

Some older Filipino Americans can still recall vividly the crash of an **EgyptAir** jetliner in the Bay of Bombay, India, on July 28, 1963. EgyptAir was called at that time the United Arab Airlines. The Egyptian airliner, a British-made Comet jetliner, was bound for Athens, Greece. Its flight originated in Hong Kong and had a stop over in Bangkok, Thailand. The ill-fated plane carried 52 passengers and eight crewmembers. Among the passengers were 24 Filipino boy scouts and scout officials en route to the **11th World Jamboree** in Marathon, Greece.

According to eyewitnesses who were mainly fishermen from Mahd Island off Bombay, India, the Egyptian airliner plunged into the sea in one piece. Among the members of the Philippine scouting delegation, only five bodies were positively identified from the human remains that were recovered in the Bay of Bombay. There were no survivors in the plane crash.

Editor's Note: This online publication is inviting the relatives of the Filipino scouts and scouters who perished in the July 1963 tragedy to contribute photos and other materials about the deceased delegates. We intend to build a lasting online memorial to them in this publication. The materials and pictures can be sent to photos@mabuhayradio.com. Here's the story of ill-fated Filipino delegation to the 11th World Jamboree in Marathon, Greece.

The Filipino delegation was composed of 24 scouts and scouting officials (called scouters in the Philippines). The delegates composed a happy bunch when it called on then Philippine President Diosdado Macapagal on July 25, 1963, at the Malacañang Palace. During the courtesy call, a Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP) official, Dr. Bonifacio Lazcano, introduced the members of the delegation. Among them were the Manila Boy Scout Council's Dr. Florante L. Ojeda and Librado Fernandez, an assistant scoutmaster. Fr. Jose Ma. Martinez, SJ, a faculty member of the Ateneo de Naga, who was an assistant scoutmaster in Naga City, was the delegation's chaplain.

The boy scouts who died in the plane crash: from the Manila BS Council: Ramon V. Albano, Henry Chuatoco, Jose Antonio Delgado, Pedro Gandia, Wilfredo Santiago and Ascario Tuason, Jr. From the Quezon City BS Council: Roberto Castor, Romeo R. Rallos and Rogelio Ybardolaza. Felix Fuentesbella, Jr., represented both the Manila and Goa, Camarines Sur BS Councils. The rest of the scouts: Victor de Guia, Jr. (Baguio City), Antonio Limbaga (Zamboanga City), Roberto Lozano (Dagupan City), Paulo Madriñan (Pasay City), Jose Fermin Magbanua (Negros Oriental), Filamor Reyes and Antonio Torillo (Cavite) and Benecio Tobias (Tarlac)

Two days later the delegation took a KLM flight for Hong Kong to catch a connecting United

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Written by Bobby Reyes

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Arab Airlines flight to Athens, Greece. The plane departed for Bangkok, Thailand, on the night of July 27, 1963, for a stop over and refueling.

Only the bodies of Jose Delgado, Henry Chuatoco, Roberto Castor, Ascario Tuason, Jr., and Librado Fernandez were positively identified from among the human remains recovered in the Bay of Bombay. Aviation authorities were not able to ascertain conclusively the cause of the accident. Sabotage was ruled out.

The head of the BSP delegation and three other scouting officials left ahead of the main group. The four "lucky" ones were Gabriel Daza, the BSP president and chief scout, H. B. Reyes, BSP vice president and deputy national scout commissioner, J. Plaridel Silvestre, BSP vice president and Godofredo Neri, a BSP executive.

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The Filipino people of all walks of life mourned the deaths of the 24 scouts and scouters. World leaders from Pope Paul VI to President Sukarno of Indonesia sent messages of condolence. At the world jamboree in Marathon, Greece, all the flags were flown at half-mast. More than 14,000 scouts and scouters at the world jamboree mourned the untimely deaths of the Philippine delegation members. Bishop Benedict Parientis of the Athens Archdiocese conducted a necrological service and mass in Marathon in memory of the 24 Filipino scouts and scouters.

The BSC decided to send a third group on Aug. 3, 1963, to the world jamboree. The group was composed of Nicasio Fernandez of the Far Eastern University, Louis Santiago of the Mapua Institute of Technology and Guillermo Flores of San Beda College, which was the school attended by Scouts Jose A. Delgado and Felix Fuentebella, Jr.

The City Council of Quezon City renamed on April 24, 1964, streets in the Kamuning and Roxas Districts after the 24 scouts and scouters. At San Beda College, a memorial plaque was dedicated in honor of Delgado and Fuentebella. # # #

Editor's Note: Bobby M. Reyes, the writer of this article, wanted to join the Philippine delegation to the 11th World Jamboree. Reyes was a scout of the BSP Sorsogon Council and he attended the 10th World Jamboree in Mt. Makiling, Laguna, Philippines, in July 1959. When he returned to Sorsogon in August 1959, Bobby asked his father support for his participation in the 11th World Jamboree. The father, Dominador S. Reyes (now deceased), who was then a candidate for provincial governor in the November 1959 elections, said that Bobby would attend the jamboree if he won. The father said that he could not afford the expense of Bobby's attending the world jamboree if he lost his electoral bid. Fortunately for Bobby his father lost the election and he gave up his dream of attending the Marathon, Greece, jamboree. The election defeat of his father was Bobby's blessing. In July 1963 Bobby was then a first-year AB student

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in San Beda College and he felt that part of him died with Bedan scouts Delgado and Fuentebella. He compiled the news reports about this tragedy and wrote a summary about it. This article was previously published in the now-defunct www.yimby.com in 1999 and some other Filipino-American hardcopy magazines in 1988 and in the early 2000s, some of which have also ceased publication. # # #

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