

PROJ: MATTHEW FISHER – THE FILIPINO VETERANS RECOGNITION AND EDUCATION PROJECT

RUDY PANAGLIMA (RP) INTERVIEW BY NOEL IZON (NI)

TRANSCRIBER: Estelito B. Vega

FILE TOTAL TIME LENGTH: 00:48:09:00

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

00:00:06:00 RP: My name is Rodolfo Cullaga Panaglisma; I was born in Lilio, Laguna, Philippines in the year 1930 April 2nd.

00:00:30:00 **NI: Okay, so now let us talk as if the two of us are only here and they are not, okay do not look at them just keep looking at me. Your surname, Panaglisma, why is that your family surname?**

00:00:44:00 RP: Ah, can I prolong the story of how, well you know the family name of my grandfather was changed to Panaglisma. Because during the Spanish regime when our country was colonized by this Spanish for four hundred years, the people of the Philippines has no family name so when there was a little of what you call, **it's like they were zoned**, they make a report on a certain place and my grandfather was at the fifth, so when the Spanish official called, Nicomedes, that is the name of my grandfather. Nicomedes, the fifth, **number five**, so that was the family name given to my old man.

00:02:21:00 NI: **Because it is** Panaglisma (?)

00:02:23:00 RP: Panaglisma, then it was translated, "*singko*" in English is the fifth and in Tagalog "*lima*". So he prolongs, Panaglisma, "*pang lima*", the fifth. "*Numero singko*". That is how we acquired; my **grandfather** acquired the family name Panaglisma. He takes it

because during that time because they are paying taxes to the Spanish government. And you know my grandfather is an “*Insurrectos*” like in our time a guerilla, an outfit organization. So he hates the enemy on that very moment so the “*Cedula*”, the residence tax (certificate), **he tore it off in front of the Spanish officers talking to him, right there, they got mad with him.** But we are talking about how; Panaglima was acquired by our family.

00:03:52:00 NI: So you come from a family with deep revolutionary roots?

00:03:58:00 RP: Yes, the original family name is Singko, **but when he tore off his Residence Certificate that** is the time he changed our family name, it become Panaglima, that is the origin of how.

00:04:23:00 NI: I knew it was an interesting story because I have never heard that last name before and I am glad you told me.

00:04:30:00 RP: Because I do not know if you believe that during the Spanish regime the people then has no family name, just Pedro, Juan, (for the) women, Maria, something like that, no family name.

00:04:45:00 NI: **For them we are incomplete persons, is not it?**

00:04:50:00 RP: So if you are called **number six! Number seven,** then your family name maybe something like seven.

00:05:07:00 NI: **So let us go back when you were growing up in 1930, what did your dad, and your mom do then?**

00:05:21:00 RP: Well you know, I will start from the time that my grandfather and my grandmother, they are both widow, widower and widow. When they got married again, **they left all of their properties to both sides of**

their previous families. They lived together with nothing. But because of what **fate dictates, they gained a little livelihood again, we call it livelihood. Then...**

00:06:07:00

NI: **What do they do?**

00:06:10:00

RP: Well, they were farmers, then it happened that they acquired again a small property and when my father was born, the only son of those widower, the only son is my father, Bernabe Panaglima, the fruit **of their beautiful marriage together, and my father was the only fruit of their beautiful romance.**

00:06:53:00

NI: **How you said it was sweet.**

00:06:55:00

RP: **From there we started to grow, we did not become rich, but we were not poor. What you call it then was,** we can afford, because he is the only son.

00:07:14:00

NI: **when you were born in 1930, how old was your father then.**

00:07:19:00

RP: Well, **he was young,** I could not remember but he still young around thirty-five or forty, like that. I could not remember **because he was still young at that time.**

00:07:41:00

NI: **So your father Bernabe, how did he mete your mother, how did they...**

00:07:50:00

RP: Well that is a very long story, **because my father was the only child, my grandparents put up a small shop for my father in their home, underneath their house. So one of the things my father do on weekends, was to go hunting up in the mountain, shooting birds, that's what you may call his hobby, that's what he does. Until in one of his hunt, he saw my mother; my mother was from the farms. There**

he saw her and it was as, in our saying, my mother was shot in the heart by my father. They met on that specific hunt until they had a good personal relationship.

00:08:49:00

NI: Tell me about that story in English, how your dad and mom met?

00:09:02:00

RP: Yes, my mom and dad, you know, the hobby of my father is hunting, he go hunting every weekend and that is the moment he won my mother's heart, well this is a very nice hunting place. **He, you know talked to her, they talked awhile until they enjoyed each other's company,** a nice you know, a nice time to know each other, **they started that way.**

00:09:49:00

NI: When they got married, did your father live in the farm with her, what happened...

00:09:56:00

RP: **No, it was my mother who lived in the town, going back and forth, vice versa to town and farm, something like that.**

00:10:11:00

NI: So, before the Japanese arrived, was your father already with the underground movement, does he have activities, military activities at that time?

00:10:24:00

RP: Well, **when the Japanese arrived,** they have organized already, because as I remember we are in the, **we were in the farm, now** I remember there is a certain man who came to our place, a certain General, he was already General at that time, as I hear from him, General Vicente Umali from Quezon Province, as I remember he is organizing the President Quezon's Own Guerilla, in short PQOG. That is the name of the organization that we belong.

00:11:23:00

NI: So your father was a, pretty high up, he is a high-ranking individual there in PQOG.

00:11:33:00 RP: Yes, he was given a rank if I am not mistaken; he was a Captain of that unit.

00:11:42:00 NI: Okay so, at some point your father is involved in a firefight with the Japanese and he was wounded, tell me that story.

00:11:53:00 RP: Yes, I do not see it but that is the reason why I was with my father.

00:12:05:00 **NI: Okay, you say it again say that during a firefight with the Japanese your father was wounded.**

00:12:12:00 **RP: During those times along with his comrades, they were engaged in a firefight, my father was hit, wounded, what his colleagues did was, because the system was so poor that time, he was brought near the town, and they informed us of it. My older sibling and me went to the place to check out my father.**

00:12:47:00 NI: **How many siblings?**

00:12:48:00 RP: **We are five siblings; my oldest sister and me were the ones who went to the field. People say your father was wounded in the battle. Nobody would take care of him, and you know during that time the guerillas there is hit and run, so it will be very hard for my father to be alone, so on that very moment I never left my father, I told him he's alone, and he's there since I was born and when I was already a grown up, I am always with my father, you know, my feeling, I was very, I pity him, I pity my father on that very moment, so I never left him that time.**

00:13:51:00 NI: **But you were so very young that time, you are only eleven years old?**

00:13:53:00 RP: **I am Eleven**; that was the time when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the break of war. When the war broke out, I was eleven years old. But still you know on that very moment, **I do not know, but I felt that people's thoughts at that time were matured. Since then I have been involved with my father, I am his crutches, his support.**

00:14:29:00 NI: **So you are the support?**

00:14:30:00 RP: **Yes, I am my father's support.**

00:14:30:00 NI: So you have to grow up fast, **because of those so many responsibilities.**

00:14:45:00 RP: **Well in growing up maybe not, but** my experience make me old, you know, **it seems like I'm enjoying those experiences I've never had since we never had such a war-torn experience, right?**

00:15:06:00 NI: **But you are too young to join the guerrilla but you are there just to be with your father?**

00:15:11:00 RP: **Yes.**

00:15:13:00 NI: **Tell me about that.**

00:15:15:00 RP: **So that is what happened, I had become my father's support up to his healing and while the Japanese occupation is inevitable and tightening, I never left his side. Then I became like sort of their runner, messenger, I gather and bring news to them about what is happening in the towns.**

00:15:56:00 NI: **But it is also dangerous?**

00:15:59:00 RP: Well at that very moment, **I do not feel like I am about to die, what I feel was I want to serve the people but not knowing that I was already serving my country. All I know is that I am serving only**

those who are with my father, under the command of my father.

00:16:24:00 NI: **Your compatriots?**

00:16:26:00 RP: Yes, that is what **I am feeling**.

00:16:33:00 NI: **But even when you were a kid, were you not scared of what was going on in that gunfire?**

00:16:40:00 RP: **Well the fear of those times was never felt by me, because there was a sentry outside of where we are encamped, before you go out in town, there are obstructions like the Japanese sentries, but I'm passing on it freely, because maybe they thought of me as a kid, I am horse-drawn, I ride a horse, I sometimes for example ride with it covered in coconuts, for camouflage. To make it look like I am a farmer who does not support any group there, I do not give anything to anyone, under any circumstances. However, underneath the saddle there are letters from the town's intelligence people, they instruct me, to bring the letters with me, with what I have, these letters are news.**

00:17:36:00 NI: **That one, tell me that in English how you are transporting the messages.**

00:17:48:00 RP: When I go to town to meet those intelligence as connected to our organization, they write a letter about what is happening, then that letter I put that under the **saddle**, that was also my instruction. When you got that information from the intelligence in the **town**, you have to be very, very careful. **Now, I ride a horse with a load of stuff, it is inconspicuous I have something illegal in my carry and I bring those to the farm.**

00:18:53:00 **NI: Were you given instructions by them on what you are supposed to do in case you were caught.**

00:18:56:00 **RP: No instructions were given; all they said was for me to be extra careful. that is the only instruction, be careful. Nevertheless, I told them the Japanese do not mind me at all, they see me as a young kid.**

00:19:13:00 **NI: Not even at one time, were you stopped by the Japanese?**

00:19:16:00 RP: No, I even, because at that very moment in our town there is a Japanese Camp, there they made a camp in our school, they made some foxhole there I even told those people, be careful because you will not see the Japanese coming out because they are passing through the foxhole, you will see the Japanese there through the foxhole they come out.

00:19:59:00 **NI: They have like sort of a tunnel?**

00:20:02:00 **RP: Yes but no, it is not a tunnel, they were digging like a canal (trenches), that is why I advised them to be careful when they are passing in that area, not to be too negligent. Those were the information I share with them; that they must be careful.**

00:20:20:00 **NI: Sometimes the Japanese liked giving candies to children, were you given candies.**

00:20:26:00 **RP: The Japanese do not have candies then. Sometimes they give Akebono cigarettes; comparatively at that time, it refers to imported cigarettes, Akebono cigarettes tastes well. Well I do not mind those things at all, I do not know but what is in my mind is to be with those people and to give them some important news about what is happening in the town.**

00:21:07:00 **NI: How long have you been a messenger, your being a courier?**

00:21:14:00 RP: Well since I joined my father up to the liberation, so.

00:21:23:00 **NI: You are lucky you never got caught.**

00:21:25:00 RP: I might be, when I realized that I was serving my people and our country is when I was already thirteen years old.

00:21:43:00 **NI: Did you study Nippongo?**

00:21:45:00 RP: **Oh no, but sometimes I go and attend, for example, the Japanese flag raising ceremony, “Mi-ya to oka eno sura ka kete”** that is the song of the Japanese people, you know.

00:22:06:00 **IN ENGLISH NI: Were you taught to count in Japanese?**

00:22:09:00 RP: No.

00:22:11:00 **NI: Because they teach that in schools.**

00:22:15:00 RP: Yes, they organize also a bamboo army during that time.

00:22:20:00 NI: What is that?

00:22:21:00 RP: Bamboo army is they got a long bamboo (culm) with a very sharp (bolo) its (branch cut from the node) they call those people bamboo army, they organize those people on the **town** who are not joining the organization up (in the mountains), the underground, that is what they are called, bamboo army. Every morning they have a flag ceremony that is why I can hear the mame ya to oka that is their song you know.

00:23:04:00

NI: Yeah, so when you accompanied your father during the same, which is like maybe a period of four years, did you have any skirmishes with the Japanese, did you have, naglaban ba kayo sa hapon.

00:23:22:00

REP: No, yes sometimes because of the ammunition, the problem of ammunition from that time, that we have no supply coming from somewhere. So if there is an encounter that cannot be avoided, we just give them a little **gunfire**, then run, hit and run, we cannot engage with them; because they have a, their armory is, you know. But the organization, what we have there is a little, what do you call that, **the bullets, there were only few bullets**, and how can you fight those Japanese? So if we can avoid, we have to run, what we are doing during that time as I remember is to, **that's why we're giving missions to those people in the field and advise them on what they must do, sometimes they are demoralized not knowing what could happen to them. So that is one of the mission of those underground people, they were given advise based on what I hear from the older ones, I was a small kid then not knowing much, but the older ones I am with in the organization I see them talking to the people in the field advising that if the Japanese comes to them, you serve the Japanese, they advised them not to engage the Japanese as they are unarmed, do not be against these Japanese soldier, if they asked to have your chicken, give it to them, give them whatever they want. However, I never saw the Japanese abusive in that way. Their only purpose in going there in the field was to see if there are guerillas in the area. So that is one of the work I do to check out on the Japanese going to the barrios, to the farms, and to the fields. I immediately report this movement for the safety of**

everyone. So we abruptly retire into the forest, go as deep as we could, as far as we can be so they could not reach us.

00:26:18:00

NI: **Are you nearby Mount Makiling?**

00:26:24:00

RP: You know, our town is something forty maybe fifty-five kilometers from Makiling, we are at the foot of Mount Banahaw.

00:26:38:00

NI: **Because my daddy was also with PQOG, he is the publisher of, do you remember the Liberator, the USAFFE newspaper that sends out news to people for them to know what is really happening in Japanese time, he do the designs then , and he said they are also in Mount Banahaw.**

00:27:05:00

RP: **We feel very safe there, far from being able not to afford it, it was as if the Japanese were also afraid of the place because there are other organizations encamped there, not just the PQOG, the Fil-American are there, the Markings and other organization are encamped there.**

00:27:33:00

NI: **Let us repeat it because something was missed, just say that your location in Mount Banahaw seem to scare the Japanese because there are many other units encamped there, just repeat that part.**

00:27:51:00

RP: That is where ah, for me, I feel that the Japanese are also afraid because they know that numerous organizations were encamped at the foot of Banahaw, they were encamped in different areas the Fil-American, Markings, PQOG, and the other organizations, and the Japanese knew that very well, there also people siding with the Japanese and this information they pass on to them.

00:28:25:00

NI: **The Makapili.**

00:28:25:00

RP: Yes, they are called Makapili, but I am not fully aware of that, some people inform my father about certain individuals as Makapili. The way I look at it, my father had saved many lives there. My father used to tell these people that maybe the reason of them siding with the Japanese is to protect their families but not exactly that they are defending the Japanese, let us not be too hard on them, they are also our fellow citizens. I saw and felt that my father had indeed saved so many lives through this system of reasoning. For those individuals wanted by the guerilla, we shelter them considering it is only me and my father in the house, we accommodate them, since our family stays in town.

00:29:52:00

NI: So when the Americans arrived in October 1944, where were you that time.

00:30:01:00

RP: Well, we were still up in the mountains, because we are hearing the news but we are analyzing it, we cannot just descend and meet them. But we are glad and relieved when we are told that the Americans had arrived. It was now the Japanese turn to hide in Mount Banahaw.

00:30:21:00

NI: So you descended?

00:30:24:00

RP: It was like the guerillas then disintegrated, fragmented but there was an understanding between them. In a reversal, the Japanese that time were now the ones hiding in the fields. Other organizations in different places were still engaging the Japanese in firefights, but the Americans keep occupying areas. So the Japanese were the ones now running away up to the mountains.

00:31:03:00

NI: So when you came down from Banahaw where did you and your father go?

00:31:05:00 **RP: Well, we were in town as if we had meet the Americans. The American encampment in our area, was the previous Japanese camp, they camped out in the school of Lilio, Laguna.**

00:31:26:00 **NI: So were you given specific orders by the Americans on what you are supposed to do?**

00:31:30:00 **RP: No, there was no order, I do not know, I am not in a position to receive orders because I am not a guerrilla officer, nor am I an official of the organization. Maybe I did not know, they might have given the officers orders, but I do not know what it is if there is one.**

00:32:00:00 **NI: Did you go to Manila during the liberation of Manila in February.**

00:32:04:00 **RP: Yes, we went there during the recognition rites, when those guerilla was given recognition.**

00:32:20:00 **NI: When was that what year?**

00:32:23:00 **RP: When I know that we are recognized, that was in 1943 to '45 that was the date given to those underground movements.**

00:32:44:00 **NI: So about your father, you have told us that he is not recognized correctly because of the ranking on the roster, can you tell me that?**

00:32:56:00 **RP: Yes but maybe not anymore, it is painful to hear that.**

00:33:03:00 **NI: Never mind, it is true.**

00:33:06:00 **RP: It is true that it happened, but it seems like several compatriots might be hurt, because what happened before seemed like a sponsor system of**

giving ranks to the guerrillas that time, well that is not good news.

00:33:24:00 NI: That is real news.

00:33:26:00 RP: But it is really true.

00:33:27:00 NI: Then tell me in Tagalog.

00:33:29:00 RP: Well my father was an officer he was like a Captain, he was demoted to a lower rank, in my knowledge he was demoted to a rank of a Sergeant only on the roster that was submitted to Camp Murphy at that time, never mind about me, I was recognized. In my case, since there were talks of disagreements on the way the proponents of the roster submittal. During the course of the processing, I am sure you are also aware of that, there were people on the roster who are not supposed to be there who have done nothing to the cause. What I mean is all of us have served the country; all of us made sacrifices. However, to those who really suffered hard, they were pushed down and those who have done nothing, just because they are relatives and friends, they are given certain rank, which is higher for those people who really suffer during the time. Now, in my case my father told them to exclude my name in the roster, he do not want misunderstanding that would create trouble from that. He feels something was not right with the person who would process the roster in *(Camp)* Murphy. He was like why am I down here and this person is up there, we all fought together. I hope these revelations would not hurt anyone.

00:35:51:00 NI: No, that is okay but...

00:35:53:00 **RP: Can we just delete that part, which would be unpleasant news, right?**

00:36:00:00 **NI: So on Independence Day July 4, 1946, were you in Manila, or were you in your hometown?**

00:36:08:00 **RP: 1946?**

00:36:09:00 **NI: Yes, July 4th when the Philippines was given independence?**

00:36:15:00 **RP: When we were given independence? I could not remember that now, imagine what is happening to me now Sonny, you see, in my age at eighty nine years old, the most important thing that I am losing are like; most significant is when I lost my wife, I seemed to have forgotten so many events, I could not remember anymore where I was then. But I still remember when I went here in America.**

00:37:06:00 **NI: When was that?**

00:37:07:00 **RP: That was March 3rd, 1993 when I came here in America with the invitation of the American people. There are groups of American people who went to our place in Manila. **There at the Luneta, we were there I think we are two hundred veterans who was celebrating because** we are given the privilege to become an American citizen, so they call us Brown American, **we were happy that time, but the others were not able to come here due the expenses on the cost of the processing to come here.** You are given privilege to become American **but if you have no money to spend? You have to pay for the doctor and the other requirements to process, the fares to travel here. Who knows if my daughter was not here?****

00:38:27:00 NI: When you found out that you were going to America were you excited?

00:38:31:00 RP: Ahh, of course on the onset, all of us dreamed of becoming an American citizen but I forgot something when I came here. If my daughter was not here I could be at the foot of Key Bridge, doing like this (begging) because you have to pay for your house, what if you do not have a job? That is the problem, but it is good that my daughter was here and she has a job, she went here ahead of me. She told me Daddy you have to come here your chance to come here and be an American is about to lapse, if you ignore this you will never be able to go. So she is the one who supported my coming here to America.

00:39:35:00 NI: From 1993 or '94?

00:39:36:00 RP: '93. I came here '93, March 5th, 1993, I cannot forget that very moment.

00:39:47:00 NI: How did you feel when you first landed here?

00:39:50:00 RP: Well I was very happy; when I arrived, I was saddened because of the way of life here.

00:39:57:00 NI: Why were you saddened?

00:40:00:00 RP: How can I live here? I wondered if my daughter was not here, I could have been homeless, jobless, and I would be begging to live. It is all right if I would die of hunger, I have no relatives here.

00:40:22:00 NI: It is good you have a daughter here.

00:40:26:00 RP: Its good my youngest daughter was already here.

00:40:35:00 NI: So you received the Congressional Gold Medal?

00:40:39:00 RP: **I received it;** it is the work of General Taguba.

00:40:45:00 NI: So when you received your medal how did you feel?

00:40:49:00 **RP: Well I felt great because there are, what you call, the grace that is given to those who served their nation.**

00:41:06:00 NI: When you look at the medal and you got it in your hand, what did it symbolize to you, what did it mean to you?

00:41:06:00 **RP: Well at first, of course, I am happy because this is the fruit of our sacrifices. However, if not for General Taguba, none of this would have happened. It is the work of General Taguba and that is more of the happiness that we felt. To know that there are people who would exert their efforts for us to have what we have now. No, I do not know, I was so happy; imagine from my young age up to the present I feel the joy that the war has brought me, right? So what I can say, I do not want to mention that our enemy is the Japanese people, I do not think we have to mention those, the Japanese is our enemy, maybe the enemy is enough because it is also a Japanese Senator who helped us, Senators (Daniel) Inouye and (Daniel) Akaka who worked for the benefits that we are receiving now. So maybe, I say to those I talk to, let us not say that the Japanese were our enemies; maybe we can say that the Japanese have brought us the happiness we enjoy today. If not for the Japanese, how can we go to America, could we come to America, maybe not? We could have just be living in the farm all our lives with my father and mother there.**

00:43:40:00 NI: **Life will never improve?**

00:43:42:00 RP: Hopeless, I will never see America and now that my family, my son, my daughter are all here already, though life is a bit difficult here in America, at least we got here, right? It is the dream of every Filipino, and maybe we are happy now.

00:44:13:00 NI: Why is it important for young people to know the story of veterans?

00:44:19:00 RP: Well maybe being honest, serving faithfully in a country like ours, others may be ignorant about it but I feel it is the reason why I am here in America now? It was clear in my mind that I was here today because that time I did not even know I was serving; the beginnings you could not have predicted. I was only supporting my father until I come to realize that I am also serving not only my town, but my fellow citizens also, and most of all my country, which had faced hardships and had been a victim of abuses from the oppressors of the past. Moreover, because of those enemies, my family and I are here in America, the country adored by the whole world. Maybe I have nothing else to be thankful for thank you Lord, thank you to everybody whoever you are, and because of that I am here in front of you, and elated and thankful even in the face of hardships I am very thankful to the Department of Veterans Affairs here in America.

00:46:25:00 NI: And God loves you.

00:46:28:00 RP: Well, maybe, first to be thankful for and I still feel like I want to add to those experiences, are the people in the Department of Veterans Affairs. They were graceful and generous I need to say that, as of recent, they told me, Sir do not worry we will do everything; just tell us if you got sick, whatever

happen to you. Then came the blessing they were all working for us and the main thought was my main concern, my Tinnitus. The loss of my hearing which they were all working out to cure, now I would like to mention here of a certain government agency which placed my retirement benefits on hold, my retirement benefits are still pending, I do not know why, to date they still have it and have not release it.

00:47:58:00

NI: **We will work on that, but thank very much.**
Thank you for your stories and your service, **thanks.** –
End at 00:48:09:00