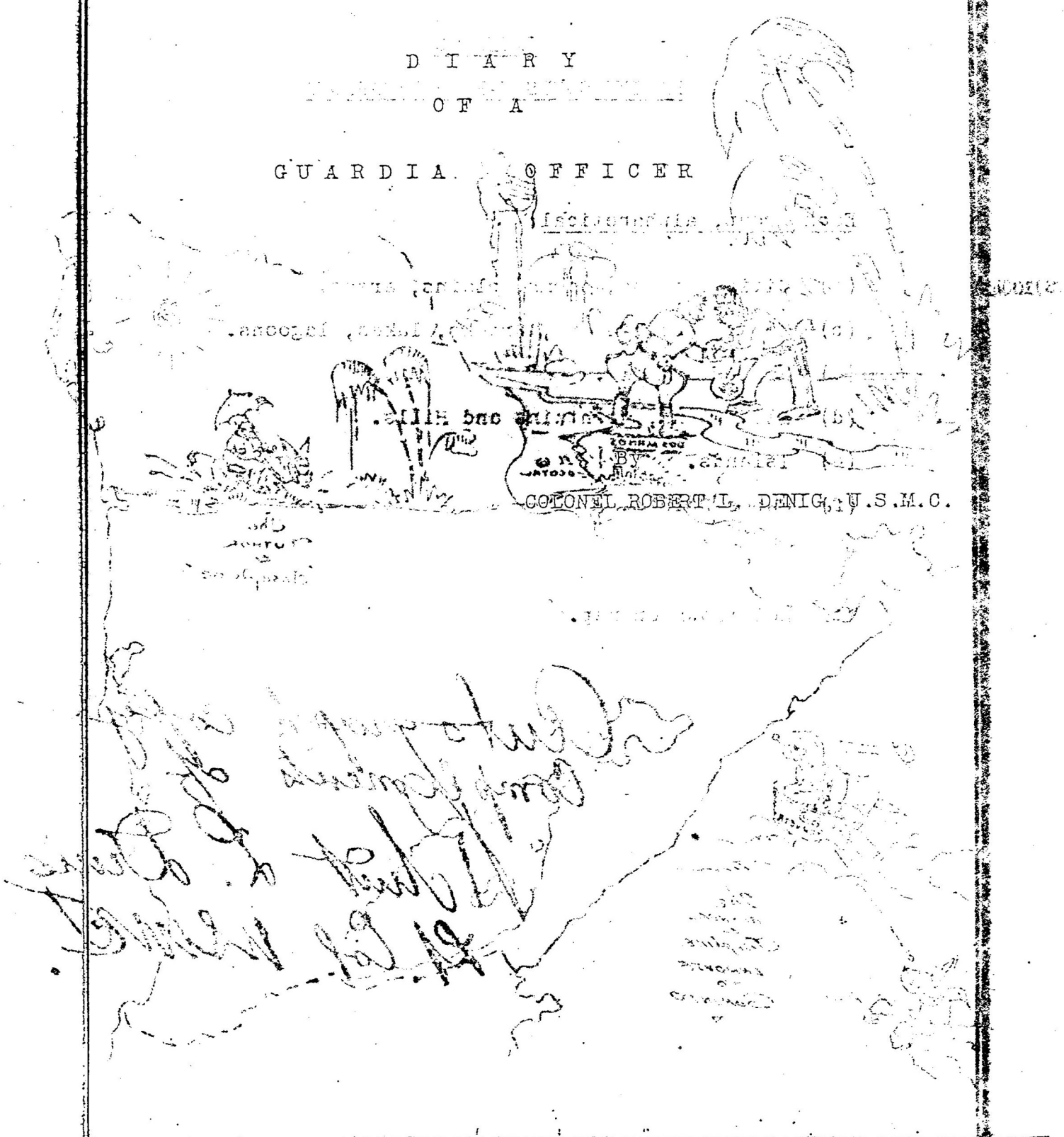
D I A R Y

O F A

GUARDIA OFFICER

Isidoro, Pinar del Rio

COLONEL ROBERT L. DENIG, U.S.M.C.



Handwritten notes in cursive script, likely describing the scene or providing a diary entry. The text is difficult to decipher due to the cursive and some fading, but appears to include words like 'Isidoro', 'Pinar del Rio', and 'Denig'.

INDEX TO
MARINE CORPS MAP OF NICARAGUA

Each group, alphabetical

(a) Cities, towns, plains, areas.

(b) Rivers, creeks, lakes, lagoons.

(c) Mountains and Hills.

(d) Islands.

(e) Capes-Points.

Not shown on map.

The
AUTHOR
&
'Josephine'

The
AUTHOR
&
Josephine
ENROUTE
TO
GORINTO

*Autograph copy
Complements of
Lieut. A. Davis
U.S. Marine Corps*

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