



From the Commander

Here's our summer newsletter. This issue includes information on our **upcoming informal reunion at the MacArthur Memorial in Norfolk, VA** this October. The program is on Saturday October 12 at the MacArthur Memorial and is a combined event with the Alamo Scouts. The Alamo Scouts were a WWII Reconnaissance Unit known for liberating POWs in the Philippines. This event also offers the perfect opportunity to visit the MacArthur Memorial and see the exhibit *The Price of Unpreparedness: POWs in the Philippines during WWII* (further described on page 10). We appreciate that Board members Dan Doolan and Chris Larsen have made these arrangements, and Cindie Leonard is handling registrations. Please see page 6 for more details and the registration form.

Speaking of reunions, February 2025 will mark 80 years since the liberation of Manila. We do not yet have details to share about an event for this momentous anniversary, but since the next newsletter won't be out until January 2025, **it is very important that you update your membership and pay your \$15 annual dues so we have your current mailing address and email on file.** The membership form is on page 5. We will send details as soon as we have them about the 80th anniversary reunion.

Also in this newsletter, we have part two of Mary Beth Klee's *A Matter of Faith: Religion and Hope at Santo Tomas*, and a review by Martin Meadows of a new book, *Waiting For America: A Civilian Prisoner of Japan in the Philippines*, just published this February. This is the story of Patty (Croft) Kelly Stevens and her internment in both Santo Tomas and Los Baños. It is written by Larry C. Floyd with Patty Kelly Stevens. Additionally, Angus Lorenzen shares his memory of meeting one of the Santo Tomas liberators in the Philippines in 2005 at an event recognizing the 60th anniversary of liberation.

Please stay comfortable and safe during these hot summer days.

Sally Meadows

A Matter of Faith: Religion and Hope at Santo Tomas - Part 2

By Mary Beth Klee

This is the second installment of a two-part article based on Dr. Klee's presentation by the same title at the CPOW conference in April 2023. She reviews themes covered in Part 1, then recounts three stories of faith and hope at Santo Tomas.

"Did you ever consider suicide?" That question posed by a Filipino teen to a surviving American internee at the seventieth anniversary of liberation in Manila sparked my initial reflections on this topic. Why amid overcrowding, cruelty, disease, hunger and eventually starvation could Joan Bennett Chapman respond decisively: "No. No, we didn't even think about it. We just knew our boys would be back. We had faith." Her reply opened for me a larger question on this matter of faith and hope at Santo Tomas. What role did faith—formal and civil religion—play in Camp?

The first part of this article (January 2024) focused on the robust frameworks of organized and civil religion at Santo Tomas. With its iconic cross tower and crucifixes on every wall, the University of Santo Tomas bore architectural witness to a heritage of faith even before it became a prison. At internment (January 1942), the Executive Committee was quick to establish a Department of Religion as one of the original sixteen committees created to help run the camp. Chaired by Rev. Walter Brooks Foley (pastor of Union Church of Manila) and assisted by Dr. Don Holter (President of Union Theological Seminary), that industrious group organized a hope-summoning flurry of activities: religious services in every denomination, Sunday school, adult classes of many kinds, men's and women's choirs and a limitless number of pastoral outreach activities.

Nor can there be doubt about the hardiness of "civil religion" at Santo Tomas — a shared commitment to historic American ideals of self-determination, democracy, can-do activism and humor. That supplied other wings of hope,

manifesting itself in tremendous committee organization (“let’s show them how democracy works!” as a slogan), a full K-12 school for the 700 children, newspaper publication, floor shows with Dave Harvey, music nightly on the PA system (often with coded messages), readings of works such as Maxwell Anderson’s Valley Forge, and almost consistently throughout -- irreverent humor. Not all STIC internees were church-goers or fans of Uncle Sam, but there is evidence of a widely shared ethos of faith in God and country that helped sustain hope.

On February 3, 1945, when the First Cavalry Division of the US Army and the 44th Tank Battalion pounded through the camp gates, nearly four thousand emaciated internees rejoiced, their long wait for liberation rewarded. Some thought of the old Protestant hymn “Ten Thousand times ten thousand/In sparkling raiment bright/The armies of the ransomed saints / throng up the steps of light/Tis finished, all is finished, their fight with death and sin.” The camp’s own Liberation Bulletin from that date completed the chorus: “Ring Open Wide, the Golden Gates and Let the Victors in!”

How the starving, sick, mind-numbingly weary prisoners “kept the faith” was unique to each person and family. But many had their eyes on a higher Power.

What internees endured in their thirty-seven months of captivity is not to be underestimated. How the starving, sick, mind-numbingly weary prisoners “kept the faith” was unique to each person and family. But many had their eyes on a higher Power. Former internee Pam Brink notes, “It was our faith that sustained us. While at Los Baños I received instruction prior to receiving the sacrament of Confirmation taught by one of the Maryknoll nuns who were imprisoned with us. We regularly attended mass.... Our faith was a constant and we were not alone. The 7th Day Adventists, who had the cubicle next to us at LB were practicing Adventists. Our family admired them immensely.”

Let’s look at three little-known stories of faith and hope from internees at Santo Tomas. For the first of them I am indebted to Mary Louella Cleland Hedrick, whose family was from Cebu. Thirteen-year-old “Lulu” was interned in two camps before Santo Tomas and in the second, saw something she will never forget.

Her Japanese captors believed that an internee had a radio. They tied him to a stake, beat him with a hose, pulled his hair and head back, made him stare at the sun for hours, and told him he would go blind

before the end of the day if he didn’t confess its whereabouts. After much abuse, the uncooperative man collapsed and was hauled away. The two soldiers reported to the Commandant, then headed for a Japanese army plane beyond the barbed wire. Angry prisoners watched the little plane lift into the free blue sky, the red suns under its wings mocking them.

Then they heard a strange buzzing noise overhead and saw “this dirty cloud that’s growing and swirling and spreading in bands,” Lulu recalled. They watched as the mass churned, roiled, then enveloped the little plane. It was a swarm of locusts—as many as four billion locusts, which hatch only once every seventeen years. “This cloud stretched for miles,” Lulu told me, “And maybe the locusts thought that plane was a crop—I don’t know. Because pretty soon the hum of the plane and the buzz of the locusts were all one thing—one huge rumble and gigantic fuzzy smudge.”

She went on to describe how the locusts seemed to swallow up their strange prey –crusting the shell of the plane, obliterating the red suns painted under the wings, until finally the chewed-up wreckage plummeted from the sky in a death spiral, crashing smack in front of the barbed wire of the camp. “For one minute, we all forgot we were prisoners and we cheered. Loud and wild cheers, but then we caught ourselves and stopped – right away before the guards could get mad and shoot us or haul somebody else to the stake. I clapped my hand right over my mouth when I realized it,” she said.

That scene was almost biblical, wasn’t it? A plague of locusts with an entirely new twist. Admittedly, people react differently. To some that must’ve just seemed an astonishing act of nature. But to others, like Lulu, it was evidence of Providence at work, God in the darkness. Justice served. Not removing the core evil of imprisonment or the cruelty she would endure, but nurturing the germ of hope.

The second story of faith and hope draws on teen internee Lee Iseron’s experience. Lee and her family were Catholic and regular mass-goers at STIC. Lee had seen the execution of a Filipino vendor in camp with a gruesome water torture. She was fifteen and horrified that their captors would act like such monsters. But it was also time for mass, and seventy Catholic priests had been newly imprisoned. They had a daily obligation to celebrate mass, and the Japanese did not stand in the way of this. So, the Spanish Dominican priests who owned Santo Tomas opened the University’s large Museum of Natural History for that purpose.

Lee describes her first mass at the museum in one of her talks. “The Museum was a dark place three floors high. Balconies overhung the second and third floors and all the walls in between were covered with the mounted heads and carcasses of every species of animal to be found in the P.I. In the center of the hall there were cases with specimens of all the snakes and other reptile life displayed. These glass cases were ... used as altars. This was in the days before concelebration, and we would have 35 priests at once offering mass, while the other 35 served. To see 35 consecrations taking place simultaneously in that dark and forbidding room [hosts, the Body of Christ, lifted to the heavens] with all the lions, tigers, and gorillas looking on was something we would never forget.”

When the priests genuflected, she noted, they looked straight into the eyes of the serpent. Lee described to her children her very strong sense in that moment that God was with them in the horror. In *Leonore’s Suite*, I describe her reaction to those hosts raised above the reptiles: “No basso profundo voice boomed, but I heard Him. I am with you in the darkness and the beasts don’t win. The serpent is crushed.” For Lee, this was a time of recognizing God among them in a time of horror; lending fortitude if not sunny hope.

How do you maintain hope? By ongoing exertion and even heroic kindness extended to each other.

Here’s a third story from a Maryknoll nun, who told Lee that she saw the hand of God in the least likely of places. Lee writes that in July 1944, the Japanese rounded up nearly a thousand nuns and priests who were under house arrest in Manila to be sent to the prison in Los Baños.

“When the Japanese interned these religious, they did not want to have the Filipinos see them taking truckloads of nuns and priests away, so they brought them into our camp for the day, and kept them on the front campus, planning to move them at 2 or 3 in the morning....One of the sisters in this group was later Mother General of Maryknoll, and she told me that when they were picked up, she had a case of dengue fever and was running a high temperature. There was no place to sit except on the ground and when they found out that they would be there until the early hours of the morning, sister’s companion became quite worried about her and begged the Japanese to let them go inside some place in our camp.

Now we had a hospital in camp, and, of course, that’s where they should have taken her. At least they could have taken her to one of the women’s rooms, but ... they took the sisters over to the Gym where 600 men lived. Now I won’t say that all the men who lived in the Gym were bums, but I can say that all the bums we had in camp lived in the Gym. The Japs opened the Gym doors and pushed the nuns in and the two sisters took a look at this room full of grizzled, unkempt men, and those men stared back at the only two women to ever set foot in the Gym.

Suddenly, a man jumped up and began shouting in a foreign language, and from all over the Gym, men started running toward the frightened sisters. Then one yelled, ‘Don’t be afraid, Sister; we are Dutch priests – we’ll take care of you.’ And so they did, commandeering a corner of the room and curtaining it off, and looking after them until Sister was well enough to travel to Los Baños two days later. The hand of God? The good Sisters thought so.

How do you maintain hope? The fountain of faith helps. An openness to seeing divine activity in one’s midst. Those locusts swarming that target. Those hosts lifted to the heads of beasts and over the cases of serpents. Those priests who leapt forward. How do you maintain hope? By ongoing exertion and even heroic kindness extended to each other. Those singers who lent their voices to lift hearts. Those teachers who made sure STIC students “used their noodles.” Those showmen who taught people to laugh and make light of the heavy. Those camp leaders who never stopped organizing. All who helped others go the extra mile on chow lines, package line, weevil duty, or garbage collection. Embodying grit and extending grace.

Let’s circle back now to the Manila high school student’s question and Joan’s answer. Did you ever consider suicide? “No, we never even thought about it... We had faith.” Today’s young, who struggle with diseases of despair, may be seeking historic moorings: faith in God, country, and fellow countrymen. It’s not all on us, these internees could tell them. Have faith.

Mary Beth Klee holds a Ph.D. in the History of American Civilization from Brandeis University. She is the daughter of Santo Tomas internee Leonore Iserson Klee and the author of Leonore’s Suite, a novel inspired by her mother’s experience as a teen prisoner of war. (www.leonoressuite.com) This article is excerpted from a talk that Dr. Klee presented at the CPOW reunion in April 2023. The footnoted full-length talk is available upon request to klee.mb@gmail.com.

Diosdado Guytingco and the Liberation of Santo Tomas Internment Camp *by Angus Lorenzen*

In February of 2005, my wife and I joined Sascha Jansen's tour of the war sites on Luzon and the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Santo Tomas. There was an all-day celebration on the campus of the university, and in the evening, we gathered on the plaza in front of the Main Building for entertainment and a buffet dinner. The whole front of the Main Building was decorated with fairy lights, a stage had been erected and a wonderful buffet dinner served. At our table was Diosdado Guytingco and his wife. He had been 19 years old at the time of liberation and I had been 9 those many years ago. We connected with that couple, so they invited us to lunch and we kept in contact with them for many years.

The lighting of the building and plaza reminded me of that day 60-years earlier that we awaited the arrival of American forces with great excitement. It had been a spectacular sunset, and as darkness fell, the sky was lit by flares, and a mysterious low pitch rumble reverberated through our bodies, which we later learned was the sound of tank treads on cobblestone streets. As the sky darkened, we had to go back to our dormitories, where people gathered at tables in the halls talking excitedly and wondering if what was happening was somehow connected with the incident that happened that morning. A Marine Corps dive bomber had crossed the campus and flown over the Main Building, dropping a pair of goggles with a note attached; "Roll out the Barrel. Santa Claus is coming Sunday or Monday". In the late afternoon, another flight of nine dive bombers crossed the camp – we didn't know it then, but the Marine Corps had nine aircraft over the flying column during all daylight hours providing close air cover.

The 1st Cavalry flying column had about 800 men and was divided into 3 serials that would leapfrog each other as a lead serial captured and held a critical position. At the end of the second day, they were almost out of fuel but during the night a fuel convoy caught up with them and by morning they were ready to roll again. Their first objective was to get across a bridge spanning a gorge nearby. The column arrived at the bridge to discover that the Japanese had placed explosives on it and already lit the fuses. A Navy demolition expert raced onto the bridge in the face of Japanese sniper fire. He cut the fuses and rolled the barrels of explosives into the river far below. The cavalry could now cross and the way to Manila was open.

The first serial arrived at the main boulevard entering Manila about 6:00 PM. It raced down undefended boulevards to the Pasig River and then to the Malacañang Palace. The second serial arrived about an hour later, but the Japanese were now alert and defending the boulevards. The second serial had to take back streets to avoid the Japanese. Guytingco was 19 years old and a student, but also an intelligence agent for a band of guerillas led by

Captain Colayco. He happened to be in North Manila and encountered a column of tanks, trucks, and other vehicles being led by a jeep with Lt. Col. Conner, C.O. of the 2nd squadron, 8th Cavalry (the second serial). Capt. Colayco called him over and invited him to join them as they made their way to the Santo Tomas Internment Camp.

At just a few minutes before 9:00 PM the column arrived at the front Gate of STIC. It was an iron gate with an iron arch crossing over it. Lt. Col. Conner and Capt. Colayco dismounted to inspect the gate and see if the column could pass through it. A Japanese guard threw a hand grenade at them, wounding the column commander in the leg and mortally wounding the Captain. While they dragged the wounded men to the center of Calle España to treat them, the lead tank, Battlin' Basic, charged the gate and broke through. The column then advanced up the East access road into the Plaza. Internees in dormitories on the southeast side of the Main Building saw the column arrive and streamed out of the building to greet them.

Guytingco helped carry Capt. Colayco into the Main Building and the temporary surgery that had been set up (the Captain died of his wounds a week later). Guytingco remained at the surgery to assist where he could, and he held a battle lantern over a trooper who had a badly wounded foot. The surgeon was assisted by one of the nurses from Corregidor that had been imprisoned at STIC. When the wounded trooper awakened, he saw the nurse and said, "Have I died and gone to heaven? I see an angel." Assured that he was not dead, he said to the nurse, "I'm going to marry you". Many years later, Guytingco, now a practicing lawyer, read in a lawyers' journal in Manila that a lady was looking for a man who had been in the surgery and helped a wounded trooper during the liberation action. Guytingco responded with his story. They started a correspondence, and when he told her that he was planning to visit his daughters in Seattle, she immediately made arrangements to fly there and meet him.

When they met, the woman explained that the wounded trooper had married the "angel" and she was their daughter. Finally, a war story that had a happy ending.

Liberators Lieutenant Diosdado Guytingco (right) and Captain Manuel Colayco (US Army Forces in the Far East guerrilla officer) guided the 1st Cavalry to the front gate of Santo Tomas Internment Camp on February 3, 1945.

(Screenshot from "Victims of Circumstance" Lou Gopal, 2005)



CPOW 2024 Membership Form

Please sign up for, or renew, your membership to receive our newsletter. 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.

Former POW or internee

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 _____

Describe 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

Register today for CPOW’s October 2024 Reunion in Norfolk Virginia – with speakers and a visit to the MacArthur Memorial Museum’s WWII POW exhibit! (Registration Deadline 8/20)

Event Details: This CPOW Reunion will occur **Friday October 11 to Sunday October 13, 2024 in Norfolk Virginia**. We have a hotel block arranged at the Courtyard Marriott Norfolk (downtown) which is next-door to the MacArthur Memorial Museum, Norfolk, Virginia. (Hotel booking details below).

Friday October 11, Explore Norfolk Friday! Go to visitnorfolk.com for information. Dinner on your own.

8:00 PM Informal CPOW gathering in Norfolk Marriott Courtyard lobby, no host bar/pick up nametags

Saturday October 12, 2024 Breakfast on your own then –

09:00 AM to 1:30 PM MacArthur Memorial Museum joint event (CPOW & Alamo Scouts) & lunch. This is a joint event that includes the Alamo Scouts (and descendants). The Alamo Scouts were a WWII Reconnaissance Unit known for liberating POWs in the Philippines. This will include speakers, including friend of CPOW Jim Zobel (MacArthur Memorial Museum historian/executive curator). The morning portion will occur at the MacArthur Memorial Museum & a no host lunch nearby at a location TBA.

1:30 – 5:00 PM Free time-explore Museum or Norfolk. Visit US Navy’s Atlantic fleet-the world’s largest!

5:15 – 7:30 PM CPOW Dinner with speakers and discussion (location TBA)

Sunday October 13th Check out and time to explore on your own. Consider a day at Virginia Beach (20 min)!

CPOW 2024 Reunion Registration (Registration Deadline August 20, 2024)

First Name	Last Name	Member (Y/N)	Reg Fee (& dues if applic.)
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Opt “yes” in “Member” column if you’re a member seeking to pay ’24 dues or nonmember joining (\$15) **TOTAL** _____

Full Registration- Member \$90, Non-member \$110; includes speakers & Saturday dinner _____

Please send your check made out to CPOW for the total to: TOTAL: \$
Cindie Leonard, 1675 S. Lake Crest Way, Eagle, ID 83616

Hotel booking: Book at the **Courtyard Marriott Norfolk (downtown) 520 Plume St, Norfolk, VA** by calling 757-963-6000 or 888-236-2427, mention the “CPOW Reunion” for \$169 / night (Fri to Sun 10/11-10/13/2024) & \$5 / night parking

Please complete the following for primary event contact person (PRINT CLEARLY PLEASE):

Name: _____ Email address: _____ Phone: _____

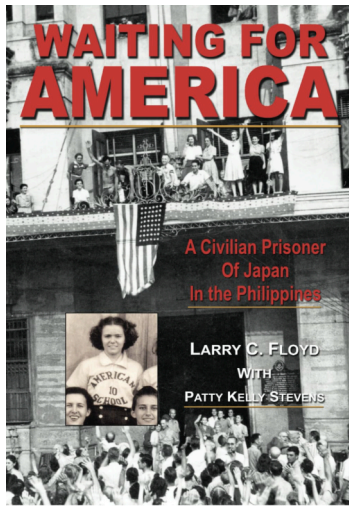
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Questions? Contact Daniel M. Doolan, doolan@sonic.net, 707-327-6886

Book Review by Martin Meadows

Waiting For America: A Civilian Prisoner of Japan in the Philippines

By Larry C. Floyd with Patty Kelly Stevens | Turnkey Communications, February 2024



Nearly eight decades after their liberation in February 1945, former civilian prisoners of Japan in the Philippines continue to recount their experiences in print. The latest such narrative differs from its predecessors, however, in that it unfolds via a professional historian rather than directly from the former internee herself.

The latter, now Patty Kelly Stephens, was a Manila high school senior named

Patty Gene Croft — to simplify, hereafter cited as simply Patty — at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. Her story is told by history professor Larry C. Floyd, who provides its structure by placing it within the broader context of geopolitical confrontations during the 1930s and 1940s (and even earlier). He expertly interweaves the macro and the micro levels: the historian’s perspective on that wider context — the background, and eventual course, of World War II (WWII) in the Pacific — with Patty’s input, utilizing both her wartime diary and her contemporary recollections.

To begin at the micro level, Patty’s British-born father, Alfred J. Croft, moved to the U.S., became an American citizen, self-trained as a pilot, and served as a flight instructor with the U.S. Army Air Service in WWI. He then moved to Manila, where he organized and trained the Philippine Air Service. In Manila he met, and married, an American nurse, Selma M. Bergstrom. The couple then moved to China, where he served as a chief flight instructor for Sun Yat-sen’s beleaguered Cantonese government.

From there the couple moved to the U.S. mainland, and then with their first child, Alfred Jr., to Hawaii, where Patty was born in 1924. The family then returned to Manila in 1926, where later a second son, William, was born. In 1938 Patty’s parents separated, and her father moved to Hawaii; thus he was not interned during WWII, nor was Alfred Jr., who was in college in the U.S. when the war began.

As for Patty herself, she attended grade school mostly at the American School, whose students were almost all children of expatriates. She started accordion lessons at about the time she entered high school, and quickly became proficient on the instrument. Interestingly, her teacher was a pro-Nazi German, who, suspiciously, liked to arrange for

the two of them to perform at military camps, and who vanished shortly before the initial Japanese attack. After hostilities began, Patty’s mother, who as noted was a nurse, helped to care for casualties inflicted by Japanese bombings. After the Japanese took Manila in January 1942, the three Crofts were interned, along with thousands of other “enemy aliens,” in Santo Tomas Internment Camp (STIC) — and, much later, in Los Baños Internment Camp (LBIC).

While in many respects Patty’s experiences as an internee inevitably mirrored those of other internees, there were noteworthy distinctions. As one example, Patty performed with her accordion during the very first of the stage shows that Dave Harvey, the camp’s widely-admired head of entertainment, organized in February 1942. A more significant example — in fact, its account starts on the first page and concludes in the Epilogue — pertains to a huge American flag that Alfred Croft rescued from a Manila fire in 1920, and that the American governor-general of the Philippines later formally presented to Croft in recognition of his daring feat. Symbolic of the patriotism of the (future) internees, who later were “waiting for America” to liberate them from their Japanese captors, the Crofts at great personal risk carefully preserved the flag through more than three years of internment and thereafter; and eventually Patty, on the anniversary in 2018 of LBIC Liberation Day, presented the flag for safekeeping to the U.S. Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, N. C.

We turn now to the macro level, which will be the principal concern herein for two main reasons. First, because most readers of this book probably will be more familiar with the micro than with the macro aspect. And second, because the book’s distinctive approach, as noted, differs from most internment-camp histories by virtue of its macro-level coverage. In that regard, it is both understandable and unavoidable that much of the book focuses on the role of General Douglas MacArthur, both before and during WWII. Indeed, the author notes that two highly-regarded volumes on MacArthur — by William Manchester and by Hiroshi Masuda — “provide much of the framework” for the book’s military/macro emphasis (pp. xii-xiii).

On the whole, the author — whether by design or not — presents a balanced view of MacArthur, in the sense that he discusses both positive and negative episodes on the General’s record. On the positive side, two such episodes are particularly noteworthy, most especially from the standpoint of Japan’s captives, inasmuch as both events

(Waiting, continued on page 8)

(Waiting, continued from page 7)

served to hasten their liberation. The one that occurred early in the war served to shorten the conflict; whereas the later development, paradoxically, may have prolonged it (though of course that is a matter of conjecture).

The first occasion involved MacArthur's decision in 1942 to stop the Japanese advance not defensively at Australia, which seemed to be the most logical action, but rather offensively with a surprise invasion of New Guinea; that maneuver, which the Japanese did not anticipate, clearly obviated what would have been a much longer struggle to repel the invaders (p. 87). The other occurrence came at a fateful July 1944 meeting in Hawaii, at which MacArthur managed to dissuade President Roosevelt and his advisers from adopting Admiral Chester Nimitz's plan to by-pass the Philippines in favor of an attack closer to Japan (pp. 113-114). By persuading FDR that the Philippines should be retaken first, MacArthur did two things: conceivably he may have lengthened the war by delaying a direct attack on, and potential invasion of, Japan itself (Hiroshima was still a year in the future); but in any case he obviously — and likely in large part for personal reasons — hastened the liberation of the Philippines and of Japan's prisoners.

Turning to some of the negatives, some MacArthur critics might start with his actions well before WWII began, in connection with his skirmishes with U.S.

government authorities as they were in the process of developing the American “Europe first” war plans; his critics could argue that he was at fault, at least technically, in that he failed to convince those officials to heed his calls for increased military aid to the Philippines to counter the growing threat posed by Japan. Moreover, his plans to repulse a potential Japanese invasion were “overly optimistic,” and his “eleventh-hour planning would prove disastrous” (p. 31). Then, when war finally did come to the islands, MacArthur’s various errors, ironically, well illustrated his “own two-word summary of failure in warfare — too late” (p. 33). The many American errors when the Japanese first attacked the Philippines are attributed to the fact that “MacArthur seemed strangely and uncharacteristically indecisive in the midst of this crisis” (p. 40). Unrelated to MacArthur but certainly worthy of mention in any catalog of blunders, is Washington's failure to warn Hawaii on 7 December 1941 even though U.S. intelligence had decoded the key message from Tokyo to the Japanese embassy in Washington; the book provides a detailed explanation of how that fiasco came to be (pp. 35-36).

Finally, there is what might be termed a “neutral” category, in that it includes actions that are not necessarily either positive or negative per se; it does, however, provide additional perspective on some of MacArthur’s best-known moves. Following are two

(Waiting, continued on page 9)

Advertisement

William A. Karges Fine Art Carmel, California

We are seeking early paintings of the Philippines by the following artists for private collectors in the Philippines. We pay very high prices and offer free appraisals as well.

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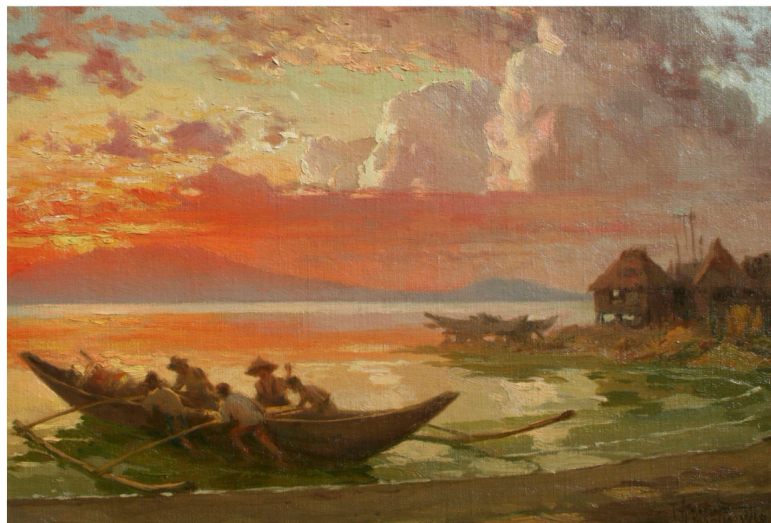
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pkraft@kargesfineart.com

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Painting,
"Manila Bay", by
Fernando Amorsolo.

(Waiting, continued from page 8)

examples, again one from the start of the war and one from much closer to its end. The first one contributes to understanding the motivation behind his famed “I shall return” proclamation. Supposedly MacArthur was influenced not — or at least not only — by his well-known ego but (also) by Carlos Romulo, then a journalist and aide to Philippine President Manuel Quezon (both of them were on Corregidor with MacArthur). Apparently Romulo convinced MacArthur that “I shall return” was preferable to any other phrase (such as “We [or the U.S.] shall return”) because Filipinos would be more likely to believe the former phrasing (pp. 71-72). Second, in the latter stages of the war, Admiral William “Bull” Halsey, who played a major role in developing the island-hopping/leap-frogging strategy, greatly influenced the unexpected decision to bypass Mindanao in favor of the celebrated Leyte landing (p. 114); that decision probably accelerated the liberation of Japan's Philippine war prisoners by some two months (and, not so incidentally, it became known in STIC via the camp's loudspeaker system with the celebrated statement “better Leyte than never”).

The book's coverage of the Pacific war has the added advantage (at least for this reviewer) of returning to the spotlight many of the military leaders of the WWII era. The names that once dominated the wartime news (e.g., Marshall, King, Mitscher, Krueger, Stark, Leahy, Kenney, Eichelberger, etc., along with Nimitz and Halsey) are now largely forgotten — but not by those who lived through WWII. And, continuing in a purely personal vein, the book enabled me (especially as a chronicler of STIC musical entertainment) to resolve an old mystery. I had long wondered how it was possible for the three Fernandez sisters in LBIC to know the wartime (1944) song “Three Little Sisters,” which they were shown singing, a la the Andrews Sisters, in an immediate post-LBIC-liberation video. The most likely explanation is that they must have heard the song — either on the internees' hidden radio or on the short-wave radio left behind by their captors — when the Japanese temporarily left LBIC for a few days in early January 1945.

Continuing on the subject of LBIC, it should be pointed out that the book provides an interesting account of conditions at Los Baños, where the Croft women spent almost three months (Patty's brother had transferred there before they did). As one example of the situation, LBIC had an apparently even worse version of STIC's hated Lt. Abiko, in the form of the equally-despised Lt. Konishi

(who, by the way, was transferred there from STIC).

While Abiko was killed during the liberation of STIC, Konishi survived and after the war was hung for war crimes. And absolutely not to be overlooked is the relatively unsung but heroic role in the liberation of LBIC of Lt. Col. Henry J. Muller (pp. 134 ff.)

A notable by-product of this history are the curious facts it cites about some of the American military men who served in the Philippines. An early example is that of Governor-General Leonard Wood (1860-1927).

Though several Philippine (and U.S.) sites are still named after him, it is not widely-known that Wood was involved in the last of the Indian Wars of the American West; headed Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in the war with Cuba, and also served as governor-general of Cuba;

was governor of the Moro Province in the southern Philippines (1903-1908); and served as U. S. Army Chief of Staff in Washington, D.C., before returning to the Philippines as governor-general in 1921 (p. 2). A later example is that of MacArthur's intelligence chief, Col. Charles Willoughby, who originally was a German named Karl Weidenbach, and who was an open admirer of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco (p. 28). There is also reference to the well-known strained relationship between MacArthur and his best-known aide in the Philippines, Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower. (Incidentally,

Patty notes that she regarded Eisenhower's son, John, who was a member of the Baguio Brent School basketball team, as “just another guy” [p. 24].)

The substantive portion of this review concludes with a discussion of topics that in effect blend the macro and the micro, via two questions that were of major concern to those who became internees. Once again these examples are from the extremes — one from even before the Pacific war erupted, and one toward the end of internment. In the former case, the author deals with the controversial argument (or excuse?) used by American authorities to justify preventing American civilians from leaving the Philippines during the period before the war — namely, the U.S. government's desire to avoid the negative impact on Filipino morale that would have resulted from an American exodus (p. 33). Then later, toward the end of their imprisonment, the question of the fate of the internees became particularly worrisome as American forces drew ever closer. The author maintains that there is no conclusive evidence of a Japanese policy to kill all prisoners as liberation approached — although LBIC became an exception to that conclusion. Whatever



Living in the Santa Mesa district of Manila in the 1930s, the Crofts were a part of the several thousand U.S. expatriates living in and around the cosmopolitan tropical city. From left, William, Selma, Patty, Alfred and Al Jr. Photo courtesy of Patty Kelly Stevens

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the case, the infamous execution of American POWs on the island of Palawan fueled MacArthur's concern that all captives would be executed and led to his orders for the daring ventures that liberated both military and civilian prisoners (see esp. pp. 147, 132).

Concluding on the procedural side, the book synthesizes the macro (the conduct of the war) and the micro (the fate of the internees, whose perspective Patty often represents). That approach should promote the book's appeal both to those interested mainly in internment-camp history as well as to those also concerned with wartime strategy and tactics (as discussed primarily from the American perspective). But even those already familiar with either or both aspects at least could refresh their memories, relive their own experiences, and/or even supplement their personal histories. Enabling them to do so is the fact that the book's coverage is enhanced by its inclusion of material not always available in other internment-related works — maps, some two dozen photographs, endnotes, bibliography, and index. The end result is a successful effort to place the internment experience within a broader wartime context while at the same time personalizing that context.

The “**The Price of Unpreparedness: POWs in the Philippines During World War II**”, opened on September 30, 2023 at the MacArthur Memorial in Norfolk, VA and is still ongoing. You can see the exhibit during our informal reunion on October 12, 2024 in Norfolk. See page 6 for details and registration.

“By early 1942, Japan’s empire had added 110 million new subjects and captured 132,000+ prisoners of war. In the Philippines, 19,000 American and 70,000 Filipino personnel were surrendered and taken into captivity by the Japanese. The Price of Unpreparedness will detail the nightmare that followed. It will also tell the story of the civilian POWs in the Philippines.

Liberated in 1945, American survivors believed there had to be a lesson learned from their experience. They wanted future generations to ask: “What is the lesson of Bataan, Corregidor and surrender in the Philippines?” The Price of Unpreparedness asks that question.”

For more information on this exhibit (admission is free), visit the Museum’s website <https://www.macarthurmemorial.org/196/Current-Special-Exhibit>.