BACEPOW
Bay Area Civilian Ex-Prisoners of War

Beyond the Wire

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From the Commander

Readers of this newsletter probably recognize that I promote the support American forces received from the Filipino guerillas that helped to minimize American casualties in numerous operations, often at the cost of their own lives. For this editorial, I'm reprinting an article written by David Blackledge in 1985. He was a 14 year-old in Los Baños who appreciates the role that the guerillas played in the liberation of the camp.

Angus Lorenzen

The Blackledge family after repatriation aboard the USCG *Eberle* to San Francisco in May 1945, including Robert, age 9, Helen, and David, age 15.

Lest We Forget

Forty years ago, just short of my fifteenth birthday, I was one of the allied internees rescued at Los Baños. In this period when concerned individuals in both countries ponder the future of the

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Finding a New Life

This message is written by Curtis Brooks who suffered irredeemable tragedy in his last days in Santo Tomas. He reflects on the changes that repatriated internees faced as they left what had once been "home" to start new lives. It is something to think about as we approach our reunion to celebrate the 75th anniversary of liberation.

It is an interesting and thought-provoking question about our feelings in the aftermath of our internment experience after all these years. When we all came to America, we left a place where all our friends were, where every face was familiar even if not a friend, where every spot and cranny was known, and a place that in effect had been home for three years. Certainly we remembered the hunger, the crowding, the bedbugs, the thousand discomforts of deprived living, but these aspects were juxtaposed with brighter side of the familiar and friendly. More than that, we shared a common moral experience, the loss of home and possessions, the loss of country in the defeat of '42, and the almost palpable sense of waiting. Waiting for the liberation which we all believed in, even though for awhile, early on, it seemed chimerical.

But we had our schools, our teachers, our friends, our sports, indeed, even our enmities, that made life there a community. One might say a community with a single purpose, to survive until the day of liberation. With hardship, I think we appreciated our friends more, and relied on them more for support and solace that bore us along through the tougher times. The bonds we formed, the places we knew, we missed, and I think missed deeply on leaving. It had become a way of life.

As a background and prelude to our wartime experience, we had been born and raised in a country far different from what we would later move to. There would be no picking up the pieces; the pieces were almost totally gone. We were psychic beggars only dimly but hurtfully aware of the hiatae.

We came therefore with latent but brooding sense of loss, a loss we would never ever make up. In my case, more than most I suppose. We reached back for comfort, something our stateside family and friends could not comprehend. Indeed, we hardly knew or understood ourselves. In time, perforce, we built new lives, careers, homes, and livelihood. In the years and years that followed the wartime aspect became a distant background. The memory stayed, however. In time we began to realize what part of history we had been; we had seen empires rise and fall, lives and cities swept away. The people we had shared this with became again friends; the reunions are witness.

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unique Philippine-United States relationship, I appreciate more than ever the significance of the role that Filipino guerillas played in our rescue. My parents went to the Philippines as teachers in 1931 as part of the nation-building program in preparation for independence. The reservoir of goodwill which such alien educators, missionaries, businessmen, and military families developed with Filipino students, congregations, business associates, and employees was proven after the shockingly successful Japanese invasion.

One of my father's former students volunteered to go to Bataan to fight alongside him; after the surrender he brought my family news of his fate and then joined the guerilla movement to fight on. When interned at Santo Tomas University, our Filipino friends continued month after month to risk Japanese wrath while bringing us aid from their own scarce resources. Later, as the Japanese destroyed Manila in their suicidal defense, these same Filipino friends included our valuables among the few possessions they were able to save.

The ultimate proof of Filipino-American bonds of brotherhood was the rescue of Los Baños Internment Camp by a combined force of American troops and Filipino guerillas. I will never forget the sight of Filipino guerillas risking their lives to save us, charging into the camp as planeloads of paratroopers descended to join in the attack. Later I learned that six different guerilla groups forgot their differences, uniting under the Hunters ROTC leadership in achieving their common goals - to strike a blow at the invader and free their friends.

The joyous occasion was saddened by the brutal Japanese revenge slaughter of several hundred civilian inhabitants of the town of Los Baños after the victorious raiders were forced to temporarily withdraw. These innocent Filipinos paid the ultimate price for rescue of 2,147 aliens whom fate had placed in their midst and for whom they already had sacrificed so much.

I am thankful for the relationship which Americans like my parents established with Filipinos from all walks of life before World War II. None of us who were at the mercy of the Japanese can ever forget how much we owe to our Filipino comrades who stood by us in our time of need. May the bonds between our two countries last forever.

Mabuhay

David W Blackledge
Colonel, U.S. Army (retired)

On a Leg and a Prayer

This article was written by J. Michael Houlahan , previously a diplomat in the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines, and a past contributor to this newsletter.

The Japanese government has been very aggressive in denying the atrocities that Japan committed during WW II. The propaganda they use claims that General MacArthur was responsible for the horrendous death rate of civilians during the Battle of Manila because it was not necessary for him to invade Manila and to trap the Japanese forces in the city. The Comfort Women from conquered populations that were forcibly employed by the Japanese Army were simply prostitutes. And the Bataan Death March was the fault of the U.S. Army for destroying their vehicles on Bataan when they surrendered, thus depriving the Japanese of the ability to transport their prisoners to the POW camps and forcing them to have to march the long distance. The Japanese have consistently lied, and this article simply proves that the Bataan Death March was retaliation and deliberate cruelty.

Eleven courageous and determined men stand out among the unrecognized heroes of the Bataan Death March. All lost legs in combat, then were forced to join the infamous sixty-mile march of death to the Camp O'Donnell prisoner of war compound. Sergeant Adriano "Jake" Olivar, who became a medical doctor living in the Chicago suburb of Flossmoor, was one of these men. This is his story.

Jake Olivar was born in a small town in rural Philippines. As part of a program to enlarge the Philippine Army, he took part in junior ROTC training during his senior year of high school, and then had two months of basic training following graduation. Now he was a seventeen year old reservist.

In October 1941, Olivar registered for classes at the University of the Philippines (UP). His ambition upon graduation was to become a fighter pilot. On Sunday, December 7 the Japanese staged their sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Upon hearing the news, Olivar and a classmate reported to the mobilization center. "They had orders not to take anybody below nineteen," he recalls. "So we left and then two days later came back and told them that we were nineteen." Eager for recruits, the duty officer accepted the boys.

The underage recruits were assigned to the 31st Division, 32nd Infantry Regiment of the Philippine Army, which took up defensive positions on Bataan Peninsula. Japanese landings began later that month and Jake saw his first combat in early January when the Japanese infiltrated the area defended by his unit.

"Pandemonium broke out," he recalls. "We were firing at each other. We were firing at the Japanese. It was midnight. We didn't know what was happening. At the time, I was scared as hell, but it was funny in a way." Several days later Jake was hit by shrapnel and then ended up in a field hospital where his badly mangled right leg was amputated.

While recuperating, he was befriended by a young American Army nurse, Lieutenant Ethel "Sally" Blaine. Realizing that Olivar was highly intelligent and dependable, she made him her orderly.

Fitted with crutches, he played an active role assisting at the hospital until the surrender of the USAFFE forces on Bataan. Almost immediately a tragedy began to unfold as all Filipino patients were forced out of the hospital into what was to become infamous as the Bataan Death March. Included in this exodus were the eleven amputees.

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"We padded the saddle of our crutches with cotton and bandages and decided to bring the woolen blanket from our bed so that we could have something to lie on."

"I remember five amputees who joined the march. I knew they weren't going to make it," Jake recalls. "They could hardly even move."

"We left the hospital without any provisions. Other than the woolen pajamas which were not changed for at least a week, we had no clothing. During the month of April, the temperature in the Philippines goes up to l00 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, so the woolen pajamas plus the woolen blanket slung diagonally across our bodies were not the recommended attire." Within two miles, pillaging Japanese soldiers looted their valuables.

On the second day, the amputees divided into two groups, the "toddlers" and the "slow walkers". "The 'toddlers' consisted of amputees who learned to use crutches on the day of the surrender whiled the 'slow walkers' were those who had anywhere from a week to two months experience. The former group was composed virtually of bed-patients who were very weak and had bleeding stumps. I attached myself to the latter group."

That day Jake's group found discarded Japanese field rations consisting of cooked dried rice and powdered salted fish wrapped into small cellophane packages. These were partly soaked in oil, but edible. "In the condition we were in," he recalls, "this constituted a royal feast."

Now every step was an ordeal. A solid cloud of dust whipped up by the marchers enveloped the entire countryside and added to their misery. Occasionally, additional columns of prisoners guarded by bicycle pedaling guards would pass them. When prisoners lagged behind, they were hit with rifle butts and bayonets.

"Japanese soldiers riding on trucks discovered a new game. They would stick a piece of wood or their rifle butts out of the trucks as they passed us. Marching prisoners of war were falling down by the roadside like dominoes. Strewn in a haphazard pattern along the roadside were lifeless bodies. More and more men were starting to give up. They were bayoneted or shot."

Late on the third day the amputees came to an artesian well. It was an unforgettable scene. "Everyone fully understood the clear warning posed by the mounted machine gun and the erratically strewn bodies near the well."

Towards the end of the fourth day, Jake felt he could go no further. Suddenly an empty Japanese truck stopped and allowed the amputees to climb aboard. They made the remainder of the trip to the POW compound by truck and train.

"Of the eleven amputees who started the march, only six reached the concentration camp. We found out much later that four of the boys who left the hospital with us on April 10, gave up the march on the second day. They were shot and left in the ditches." Civilians helped a fifth amputee escape.

Jake was held at Camp O'Donnell through July. There was little to eat or drink. Illness was widespread due to malnutrition and unsanitary conditions. The Filipinos were not as careful with sanitation as the Americans, so died at a much faster rate.

Finally the surviving amputees were moved to a makeshift hospital in Manila, where they remained until their release in March 1943 as part of a Japanese pacification program. The Filipino soldiers were paroled to their provincial governors. Almost immediately Olivar began reporting information to the guerrillas that the governor received from the local Japanese commander. "It was a lot of fun," he recalls, "but also rather dangerous."

Jake worked with the guerrillas for about a year, then was evacuated by submarine to Australia along with a small group of Filipinos and downed American pilots. Returning to Manila after liberation, he was awarded the Prisoner of War and Purple Heart Medals.

Thwarted in his ambition to become a fighter pilot, Jake studied medicine, graduating from the U.P. medical school in 1953. He then interned at a hospital in Hartford, Connecticut, followed by a residency at Northwestern University.

Dr. Olivar remained in the Chicago area, teaching part time at Northwestern and working in clinical pathology in Chicago Heights. He married an American, whom he met while interning in Hartford. They have two boys and a girl, as well as several grandchildren.

While attending a POW reunion in 1968, Dr. Olivar met an American survivor of Bataan who recognized him. "He saw us leave the hospital to join the Death March and remembered that he made a bet with one of his buddies that we would not make it. I told him that he lost the bet."

Sally, the nurse who befriended Jake in the Bataan field hospital, was imprisoned in the Santo Tomas Internment Camp after the Japanese capture of Corregidor. After the war, Jake and Sally, now Ethel Blaine Millett, corresponded until her recent death. She put the author in touch with Dr. Olivar. Jake passed away at the age of 86 in 2010.

Dr. Olivar was a WWII Army Veteran, POW and survivor of the Bataan Death March. He attended medical school in the Philippines (UP). He interned at Mt. Sinai Hospital Hartford, CT and served his residency at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, where he later taught pathology at the Medical School. Director of Pathology and Chief of Staff at St. James Hospital. Past President of Chicago Hts. Rotary Club, member of VFW, American Legion, and Order of the Purple Heart.

Philippine Birthmark

Book Review by Angus Lorenzen

Philippine Birthmark, the Story of William Singleton Carroll
By McLean Goodpasture Carroll

This is an unusual story because it is written by Lean, the wife of the principal, who is Bill or Billy Carroll. I must speculate how this came to be because it is not about Billy, but for him. I imagine that Bill said little about his experience as a Japanese prisoner when Lean and he first started their romance, but when she met his parents, Norwood and Isabel Carroll, the story emerged. Initially the details were sparse as people who had been in the internment camps did not talk about the experience, becoming less reticent as they became older. So, the first details trickled out at various family functions and Lean became intrigued, beginning to read the history of the Philippines war years and books by other authors. Then she planned a special Christmas present for her family in 2017 - a trip to the Philippines, which gave her the final incentive to write this book. To my mind, it is one of the finest books written about the internment experience.

Norwood Carroll began a career with Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company in 1929 after graduating from the University of North Carolina, and in 1931 was sent to the Philippines as Far Eastern Manager. After 3 years, Norwood took a brief leave to return home and marry Isabel Singleton, the couple returning to Manila to live a luxurious and exciting life with their fellow expatriates. Eventually Norwood's job took him to live in Iloilo on Panay Island, where their first two children were born – Lee in 1938 and Peggy in 1939.

Their storybook life ended suddenly with the Japanese attack and invasion in 1941, and with an air attack on Iloilo, the Carrolls knew they had to find a safer place, especially as Isabel was soon due to have another baby. Five families moved together to Janiuay, where Billy was born. This was still not a safe place, and the husbands found a place in the hills to hide when the Japanese invaded, and after a tortuous journey they moved into a nipa hut. But their sanctuary was short-lived as they were discovered by the Japanese in June, 1942. Another harrowing journey returned them to Iloilo, and they were interned with over 100 other civilians for a year before being loaded on a ship, where they suffered a seven-day roundabout voyage to Manila.

They arrived at the Santo Tomas Internment Camp (STIC) on June 23, 1943, thinking that they were being sent to Los Baños; but that camp had just been opened and housing was not yet complete. STIC was a thriving organized camp, overcrowded but well established. In the book, Lean discusses how the camp came to be, its history, and how the internees lived. She does this in such a way, using quotes from many sources, that the reader gets a complete understanding of their daily life and the issues that faced them. This is probably one of the most direct and succinct summaries of the history of STIC and life within it, enhanced by numerous photos.

In 1944, conditions became more dire as STIC came under the supervision of Japan's War Prisoner Department with complete severance from outside contact. Food became more limited with people drastically losing weight and having to curtail activity. Then on September 21 the internees were treated to the sight of waves of U.S. carrier-based aircraft making their first attack on the Japanese in Manila. On October 20 American forces landed on the island of Leyte, the information surreptitiously reaching the internees, giving some hope. But conditions worsened for the internees and by November, starvation was rampant. Conditions continued to deteriorate and deaths from starvation increased. Then in a melee of jubilation, the internees greeted the troopers of the 1st Cavalry when they burst through the gate on February 3, 1945.

General MacArthur visited STIC a few days later, and after he left, all hell broke loose as the Japanese started to shell the camp. Around the camp, the murderous Battle of Manila raged, the Japanese turning their wrath on the civilians in the city, and when it ended, 100,000 civilians were dead.

Finally, the time for repatriation came, and the Carroll's flew to Leyte, boarding the Dutch liner SS Klipfontein, making the long sea voyage and finally landing in San Francisco on April 21, 1945. They reestablished their lives in Durham. Later, all three of the children enrolled in the University of North Carolina, going their separate ways after graduation. Bill joined the Airforce as an officer, and coincidentally served at Clark AFB before being sent to Viet Nam. In 2018, the family took the trip to the Philippines that Lean planned to explore the places that Bill and his family had endured during the war. And from that trip came the final words for this book.

Philippine Birthmark, written by someone with an intense interest in the events depicted, but without a personal involvement, creates a book that tells the story in a linear fashion without the emotionalism and personal deviations that might otherwise occur. The book is liberally laced with photos, and quotations from people who were there, interlaced so seamlessly that the book flows smoothly. When I started reading, I was soon so absorbed that I finished it in 4 evenings. This is the kind of book other authors writing about the war years in the Philippines should emulate as it is straightforward and accurate. I can only say, "Well done, Lean".

The Carroll family in the lobby of the Main Building at STIC from L to R - Jonathan Whitacre, son-in-law; Will Carroll, son; Bill Carroll, Tilghman Carroll Whitacre, daughter; and Lean.

Registration

Diamond Jubilee of Liberation

75 Years of Freedom from Japan's Domination

Embassy Suites by Hilton Sacramento Riverfront Promenade

Thursday February 6 to Sunday February 9, 2020

Reservations at the Embassy Suites Riverfront Sacramento Hotel should be made early to obtain the special BACEPOW rate of $189. Reservations can be made on the internet at **www.sacramento.embassysuites.com** using our group code **BCE**. Or call (916) 326-5000 or toll-free 1-800-EMBASSY and ask for the Bay Area Civilian Ex-POW's code **BCE** rate. Your reservation includes a complimentary hot cooked breakfast and the managers cocktail party. Valet parking is available at a discount rate of $25 or use self-parking nearby. Free airport pickup call (916) 326-5000. The deadline for reservations is January 16, 2020.

Registration for the reunion is open to all those interested. The **deadline for registering** is January 16, 2020 **and reservations received after that date may be rejected if no space is available.**

BACEPOW subsidizes the registration cost for members. The subsidized price is available only to people who have paid their membership dues for 2020. For convenience, you may include your 2020 membership with this registration.

The Preliminary program is shown on the reverse side of this page.

BACEPOW Reunion Registration

Registration for the BACEPOW 2020 Reunion is due no later than January 16, 2020. Late reservations will require an added fee of $25 per person if space is available.

Please fill out the required information below		Member	2020 Dues
First Name	**Last Name**	**(Yes/No)**	**(Yes/No)**

***** If you do not want to attend the banquet, you can deduct $50 from the full registration cost **Total**

Annual Dues If you want to include $15 for 2020 dues, please put names on reverse side Number _____ $

Full Registration incl. Banquet Member $70/Non-member $80 Number of members ____ Non-Membs ____ * $

Sunday Only - Events & Banquet Members $57/Non Members $67 No. of members ____ Non-Membs ____ $

Please send your check made out to BACEPOW for the total to: **TOTAL** **$**

Scot Doolan
765 Euclid Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708

Please note that registration for the reunion ends on January 16, 2020. Late registrants will be charged an extra $25 if space is still available.

Visit the California State Railroad Museum

Time has been arranged at the Reunion on Saturday afternoon, February 8, to allow for special events. Ted Cadwallader has arranged for a special docent-led tour of the California State Railroad Museum. The tour will start at 2:30 and will be limited to 30 people. The cost will be $5 per person. The museum is only a short walk from the hotel, but please let us know if you will need transportation. For a reservation, please contact Ted Cadwallader at dcadwall@aol.com and include your $5 fee with your registration for the reunion sent to Scot Doolan. **Deadline for your registration is January 16, 2020.**

The museum was first opened to the public in 1976, the California State Railroad Museum complex is one of Sacramento's largest and most popular visitor destinations. Over 500,000 visit the Museum annually, with guests traveling from throughout the world to experience this world-renowned facility.

With over 225,000 square feet of total exhibit space, the buildings within the California State Railroad Museum complex use stimulating exhibits, enthusiastic and knowledgeable docents, and beautifully restored railroad cars and locomotives to illustrate railroad history in California and the West.

Throughout the main Railroad History Museum building, 21 meticulously restored locomotives and cars and numerous exhibits illustrate how railroads have shaped people's lives, the economy, and the unique culture of California and the West. Included are a Pullman-style sleeping car and a dining car filled with railroad china.

Courtesy California State Railroad Museum

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