



From the Commander

Happy New Year 2022! It's hard to believe that it's been nearly two years since we were in Sacramento celebrating 75 years of Liberation from the internment camps in the Philippines. Recently we've commemorated another major milestone, 80 years since the attack on Pearl Harbor, which represented the beginning of a long WWII odyssey for those who were in the Philippines in December 1941.

A compelling summary of the reach and magnitude of the events of that infamous day is described by Mindy Kotler in our feature article (see attribution below). The article highlights the immense scale of Imperial Japan's aggression throughout the Pacific on December 7, 1941 (which of course was December 8 in Asia). Those attacks set in motion events that we still recognize after 80 years.

We've also included this year's membership renewal along with a survey about our reunions. The survey results will help us plan the next reunion, which is now likely to be in spring 2023. Please send the survey back along with your membership renewal and include any feedback you'd like to share.

Finally, Joan Montesa has been kind enough to share the work her late husband, John Montesa, researched regarding benefits for internees from the US Government, partially entitled "How to Avail Yourself of the Benefits of the War Claims Act of 1948 and Their Amendments". Anyone who is interested in receiving a copy of John's information packet can contact me at the above email or leave a voice message at (650) 948-8308 and I will send it to you.

Wishing everyone a healthy and safe 2022.

Sally Meadows

Our Featured Article

"Eighty Years Ago, Japan Assaulted More Than Pearl Harbor", is written by Mindy L. Kotler. She is director and founder of Asia Policy Point, a Washington think tank focused on Northeast Asia. She is also an adviser to the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society that represents the American POWs of Japan and their families.

This article was originally published in *The National Interest*, December 7, 2021 (<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/eighty-years-ago-japan-assaulted-more-pearl-harbor-197570>) and is reprinted with permission of the author.

Eighty Years Ago, Japan Assaulted More Than Pearl Harbor

By Mindy L. Kotler

Eighty years ago, on December 7, 1941, critical airfields and ports across Southeast Asia and the Pacific were ablaze and in ruin. In just seven hours, Imperial Japan's surprise attacks crippled British and American forces in the Far East, exposed the Dutch East Indies to invasion, and pushed Thailand into submission. The bombing of Pearl Harbor was but one of many that day. Casualties of the "Associated Powers," likely exceeded those in Hawaii. One result of these unprovoked attacks was the creation of alliances that endure to this day.

Japan coordinated attacks on the U.S. territories of Philippines, Guam, Wake Island, Howland Island, and Midway and the British Empire in Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Japanese forces invaded and bombed Thailand's airfields. In Shanghai, Japan took control of the International Settlement after blowing up the last two British and American gunboats on the Yangtze, the HMS *Peterel* and the USS *Wake*.

The first attack, 70 minutes before Pearl Harbor, was on British-Indian forces at Kota Bharu, on the eastern side of Malaya. Hours before, a British flying boat was shot down by Japanese aircraft while monitoring the progress of the Japanese fleet. The British Royal Air Force crew and their Royal Australian Air Force observer became the first Allied casualties of the war. The ensuing defense of northeastern Malaya was fierce and savage with high casualties on both sides.

Soon after, Bangkok was bombed and Japanese troops landed to its south and at various points along the Kra Peninsula on the southeastern coast of Thailand. Again, the invaders met with stiff resistance. Despite determined Thai forces, the fighting lasted only five hours. Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram agreed to a ceasefire and formed an alliance with Japan. The Kota Bharu landings were a prelude to the drive down the eastern side of the Malay peninsula, while the Japanese troops landed in Thailand advanced with Thai soldiers down the western side to seize Singapore and its naval base--the cornerstone of British power in the Indo-Pacific. Japanese planes bombed Singapore that day in warning.

Japan's early morning attack on Pearl Harbor on Hawaii's Oahu, was followed by the bombardments of the American airfields on Midway and Howland Island in the equatorial Pacific. Two of the four Hawaii settlers on Howland were killed. For his selfless defense of Midway,

(Eighty Years Ago, continued on page 2)

(Eighty Years Ago, continued from page 1)

First Lieutenant George H. Cannon became the first U.S. Marine in World War II to receive the Medal of Honor.

Guam was shelled, bombed, and invaded. The American territory fell two days later. Of the nearly 500 American military personnel taken to Japan from Guam as prisoners of war, five were female nurses. Japanese troops occupied Batan Island above Northern Luzon in the Philippines before mounting a full-scale invasion. This approach on Aparri on the coast of Cagayan Valley, believed by American war planners as impractical, caught the defenders off-guard and unprepared. The success of the surprise assault was played out just this past fall when U.S., Filipino, and Japanese forces held their first joint amphibious exercises near this Northern Luzon town.

Six hours after the Pearl Harbor attack, the Japanese bombed Hong Kong's Kai Tak Airport and pushed the defending British and Commonwealth troops to the defensive Gin Drinkers Line. The territory, however, was long regarded as indefensible. Nevertheless British, Indian, Canadian units along with the Auxiliary Defence Units and Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps (HKVDC) held out for two weeks against a Japanese force twice its size.

The Japanese attacked Wake Island about the same time as they bombed Hong Kong. The Americans on Wake Island were composed of 400 Marines, a handful of soldiers and sailors, 45 Chamorro Pan Am employees, and 1,146 unarmed civilian contractors building an airfield. They proceeded to do what had never been done before or after, hold off an Armada for nearly two weeks. They did not surrender until December 23rd.

The last Japanese actions on December 7th were the bombing of the Iba and Clark airfields in southern Luzon,

the Philippines. As in Hawaii, the Japanese caught the American planes on the ground and the defense weak. The guns of neither the ageing artillery batteries nor tank battalions defending the fields could reach the high flying Japanese planes. Whereas the attack on Pearl Harbor damaged the Pacific Fleet, the attack on the Philippines and other U.S. territories destroyed the Far East Air Force.

The first battle casualty of the Armored Force in World War II, Pvt. Robert Brooks of Kentucky's Company D, 192nd Tank Battalion, took place on Clark Field. Back at Fort Knox, the home of the newly formed Armored Force, the Commanding General Jacob Devers responded to the news by ordering that the main parade ground at the base be named after the young tanker. This distinction was particularly significant as Brooks turned out to be African American.

On December 7, 1941, Japan expanded its war on the Asian mainland south and eastward into the Pacific. The primary objective was to knock out American and British opposition to its advance into Southeast Asia. The ultimate goal was occupation of the Indo-Pacific, control over its valuable natural resources, and supremacy over the region's seas. As the sun set, Japan's success seemed possible.

Instead, the day's debacles forged alliances with a resolve to fight fascist expansionism East and West. The "Associated Powers" (Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States) became the Allies and expanded to include India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and free forces from Japan's occupied territories. The shared bitter experience of Imperial Japan's wanton brutality and deceptions provided the emotional bond to this warfighting coalition. Ironically, these very alliances are what Japan today looks to in defending its homeland.

Advertisement

Philippine Art Gallery

Buying and Selling

Fine Philippine Paintings
Chinese Ceramics
Korean Ceramics
Scroll Paintings
Chinese Jade and Objects
Korean Paintings

Contact us for a price evaluation:

(805) 975-5413

info@philippineartgallery.com

Image: Detail of a painting by Fernando Amorsolo



CPOW 2022 Membership Form

We hope you enjoy CPOW's first newsletter of the year. Now is the time to renew (or sign up for) membership to keep receiving our newsletter. Please fill out this form and mail it with your check for \$15 (per person) to:

Cindie Leonard, 1675 S. Lake Crest Way, Eagle, ID 83616

Please make your check out to Civilian ex-POWs

Name(s): _____

Current Mailing Address: _____

Email Address (please print clearly): _____

Phone Number: _____

How would you like to receive the CPOW newsletter? Email US Mail Both

If you are a new member only, please complete the following information by checking the appropriate box indicating your connection to CPOW and provide the requested information below. You do not need to fill this out if you are a renewing member.

For Ex-POWs

Camp(s) Check all that apply: Santo Tomas Baguio/Bilibid Los Baños Other

Name in camp (if different than current name): _____

Descendant, Relative or Friend

What is your relationship to the ex-POW? Please share the name(s) of your relative(s) or friend(s) -- including the name(s) they went by in camp, along with the camp(s) they were interned in.

Military Branch of Service _____

If you have any questions, please contact Cindie: cindieleonard@gmail.com or (208) 890-5694

Please fill out the page on the back regarding REUNIONS.

CPOW REUNION SURVEY

It's time to plan for another spectacular reunion. We have been working diligently to come up with a great venue since we decided to cancel the April 2022 reunion in Norfolk, VA due to uncertainties associated with the pandemic. We need your input. We were hoping for a three-day reunion in late 2022 but could not find hotel/meeting space large enough for our group. For now, the plan is for the spring of 2023.

Please help! This is not a commitment; we simply need to know your preferences before booking a venue. Hotels and conference centers are requiring higher, non-refundable deposits (some of which would deplete our treasury if we do not meet the quota.) Therefore, it is imperative to know the level of interest before proceeding. Please complete and mail this form before January 31, 2022 to:

Cindie Leonard
1675 S. Lake Crest Way
Eagle, ID. 83616

Instead of mailing, feel free to email your responses to cindieleonard@gmail.com if you prefer. Please write CPOW REUNION in the subject line.

- ~~~~~
- Please describe** your overall interest in attending a CPOW reunion in 2023 (assuming travel is safe again).

Very High	Somewhat High	Moderate	Somewhat Low	Very Low
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- How likely** are you to attend a future CPOW reunion in each of the following location scenarios?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not at all likely	Will not attend
--	-------------	-----------------	-------------------	-----------------

If location is driving distance	_____	_____	_____	_____
If location requires you fly	_____	_____	_____	_____

- Please rank** the reunion location choices below in order of preference, where **1 is most preferred and 4 is least preferred**.

_____ Pismo Beach, CA
Pismo would be a beachfront facility to enjoy the sunshine and ocean views with access by car, train or plane.

_____ Sacramento, CA
Embassy Suites in Sacramento is the site of past successful reunions, our "home sweet home".

_____ Norfolk, VA
Norfolk would be an East Coast experience including time at the MacArthur Memorial.

_____ New Orleans, LA
New Orleans would include the National WWII Museum and time to explore its many exhibits.

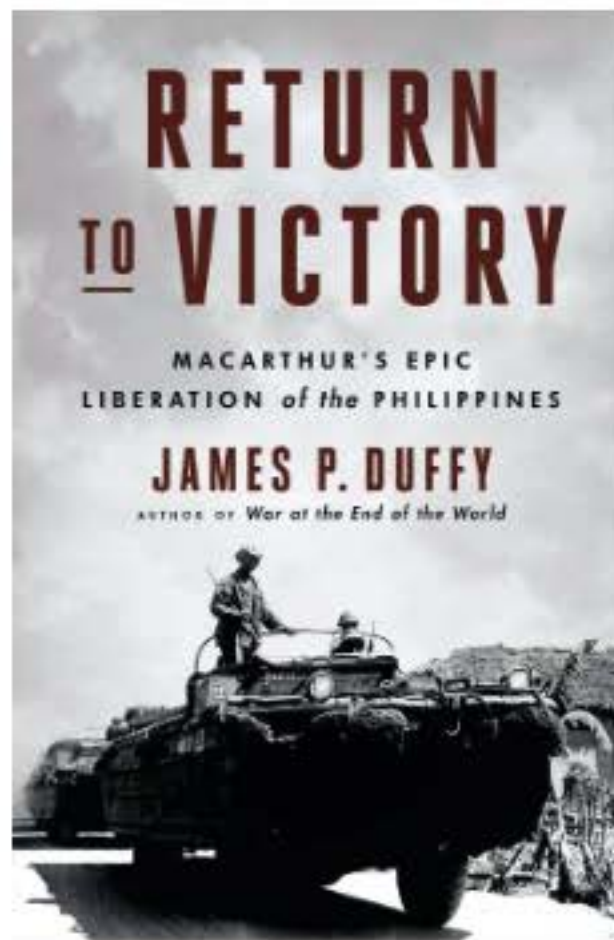
_____ Other (Please explain. We welcome your input.)

In the meantime, if you are interested in planning a mini-reunion in 2022, for example a luncheon, go for it! We will assist you in any way possible. Contact Cindie Leonard at cindieleonard@gmail.com or (208) 890-5694.

Book Review
by Angus Lorenzen

Return to Victory: MacArthur's Epic Liberation of the Philippines

By James P. Duffy | Hachette Books, 2021



Those of us who were in the internment camps in Manila cannot forget that coded message that came over the loudspeakers at Santo Tomas, “Better Leyte than never”. That was in October of 1944 and was an affirmation that the U.S. Navy’s air raids on Manila starting September 21 were just the start of the action by the American Army and Navy that would eventually get us out of

the hell hole we were in. But we could never imagine the ferocity of battle that was in store for the American forces before they could finally liberate us, nor the murderous fury of the Japanese that followed as they destroyed Manila and murdered untold thousands of civilians

James Duffy now fills in the gap in our knowledge as he tells the story of MacArthur’s return to the Philippines and the tussle he had with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to convince them that the Philippines, not Formosa, was the most appropriate jumping off location for the invasion of Japan that would have to be accomplished before peace could finally prevail. The Philippine Islands sat squarely in the shipping path of the oil, rubber, and other commodities that Japan had to ship from the Dutch East Indies to the home islands. Occupation by Allied forces would provide the ability to unmercifully harry the ships carrying these supplies to a Japan that vitally needed them to carry on the war.

The original plan was to land on Mindanao where the Army Air Corps could support the troops from New Guinea, but it was changed to the more central location of Leyte when Navy pilots reported minimal enemy activity there. One thing that was clear was that air power was to be the deciding factor for American forces and the strategic location of airfields was paramount. Japan’s strategy since the start of the war was to have a concentration of capital ships that could destroy an enemy fleet. But aircraft carriers changed the way that navies fought, and the U.S. had the technology and resources to build far more aircraft carriers than the Japanese did, which doomed Japan’s plan for a decisive naval victory which would cause the U.S. to sue for peace. They made one final attempt at a decisive

sea victory during the American invasion of the Philippines, but the result was almost complete destruction of the Imperial Navy. It was then that they turned to suicide missions.

When General Wainwright ordered all armed forces under his command to surrender to the Japanese after the fall of Corregidor, many small units broke away and formed guerilla units. MacArthur ordered the leaders to avoid confrontation with the Japanese and to develop intelligence information that would be valuable when he returned. Without question, the guerilla movement in the Philippines was huge and when the American forces returned, they provided information needed by the Landing forces and joined the troops in combat.

The battle for the Philippines was characterized by two indomitable forces. On the one side was General MacArthur who was determined to keep his promise to return and mustered all of the forces he could to make that happen. On the other side was the Japanese Imperial Army that believed that a major defeat of the Americans on the battlefield would cause them to negotiate for peace. The Philippines was where that major battle would take place and for that the Japanese brought General Yamashita, “The Tiger of Malaya”, from Manchuria to command their forces in the Philippines. Yamashita assembled a force of 260,000 men on Luzon to prepare for the major battle. The Japanese navy also assembled fleets to deter the American forces and as the battle became imminent there were four Japanese fleets facing four American fleets.

The American landings on Leyte commenced on October 20, 1944, over a long stretch of the east coast of Leyte. It’s not well known what a major landing it was, but for comparison, more troops were landed on Leyte than were landed in Normandy on D-day. One of the early objectives was Tacloban, and the 1st Cavalry raced from their landing beach to occupy the lightly held city. Shortly afterwards, MacArthur arrived and announced that he had returned as promised and Tacloban became the provisional capital of the Philippine Islands.

General Yamashita had been placed in command of the defense of all of the Philippine Islands. He was preparing for the big battle to be on Luzon, but the Imperial Army in Tokyo wanted it to be on Leyte and commanded Yamashita to send troops to Leyte to engage the American forces. Reluctantly, he did so but most of the troopships were sunk because of the superior American air power. Still the fighting was intense, especially in the northwest of the island. General MacArthur announced the end of

(Return to Victory, continued on page 6)

(Return to Victory, continued from page 5)

organized resistance on Leyte on December 25, 1944, but resistance continued until March 1945.

The next large island invaded was Mindoro on December 15, 1944, only a short distance from Manila, and use of its airfields allowed Army Air Corps coverage over Manila and the Lingayen landing beaches that were used a short time later. The landing was made at Lingayen shortly afterward on January 9, 1945. The 6th Army started moving cautiously down the central valley of Luzon. MacArthur was anxious to reach Manila and ordered a more aggressive advance, resulting in the 1st Cavalry reaching the capital city on February 3 and the 37th Infantry arriving a day later. And thus began the infamous Battle of Manila, the most intense urban battle fought by the U.S. during WWII.

The things that I considered the most important takeaways from this book were as follows.

- The land battles in the Philippines were not trivial. Huge numbers of troops on both sides battled for supremacy, and the Japanese hoped for a victory that would force the Americans to sue for peace.
- Air power over the battlefield was essential and American forces moved quickly to build or renovate airfields in the territory they captured. In fact, access to locations for airfields was paramount in deciding where to land.

- Naval power on both sides was deployed in some of the major naval battles of the war. Each side had four fleets that engaged the enemy in different parts of the archipelago. Naval losses for the Japanese were devastating, including the loss of their two battleships that were the largest in the World.

- Japanese aircraft carriers were unable to match the number of carriers fielded by the Americans, which caused them a huge disadvantage in the naval battles. Having lost so many experienced naval combat pilots, the Japanese turned to using inexperienced pilots in the infamous suicide attacks by kamikazes.

- The American forces were aided by guerilla units to a much greater extent than indicated by many other authors. Guerillas held large sections of some islands, withholding them from use by the Japanese forces.

The author does a good job of describing the action throughout the Philippines and includes a number of maps and photos. He concentrates on strategy of the commanders on both sides. It is difficult to follow the naval battles which are so important to the outcome, and I would recommend having a fairly large size map of the Philippine Islands to trace the sea battles. This book fills in a lot of gaps in our knowledge about what was happening around us as we awaited deliverance from the Japanese oppression.