

Colonial Integration The Native Soldiers under Governor Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, 1635-1640

Integración colonial Los soldados indígenas bajo el gobierno de Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, 1635-1640

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Abstract

By the 17th century, the Spaniards in Manila had continued expanding both southward (Ternate in 1606) and northward (Hermosa in 1626). This expansion, however, stopped due to the prevalent Moro aggression in the different provinces of the archipelago. Hence, in 1635, Felipe IV sent Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, as the new governor of the Philippine islands. With him were different soldiers from New Spain. In the islands, he was faced immediately with the most concerning problem—its military and the insufficiency of soldiers. This paper argues that Corcuera's reforms treated the native soldiers with decency and honor to fully utilize them for the interest of the Spanish Crown—both in keeping order and conquest. Hence, they developed a mutualistic relationship where both benefitted from each other. This paper elaborates on the military problems which caused Corcuera to turn to the native for military recruitment. Further, it shows the relationship established between the governor and the indigenous soldiers who fought in his military campaigns in Mindanao and in the defense of Manila against Chinese insurrections. In writing this paper, I greatly utilized The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898, by Blair and Robertson while other secondary sources such as the works of Mawson were used as well.

Keywords: Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera; native soldiers; Pampango; Tagalog; Chinese insurrection

Resumen

En el siglo XVII, los españoles en Manila habían continuado expandiéndose tanto hacia el sur (Ternate en 1606) como hacia el norte (Taiwán en 1626). Sin embargo, esta expansión se detuvo debido a la agresión mora prevalente en las diferentes provincias del archipiélago. Por ello, en 1635, Felipe IV envió a Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera como nuevo gobernador de las islas Filipinas. Junto con él, llegaron diversos soldados de Nueva España. En las islas, se enfrentó de inmediato con el problema más preocupante: su ejército y la insuficiencia de soldados. Este artículo argumenta que las reformas de Corcuera trataron a los soldados nativos con decencia y honor para utilizarlos plenamente en interés de la Corona española, tanto en el mantenimiento del orden como en la conquista. De este modo, se desarrolló una relación en

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la que ambos se beneficiaban mutuamente. Este artículo aborda los problemas militares que llevaron a Corcuera a recurrir al reclutamiento militar de los nativos. Además, muestra la relación establecida entre el gobernador y los soldados indígenas que lucharon en sus campañas militares en Mindanao y en la defensa de Manila contra las insurrecciones chinas. Para la redacción de este artículo, se utilizó en gran medida *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, de Blair y Robertson, así como otras fuentes secundarias, como las obras de Mawson.

Palabras clave: Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera; soldados nativos; pampangos; tagalogos; insurrección china

*The Indian natives...have served and are serving
Your Majesty with great love and fidelity since the time of the conquest.¹*

Introduction

Sixty-four years after the founding of Manila in 1571, don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera arrived in the city to take the office of Governor-General. This period in the first half of the 17th century for Spanish colonialism is considered to be the peak of Spanish influence in Asia, spanning from Spanish Taiwan —Hermosa,² occupied in 1626— in the north, and as far as the Spanish Ternate —occupied in 1606— in the south. With many islands under the Spanish crown, Corcuera's tasks were to keep order among the islands, especially in Manila; secure the islands from the Moro aggression in Mindanao, and continue the expansion of Spain by capturing Mindanao.

The aim of this paper is to examine Corcuera's military reforms and how they affected and benefitted his native soldiers. To provide a concise answer to the objective, I ask the following questions: What were the problems that brought about the military reforms, and how were the native soldiers affected and treated considering these changes? To be more specific, what were the benefits and privileges that the soldiers enjoyed while in service, and what oppositions emerged? To highlight Corcuera's treatment of his native soldiers, why was his reform vital in the treatment of his soldiers, and how did he utilize his native soldiers in war and peace? In this paper, I argue that a mutual relationship between Corcuera and the

¹ Juan Grau y Monfalcon, "Military Services of Filipinos," in *The Philippines Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 25, 1635-1636, ed. Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1906), 108.

² From 1626-1642, Spain occupied the northern part of Taiwan and called it Isla Hermosa. Henceforward, the island will be referred as Hermosa.

indigenous soldiers was established wherein the former utilized his reforms to recruit more soldiers for internal order and conquest, while the latter benefitted from different colonial exemptions and rewards.

The focus of my paper is Corcuera's military reformation, ranging from 1635 with his arrival, to his military campaigns against sultan Kudarat in 1637, and up until the Chinese insurrection of 1639-1640. I discuss the military reforms which Corcuera ordered during his administration and their effects on the treatment of the local soldiers amidst his military campaigns while also examining the indigenous soldiers' participation in these conquests and suppressions. While the native integration to colonial military institutions may have been present outside of the Philippines but within the Spanish Empire, this paper limits itself on the examination of the Philippine setting. Moreover, the text is written in narrative because its concern is the reconstruction of Filipino soldiers and their participation in the selected military events found in this period. Nevertheless, it tries to be analytical as well with a focus on the agency and dynamics established between the colonizer and the colonized.

The article is organized as follows: firstly, I attempt to give a survey and discussion on the Philippine military historiography on the presence of indigenous soldiers and their agency in the 17th century. Secondly, I provide a summary of the events under Corcuera's administration from 1635-1644 and his brief biography. Thirdly, I elaborate the situation and problems that Corcuera faced, specifically the standing of the Spanish military. The paper proceeds with the discussion of Corcuera's treatment through his reforms regarding their subjects and the oppositions that these reforms faced. Lastly, I revise the two major military events which saw the mobilization of the recruited local soldiers: the war against sultan Kudarat of 1637 and the Chinese insurrection of 1639-1640. In this part, I ask this question: how did the native soldiers participate in these military events and how did Corcuera treat them? To conclude, I emphasize the significance of the reforms that developed a mutualistic relationship between Corcuera and his native soldiers.

The Philippine Military Historiography in the 17th Century

Whenever Philippine military history is brought to discussion, it is impossible not to tackle the Second World War and works of the prominent

military historian Ricardo Trota Jose such as *The Philippine Army, 1935-1941*, which details the Philippine preparation for the incoming war, and *Captive Arms. The Philippine Constabulary Under the Japanese, 1942-1945*, a study on the Philippine military institution amidst the Occupation.³ Samuel K. Tan offers a discussion on Filipino responses to the event.⁴ In his study of the revolution of 1896, Richardson provides an in-depth and primary source-based study on the formation of Katipunan as a military institution.⁵ Finally, a comprehensive study on the history of the armed forces of the Philippines was written by Cesar P. Pobre.⁶

But in dealing with the military institution established during the Spanish Philippines, there is a dearth of research written by Filipinos. Other than Grace Liza Concepcion's work on the native militias, few Filipino scholars have dealt with the military institution in the 17th century.⁷ Currently, works on the military institutions in the early Spanish period like the colonial army have been written by international scholars like José Eugenio Borao Mateo's work *Spaniards in Taiwan*, an annotation of translated archival sources found both in Spanish and Dutch archives.⁸ In addition to that, his studies on the Filipinos who participated in different military expeditions from late 16th to 17th centuries provide data on the population of native soldiers from each expedition.⁹ Another scholar who discusses native soldiers and their agency is Stephanie Joy Mawson. Her work focuses on the soldiers coming to the Philippines via the galleon trade, and indigenous soldiers who were integrated to the military institution and who later revolted against their Spanish

³ Ricardo Trota Jose, *The Philippine Army, 1935-1942* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1992); Ricardo Trota Jose, *Captive Arms. The Philippine Constabulary under the Japanese, 1942-1945* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1997).

⁴ Samuel K. Tan, *The Filipino-American War, 1899-1913* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2002).

⁵ Jim Richardson, *The Light of Liberty. Documents and Studies on the Katipunan, 1892-1897* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013).

⁶ Cesar P. Pobre, *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2000).

⁷ Grace Liza Concepcion, "The Native Militia in the Seventeenth-Century Spanish Philippines. A Space of Power for the Indigenous Elite," *Itinerario* 47, no. 1 (April 2023): 1-23, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0165115323000062>.

⁸ José Eugenio Borao Mateo, *Spaniards in Taiwan*, vol. 1, 1582-1641 (Taiwan: SMC Publishing, 2001), and Borao Mateo, *Spaniards in Taiwan*, vol. 2, 1642-1682 (Taiwan: SMC Publishing, 2002).

⁹ José Eugenio Borao Mateo, "Filipinos in the Spanish Colonial Army during the Dutch Wars (1600-1648)," in *More Hispanic Than We Admit. Insights in Philippine Cultural History*, ed. Isaac Donoso Jiménez (Quezon City: Vibal Foundation, 2008), 74-93.

overlords.¹⁰ This paper hopes to contribute to the aforementioned studies on the indigenous soldiers and their participation in different military campaigns in the 17th century. For this century, Corcuera's military policies and campaigns from 1635 to 1644 are worth examining since his governorship started the formal integration of native soldiers to the colonial army by creating indigenous military companies with native officers.

Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera (1587-1660)

Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera's life was devoted to service and the military. McCarthy nicknamed him "The Last Conquistador" as it was during his office that the Mindanao expansion took place.¹¹ Before this, his first service to Felipe IV came as a knight of the Order of Alcántara and his participation in the Eighty Years' War in the Netherlands. He was later sent to the Spanish territories in the Americas where he became the master-of-camp of the Port of Callao, Peru, and in 1632, he was appointed as governor of Panama.¹²

By June 1635, he arrived in Cavite to replace Juan Cereza Salamanca (t. 1633-1635) and began his governance. When he got there, Díaz referred to him as a "gentleman with great valor".¹³ However, he was also called the "son of the devil" or "scourge of God" by other religious men, notably by fray Diego Collado due to his conflicts with the ecclesiastical officials of Manila, especially with archbishop Hernando Guerrero whom he exiled in 1636.¹⁴

His nine years of governance were marked by important events for the first half of the 17th-century Philippines. The first three—from 1635-1637—were years of military reforms that saw the construction of new military buildings in Manila, recruitment among the natives to be soldiers, and even

¹⁰ See Stephanie Joy Mawson, *Incomplete Conquest. The Limits of the Spanish Empire in the Seventeenth-Century Philippines* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2023).

¹¹ William J. McCarthy, "Cashiering the Last Conquistador. The Juicio de Residencia of Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, 1639-1658," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 18, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 35-61, accessed on January 27, 2025, <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/clahr/vol18/iss1/2/>.

¹² Casimiro Díaz, "Conflicts between Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities, 1635-1636," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 25, 1635-1636, 117.

¹³ Díaz, "Conflicts between Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities, 1635-1636", 117.

¹⁴ The original words were in Latin: "*filius diaboli flagellum dei et alia hujus modi*". Juan López, "Events in the Filipinas, 1637-1638," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 29, 1638-1640, 39.

rewarding them with promotions. By late 1637, Corcuera, in his dedication to deter the Moros from raiding the archipelago, started a war with sultan Kudarat. By 1638, he began the conquest of Jolo. In 1639-1640, he extinguished the Chinese insurrection in Manila.

Díaz defined the years of Corcuera's term as "fatal and unfortunate".¹⁵ When the new governor-general arrived to replace him, he was put to prison from 1644-1649, all his properties were confiscated, and he was fined as much as 800 000 pesos as a consequence to his military blunder in Hermosa, where the Dutch successfully drove the Spaniards out of the island in 1642.¹⁶ Because of this, in 1651, he appealed his case to the Council of the Indies where he cited irregularities from the proceedings in Manila. Five years later, the Council of Indies overturned the judgement of Manila and the king rewarded him with the governorship of the Canaries in 1659 where a year later he died.¹⁷

The problems: Insufficient soldiers, defenseless islands

On June 23, 1635, Corcuera arrived in the Philippines where he disembarked in the port of Cavite to be governor and captain-general of Manila. The day after that, he entered Manila and began governing the colony.¹⁸ At this time he inherited less than 2 000 soldiers spread over three colonies: Manila (Luzon, Visayas, Zamboanga), Hermosa, and Ternate. In Luzon, there were four places where the military was mostly present: the City of Manila, Fort Santiago, Fort Felipe (Cavite), and Fort San Francisco (a *presidio* in Cagayan). In the Visayas, there were three *presidios*: Cebu, Oton (Fort Nuestra Señora de la Rosario), and Caraga (Fort San Jose). In Mindanao, there was only one *presidio* in Zamboanga that was only established

¹⁵ Díaz, "Conflicts between Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities, 1635-1636," 139.

¹⁶ McCarthy, "Cashiering the Last Conquistador...", 57-59.

¹⁷ Díaz, "Conflicts between Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities, 1635-1636," 139.

¹⁸ In "Relations of 1635-1636," it was noted by the anonymous chronicler that Corcuera disembarked on June 23 in Cavite but only entered Manila on June 24 to begin his term. Robert W. Haight, trans., "Relations of 1635-1636," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 26, 1636, 24. However, in a later account by Casimiro Díaz, he reported that it was June 25 when Corcuera took office. See Díaz, "Conflicts between Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities, 1635-1636," 117-118.

in 1634 by Salamanca.¹⁹ While Hermosa and Ternate had one for each.²⁰ In Manila and Fort Santiago, there were six military companies in total; and one each in Cavite and Cagayan. In the Visayas, there was only one company in Cebu, Oton, and Caraga, respectively. However, in Zamboanga, three companies were guarding the fort; this is similar to Hermosa. But it was in Ternate where the the majority of the military encamped with six companies guarding the *presidio*. Overall, there were about 23 companies.²¹

When it comes to the Spanish military ranks that were present in the 17th century, the whole of Spanish Asia was ruled by the governor-general of Manila, who was Corcuera at this time, while Hermosa and Ternate were only headed by a governor appointed by him. Inside the *presidios* and fort, it was the master-of-camp (called *capitán*) who supervised these places. Then were the other captains, *alfereces*, sergeants, post-below commissioned officers, and the ordinary soldiers who were the majority of the military.²² In Manila, there was also cavalry, lieutenants, trumpeters, adjutants, drummers, and guards who were distinctly present only there. Overall, there were about 1 774 officers and soldiers in total guarding the whole of Spanish Asia.²³ This was the root cause of all problems —insufficient soldiers to keep peace and continue expanding the empire. By the 17th century, according to Newson, the Spanish Philippines had about a 221 700 population. By soldier-to-settler ratio, one soldier was responsible for 125 persons (see table 1).²⁴

More than this, the frontiers were defenseless and too prone to piratical raids which were prevalent as this was one of the ways the Muslims resisted colonization.²⁵ There are several reasons why this problem occurred in the first place. First, due to the extreme climate and heat of the islands. In a letter

¹⁹ Pedro de Arce, “Letter from Pedro de Arce to Felipe IV,” in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 25, 1635-1636, 79-80.

²⁰ The population of the Spanish military is cited by Corcuera and based on the report of Martín Ruiz de Salazar, the accountant of the Royal Treasury in Filipinas regarding the payment of the soldiers, officers, pilots, and seamen for the construction of the hospital in 1636. Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, “The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions,” in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 26, 1636, 192-197.

²¹ Hurtado de Corcuera, “The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions,” 187-189.

²² Grace Liza Concepcion drew the military hierarchy according to the *organización de un tercio*. “The Native Militia...,” 12.

²³ Hurtado de Corcuera, “The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions,” 192-197.

²⁴ Linda A. Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2011), 256.

²⁵ For Moro raids as their way to resist Spanish colonialism see Mawson, *Incomplete Conquest...*, 78-101.

to Felipe IV just a month after taking office, Corcuera wrote that the Spanish soldiers mostly died due to the unhealthy climate. Because of this, only those who were married or ordered to serve in the colony joined the military.²⁶ Moreover, Mawson also observed that only an average of 156 soldiers were being sent to the Philippines via the galleons.²⁷ In another letter to the king during the conquest of Mindanao, Corcuera reiterated his concern about the lack of soldiers and its result—he was unable to guard all the islands at the same time.²⁸ Yet another problem was that soldiers tend to become clerics to escape the duties and debts they acquired while in service.²⁹

Aside from the population problem, there was also a lack of proper military buildings. In Fort San Felipe, Corcuera noted to the king his soldiers lived outside the fort as there were no proper quarters for them to stay in, and some even built their own using poor materials. There was the same situation in Manila. There were no chapels, no royal hospitals, and no barracks for them.³⁰ The persistence of these military problems consequently led to more piratical and Moro aggression. For instance, in 1634, 18 Moro galleys raided Ormoc and Leyte; burned rice and *abaca* supplies, and even their houses were also burned while also taking Christian captives as prizes.³¹ The Camucones pirates were heavily active during this time as they reached Palapag, Samar where they took more than a hundred Christians as captives.³² But worst of all these aggressions were the raids of a certain Tagal (a relative of sultan Kudarat) who brought with him eight caracoas full of warriors where he raided the archipelago from April to December 1636, captured military and religious officers in Cuyo, and then proceeded to Mindoro to raid and burn its villages (see table 1).³³

²⁶ Hurtado de Corcuera, "The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions," 177.

²⁷ Mawson, *Incomplete Conquest...*, 90.

²⁸ Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, "Letters from Corcuera to Felipe IV," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 27, 1636-1637, 276.

²⁹ For instance, a military surgeon who was ordered to serve under Corcuera was sent to the Philippines but escaped the service by becoming part of the clergy and even was ordained before travelling to another *presidio*. This will be discussed later. Fabián de Santillán, "Letter Written by a Citizen of Manila to an Absent Friend," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 25, 1635-1636, 192.

³⁰ Corcuera noted these deficiencies in his letter to the king on July 11, 1636. Corcuera, "Letters from Corcuera to Felipe IV," Vol. 26, 1636, 178-179.

³¹ Díaz, "Conflicts between...", 111-112.

³² López, "Events in Filipinas, 1636-1637," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 27, 1636-1637, 243-244.

³³ López, "Events in Filipinas, 1636-1637," 245-246.

Table 1
THE POPULATION OF THE SPANISH MILITARY ACCORDING
TO THEIR RANKS IN 1636³⁴

	Luzon	Visayas	Zamboanga	Hermosa	Ternate
Number of Companies	8	3	3	3	6
Captains	3	3	3	3	6
Alferez	3	3	3	3	6
Sergeants	6	3	1	3	6
Post below commissioned officers	24	12	4	2	24
Ordinary soldiers	560	145	210	180	480
Mounted arquebusiers (cavalry)	30	-	-	-	-
Lieutenants	2	-	-	-	-
Trumpeter	1	-	-	-	-
Adjutants	2	-	-	-	-
Drummer	1	-	-	-	-
Guards	12	-	-	-	-
Total	644	166	221	191	522

SOURCE: Made by Moises Levi Orino with data listed by Hurtado de Corcuera in "The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 26, 1636, 182-198.

The Reforms: Corcuera's Recruitment Programs

To attempt to solve these problems that are more interconnected than it seems, two main reforms took place during the early years of Corcuera's administration: the recruitment of the native soldiers and the building of military structures. First, when Corcuera landed in Cavite and was informed of all the problems of the military, especially the small population of the army, it was as if he already anticipated the insufficiency of the soldiers in

³⁴ The numbers are based on Corcuera's list of soldiers who pledged to pay taxes for the construction of the military chapel and hospitals. For more information on the military activities of Filipino soldiers in Hermosa, see Moises Levi Orino, "A Dependent Empire. The Military Activities of the Filipino Natives in Spanish Taiwan, 1589-1642," *TALA. An Online Journal of History* 7, no. 1 (June 2024): 41-58, accessed on January 29, 2025, <https://talakasaysayan.org/index.php/talakasaysayan/article/view/176>. Note: The table was first published in this article.

the archipelago. Hence, Escalona, the accountant of the Royal Treasury reported that he brought with him more than 500 soldiers to boost the population of the army.³⁵ Díaz also noted that these soldiers were not Spaniards but from Peru who served under Corcuera during his governorship.³⁶ However, Corcuera already knew of Manila's need for soldiers as in 1634, a letter from Felipe IV ordered Spanish America to send 2 200 soldiers and sailors for the defense of Manila, and he even ordered the sending of 400 soldiers, 850 sailors annually for the preservation of the colony.³⁷

But even prior to this request and order, the Spanish empire had been sending soldiers to the Philippines since the late 16th century. For instance, Muro listed down profiles of 180 soldiers, whose ages ranged from 16 to 50 years old and were natives of Andalucía, Extremadura, León, and Aragón. In addition to these recruits, residents of New Spain, Peru, and Santo Domingo also joined the reinforcement to be sent to the archipelago.³⁸ Going deeper into these recruits, Mawson found out that soldiers recruited from New Spain were criminals who were sentenced to serve as convicts in the colonial army to be sent to the Philippines. These men were products of a coercive recruitment method known as the *forzado* system.³⁹ Mehl noted that merchants without license —mostly selling stolen goods— were criminals worthy of banishment to the Philippines for six years. Because of European prejudices which only allow men of “good quality” to be sent to the archipelago, Mehl observed that if Indians, mestizos, or mulattos were convicted, they were not banished but whipped and sent to work on the galleys and mills.⁴⁰

³⁵ Baltasar Luis de Escalona, “Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila,” in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 29, 1638-1640, 46.

³⁶ Díaz reported that “a great reinforcement of soldiers, many of them from Peru” also took the voyage with Corcuera. Díaz, “Conflicts between...,” 114.

³⁷ The letter was addressed to the governor of New Spain, Marqués de Cerravelo on March 10, 1634. In the letter, Felipe IV was ordering the reinforcement to be sent to Filipinas according to the request of don Juan Grau, procurator general of Manila. Felipe IV of Spain, “Royal Decrees, 1633-1635,” in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 25, 1635-1636, 35.

³⁸ Luis Muro, “Soldados de Nueva España a Filipinas, 1575,” *Historia Mexicana* 19, no. 4 (April 1970): 472-491.

³⁹ Stephanie Joy Mawson, “Convicts or Conquistadores? Spanish Soldiers in the Seventeenth-Century Pacific,” *Past & Present* 232, no. 1 (August 2016): 87-125, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtw008>. For the discussion on the *forzado* system, see Mawson, “Unruly Plebeians and the Forzado System. Convict Transportation between New Spain and the Philippines during the Seventeenth Century,” *Revista de Indias* 73, no. 259 (December 2013): 693-730. <https://doi.org/10.3989/revindias.2013.23>

⁴⁰ Eva María Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World. From Mexico to the Philippines 1765-1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 50-53.

Even before the sending of reinforcement from Spanish America to help with the Filipinas' defense, the military officials were already utilizing the native soldiers to keep peace and wage war with them—and they were very good at it. Borao noted that natives had been present and fighting alongside the Spaniards since 1575 with the defense of Manila against Limahong. Indigenous soldiers were also present in the expeditions to Borneo and in the capture of Ternate.⁴¹ To prove this, a letter of commendation and request was even sent to Felipe IV in 1636 demanding that the king wrote a letter of appreciation to its loyal and brave native soldiers who were loyal to him in many instances. Grau wrote regarding the native soldiers:

that the Indian natives of the provinces of Pampanga, Camarinas, and Tagalos have served and are serving your Majesty with great love and fidelity, since the time of the conquest of those islands [...] Those Indians mingled with Spaniards, serve as soldiers in war, and have proved excellent therein. Especially are the Pampangos valiant soldiers, who have performed and are daily performing valiant exploits at the side of the Spanish. They were at the taking of Terrenate; and, whenever occasion offers, they with other companies come to guard the city of Manila. They also serve as rowers and pioneers in expeditions by the fleets.⁴²

As mentioned by Grau, in Luzon there were three main groups of people who were loyal to them: the people of the provinces of Pampanga, Camarines, and Tagalog (South Luzon). In the Visayas, there were also the Caragan native soldiers who were present at the conquest of Jolo, the Visayans whom Juan de Barrios called, “the most cowardly race”.⁴³ But of all the natives, it was the Pampangos that the reforms of Corcuera were most explicit about. As part of this recruitment plan, he established two companies of Pampango soldiers with 96 members each. Their purpose was to guard the city along with their Spanish counterparts. In return, Corcuera paid them substantially to the horror of the accountant of Manila. According to the records, they were paid according to their rank per month (see table 2).

⁴¹ Borao Mateo, “Filipinos in the Spanish Colonial Army...,” 80-81.

⁴² Grau y Monfalcon, “Military Services of the Filipinos,” in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 25, 1635-1636, 108.

⁴³ Barrios reported that there were about 200 Caragan native soldiers who joined the war under the Spaniards, and about 200 Visayan native soldiers had also died during the conquest. Juan de Barrios, “Corcuera’s Campaign in Jolo,” in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 28, 1637-1638, 43-44.

Table 2
SALARY OF NATIVE SOLDIERS ACCORDING TO THEIR RANK

<i>Ranks</i>	<i>Salary per annum</i>
Captain	240.00 pesos
Drummers (2)	24.00 pesos
Alferez	124.00 pesos
Standard-bearer	24.00 pesos
Sergeants	84.00 pesos
Corporals (4)	60.00 pesos

SOURCE: Made by Moises Levi Orlino based on the Treasurer of Manila.⁴⁴

With the two newly formed Pampango companies, it cost the Royal Treasury a total of 10 728 pesos per annum. By 1637, the native recruitment expanded as two more local companies were established. The first was encamped in Manila while the second was stationed in a new *presidio* at Jolo. In addition to that, a different group of 72 Pampango soldiers was present in San Felipe Fort. With all the natives being paid, the expenses reached 25 092 pesos per annum.⁴⁵ To the greater horror of Escalona, every active native soldier was not just paid but also exempted from paying tribute including their wives.⁴⁶ This move by Corcuera seemed to be unhealthy for the treasury of the king. However, the governor was supported and recommended officials in Manila. For the whole of Corcuera's term, Mawson also noted that the governor created about 22 native companies. With this, he recruited 2024 native soldiers all throughout the archipelago (an average of 225 soldiers per year from 1636-1644).⁴⁷

While the recruitment of native soldiers has been the norm since the late 16th century, Corcuera was the first governor to establish formal companies of indigenous soldiers with native officers. Even after his governorship, Diego Farjardo and Sabiniano Manrique de Lara continued creating

⁴⁴ Escalona, "Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila," 46.

⁴⁵ Escalona, "Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila," 46.

⁴⁶ Escalona, "Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila," 46.

⁴⁷ In Mawson's article, she provides a table that shows the increase of native recruitment into the Spanish military until the term of Fajardo in 1654. Mawson, "Philippine Indios in the Service of Empire. Indigenous Soldiers and Contingent Loyalty, 1600-1700," *Ethnohistory* 63, no. 2 (April 2016): 389, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-3455363>.

companies of indigenous soldiers with a peak in 1648-1649 with the creation of six native companies per year.⁴⁸

In the same letter by Grau to Felipe IV, the former requested that the natives were to be honored by military offices and exemptions.⁴⁹ In 1642, Felipe IV responded to Grau's request of commendation for the local soldiers. Grau read a letter by the king addressed to them; and most importantly, the exemption of certain heavy burdens that natives were mandated to do. This was a vindication of Corcuera's pre-1642 policies towards the salary and exemptions of the native soldiers from tributes and other duties. To further see the long-term consequences of his reform, according to Scott, within the century, it was already the norm to reward the native soldiers with military officers on the frontiers due to the lack of men to defend it. For example, in 1660, a certain Igorot by the name of Massignop was already the master-of-camp of Bangui, a military outpost north of Luzon.⁵⁰

To further boost the participation of the locals in the defense and order of the islands against Moro and piratical raids; and as a response to the king's decree of February 16, 1635, Corcuera, on July 16, 1636, ordered all the *alcaldes mayores* to recruit natives to be soldiers who were to be equipped with firearms, pikes, and lances; and where the captains, *alféreces*, sergeants were to be also exempted from tributes and services. This reform was specifically effective as Corcuera reported to the king that only one village was severely plundered due to the delay of aid.⁵¹

Other recruitment programs that Corcuera established were a cavalry company of 29 soldiers—a captain, lieutenant, an *alférez*, a standard-bearer, and a corporal—and 24 mounted soldiers with a pay of 168 pesos per annum. In total, the whole company's salary per year was 7248 pesos.⁵² The goal of this company was to guard and patrol the streets of Manila at night so that the infantry who were supposed to guard the city could rest. Here, it should be noted that Corcuera, strong as he was to his soldiers, treated them fairly by giving them the proper, if not an increased, salary and not overburdened duties. Another action of Corcuera to maintain the numbers of his soldiers was the

⁴⁸ Mawson, "Philippine Indios in the Service....," 389.

⁴⁹ Grau y Monfalcon, "Military Services of the Filipinos," 108-109.

⁵⁰ William Henry Scott, *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain and Other Essays in Philippine History* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985), 33-34.

⁵¹ Hurtado de Corcuera, "Letter from Corcuera to Felipe IV," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 26, 1636, 173.

⁵² Escalona, "Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila," 44.

banning of a career change for soldiers. So, on December 23, 1637, he ordered that soldiers who wanted to enter the clergy due to their debts could not do so until they satisfied them and had the approval of the governor.⁵³

For the second part of the reform, Corcuera, after anchoring in Cavite, immediately ordered the construction of military buildings in different parts of the islands. In his letter to Felipe IV dated July 1636, he elaborated his plans for the construction of military buildings; namely, a storehouse at the Port of Cavite inside San Felipe Fort. Another was the lodging for the infantry as he noted the lack thereof. If any, they were of poor condition, made by the soldiers themselves. The governor was also very eager about the construction of a chapel for the soldiers to bury their dead. Barracks were also planned to be built, financed through donations and services. Of all the buildings, the construction of the royal hospital in Cavite was to be built from the structure of the governor's lodge. It even was an expanded two-wing building so that the sailors—both Spaniards and natives—may benefit from treatment.⁵⁴ However, the payment for the construction of the hospital would not come from the Royal Treasury ideally, but from a tax that soldiers would have to pay.⁵⁵

Responses to the Military Reforms

However, it was the reform of the royal hospital in Manila that saw issues emerged. Corcuera expelled the Franciscans who had been managing the institution due to misspending. Thus, he requested to the king that the Order of Saint John be sent for the administration of the hospitals. Corcuera's request was reasonable since the Order of the Saint John, a hospital order, would be more fit to administer over the royal hospital than the mendicant Franciscans. He added to this request that, if the king did not see the need of sending the order, at least the seculars ought to be given the authority to administer the sacraments, and the layman, the authority over the revenue. But the king never replied to Corcuera in regard to this,

⁵³ In the notes of the account, the decree of December 23, 1637, was attached. Santillán, "Letter Written by a Citizen of Manila to an Absent Friend," 211.

⁵⁴ Hurtado de Corcuera, "Letter from Corcuera to Felipe IV," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 26, 1636, 173-174.

⁵⁵ Hurtado de Corcuera, "The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions," 182.

and it seemed that the Order of Saint John never arrived in the archipelago during this time.⁵⁶

Another construction was destined to be a ward for the convalescent just near the royal hospital where the Spaniards and the citizens of Manila would be treated. It can be inferred that Corcuera focused more on the hospitals as he lamented to the king that it was due to the poor post-hospital treatment that soldiers became infected again, and worst, die.⁵⁷ As for the native soldiers who were stationed in Manila, Corcuera did not forget them as he also ordered the building of rooms and an infirmary where the sick Pampangos could go for treatment. But all of these were to be paid by a deduction from the soldiers' salaries.⁵⁸

With all these developments, Corcuera was not unopposed. Some people reacted against the different reforms in the military and a few construction did not proceed as the king did not permit it as advised by the Audiencia. One of these was the construction of the hospital in Cavite where a lodging for governors was to be transformed into a hospital. While the Audiencia acknowledged the good intentions of Corcuera, the plan was going to be inconvenient to the governors when they stayed in Cavite due to the lack of proper lodging.⁵⁹ Another opposition to a building was that of the petitions of the Nuns of St. Claire to Felipe IV in 1636. The nuns' reported the following to the king:

What is worse is that the governor is building a ward at the hospital, on the side that faces our convent—which he says is for convalescents. It is so high that because of its proximity to the convent, we think that one will be able to see the beds of the nuns in our infirmary and dormitory. That is a thing that ought to be carefully considered.⁶⁰

This was a valid opposition devoid of malicious intent from the nuns. They further complained about the closure of a street that was being used by the citizens of Manila, especially of their convent due to the building of the lodgings and stables for the new cavalry company.⁶¹ All these were

⁵⁶ Hurtado de Corcuera, "The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions," 182-184.

⁵⁷ Hurtado de Corcuera, "The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions," 188.

⁵⁸ Hurtado de Corcuera, "The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions," 189-196.

⁵⁹ Hurtado de Corcuera, "The Hospitals and Hospital Contributions," 187.

⁶⁰ Miguel Pérez, "Petition of the Nuns of St. Claire (1636)," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 26, 1636, 20.

⁶¹ Pérez, "Petition of the Nuns of St. Claire (1636)," 20.

relayed to Corcuera, and two years after the complaint, the king ordered Corcuera to pay the nuns for the inconvenience that these changes had brought about.⁶²

However, of all the oppositions, the most severe came from the officials of the Royal Treasury, specifically Baltasar Luis de Escalona, the Treasurer of Manila during Corcuera's governorship. In his letters to the king, he explicitly criticized the overspending of Corcuera just to finance his military reforms. He remarked that the establishment of the new cavalry company was a waste of resources because the infantry of Manila was already doing their duties. If Corcuera saw it as proper military rotation between infantry and cavalry, Escalona, being a man of budget, saw it as redundancy.⁶³ More than this, he claimed the company was "of little importance" and that the increased salary was unnecessary, and even warned Corcuera of the consequences if he continued forward.⁶⁴

The creation of the Pampango companies was not also exempted from his criticism. Seeing the foreign reinforcement that Corcuera brought along with him, he saw the creation of local companies again as unnecessary; and their salary was seen as "useless and needless."⁶⁵ For Escalona, what frustrated the gain of the royal estate was the exemption of the soldiers to pay tribute and do mandatory services. Even the chaplains that were assigned in the newly constructed military chapel did not go unnoticed as he preferred the friars who did not need to be paid for their services. But if there were any valid opposition that came from Escalona, this was the inability of Corcuera to pay for the whole construction of the barracks and hospitals that he ordered to be built. Escalona reported that the expenses for the building reached around 80 000 pesos, but Corcuera only contributed the 16 000 pesos deducted from salary of the soldiers and the remaining was taken from the royal treasury,⁶⁶ contrary to what he promised to the king.

⁶² Felipe IV of Spain, "Royal Orders and Decrees, 1638," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 29, 1638-1640, 86.

⁶³ Escalona, "Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila," 44-45.

⁶⁴ Escalona, "Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila," 45.

⁶⁵ "For it is a useless and needless expense when, as I have said, your royal treasury suffers so great losses as it does, by the so terrible and irreparable damage which the province from which those Indians are drafted has suffered, as they are all tillers of the soil and tributaries of your Majesty." Escalona, "Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila," 46.

⁶⁶ Escalona lamented to the king that Corcuera did not keep his promise of total payment from the soldiers. "*But he did not keep his word*, although the said church was fully built, together with some barracks and quarters for the said soldiers to live in. *In the erection of it*,

Lastly, he lamented to the king that Corcuera's conquest of Mindanao —the Battle against sultan Kudarat and the Conquest of Jolo— was expensive for the Crown. The first expedition cost about 9 867 pesos; while the last was 47 171 pesos resulting in almost bankruptcy of the treasury.⁶⁷

Effects of Corcuera's Reform on the Native Soldiers

In this section, I present the two main events that took place during and after the reforms: the war against Kudarat (1637), and the Sangley Insurrection (1639-1640) that challenged the governorship of Corcuera which saw the native soldiers in actions along with the Spaniards. I aim to highlight the participation of the native soldiers and how the government, through Corcuera, treated them.

John Leddy Phelan remarked that the beginning of the war in Mindanao was a purely defensive action from the Spaniards as Moro and piratical raids were rampant during this time.⁶⁸ This is true as Pedro Gutiérrez, a Jesuit friar, reported that Tagal, a Moro, had been raiding the Spanish Visayas from April to December 1636 and even threatened to enter the Bay of Manila.⁶⁹ Thus, Corcuera, deeming that offense is the best defense of the colony, called a council of war where old soldiers, royal officials, and the Audiencia were summoned to discuss how to put an end to these raids permanently.⁷⁰ In this council, Corcuera pushed for the defeat of sultan Kudarat by invasion, but most of the officers disagreed stating that the governor should stay in Manila to administer and that they lacked enough manpower to handle Kudarat's forces. Nevertheless, Corcuera decided to

more than eighty thousand pesos have been already spent, while the amount charged to the infantry is not over sixteen thousand pesos," Escalona, "Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila," 46-47, emphasis by the author.

⁶⁷ Escalona, "Letter to Felipe IV from the Treasurer at Manila," 50.

⁶⁸ John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines. Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press; London: Cop, 2011), 137.

⁶⁹ Pedro Gutiérrez, "The Defeat of Moro Pirates," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 27, 1636-1637, 171-172.

⁷⁰ In a report addressed to the king, Corcuera mentioned calling a council of war to discuss the future of Moros in Mindanao and how the colonial government should handle it. Hurtado de Corcuera, "Letter from Corcuera to Felipe IV," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 27, 1636-1637, 264.

embark on his invasion following the advice of his nephew, don Pedro Hurtado de Corcuera.⁷¹

On February 2, 1637, Corcuera departed for Zamboanga where he brought with him 11 champan vessels containing 150 soldiers and 100 Pampango soldiers. Under his command was captain Lorenzo de Orella y Ugalde who also brought with him 100 mariners. Overall, Corcuera departed with 250 Spanish soldiers and about 100 Pampango soldiers which were divided into four companies —three Spanish, and one Pampango.⁷² Aside from this, the fort in Oton under captain Juan Nicolás and Juan de León joined the war and promised to bring 80 Spanish soldiers and around 1000 native soldiers who volunteered for the war.⁷³ On February 27, he landed in Zamboanga where his forces grew to 350 Spanish soldiers and 150 Pampango soldiers (Nicolás and de León's reinforcement was delayed)⁷⁴ and by March 13, he landed at the port of Kudarat alongside his Spanish and Pampango soldiers.⁷⁵

In this first attack, bringing all 500 soldiers, Corcuera captured Lamitan, the principal village of Kudarat where a fort and a mosque were situated. After the invasion, Corcuera made the mosque his headquarters, where he and his military officers lodged while the soldiers used the other houses for lodging. How Corcuera treated his soldiers during the fighting is very interesting, specifically where the Pampango company lodged —the powder house.⁷⁶ Corcuera trusted the loyalty of his local soldiers and ordered them to lodge and guard the powder houses of Lamitan. To further show good treatment by Corcuera, the Pampango company was never excluded, but rather always included in the military marches, taking the rear-guard position. Hence, the native soldiers never disappointed Corcuera during the war by obeying all of his orders. For instance, Corcuera, to prevent the Moro from retreating to a hill ordered Nicolás González to attack them with 120 Spanish, 30 Pampango, and 80 native soldiers. In addition to this,

⁷¹ Hurtado de Corcuera, "Letter from Corcuera to Felipe IV," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 27, 1636-1637, 264-265.

⁷² Marcelo Francisco Mastrili, "The Conquest of Mindanao," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 27, 1636-1637, 203.

⁷³ López, "Events in Filipinas, 1636-1637," 247.

⁷⁴ López, "Events in Filipinas, 1636-1637," 271.

⁷⁵ Mastrili, "The Conquest of Mindanao," 203-204.

⁷⁶ Mastrili, "The Conquest of Mindanao," 210- 211

it was the Pampango company who guarded the supply and covered the retreating Spanish soldiers during one of the Moro ambushes.⁷⁷

In return, Corcuera never resented his native soldiers and even gave them the best possible treatment, both to the dead and the living. For the former, the governor ordered the celebration of mass and that they should be given funeral honors.⁷⁸ When he arrived in Manila on May 25, he ordered that funerals be held in the new military church to honor the dead soldiers. By June 8, there were already eight altars erected where masses were held in the morning.⁷⁹ But it was the living who were most blessed by Corcuera. As Mastrili observed, the governor divided all bounties equally, not even giving himself and his friends more. More than this, Corcuera granted all those wounded “gifts, offices, and rewards.”⁸⁰ Back in Manila, the native soldiers, especially the Pampangos, were included in the victory march and were even described by Bobadilla as “brave, very faithful, and excellent Christians.”⁸¹

Two years later, the loyal native soldiers were still being utilized by Corcuera. But now the hostilities took place in Luzon itself. This time the goal was not to expand the Spanish Empire but to maintain order in its colonies as the Chinese had just begun their insurrection. On November 20, 1639, Manila received news of insurrections and Corcuera immediately dispatched captain Martín de Aduna with his company of cavalry to punish the insurrectionists who were mostly armed with spears, bamboo, and blades.⁸² It was in Biñan where Aduna faced more than 3000 Chinese and met his end. This further saw the Chinese advancing to San Pedro. To retaliate, Corcuera sent out his *sargento mayor* don Juan de Arceo with his Spanish and native forces of 200 infantry, 80 cavalries, 100 Pampangos, and 400 Tagalogs, all armed with firearms, and bringing with them two pieces of cannon.⁸³ Meanwhile in Los Baños, admiral don Fernando Galindo, disturbed by the chaos, recruited 500 Tagalogs to attack

⁷⁷ Mastrili, “The Conquest of Mindanao,” 213-214.

⁷⁸ Mastrili, “The Conquest of Mindanao,” 219-226.

⁷⁹ Juan López, “Corcuera’s Triumphant Entry into Manila,” in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 27, 1636-1637, 258.

⁸⁰ Mastrili, “The Conquest of Mindanao,” 223-227.

⁸¹ López, “Corcuera’s Triumphant Entry into Manila,” 256.

⁸² Juan López, “Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese,” in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 29, 1638-1640, 170.

⁸³ López, “Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese,” 171.

the Chinese. During these fights, López recalled how the native soldiers reacted “nobly and courageously” against the Chinese.⁸⁴

In Cavite, the Spaniards were ordered to kill all Chinese in the port and fort. Thus, *sargento mayor* Alonso García Romero, making the Chinese believe that they would be protected within the churches, ordered that all were secretly beheaded. Due to this, 1 300 Chinese died.⁸⁵ By December 7, Corcuera started recruiting more native soldiers for the defense and order of the colonies. To answer this, 800 Zambal archers and 1 000 Pampango arquebusiers under *capitán* Santiago Gastelu arrived in Manila as reinforcement.⁸⁶ López even remarked that the loyalty of the natives was greatly seen during this event as even the women wanted to “show fidelity to their king, their affection for the Spaniards”. This help was refused as it was deemed impractical.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, many natives armed themselves with arrows, spears, and shields to heed the call of Corcuera. During the peace negotiations, it was noted that the natives who participated in the war under the Spaniards were the Pampango infantry, the Cagayan natives, the Zambal archers, and other natives who were armed with spears and shields.⁸⁸ The insurrection that began on November 20, 1639, ended on March 15, 1640. It cost the Spaniards the death of 45 Spaniards, and 300 native soldiers. While the Chinese had 22 000-24 000 dead.

After the insurrection, many soldiers were distinguished and rewarded by Corcuera. The native soldiers were greatly praised by the Spaniards after the war. This was how López described the different natives who fought for the king and their homes: the Pampango infantry, archers, and shield-bearers led by fray Juan de Sosa. The Zambal archers were under fray Antonio de las Misas and some indigenous companies from Cagayan who were trained for war. Lastly, the Tagalogs whose loyalty exceeded all other natives and had the largest loss in the insurrection showed their “valor and loyalty.”⁸⁹ López ended his account with these praises for the natives:

⁸⁴ López, “Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese,” 172-173.

⁸⁵ López, “Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese,” 179-180.

⁸⁶ This is based on the note by Blair where he cited Díaz. López, “Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese,” 205.

⁸⁷ López, “Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese,” 182

⁸⁸ López, “Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese,” 195.

⁸⁹ López, “Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese,” 196-197.

These Indians took up arms against them most of the villages serving in their companies, *and by so honorable an act giving proof of their fidelity toward God, and of their affection for the Spaniards, tokens also of their loyalty, subjection, and obedience to the king our lord and his officials.*⁹⁰

More than all of these praises, to show appreciation for his subjects, Felipe IV himself wrote a decree for the native soldiers who fought on his side during the insurrection. In his decree dated October 24, 1642, Felipe IV ordered Corcuera to summon all of the chiefs of the natives and make it personally known to them the esteem that the king had for them. Furthermore, he ordered that they should be given thanks and rewarded by relieving and exempting them from their mandatory duties.⁹¹

Conclusion

To sum up, a major problem in the 1630s that caused further conflict was the insufficiency of soldiers to keep all three colonies stable and peaceful, while the empire expanded. The Spanish military only had around 1 700 soldiers to keep from external threats a vast Asian colony that spread throughout different islands. This circumstance implied three internal problems and two external consequences. First, the career change (from military to clerical) greatly affected the numbers of active soldiers as most of them would seek religious asylum to escape military service once they entered the colony. Another is the extreme weather of the Philippines for the Spaniards. As complained by Corcuera, it was due to the climate that most of his soldiers died resulting in soldiers unwilling to travel to the Philippines. The last reason, the poor condition or lack of proper military structures such as hospitals, barracks, and chapels was also a great factor to explain why only a few men were willing to be recruited.

As for the consequences, due to the inability of the military to properly defend the islands, it became more vulnerable to piratical raids, and the Moro aggression to Spanish territories. Since the Spaniards were not able to protect their colonized islands, Corcuera reformed the military and looked upon its natives to protect it. To attract such recruits and volunteers,

⁹⁰ López, "Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese," 196-197. Emphasis by the author.

⁹¹ Felipe IV of Spain, "Decree Regarding the Indians," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 35, 1640-1649, 101-102.

Corcuera needed to show they would be treated fairly; be given proper rewards and exemptions. Such treatments were provided as exemplified by the decrees of the king of Spain in 1636 and 1642, the reforms of Corcuera in 1635-1637 such as the building of the royal hospital, military chapel, and barracks where the native soldiers could be admitted. Aside from these, they were given salaries that were attractive to the natives. During the military campaigns, the native soldiers who took part in them were given their share of the bounty—even to the point where Corcuera would pay for their increased salary if necessary. Aside from this, they were also rewarded with offices and promotions (as per the instruction of the king), the native soldiers were treated more than properly—they were greatly rewarded to the point of exemptions from certain burdens due to their acts of valor and great loyalty to Felipe IV.

When it comes to the particularity of the benefits and privileges, they were diversely granted in peacetime or wartime. In peacetime, native soldiers who were recruited for the defense of their villages, especially those of the *principalia* were exempted from the heavy burden that comes from being a Spanish subject. They were also allowed to enter and be treated in hospitals; they were buried in military chapels and given proper burial ceremonies. In short, they were integrated and considered as part of the Spanish military. During wartime, companies of native soldiers who fought alongside Corcuera in Mindanao were greatly trusted, favored, and honored. This was evidenced by the native soldiers manning the war cannons and guarding the powder houses. When it comes to the share of the bounty that they acquired from the invasion, Corcuera was more than willing to share it with everyone—even to the point that if the government would not allow their increase of salary, the governor was willing to pay for it using his own salary. While oppositions that emerged regarding the reforms came greatly from the religious—a few of them were valid, but most were just politics. Corcuera did not let this hinder his military changes for the betterment of the colony.

The native soldiers repaid all these treatments by being part of the expansion of the Spanish empire and keeping order in the colonies. This was perfectly shown by their participation in two major military events during Corcuera's governorship: the war against Kudarat in 1637 and the Chinese Insurrection of 1639-1640. In these events, the native soldiers showed their loyalty, especially the Pampango and Tagalog soldiers who were mostly present. In return for these services, Corcuera respected them even more by dividing the bounties equally and honoring their dead.

Furthermore, the king himself showed appreciation by writing a decree that exempted them from other services, awarded them with gifts, and even promoted them to certain offices.

Why were these reforms vital? Corcuera was able to get his proper military government and even ruled as a strong governor with dictatorial tendencies to an extent. He needed to reform the military if the Spaniards were to stay as rulers of these islands as external threats were emerging—the continued Moro resistance in Mindanao, and the Dutch presence in Southeast Asia. Encouragement for native participation in keeping order and peace among the islands was a crucial part of the reforms, and Corcuera did manage to utilize the military for the interest of the empire.

If one looks to evaluate the reforms of Corcuera, I would say that these were necessary and more than that, successful. As for his dual objective—order and conquest—he achieved both (except for the loss of Hermosa). More than that, he was able to build a mutualistic relationship with his local natives wherein both benefited. For the former, it was the stability of the colony and the expansion of the empire. Meaning, the natives, if called, would always join the side of the Spaniards against Moros and insurrectionists. For the latter, it was the benefits and privileges that they enjoyed if they were part of the Spanish military; it was the fair treatment, and high praises both from secular and religious Spaniards—even catching the praises of Felipe IV himself. These reforms became more than just vital but fundamental in the mutualistic relationship between the king and his foreign subjects; the governor and his military; and the Spaniards and the natives as it provided a space of common ground where both needed help, and both were the answer to each other's challenges. One can say that Corcuera's military problems were solved by his native soldiers, and the struggles of the native soldiers when it came to the treatment of the Spaniards were answered.

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