



## The US Navy Had a Destroyer Named After Jose Rizal - MabuhayRadio

Written by Jose Sison Luzadas

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When Dewey was victorious in the Battle of Manila Bay on May 2, 1898, it nailed down a decaying colonial empire, putting an end to Spain's rank as minor world power. It marked a new era in American history flirting with imperialism to gain foothold in Asia to acquire a portion of lucrative trade and commerce of Southeast Asian markets dominated by Europeans. In short, it transformed America overnight as an emerging military, naval commercial power to watch.

In the acquisition of territories, commerce, consequently followed the flag and America was ready to venture in Asian markets lay waiting for American goods with the Philippines as distribution center in the region. Except for Mark Twain and his Isolationist friends, there were rallying words that are music to American ears: Manifest Destiny.

With Aguinaldo's capture in Palanan, Isabela, Apolinario Mabini getting exiled in Guam, Miguel Malvar finally decided to quit fighting as the last Filipino general to surrender, President Roosevelt proclaimed in 1902 the termination of hostilities a state of belligerency that American historians referred to as the Philippine Insurrection. Pacification and transition to peace and order finally settled but still Filipinos were reluctant to participate in national, provincial and local government set up by the Americans. It took several years to entice Filipinos to the civil service until the American showed genuine promise of preparing the citizens for self-government that highlighted when American Governor General Francis Burton Harrison proclaimed his administration's policy of "Philippines for the Filipinos".

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The story of overseas Filipinos that we noticed as tremendous booming business, started when migrant workers were allowed to go to the pineapple plantations of Hawaii and the farmlands of California in the early 1900. In comparison of the change of colonial masters, the Americans were much different from the Spanish. They were more interested in education and the study of politics and government. However, while the teaching of English was "shoved" to our throats there was no complaint or protest. It was an amazement and surprise for Americans to learn that while Filipinos can be "Americanized" they cannot be not Americans.

The excitement and fascination of working for Uncle Sam seems undeterred. We want to be a part of the American Dream. In the fifties, sixties and seventies, arguably, we supplied America not just doctors and nurses. Had it not for termination of our bilateral defense treaty phasing out Sangley Point in Cavite, Navy Yard in Zambales and Clark Airbase in Angeles, Pampanga, the long waiting list of applicants can provide the US Navy Recruiting Office a 50 year supply of recruits.

FLASH BACK to yesterday:

The first twenty years under America was an era dominated by the political careers, ambition and rivalry of Manuel Quezon and Sergio Osmena. Starting from 1904 it was a period when Filipinos were allowed to form political parties, sing their national anthem and wave the present Philippine flag. A transition period was a condition required for the grant of independence known as the Jones Act was passed by the US Congress 1916. Then in February 1935 the Philippine Constitution was proclaimed followed by the TydingsMcDuffie Act promising the grant of independence within ten years.

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### BACK TO THE PICTURE

This US destroyer is a symbol of American power. Christened the USS RIZAL, it was built in California and saw its maiden voyage visiting the ports of Japan, China, the Philippines and Guam. Unlike other US Navy vessel, majority of the crew manning USS RIZAL were Filipinos. Returning to California in 1930, it was decommissioned and in 1931 it was scrapped for good.

### BELEVE IT OR NOT!

The Philippine Government shouldered the expenses for the construction of USS RIZAL and was donated to the US Navy. In return for the Philippine gift, the US Navy named the 1060 ton destroyer after Dr. Jose Rizal. I cannot find any rationale why the members of the Philippine Legislature appropriated such amount of money to build a ship only to be donated. Even though the ship will bear the name of Rizal, the issue on priority is highly debatable if not questionable on the wisdom and leadership of Quezon, Osmena, Paredes, Roxas, Quirino and other ardent nationalists.

If Rizal would have his way, he would have preferred the money to be spent for education or for economic development. Can we blame the action of the men of the past with

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