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This US Air Force photo depicts "Japanese troops coming ashore in the main landing at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, on Dec. 22, 1941." It is part of an article, at the National Museum of the US Air Force, entitled: "The Cost of Being Unprepared: The Last Days on Bataan."

A story told in the Army's [official record](#) of the war in the Philippines typifies the lack of appropriate defenses when Japan attacked. While the story is apocryphal, it would not appear in the record if Filipinos and Americans could have responded with strength.

On December 12th, 1941, General Kimura and his detachment landed [at Legaspi](#). They met with no resistance, since the nearest American and Filipino [forces](#) were about 150 miles away.

Kimura quickly gained control of the airfield and the terminus of the Manila Railroad. The station master at Legaspi (which is near the [Legaspi volcano](#)) called headquarters (of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East - USAFFE) in Manilla, whereupon the following conversation [reportedly occurred](#):

STATIONMASTER: "There are four Jap boats in the harbor, sir, and the Japs are landing. What shall I do?"

USAFFE OFFICER: "Just hang onto the phone and keep reporting."

STATIONMASTER: "There are about twenty Japs ashore already, sir, and more are coming" A pause. "Now there are about three hundred Japs outside the station, sir, What am I to do?"

USAFFE OFFICER: "Just sit tight."

STATIONMASTER: "Sir, a few of those Japs, with an officer in front, are coming over here."

USAFFE OFFICER: "See what they want."

STATIONMASTER: "Those Japs want me to give them a train to take them to Manila, sir. What do I do now?"

USAFFE OFFICER: "Tell them the next train leaves a week from Sunday. Don't give it to them."

STATIONMASTER, hanging up: "Okay sir."

True or apocryphal, the story was an omen of things to come.

Before the end of the month, MacArthur knew he could not hold Manila. He declared it an "[open city](#)," even as Japanese forces were making [their way](#) to the capital.

They entered the city on January 2nd, 1942.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-BREAKING-POINT-Great-Raid-The>

Media Stream



Map Showing Legaspi in Philippines

Image online, courtesy insights-philippines.de website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Showing-Legaspi-in-Philippines>



Mount Mayon Volcano - Near Legaspi in The Philippines

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Map - American Forces in Philippines, 12/8/1941

Map image from the U.S. Military Academy's map atlases. Image online, courtesy U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

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Manila - Open City Sign

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Japanese Troops En Route to Manilla

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