



From the Commander

This is turning out to be a most eventful year for BACEPOW. We passed the 150-membership mark, and continue to grow with the addition of descendents of those who were prisoners in the camps. We successfully launched our website at www.bacepow.org and instituted a descendents forum at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bacepowkids/>. And we had several luncheons with excellent speakers and programs.

But right now, we are most excited about the preparations for our next reunion in Fremont, which will be a celebration of the 65th anniversary of our liberation. Normally, we would not have reunions three years in a row, but this seminal date is too good to pass up. Our program will be all about where we were and what we were doing when the ecstatic cry rang out, "They're here!" And we have some excellent guests lined up to give us new perspectives about the camps and life in them.

Also, we'll have an authors' corner where some of our members and friends who have written books can display, discuss, and sell them. It is always amazing to see how different our experiences were and to read the first-hand accounts of the people who suffered along with us.

We hope to have an outstanding crowd at this special reunion, so mark your calendar for January 22-24. And those who are more adventurous can take advantage of the back to the Philippines tour that leaves immediately after reunion, which will be highlighted by a special program at the University of Santo Tomas on February 3, 2010, 65 years after that momentous evening.

Angus Lorenzen

America's Gurkhas The Philippine Scouts 1901-1950

This article was contributed by Mike Houlahan, a retired Foreign Service officer with about 50 published articles and reviews, almost all on the Philippines. He is the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society Historian

One of the best-kept secrets of World War II is that the most decorated U.S. Army units in the early days of that conflict were manned by Filipinos. The heroics of the Philippine Scouts are omitted from most history books. While the commissioned officers of the Scouts included a number of native-born Americans, the noncommissioned officers and enlisted men were Pinoys. Well trained and highly motivated, they played a dominant role in the defense of Bataan in the face of the devastating invasion of the archipelago by over 43,000 battle-hardened Japanese combat troops.

The Philippine Army, 120,000 strong, existed more on paper than in reality. It was far from completely trained and equipped when the Japanese attacked in December 1941 and many of its soldiers had never fired the outdated WW I rifles they were issued.

One of the very few bright spots in this otherwise gloomy scenario was the well-trained Philippine Scouts, who had almost doubled in manpower in the year prior to the outbreak of hostilities, reaching full strength at about 12,350 officers and men. These Scouts, considered by many to be the best light infantry in the Pacific theater, were Gen. MacArthur's most effective force against the Japanese. During the defense of Bataan three Scouts, Sgt. Joe Calugas, Sr., 1st Lt. Alexander R. Nininger and 1st Lt. Willibald C. Bianchi, received Medals of Honor, America's highest award for combat valor. Only Sgt. Calugas survived the war.

The heroic stand of the Scout combat units began while opposing the Lingayen Gulf landings in mid-December 1941 and continued until the surrender of the main body of Fil-Am forces on Bataan in early April 1942. After that surrender, smaller groups of Scouts carried on the fight from Corregidor and the southern islands, then hundreds joined various guerrilla groups following the surrender of the USAFFE forces when Corregidor fell in early May.

The aftermath of the surrender was horrific. Of the 75,000 Fil-Am soldiers captured on Bataan, only 63,000 arrived alive at Camp O'Donnell following the Bataan Death March. In the camp approximately 26,000 Filipinos and 1,565 Americans



BACEPOW members Ted Cadwallader and Angus Lorenzen at the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society Reunion join members who represent the Muslim units and the 26th Cavalry.

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died. Included among the Filipino victims were 2,600 Scouts. Between combat, the Bataan Death March and prison camp, over one-third of the Scouts did not survive the war.

The conquest of the Philippines, expected by the Japanese high command to require only 50 days, had taken five months. The valiant stand of the Fil-Am forces had bought enough time to save Australia and New Zealand from invasion. These two countries became the staging point from which General Douglas MacArthur launched his island hopping campaign which eventually liberated the Philippines and saved thousands of civilian internees and hundreds of POWs from slaughter.

Scout Origins

Organized in 1901 by an Act of the United States Congress and recruited from the indigenous population, the Philippine Scouts initially were used to suppress Muslim Moro rebels in the Southern Philippine islands and garrison the colony when most U.S. troops were diverted to Europe during World War I. In gratitude for this service, the U.S. Congress authorized induction of the 6,000 Scouts into the regular U. S. Army following the war.

Post-war Scouts

The Japanese unconditional surrender on August 15, 1945 ended World War II. The United States quickly moved to fulfill its pre-war promise, granting independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946. It was not immediately obvious, but these two events were to mark the beginning of the end for the Philippine Scouts. By 1947 aggressive recruiting had increased their ranks to a peak of around 36,000, with the new troops used to guard U.S. military bases in the Philippines and for occupation duty, mainly on Okinawa.

Unfortunately, the use of Philippine Scouts on Okinawa was not a success. Animosity towards the Japanese as a result of their brutal wartime occupation of the Philippines appeared to be an important factor in the problems that emerged. Also weak discipline due to less intensive training and the inexperience of newly recruited junior officers further aggravated the situation. Finally, a tendency for the veteran Scouts to become naturalized Americans and transfer to non-Scout units reduced the numbers of experienced, well-trained officers available to Philippine Scout units.

These assorted problems led in mid-1947 to the gradual demobilization of Philippine Scout units. Post-war Scout recruits were not allowed to reenlist and pre-war Scouts with American citizenship were encouraged to transfer to non-Scout units. By mid-1949 most post-war Scouts had been discharged and by early 1950 only a few hundred unabsorbed pre-war Scouts remained, mostly men with medical problems awaiting discharge or retirement. A proud tradition of loyalty and combat heroism in the service of the United States had ended, made obsolete by the demise of the colonial relationship and the achievement of full independence for the Philippines.

Recipe Corner

In our last issue, John Montessa contributed the first part of a serialized article on his fine dining experience in Los Baños. Here is the conclusion of the article.

Haute Cuisine

One can only remember that the meals were dull and boring. In the beginning breakfast consisted of cracked wheat mush and coconut milk. Where the Japanese obtained that cereal is a mystery to me. After the cracked wheat supply ran out, breakfast became a dull routine of 'lugao', a rice gruel, ordinarily quite thick, but in the camp it was a bit thin. This was also served with coconut milk. To the unenlightened, coconut milk is the liquid inside the coconut. In truth, that liquid is coconut water. Coconut milk is the result of pressing grated coconut and collecting the drain-off, a creamy white, fat rich product, nutritious and pleasant tasting, used in many Asian cuisines. Camp craftsmen constructed a wooden press and every morning at 4:30 a.m. coconut grating teams prepared the product for the press. Since I was on a team of graters, I was able to take some of the pressed gratings to the barracks where we would toast them in a frying pan. There was nutrition in them; anything to keep going.

I remember lunch as being a ladle of mung beans and nothing else. Dinner was always the same insufficient amount of a stew composed of one or two kinds of vegetables, some minute bits of animal tissue or fat and, of course, a scoop of white rice. In spite of the Islands being in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and the China Sea, we never did see any seafood. Until the Japanese commandant prohibited the vendors from conducting their business, internees with money could augment their diet quite well with the exception of purchasing any meat. During the three years of internment, the International Red Cross continually attempted to deliver to the internees comfort kits containing canned goods and other non-perishable edibles. To my knowledge, the Japanese distributed only two kits to each person in Santo Tomas at Christmas 1942 and 1943, and one kit to each person in Los Baños in 1943. Later, I understood that the Japanese warehouses were well stocked with IRC kits. This is in contrast as to how the Nazis permitted captured Americans to receive a steady monthly supply of such kits. It is my belief that the American and allied civilian internees fared very badly under the Japanese compared to military prisoners captured by the Germans. Needless to say, American military POWs under Japanese authority suffered most of all with a higher death rate than any other unfortunates with the exception of the Holocaust victims.

In 1944, the Japanese began an incremental reduction in the food supply, the size of the camp, and the few liberties that the internees could exercise. When one thinks about it, it is reasonable to conclude that it was not because of a petty desire to inflict hardship upon the occupants. The Japanese military was not capable of a successful logistics program. It had launched a war with limited resources and lived off the bounty of the conquered territories whose population resented the appropriation of their natural wealth. Farmers burned their crop rather than receive worthless military script. In the end, the private soldier fared only somewhat better than the internees. I observed that the sentries in the guardhouses lunched on the content of a small 5"x8"x1 1/2" bento box whose content usually consisted of some rice, dried meat or fish, a pickle and perhaps a sweet. How do I know? I used to see internee children loitering about one of the sentry boxes waiting for the guards to finish eating. The guards would then toss whatever was left over to the children who dashed in to get them. The

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fastest kid got the prize. Once in a while an adult male would interfere and wrest it away from the children. This displeased the sentries who would glare at the intruder who was immune to such a display. The size of the camp was reduced when the commandant decided that the internees should no longer utilize any of the permanent pre-war structures and athletic fields. It was not possible for the rank and file of the internee community to know the reason. It was commonly ascribed to a vindictive desire by the Japanese to avenge themselves for their continuing losses sustained in the war. This may have been the case but one can't be sure. With respect to the loss of the few liberties permitted, I would ascribe it to the Japanese fear of losing control of the camp in view of their limited, unfit for battle rear echelon troops.

With the rations reduced to approximately one thousand calories per day, everyone's thoughts fixated on food. Many people indulged in a completely unrewarding pastime; salivating on colorful pictures in cookbooks: pictures of wonderful roasts, rich stews, pastries, etc. They did turn up their noses on some very nutritional by-products normally tossed out. We found that upon the slaughter of a carabao, the blood was discarded. Collecting the blood in a container, it would coagulate into the consistency of cranberry sauce and be grey in color. Very unappetizing! However, it could be slid out of the container and sliced like baloney. When fried in a pan with a little oil, it was very palatable (I thought so then) and very rich in protein. So my mother and we brothers were ahead of the game. Additionally, we collected the peelings from the camotes that the camp kitchen tossed out. Washed and cooked, they were as good and nutritious as any sweet potato. Finally, when the daily ration was reduced to eight hundred calories and the Japanese taking over the camp's truck garden for their own use, we were in dire straits. But it was going to get worse.

I have read and heard stories by former Los Baños internees of how they ate dogs and cats, bugs and beetles, earthworms and everything else imaginable. Most of those stories are exaggerations or pure fantasy. If they were true, how come they refused my cooked, coagulated water buffalo blood when offered? How come there was never a contest over the camote peelings? There was only one dog in the camp, belonging to an American professor of agriculture who lived on the campus with his family before the war. The Japanese permitted him to keep the dog on the proviso that it was his responsibility to provide for it. That sounds like a real problem. There is a story there about hunger that reveals something about character. It involved the professor, the dog and a third party. As a witness it made quite an impression on me. It is not appropriate to relate it here but I might write it in another episode. The point is that there were no other dogs available in the camp to add to the

menu.

With respect to eating cats, again I never heard much about that during my time in the camp. The one time it was mentioned was in a hush, hush voice. It was told that some Navy nurses killed, cooked and ate their own cat. I can understand why it was hush, hush and I am inclined to believe it. Bugs and beetles; they can be toxic. Moreover, when crushed, many beetles exude a sickly greenish, yellow, pus-like substance. I doubt those stories.

I was acquainted with a merchant sailor who actually experimented with earthworms before my very own eyes. He gathered a handful, put them in a pan with a little coconut oil and fried them. When cooked, he didn't offer me any until after he tried to eat them. He couldn't do it, he said, because they were too chewy and gritty. After all, earthworms ingest soil as they go through the earth. I did not partake. So much for an earthworm diet.

Ultimately conditions truly deteriorated and insult was added to injury. By design or otherwise, in the last two or three weeks before liberation, the rations were down to eight hundred calories daily. The insult was the distribution of un-husked rice to the camp kitchen. Knowing that they could not do anything with the rice, the internee committee distributed it to each internee to somehow husk it by any means they could conjure up. Various methods were attempted to mill the rice and finally it was found that spreading some out on a flat surface and rolling a bottle over it, to and fro, slowly removed the husks. This took time, a lot of time, and was not very practical. But time was on our hands. We were waiting for deliverance. How it would come, no one knew, but it had to come. So we rolled and rolled and rolled.

For about some months before liberation the internees were suffering from malnutrition and were very much in a lethargic state. Some of the older ones who were addicted to tobacco traded their meager rations for cigarettes. They paid the price since hunger truly reduced them. Many suffered from beri-beri and the weaker ones died. Daily, the men assigned to the death detail recovered their bodies from the barracks after morning roll call, put them in hastily constructed coffins and they were buried. The newly born also suffered because in later years their malnutrition manifested itself in all manner of physical impairments.

In the end, everyone had either lost weight, become ill, or died. As for myself, at my height and age I should have weighed 135 pounds, but came out of there at 105. However, in three months I was up to the correct weight and with over ten other teen-age ex-internee males, joined the military service, ready, willing and able for Operation Coronet. Now, at eighty-three I wonder why we did that.

BACEPOW WEB PAGE

Our web page is now up and running at www.bacepow.org. Anyone who would like to make an announcement of interest to members should contact Sascha Jansen at mabuhayma@aol.com to make the arrangements. Personal messages or announcements of meetings are welcome. Commercial messages or advertising will be screened and there will be a charge if they are accepted.

2010 BACEPOW DUES

Annual dues for BACEPOW membership will remain at \$15 for 2010, and will be due by January 1. A dues statement will be sent to present members. Others can join by mailing your dues, and your POW affiliation (camp, family, liberator or friend) to Ric Laurence, 120 Canal Street, San Rafael, CA 94901. Membership has its privileges as you will get a discount for the Liberation Reunion and for any luncheons that you attend.

WORD OF MOUTH

Book Review by Sascha Jansen

Manila Memories

Edited by Juergen Goldhagen – Four Boys Remember Their Lives Before, During and After the Japanese Occupation
Old Guard Press – United Kingdom

Those of you who pick up this book will find a whole new dimension of the WWII experience for civilians in Manila. The story of four young boyhood friends growing up in the Philippines brings to life the contrasting elements of peacetime adventures in their early years to the harrowing brutality of the Japanese occupation and its bloody aftermath when U.S. forces take over the city in the month long Battle for Manila.

Juergen Goldhagen, Hans Hoeflein, Roderick Hall, and Hans Walser, four young European boys between the ages of nine and twelve, provide valuable insight about lives “outside” the internment camps. We learn much from their turbulent and dangerous existence.

Hans Walser remembers, “Instead of toothpaste to brush my teeth, I had to use ashes from my father’s cigars. For calcium we ground up eggshells and put them in our drinks.” Musing about changes they went through at the onset of the war, Hans relates, “At the beginning of the occupation, the Japanese had killed my piano teacher so that ended my time on the piano.” A child’s matter of fact remembrance in extraordinary times startles the reader.

Occasional humor prevails when Juergen relates the tale of his father’s try at making a pair of shorts from the hide of a dead goat. After soaking them in various foul smelling solutions and stretching them on bamboo poles, they were then sewn together by a Filipino gent. Such stiffness prevailed that it

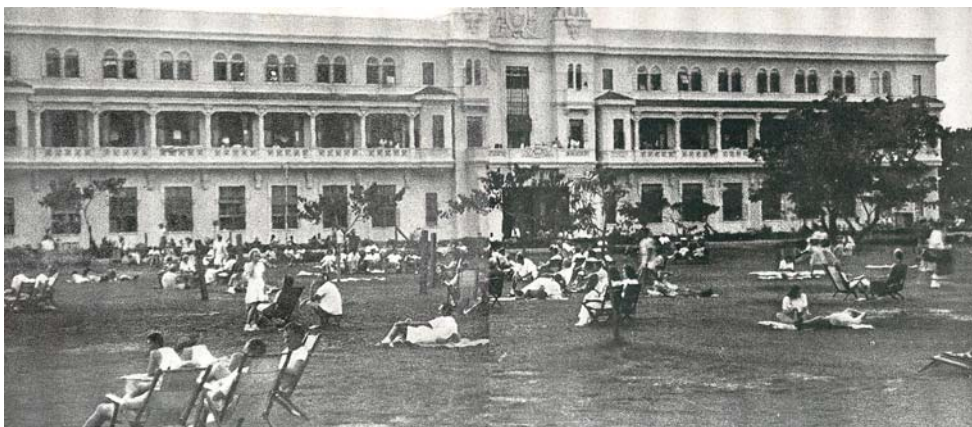
was banished in a standing position in a closet for the rest of the war.”

Rodney Hall experienced the unbelievably abhorrent massacre of six members of his family by the Japanese on January 20, 1945. Only two weeks prior to the liberation of Santo Tomas and the entry into Manila by the U.S. troops, Rodney’s mother and grandmother and other family members were led away to their untimely demise – an unfathomable experience for a young child.

At age 14, Hans Hoeflein relates his experience in the fall of 1945. “There were some picket boats moored on the Pasig River. Through meeting some of the officers attached to The War Crimes Investigation Unit who lived on the boats, I was able to go around some of the islands (with them) to interview witnesses for the War Crimes Trials in Manila and Tokyo. It was a very interesting experience.”

As I read the individual stories from these young boys, now wise and seasoned men, I realized that perhaps time spent in Santo Tomas and other camps for civilians was a more controlled and “safer” environment. The prisoners knew what to expect each day and adhered to regimented lives. On the “outside”, people experienced uncertainty and the ever-present threat of being uprooted from their homes, ransacking of houses, and the dangers of immediate torture and death, spurred by quislings and the enemy. Hunger, in or out of camps, was a reality.

This simple telling of the moving account of war draws you close to the subject and to the all-too-familiar paths of a city most of us knew so well. Kudos to the four authors for sharing their personal lives. I thoroughly enjoyed this read and learned so much from *Manila Memories* and highly recommend it to anyone who wishes to know more of history and to those of you who have shared the front lines of war.



The Country Club

In early January of 1942, the Japanese started to round up “Enemy Aliens” in and around Manila and transport them to the University of Santo Tomas Campus. People were told to bring food and supplies for three days, and they had the expectation that they would soon be return-



ing to their homes after being processed by the Japanese authorities. Since the accommodations were sparse, people made themselves comfortable on the lawns in front of the Education Building (above) and the Main Building (left). This relaxed atmosphere provided a great opportunity for Japanese propaganda photos and newsreels. One missionary lady who was repatriated from an internment camp in Shanghai wrote in her diary, “Oh, if only we could have been in Manila. Santo Tomas was just like a country club.” While she got to go home, the occupants of the “country club” had to wait more than three years to finally go home again, suffering deprivation and many dying along the way.

CAROLING DURING BLACKOUTS

This article is excerpted from a story submitted by Heather Ellis that was written by her mother, Isabelle Holter. Heather, her parents, and her two sisters, spent three years in Santo Tomas. We wish we could publish the entire story but space limits us.

Christmas of 1944 - what a memorable day it was even as captives of the Japanese! It began by reporting for roll call and standing in line until dismissed, scarcely a part of the American tradition for Christmas Day.

Phyllis, eight, Martha, five, and Heather, two, were among the nine hundred children and young people in Santo Tomas for whom this was to be the fourth Christmas since the disruption of their normal home lives with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Throughout all these months a gallant determination was evident on the part of parents to provide some "red letter" days in the calendars for their children. By now their resourcefulness and ingenuity were long over-trying and threadbare. How were they to provide some bit of surprise and delight for young children who had accepted their part in the pattern of life as it had been for three years, but who still clung wistfully to a faith in Santa Claus? "I sure hope Santa Claus picks a cloudy day to come, so those bombers won't bomb him," exclaimed one, after a day of continuous air raids. Grim indeed was the prospect of any who contemplated serious preparation in celebration of Christmas that year.

But hopes literally born upon wings - of the American planes - provided real inspiration to keep this festival of the ages. Though we were weary and hungry, those hopes put songs in our hearts. Even the children responded in song. Phyllis and Martha, inspired after a morning of air raids, sat in their bunks at siesta time and sang an impromptu parody of one of their favorite songs, "Oh, Oh, Grandma, Oh, don't you cry for me, for I'm coming to America with a banjo on my knee." Another was a parody to the lilting tune of the Philippine rice planting song: "We can't waste water, We can't waste soap, We cannot waste a bit of string; We can't waste paper or electric light, We cannot waste a single thing." And then there was the refrain, "Living in wartime is no fun, Not if you're old or if you're young, Living in wartime is no fun, Not for any single one."

For several weeks before Christmas we sang Christmas carols every night in the dark. Even blackout regulations could not prevent that. Through the years warm memories have lingered from those songs in the dark.

But today was Christmas! A thrilling surprise early in the day provided an added highlight. Leaflets containing printed messages of hope and cheer from General MacArthur were dropped from planes over the camp, but quickly retrieved by the Japanese.

Around our tree there were gifts to exchange with that air of expectancy and excitement that accompanies such occasions, each one hoping the other would like his gift. A very different little tree it was, resembling traditional Christmas trees only in that it was green. Its sole ornaments had been painstakingly made from bits of colored paper. For Phyllis and Martha there was a small dollhouse made of woven sawali with thatched roof and bamboo floor, a replica of the shanty in which we lived.

For that "something to treasure" there was for each of them a small silver cross. The history of these pins dated back to the time when they served as part of a chaplain's insignia (My dad's). For Heather there was a tiny yarn doll.

Boundless pride of achievement lighted the eyes of our eight-year-old who had managed to create from matchboxes and scraps of cloth an ingenious set of boxes for pins and needles. Its utilitarian value was overshadowed by the imagination and resourcefulness that provided the blueprint for the minute stitches. A small booklet entitled, "A Story Picture Book for Mother", her first literary adventure, evidenced real imagination and is still a cherished possession. Included were pictures and stories of incidents of camp life drawn and printed on the backs of old mimeograph reports, the only available paper.

For her daddy, Martha presented a gift that was a treasure beyond what met the eye - a small wooden box polished and smooth. "I wish I was going to get such a cute little box; Daddy sure is lucky," she had exclaimed over and over as she vigorously rubbed the wood with a rough leaf and stained and polished it with a bit of shoe polish. Even the possession of this cigar box was the result of her own efforts. She was given this box in return for assisting a neighbor in "gleaning" some peelings from the dirt floor of the shed where vegetables were prepared.

In sheer reckless abandon to the spirit of the season, I had negotiated the exchange of one small can of salmon, a precious meal, for a small tin of powdered coffee, as a gift on the tree for him who had toiled so patiently for us all. His gift for me was one that filled a great longing - a screen that served somewhat in the manner of a roller shade to hide the tiny smoke-blackened area where all our cooking was done on an open fire on a clay stove.

As always no Christmas celebration is complete that does not enable us to send some token "from our house to your house." For that privilege we were grateful for a negligible quantity of rice and cassava flour and the other ingredients for making a few cookies in our clay stove. Cut out with a star-shaped cutter made from a tin can - they were given to several friends.

Many years have passed since the days of Santo Tomas. "Are you marked by the experience?" a friend once asked. The only reply to that question is, "Yes, through the inescapable realization that, whether we like it or not, that experience has given us a life-time membership in the fellowship of the homeless, the hungry, the sick and the suppressed, wherever they may be.



The Holter girls play with the dollhouse, or dollshanty, that they received for a 1944 Christmas gift in Santo Tomas

LIBERATION

The year 2010 marks the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the prison camps on Luzon, and BACEPOW will celebrate with a special reunion from January 22 through 24 in Fremont, California. Mark your calendar and plan to attend the special ceremonies and presentations that are being organized to make this the best reunion ever.

FRIDAY We kick off the festivities with an evening wine and hors d'oeuvres party to help you to reconnect with long-time friends and their families who shared our experiences. Last year this was a huge success and no one felt any urge, or need, to leave for dinner.

SATURDAY We start early with a descendants' forum and breakfast where the attendees can discuss the quirks that their ancestors brought to their gene pool as a result of their experience, and decide on the contribution they can make to the future of BACEPOW.

The remainder of the day will include 3 consecutive forums titled, *Where Were You When....?*, one for each of the camps – Santo Tomas, Bilibid, and Los Baños. People who were there will describe what they were doing and what they saw when those big soldiers with the funny-looking helmets suddenly showed up. Through explosions and flying bullets, the prisoners experienced a euphoria that was probably never duplicated in the rest of their lives. Audience participation will include questions or comments from others who were there. Archivist of the General MacArthur Museum, Jim Zobel, will be the moderator. With all his years at the MacArthur Memorial, Jim is most knowledgeable about our history in the war.

In the evening, there will be a no-host cocktail reception with lots of food to tame your appetite and satisfy your taste for Filipino treats. Why is food so important to the ex-internees? Enjoy Nineteen-Forties entertainment at it's best.

SUNDAY In the morning, there will be an author's corner where people who have written stories about the war experience can discuss their books and make them available for sale. Jim Zobel of the MacArthur Museum in Norfolk, Va. will be on hand if anyone wishes to donate papers and artifacts to the museum.

The noon banquet will be preceded by a no-host cocktail party and introductions. After dining, the keynote speaker will be Jim Zobel, who will discuss the prisoner experience and the role of the MacArthur Museum.

MONDAY Those who are taking the Anniversary Tour leave for the Philippines on January 25. The first stop is Honolulu for two nights where the group will tour the Pearl Harbor Memorial and the USS Missouri where Japan signed the terms of surrender – the start and end of World War II for the U.S. Then after a luau, they are off to Manila, where the group will spend Liberation Day, February 3, at the University of Santo Tomas. Later they will visit Los Baños, Baguio, Camp O'Donnell, Cabanatuan, and other sites that featured so importantly in the Japanese occupation. For more information about the tour contact Sascha Jansen at mabuhayma@aol.com or (530) 795-0411 for further information.

SEND US YOUR LIBERATION STORIES

Our next issue of *Beyond the Wire* will feature stories of liberation told by the people who were there. Please send us your stories. They should be concise, not exceeding 800 words, and we will edit them to fit into our newsletter.

E-mail them to bacepow@earthlink.net or mail to Angus Lorenzen, 15 Diamonte Lane, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275.

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