



From the Commander

February was the 70th anniversary of liberation, and there were big doings in Manila to celebrate this auspicious occasion. Liberation for the three camps holding civilian prisoners occurred on three specific dates; but the liberation of Manila was a process that took a month and was extremely painful for the people and resulted in enormous destruction and death. It started on February 3, 1945 when the 1st Cavalry Flying column entered the city and ended on March 3 when General MacArthur declared all Japanese resistance ended.

This was probably the last chance for members of BACEPOW to participate in the festivities in Manila to celebrate a major anniversary of the liberation. Sascha Jansen organized a tour for 80 people, including those who were in the camps, descendants, and friends, to visit Manila, attend ceremonies and share their experiences of liberation.

Few people in Manila remember the years of Japanese occupation and the holocaust that resulted when a stubborn Japanese enemy refused to evacuate the city and fought to their death in fortified positions within the densely populated districts. The younger generations are largely unaware of the years of fear, deprivation, and murder that this enemy imposed on the occupants of the city. The visit by the BACEPOW group gave them a chance to educate the younger people about their legacy.

Those of us who were held prisoner by the Japanese have important reasons to be grateful to the Filipino people who were outside of the camps for the succor they provided during those years of confinement. We take this as a sacred duty to pay back for all they did for us, by helping in their education and when needed, contributing to typhoon relief, and providing in some way to better their lives. The funds for these contributions are attributed to our BACEPOW annual dues, donations to us from members and others, income from sale of challenge coins and other artifacts, and advertising in this publication. We thank you for your generosity, which makes it possible for us collectively to contribute in some small way to the Filipino people as thanks for what they did for us so many years ago.

Angus Lorenzen

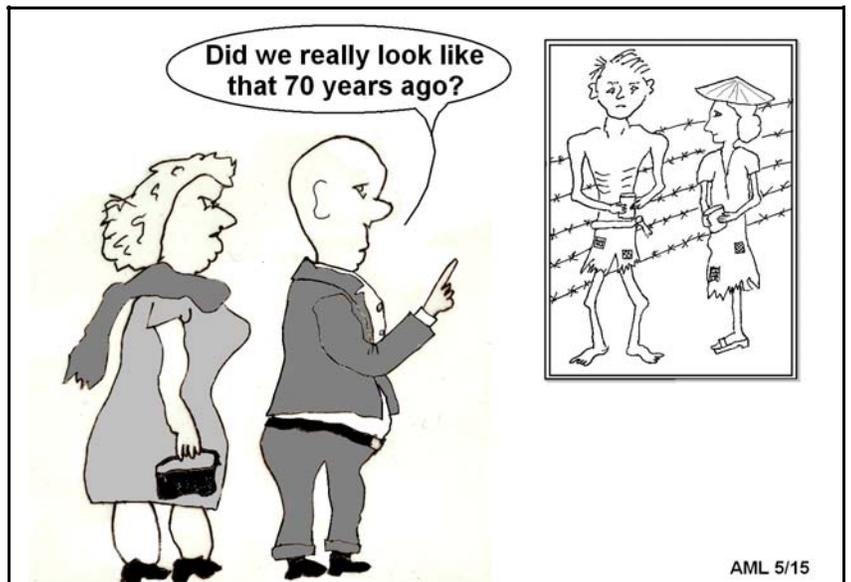
Manila Liberation – 1945

.When the Philippine Air Lines Boeing 777, landed at Ninoy Aquino International Airport on February 1st, 2015, she carried some pretty important people coming to Manila. Exactly seventy years earlier, during WWII, the US Armed Forces liberated seventeen of these passengers from their prison camps. After being held by the Japanese military for over three years, they were given another chance at life. Today, they were accompanied by family members of several generations totaling 78 travelers.

Staying at the famed Manila Hotel, over night at Tagaytay and at the French Sofitel Hotel on Manila Bay was a welcoming and nostalgic experience. Many days of touring Corregidor, Manila City, Intramurus, U.S. Battle Monuments American Cemetery, Ayala Museum, Filipino Heritage Library, Villa Escudero and Los Banos were some of the tour high-lights.

On February 3rd the travelers were invited to spend the day at the University of Santo Tomas where the Museum's exhibit of the campus war time days were beautifully displayed, bringing up old memories and a few tears. Ribbon cutting, Filipino food and welcoming speeches preceded a few hours of storytelling and communicating about the war years on campus with the students. Our time with our families, showing them around the camp where we lived, provided special moments of learning and reflection. We so appreciated the hospitality and the generosity of

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Apologies to former prisoners. most of whom never gained excessive weight after experiencing an extended period of the "Japanese diet".

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the priests and faculty on this, our very important day of freedom 70 years ago.

Our memorable journey ended with an amazing Farewell Dinner at the Sofitel Hotel. Cocktail hour, viewing a famous Manila sunset, and a wonderful buffet was held out -doors pool side. Native dancers in Filipino attire entertained and enticed our group to join them in dance; and, they joyfully did.

We shopped, ate and drank well, and rekindled old friendships. Our visits to special places from our youth were both rewarding and sad, and we enjoyed sharing them with our families. How wonderful they could be with us. Thank you to all who came on this 70th Anniversary Liberation trip of a lifetime. I hope your journey was enjoyable and fulfilling for you.

Aloha – Sascha Jansen

Photographs from the 70th Anniversary of Liberation trip, February 2015



Tom (Blackblue Ankles) Crosby demonstrates his skill at dancing the Tinikling at the Farewell Dinner - Sofitel Hotel



Ex-internees with University of Santo Tomas students on the stairs in the lobby of the Main Building



U.S. Battle Monuments Cemetery – February 4, 2015 – Manila.

On this day our tour group gathered at the cemetery with Superintendent, Bert Caloud, to take part in a ceremony with a wreath laying honoring many of our fellow internees who were killed on February 7, 2015 in Santo Tomas.

Our ceremony also included honoring the 7 prisoners who were executed in 1942, and right before liberation. It was our honor to also pay homage to the 11 crew members of the B-24 who were downed right before our very eyes on January 8th, 1945 as they were on their way to bomb Nielson Field that day. Many of these crew members are buried within these hallowed grounds, and who's names are etched on the Wall of the Missing.

The only double head stone in the cemetery belongs to Lt JG Harry Morton, USN, who died in battle, and his young son, Richy Morton, who died in Santo Tomas. Our prayers were left with all.

Sascha Jansen read these names and shared short stories of each group honored. Superintendent Caloud so generously gave of his time to relate the history of the cemetery and how they care for these heroes who died in the name of freedom. His time spent with our group was generous and very much appreciated.



In the last days of Los Banos, situations were grave with disease and hunger becoming worse. Jerry and Margaret Sams with their 7 yr old David and 13 month old Gerry Ann made plans to escape before their conditions grew worse. Confiding in their friend, Dr. Dana Nance, they told him of their plans. Alarmed, Nance tried to dissuade the couple from their dangerous plans. After all, he warned, the US Army was in Manila and would be here soon. When Nance realized his warnings were unheeded, he offered to give Gerry Ann a slight calming injection to prevent her from crying. He handed the couple 30 pesos and gave the baby the shot. Gerry Ann let out a wailing scream and didn't stop all night. It was obvious no one was going anywhere.

The photo is the “toddler”, Gerry Ann today. The fine gentleman is Dr. Carter Nance, son of Dr. Dana Nance, Los Baños.

DEAR JOHN

Submitted by Peggy Barker Allen

When the Japanese occupied the Philippines, essentially all communication ended between people trapped there and their families and friends at home. People in the prison camps were allowed to fill out a mail card with about 25 words to be forwarded by the International Red Cross. Some of the heavily censored cards got through after long delays, but others were never delivered, and a large number were discovered after the liberation and had never been forwarded by the Japanese.

Letters from home to the prisoners did arrive on isolated occasions, brought on the prisoner exchange ship Gripsholm, and after long delays were finally distributed by the Japanese. They were an exercise in frustration because in the process of censoring them, the Japanese used razor blades to cut out whole sections. Since the letters were written on two sides of the paper, not only the offending portions were excised, but so was much of the innocent parts. The readers were left to do a lot of guessing about the letters' content.

Families that had been split up when the war started because some members were away from home to go to school or on business suddenly lost all contact with loved ones. For more than three years, communications were a black hole and the people at home could only worry, follow the progress of the war across the Pacific and wonder, and listen to rumors and innuendo about what was happening.

Shortly after liberation, bags of mail from home were delivered to the camps and distributed to the ex-prisoners to their great joy. The Red Cross also provided writing material so the people in the camps could finally write home, and these letters were rushed back to their home countries. (Rushing in those days might mean a couple of months as mail was carried by ship across the ocean and train through the country.)

Peggy Barker Allen's father, John Earl Barker was imprisoned in Santo Tomas. Shortly after being rescued by the U. S. Army, he sent the following letter to his sister Grace Engel in March 1945. The original letter, which is in her possession, was dated "Sto Tomas Mar 11 - 45." The letter was written on six sheets of 5 1/2 inch by 8 1/2 inch American Red Cross writing paper.

Thanks for the wire of best wishes and regards.

To bring things up to date briefly, then we can go on from there.

Had been nearly blind for years before the big mixup started, and had finally contacted a surgeon willing to take a risk and I was in a hospital recovering from a delicate operation, successful, when the Jap hordes swept over the whole Orient.

He got me, along with some thousands of others, and slammed us into a camp, we were told for three days only, and not to bring anything. We got no food for the first three days - spent sitting in a chair - and then to another camp, where we were fed food; of a kind; prepared by ourselves, and from then on we lived thru three years of slow torture.

Just one round after another of broken promises, food and relief shipments from the States taken and used by the conqueror, Internees beaten up, some left with broken bones, anyone from the outside prohibited from giving any food or aid.

Anyone they suspected among us just disappeared, that's all, tho thru the underground we learned of their deaths, after unbelievable violence.

They started reducing rations, until the last few months, when we were getting 600 calories in rice only, with a salt allowance of 125 grams a month.

We had started schools & college classes here, and the last 2 years I had been teaching higher mathematics, but when I dropped to a weight of 98 pounds, Christmas, 1944, had to give it up, tho all work was stopped at that time as all were starving and many deaths daily from lack of food.

When the head Doctor filled out death certificates as cause undernourishment or malnutrition, the Jap just put the Doctor out of circulation, and helping us, by slamming the jail door on him.

I ended up with Bacillary dysentery and Beri-Beri, a tropical disease resulting from an exclusive rice diet, which usually has a prognosis of a lingering more or less painless end. Which proved true with a lot of the internees here.

Pres. Roosevelt had wired to the Philippines about the end of December 1941, "Help is on the way.", and to tell the truth, as month followed month, and year followed year, the quotation began to be use (sic) sarcastically as a joke among us, when one asked "How are you making out," a good standard answer was, "Well I'm still hungry but help is on the way."

Such was the set-up, with a ration of 600 calories, Beri-Beri, and Bacillary dysentery, when at 7:30 p.m., on February 3, 1945, I heard people running thru the hall (The Nips corralled us all in Buildings before dark) yelling, "The tanks are in the streets."

I took it for another rumor, and rolled over for another nap, but snapped out of it with the close crash of guns, and the smashing of the iron and concrete wall as the Tanks smashed in.

In a few moments they cleaned out the Japs and the doors of the buildings were thrown open to give a royal welcome to a handful of reckless boys who took a long chance and smashed their way through to relieve the camp.

It was theatrical, and unbelievable, but it was true, and just the thing our boys would do.

The aftermath - the Japs in the rest of Manila shelled the internment camp killing many, and then burned Manila.

I am getting better, due to treatment by the Army doctors, and will soon be about. The Army is feeding us all very well indeed, and gradually repatriating people to the States.

I do not expect to leave here for some time, as I had a lot of interests, probably all gone now, but to be looked up before given up as lost.

Will drop you more definite news from time to time, so please, in your answer, give me your address as that part of your message was garbled.

There does not seem to be any censorship on communication, tho we were warned to leave war matters out, which I have.

Thanks again, and the best to you and yours, and let me hear from you soon.

(signed) J Barker

Address:

Sto Tomas Internment Camp

Manila

Jim Holzem and the Giraffes

By Fergus Kyle

It was 1941. While the European war raged, the Japanese had created a budding empire as they sought necessary resources long denied them. As their army rampaged through China, Britain and the U.S began to evacuate their people but left an insufficient military guard to protect their outposts.

Jenny Templer, her mother, brother and sister fled Hong Kong for the Philippines and supposed safety. Four adults, 2 babies, and four children piled into a tiny Morris 8 car and raced ahead of the invaders, but were overrun by the advancing Japanese in Manila.

Two of the mothers, left out of an early prison round-up to defer to the babies, found and occupied a deserted home, and set about to find some way to provide food. The answer came when the home revealed many costumes and instructions for creating stuffed animal toys. Jenny watched at her mother's knee as the toys were made. These were sold, some of which were peddled at markets.

Move ahead three years and those two families now in prison, were parted - one family ensconced in Santo Tomas University prison grounds, and the Templers in the University Agricultural College campus in Los Baños, sixty kilometres south of Manila. With food continually dwindling, the army ate first and civilians got what was left.

Soon that was insufficient and orders were sent that to cover starvation, troops were to lob grenades into the compound at morning roll call, stampede prisoners out open gates, and shoot them as "escapers". Two inmates, secretly fluent in Japanese, overheard guards being briefed and, helped by guerrillas, escaped the camp and were guided through enemy lines to the U.S. Army. They told their story. With few days to prepare, MacArthur's staff began planning and training for a rescue.

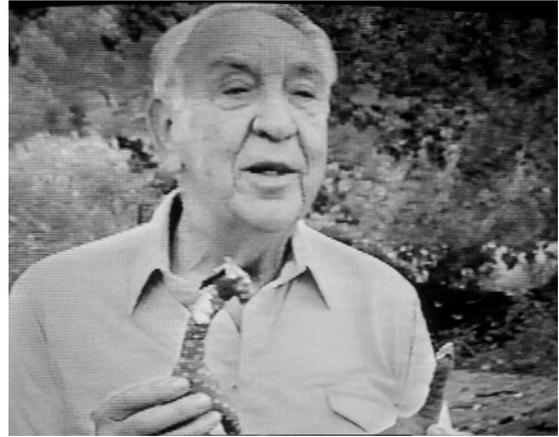
The planning was accurate and the execution almost perfect.

23 February 1945: As the guards practised their morning exercises, their rifles stacked aside, Douglas transports disgorged the First battalion, 11th Airborne Division, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment from 500 feet overhead, firing as they came. Guerrillas emerged from the jungle, surprising and dispersing the guards and soon the paratroopers had the camp in hand with guards running away or dead. With the crack Tigers, First Regiment of Japan - infamous for ferocity and bestial behaviour in China, bivouacked only 30 kilometres away - quick escape was vital. The rescuers set fire to the flimsy barracks to force the inmates to hurry to amphibious tractors.

As trooper Jim Holzem raced through the flaming barracks he spied some stuffed animal toys and collected two as souvenirs.

Some fifty years later the U.S. History TV channel showed a re-enactment of the raid with returned veterans to reminisce. Holzem was one and brought with him his souvenirs to show.

Jenny had been told of the program and drove to New York State to see it (US History Channel "Rescue at Dawn"). When Jim displayed his trophies on screen, Jenny exclaimed, "My mother made those!!" - recognising the clothing scraps sewn those many years ago.



Jim Holzem with giraffes he found in one of the burning barracks in Los Baños

Three or four years passed, when fellow ex-prisoner Margie Squires sought Holzem's whereabouts from authorities. Soon the veterans groups wrote his details to her and she passed them to Jenny. She immediately telephoned and he answered.

"I'm Jenny Templer in Canada and you rescued me in the Los Baños raid!"

"Did I?", he replied.

"Yes," she continued, "and you showed two stuffed toys on TV - my mother made them. If you still have them, may I have a photo of them?"

"No!," said Jim, "I'll send them to you...", and days later his package arrived - and here they are!:



Jenny Kyle with returned giraffes

Word of Mouth

By Sascha Jansen

THE RESCUE OF LOS BAÑOS *The Most Daring Prison Camp Raid of WWII*

By **Bruce Henderson** – Publisher: *William Morrow*

During WWII, the war in the Philippines and the Pacific was largely overshadowed by President Roosevelt's fixation with the European Theater and the concentration on Hitler's demise. Thus, when the Japanese Imperial Army took over the ill – prepared American held Philippine Islands, thousands of American and Allied military and civilians were captured and held in sadistic prison camps throughout the country for over three years.

As the Nipon Army began losing its grasp in the war in 1944, General Douglas MacArthur, on his return to the Philippines, became increasingly concerned about the civilian prisoners who were half starved and ill treated. Knowing this particular oriental enemy and its history of diabolic atrocities, MacArthur called upon the 11th Airborne Division's commanding general, General Joseph Swing, for the ultimate, dangerous rescue mission of the Los Baños camp deep behind enemy lines. G-2 Intelligence, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, guerrilla units, 672nd Amphibian Tractor Battalion and Reconnaissance units with resistance groups were paramount in this massive liberation plan. G-2 and G-3 operations planning with strong and cohesive communications took the lead.

Today, 70 years after the catastrophic month long Battle of Manila, and the liberation of thousands of American and Allied civilians held in prison camps in the Philippines, a riveting book and it's author brings to light an amazing true story of rescue, daring and survival on February 23, 1945.

New York Times Bestselling Author, **Bruce Henderson**, became obsessed with the intricate plans and execution of the Los Baños prison camp rescue after reading about one of the prisoner's tale of liberation from that particular rescue mission.

Henderson superbly details tactical and strategic forecasting between unit commanders with precise conditions and intelligence to succeed in this mission. The extensive research and hours of personal interviews with liberators and prisoners

brings this exciting mission to light. Secrecy was everything. Timing- crucial.

Malnutrition, weakness and disease continued to plague the adults, children and infants in the Los Baños camp. Conditions were bleak as they waited for some sign of rescue - 2,146 prisoners prayed, they buried their dead, and waited some more.

When waves of paratroopers, amtracs and participating units were joined by the outpost guerrilla groups at the intended target of the camp on the designated date, their precision and exacting on-target mission was complete.

The Los Baños raid would become one of the greatest triumphs of any war; hailed, years later, by Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell as a "Textbook operation for all ages and all armies."

Bruce Henderson's book captures the heart of romance, captivity, enemy cruelty, loss of life, survival and adventure, and the delicious experience of sweet freedom. The integrity of Henderson's writing stands tall in the annals of journalism. As an award winning author and journalist he justly nails it again in the Rescue of Los Baños.

ATTENTION DESCENDENTS

There will be a very important meeting for descendents during the April reunion. It concerns the future of BACEPOW and the direction that descendents of ex-POWs would like to see it develop. If you are going to the reunion, please try to attend.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LUNCHEON

We are planning to have a luncheon in the Long Beach area in August to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the end of the war. For more information contact:

Denise Paige dtpaige@hotmail.com (310) (562)-818-6580
Angus Lorenzen bacepow@earthlink.net

BACEPOW Newsletter
15 Diamonte Lane
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275