



## **HAPPY 110th BIRTHDAY—FRANK WOODRUFF BUCKLES**

**From your prison mates in Santo Tomas and Los Baños**

### *From the Commander*

In September of 2010, the Japanese government invited 6 American ex-POWs and two descendants to visit Japan as part of their Peace and Friendship Exchange Program. Though this program was initiated in 1995 for ex-POWs of our allies during WW II, this is the first time that Americans have been invited to participate.

An immediate uproar ensued from people in the POW community who believe that Japan is using this program to assuage their collective conscience, while not giving a real apology for their brutal treatment of prisoners, nor compensation from their corporations who used the Americans as slave labor. Their very understandable position is that this is far too little and too late.

The fact of the matter is that the U.S. government gave away our rights to fair recompense and gave Japan full amnesty for their atrocities in the 1951 peace treaty. While the U.S. courts have entertained all kinds of suits against the Axis powers of Europe, whose governments and corporations have paid billions of dollars in compensation to their victims, every suit against Japan and its corporations has been struck down by our Federal courts as being in violation of the peace treaty, which allowed for approximately \$20 million to be paid to all Allied POWs. (American civilian POWs were paid approximately \$0.86 a day for their time spent in Japanese controlled camps.)

There is no legal means to gain an apology or fair compensation from Japan and its corporations. There is only a moral obligation for our government and that of Japan, and we all know how little that really means. Our government has been less than forthcoming in its recognition of American POWs' rights and needs, while the Japanese government has been downright antagonistic towards any individual, organization or country calling for recognition and apology for the atrocities it committed during the war.

It is understandable why so many ex-POWs and their families are incensed at the token offering of Japan's Peace and Friendship Exchange. And yet it is a beginning. Japan does not teach its students about its aggressive nature and atrocities committed during the war. Except for the older generation, they are completely ignorant about Japan's role. Therefore the exchange program is a positive force if it helps to educate the Japanese people. And it can do this if the Americans who participate are effective ambassadors who take seriously their responsibility to educate the people of Japan.

The 2010 program is intended by Japan to be a start in the reconciliation with American war victims. We hope and expect that it will be expanded to include civilian POWs who also suffered – 11% dying in the camps and others suffering lifelong disabilities as a result of their harsh treatment. Rather than tearing down the program, let's make it an effective force to make the Japanese recognize their culpability and bring them around to a higher moral standard in treating their worldwide victims.

Angus Lorenzen



*Frank served in the U.S. Army in France, and in the occupation of Germany, during World War I. He was a prisoner of the Japanese in the Philippines during World War II.*

### **2011 Annual Meeting**

You are all invited to the BACEPOW one-day annual meeting at the Embassy Suites in Old Sacramento on Saturday February 26. There will be a full day program of events, including a luncheon with a speaker to be announced.

- 10:00 Board of Director's Meeting
- 10:00 Author's corner - book signing and discussions
- 10:00 Affinity group get-togethers  
Santo Tomas  
Los Baños  
Baguio/Bilibid
- 11:00 Descendants Group - Plans for descendants programs - Contact Suzie Reynolds at (209)-267-5387 [gsreynolds@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gsreynolds@sbcglobal.net)
- 11:30 No host reception
- 12:30 Lunch
- 3:30 Depart for California Military Museum

Member price               \$38.00  
Non-member price       \$40.00

For additional information contact Sasha Jansen at (530)-795-0411 [mabuhayma@aol.com](mailto:mabuhayma@aol.com). If you wish to stay at the Embassy Suites, there is a special rate for BACEPOW.

## Going Home

*Going Home after years of internment was a unique experience for everyone who had the opportunity to do so. Home, in most cases, was America, and many looked at the opportunity with mixed emotions, leaving a home where they had grown up to go to a far-off home that they may never have visited, but had heard so much about from parents, friends, and the GIs who had rescued them. Here are three stories from people who were repatriated from Santo Tomas. They differ only in detail as the date or time of day they finally started their journey provided different experiences. Curtis Brooks and Karen Kerns were in the first group to leave Santo Tomas, though they did so on different aircraft in the same day. Ted Cadwallader tells of leaving later, after trying to reestablish a home in Manila when released from Santo Tomas. Sasha Jansen contributed a photo and poem from her family's voyage home.*

### Sascha Weinzheimer Jansen



*The Weinzheimer family going home aboard the military transport Admiral Capps. Sasha Jansen is shown second from left. The following poem was written by a crewman somewhere in the Pacific late in the month of March, 1945. The ship was on its way to a friendly port, yet unknown, carrying wounded GIs, military personnel and civilian men, women and children from Santo Tomas. It was published in the ship's newspaper called, THE BULL SHEET! This poem says it all.*

#### A SOLDIER'S PLEA

Look here, Little Man, let's get this thing straight.  
Reach some understanding before it's too late.  
I'm just a G.I. and I work on this ship,  
While you're an American kid on a trip,  
I work on the boat and you're the boat's guest,  
So nothing's too good for you, even the best.

A stateroom, clean linen, a deck up above,  
All the chow you can eat of the land that you love.  
After three years of rice, Lad, you rate a good break,  
So fill up your belly with ice cream and cake.  
But look, my young fellow – don't go quite so fast.  
You've got our ship's discipline lashed to the mast.

The deck crew is jittery, Skipper is wild,  
The stewards are suffering, mess cooks are riled.  
The mischief you're into, you and the others,  
I should think about now, be the death of your mothers.  
You've marked up the bulkheads with crayon and chalk,  
You've kept us from duty with incessant talk

Greased all the handrails with butter, I think,  
Splashed all the bed sheets with fountain pen ink,  
Built bonfires in places where powder is stored,  
You've just about driven morale overboard.  
Now don't get me wrong, Pal, we're friends, you and me.  
You remind me of my boy whom I'm longing to see.

But hold it, Lad, hold it! You're one up on the Japs.  
You're raising all HELL with the Admiral Capps!

### Curtis Brooks

I left with the first group of internees to be repatriated from Santo Tomas. We loaded onto trucks in front of the Main Building on the morning of February 23, 1945. The trucks proceeded to a makeshift airstrip on the eastern outskirts of the city. I think the airstrip was part of Quezon Blvd extension. There was a traffic circle with transport aircraft parked around it. My brother and I had never flown before, and the prospect before us was remarkable. We boarded one of the larger aircraft (subsequently identified as a C-46), along with about 30 other internees. Our take-off was uneventful. As we turned southeast we could see all of Manila, a blackened, burning ruined city, astonishingly grim. The Bay was littered with the hulks of sunken ships.

Our route took us right over Laguna de Bay; as we neared the southern end of the lake, we noticed Amtraks churning through the lake very near its southern shore. We knew they must be close to the other internment camp, Los Baños, and concluded that either that camp had been liberated or was close to it. Of course we knew nothing of the remarkable raid carried out that very morning by troops of the 11th Airborne Division, Filipino guerrillas and Amtrak battalions that liberated the camp. What we saw was part of the follow-up evacuation effort.

After leaving Laguna de Bay we were over Japanese-held territory on Southern Luzon. I looked down to see if any activity of any sort were visible and could see towns and villages but no activity. The small round ports in each window intrigued us and when we were over enemy territory I forced a stick of gum out the port to fall to who knows where on the ground below. The plane's crew had given us gum.

We saw a number of fires on the island of Masbate but as there were no ships or any other sign of military activity near the island, could not understand their cause. Perhaps the fires had more to do with agriculture than war.

Once over Leyte, the prospect changed. Beneath us as we flew over the island were vast stockpiles of military equipment of all kinds. It seemed like an astonishing amount of materiel. Leyte Gulf teemed with shipping. We could also see, in many places, shell and bomb craters left by the fighting on the

island.

We landed first at Dulag Air Base. There appeared to be some discussion as to whether this was our correct destination. The crew cracked open some cans of orange juice for us; most welcome. The discussions ended and we took off again, this time for the Tanuaun Air Base. Dulag we thought rather quiet; Tanuaun, on the other hand was a very busy place, with aircraft of all types parked up and down the airstrips.

We disembarked and loaded onto trucks. We were told our destination was White Beach, which we reached after about a half-hour road trip. It was, indeed, a beach. There we were ushered aboard a landing craft, an LCM, with sides so high we could not see over them. As I remember, the ride from White Beach to our ship, the Jean LaFitte, in that flat-bottomed craft, was rather long and somewhat rough. A few of our party found rough a little hard to take. Climbing aboard the landing craft we left the land where we had been born and grown up, not knowing when or if we would ever return. But we were free, with friends, in good hands. Hope had been the only fuel to sustain us in the dark days of internment; it now lit the pathway we were about to take to a future we could only guess at. That bumpy ride across San Pedro marked an end and a beginning.

### Karen Kerns

I was twelve and half years old on Feb. 3 1945 when Santo Tomas Internment Camp in Manila was liberated. My mother and father, Bryan and Thelma Kerns, and I were among the first to be repatriated with the group that was flown down to Leyte on Feb 23rd. The Battle of Manila was underway as we were loaded into a truck in front of the main building of Santo Tomas University. It was very late in the afternoon but we could see the orange fires and their smoke rising above the city silhouette to the west. The truck took us to the northeastern outskirts of the city, where an army plane with metal bucket seats awaited on a back road. I remembered being surprised by the large size of the plane and its propellers as it sat on its country road runway. Because the Japanese still held all of Manila, its airports and most of the surrounding territory, "flying out" was makeshift at best.

Actually, that plane didn't fly out. We boarded, taxied and ran into a pothole. As we disembarked from the crippled plane, my mother must have had a meltdown because she absolutely refused to return to Santo Tomas, and when, by sunset, a second smaller plane had appeared, we were on it.

By the time we set down in Leyte, it was dark, and, as we were the very first of the civilian POWs to show up in that war zone, no one on the ground knew what to do with us!

We were again loaded into trucks and began traversing broken roads up and down the island until someone thought of putting us up in a convalescent/hospital type of camp. We fell asleep on clean-sheeted army cots to the sound of the Pacific surf outside the hospital tent.

We awoke to walk through a coconut grove to the best breakfast I have ever had - army ration scrambled eggs and creamed chip beef! And we were free!! We spent our next days frolicking in the surf, fattening up in the mess hall and sleeping soundly at night. Eventually, we boarded the SS Jean LaFitte to sail back to San Francisco USA, arriving by the end

of March, 1945.

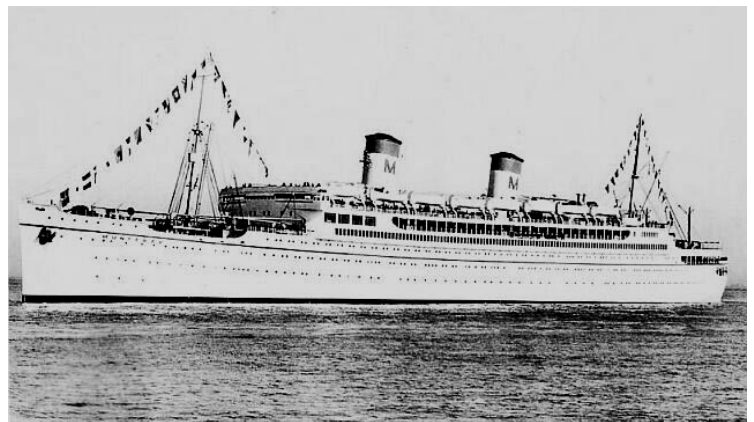
As most of the Pacific was still a war zone in March, we sailed south from Leyte down towards New Guinea and the Admiralty Islands, crossing the equator before heading north toward California. It took almost a month to arrive.

### Ted Cadwallader

After we were permitted to leave STIC in early 1945 several members of my family decided to stay on in ruined Manila and try to make a go of it. We returned to the Boulevard Apartments on Dewey Blvd., which were owned by my grandmother and where my parents were employed as managers before the war. The Apartments were heavily damaged, full of bomb and bullet holes, and ravaged by fire. We were there until August 1945 when it was decided to ship out to the U.S.

We left Manila Bay in late August on board the SS Monterey, a former passenger ship. There were many returning GIs on board with us. I had my seventh birthday on board the Monterey as we were anchored off Waikiki Beach, Hawaii. We were not permitted to go ashore at this brief stop. Several days later we sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge with a seven-year-old boy (me) gaping up at the underside of the bridge, when a sailor below me in a hold yelled angrily at me to toss down my life vest as we stood in line to do just that. He was not happy at my dalliance and most likely flung a few choice words in my direction. I do not now recall the exact details, but I know he was angry. We spent some time in San Francisco (some of it receiving welfare) and then traveled south to Los Angeles to stay with an aunt of my father's. We had almost nothing in the way of resources with us and were real "refugees". It was not easy for my dad to secure work in 1945-46 Los Angeles, but he did the best he could.

The Japanese with their Pacific/China War certainly changed and destroyed families and a way of life never to be seen again.



*Launched in 1931, the SS Monterey, with a capacity of 701 passengers, was one of four Matson Lines passenger liners. During WW II, she was converted to a fast troop transport, with capacity of 6,000 troops, which did not need to sail in a convoy. The voyage of the Cadwallader family was its last as a troop ship. Subsequently it was retired and mothballed twice, and brought back into service by Matson, first as the Matsonia, then as the Lurline. She continued in passenger service with other cruise lines after Matson sold her in 1970, but sank in 2000 while being towed to a scrap yard. This is a venerable history in which the Cadwalladers shared one of its historical events.*

# A Philippine Odyssey

*Louis Jurika was born in Manila shortly after the war ended. Both his father and mother's families were long time residents of Mindanao whose lives were torn apart by the Japanese invasion; but they resisted in every way they could. Based on extensive research, he tells the story of his father, Major Tom Jurika, and his odyssey from the time he was a guerrilla in the Visayas and Mindanao until he returned to Manila, assigned by General MacArthur to the administration of Santo Tomas Internment Camp, where he commenced his search for his mother, Blanche, who he had last seen in Manila in November of 1941.*

*This article is in two parts – the first tells how Major Jurika escaped from Mindanao and his actions in returning to Manila and commencing the search for his mother. The second part will be in the May issue and tells about the culmination of his search.*

Thomas Walker Jurika was born in Zamboanga, Mindanao, in 1914. The youngest of four children of Stefan Jurika and Blanche Anna Walker, Tommy had grown up sailing his bamboo-outrigger Moro vinta around the Sulu Sea like a native, which indeed he almost was. His father, a naturalized American citizen originally from Czechoslovakia, had founded a south seas trading company in 1902 on the island of Jolo between the Philippines and Borneo, later moving to Zamboanga and establishing branches of the business in Cotabato and Davao as well as Jolo. After Stefan died in 1928, Blanche, from a California family, established a coconut plantation on her own at Panabutan Bay to the north of Zamboanga, later moving to Manila and building a home overlooking Lake Taal at Tagaytay, to be closer to her two daughters and grandchildren. She became well known as "The Story Lady", the radio voice of The Children's Hour on KZRH, reading evening bedtime tales to young listeners.

Tom was 13 years junior to his brother-in-law Chick Parsons, a legend in the Philippine guerrilla movement, and became Chick's right-hand-man in the islands after Chick was repatriated from the Philippines and secretly returned to direct guerilla operations. The Japs had been looking for Tom ever since he had burned and destroyed equipment and war materiel useful to them during the defense of Cebu in April 1942. He was wanted dead or alive and the price tag on his head was second only to the price on Chick's head. It was no longer safe for him to remain; but more importantly, someone from the Philippines was needed in Australia who knew exactly what the guerrillas needed sent in by submarine. Tom's last guerrilla mission was to install a radio and coastwatcher at San Bernardino Straits between Luzon and Samar. Then he was ordered out on the submarine Narwhal in February 1944.

Now, in early 1945, Tom had flown up to a Lingayen airstrip on a C-47 from the Leyte beachhead. Knowing from experience what survivors needed most, Tom had arrived with a cache of hard-to-find goods accumulated from his position in the Quartermaster Corps, all the way from Australia to Leyte.

On January 29, while the American forces were stalled in their advance to Manila near Guimba, orders had been issued at MacArthur's advance headquarters for Colonel T.M. "Pete" Grimm, who, upon liberation of the area surrounding Santo Tomas, "will assume command of the internment camp". He

would, "be accompanied into the camp by ... persons having immediate relatives or special interest therein". Among those listed was Major Thomas Jurika.

At the Lingayen beachhead and on the way to Guimba, Tom had picked up more supplies, plus a couple of members of Pete Grimm's new staff. Now finally it was on to Manila. More supplies would follow on trucks behind them, with an army administration for Santo Tomas.

Tom had orders personally signed by MacArthur enabling him to operate at will, be his own boss or link up with any units he cared to be under, truly a "carte blanche" as he was indeed looking for Blanche, his mother. She was hopefully still alive somewhere in Manila after having been picked up a year earlier by the Japanese Kempetai and taken to Fort Santiago with other members of an underground resistance group that had been penetrated by a traitor.

Monitored radio reports from 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry tanks in the Flying Column reported progress through the suburbs to Santo Tomas the afternoon and evening of February 3<sup>rd</sup>. There were no real pitched battles yet, as the first tanks rolled into the internment camp around 9 PM that night. Waiting north of Manila behind the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry, officers like Tom under Colonel Grimm had their own vehicles and orders to proceed independently of one another in order to get to Santo Tomas. Orders had been to link up with any armored unit when and if needed.

It was still dark early Sunday morning, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1945, when the major climbed into the cab of his truck for the final run into Manila to Santo Tomas. Known to his guerrilla colleagues as "Major Tom", he stood six feet tall, skinny as a rail with black hair and very blue eyes and a wide smile, and he knew the route into Manila from many angles.

Now daylight was only an hour away on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Incredibly, it appeared that there was no opposition on the highway ahead, so far at least. Switching on the headlights for a second at a time revealed the tread marks on the asphalt left from tanks that had been here just hours earlier. Still, they were wary. Way up ahead the city was on fire in different places, but not along their route, not yet at least.

Tom had fought the Japanese in the defense of Cebu three years earlier, and as a guerrilla in the ensuing two years he was mindful of the ways of the Jap. He already had a Purple Heart and Bronze Star from action at Cebu and Mindanao in 1942 and wasn't looking for another medal now. The objective was to stay alive and avoid engaging the enemy. Closing in on Santo Tomas, they started zigzagging through side streets to get there instead of taking broad avenues that went in a straight line right to the gates. Especially after Cebu in '42, Tom's rule for urban warfare was: "Never drive more than two blocks in a straight line". The Japanese were masters at ambush and hidden "booby traps".

As they got closer to Santo Tomas and could make out the familiar bell tower, Tom recalled that the dawn in the streets that day still held the old familiar Manila smells of smoky charcoal stoves and garlic rice. But now the city ahead of them was really going up in flames as the Japanese set fire to homes and everything combustible. It was also the dry season and the smoke overhead was swept up in thermal currents for days, with the acrid burning smell of explosive cordite searing one's nostrils for weeks on end, especially when American artillery

finally opened up on the enemy across the Pasig River and in the beautiful old Walled City of Manila that had been built by the Spanish four hundred years earlier.

In the suburbs and then the city streets, Filipinos were smiling and laughing and shouting. They had seen the tanks go by the night before and were flashing the V-for-Victory sign in the faint glow of dawn, waving from windows flung open everywhere, cheering on the healthy-looking young soldiers in their olive-drab uniforms, heavy-duty lace-up boots and strange new style helmets. Tom was feeling quite unwashed in his rumpled, stinky army fatigues, under a helmet with his major's insignia, canteen and .45-calibre automatic pistol on his cartridge belt and carrying his favorite carbine with the folding stock. Designed for use by paratroopers, it was small and light.

At two points on the run into Santo Tomas, the truck was fired upon by small arms from a side street. No one was hit, but it was a reminder that they weren't home yet. On the truck were footlockers filled with medicine, cigarettes, liquor, chocolates, chewing gum, razor blades, soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Along with a portable generator, radio sets, microphones and sound system, there was also a wind-up record player with a stack of new 78's. And there were two collapsible "parabikes", small two-cylinder motor bikes originally designed to be dropped with parachute troops. These proved to be the ideal way to get around Manila in the next month.

At 6 AM on February 4<sup>th</sup> Tom's truck rolled into Santo Tomas through gates blown from their old posts by American tanks the night before. Those early arrivals were now parked off to the side of the Main Building with their barrels pointed at another building still occupied by Japanese soldiers with internee hostages in their midst. In the Main Building, Tom found the nurses and people he was looking for and started unloading supplies from his truck, all the while asking if anyone knew anything about his mother Blanche. There were a lot of suggestions of hospitals and churches where she might be holed up, but no one inside Santo Tomas had even heard that she had been arrested by the secret police a year earlier and incarcerated in Fort Santiago. Some of the internees had known Tom from pre-war days in Cebu, Mindanao, or Manila, but no one knew anything about Blanche. In the meantime more trucks, tanks and jeeps arrived until it seemed there were over a thousand soldiers milling about on the grounds, many setting up stoves for breakfast. As more arrived, it was a festive atmosphere.

The first two days of the liberation of Santo Tomas were an effusion and confusion of happiness and deliverance. But then the Japs found the campus in their sights and started a sporadic artillery bombardment from across the Pasig River. Tom was out front standing by an army tank talking to its crew when the first Jap shell hit the camp. From that moment on it was a peculiar ebb and flow of havoc as the internees scrambled for cover when under fire and alternately came out for air and socializing in the open with all the troops. Tom never forgot the crumpled body of a young American girl, one of many internees to be killed by Japanese shelling in ensuing days. After waiting for three years, many more Filipinos and Americans would not live to see the end. The crescendo of artillery fire was now constant.

As more supplies arrived at Santo Tomas, Tom deferred to others in charge of handling the camp while he directed supplies into neighborhoods where refugees were arriving from the inner city. He was also working with G-2 in the search for



*While searching for his mother, Blanche, during the battle of Manila, Tom Jurika came under Japanese machine gun fire. He dumped the parabike he was riding and dived over a low wall. He was temporarily safe behind the front wall of a house, amazed that he was still alive, when he looked up to see the face of a middle-aged Filipino man only a few feet away who somehow looked very familiar amidst all the craziness. At that very moment the man cried out "Tommy Jurika!" It was Fernando Amorsolo. Crouching and crawling away to safety, the two quickly exchanged information. Fernando had not seen Blanche since before the war. Like the rest of starving Manila, he was out looking for food as the American lines approached.*

*Knowing that Amorsolo had a very large family, Tom told him to stay right where he was, while he made his way back behind the lines to a supply truck. In a few hours Tom returned to the now-secured area in a jeep with a case of Spam and a case of Klim milk for Amorsolo. Moved to tears at such largesse, the famous artist asked Tom how he could possibly repay him. The only thing Tom could think of was to say that if the two of them somehow survived the war, maybe the artist could paint his picture someday. A few months later Major Tom was sitting for this portrait in Amorsolo's studio.*

Blanche. In the process he was able to get to a number of newly-liberated churches and buildings where crowds had taken refuge from not only the Japanese but also the incessant American artillery barrage. The carnage Tom found was just unbelievable. The Japanese had obviously just started shooting and bayoneting Filipinos wherever they found them, on the streets, in houses, cut down in groups or individually on sidewalks or against a wall. It was too much to take.

During this time and in the days to follow, Tom never stopped asking if anyone knew where Blanche was.

*Tom's search for Blanche will be continued in the May issue.*

# BACEPOW NEEDS YOU

## And YOU NEED BACEPOW!

Think about it! We are the only confirmed Civilian Ex-Prisoner of War Organization in the United States. BACEPOW's members come from all over the United States and also overseas. Membership is for everyone and anyone who wants to join and MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

There are many of us still around without an anchor to a bona fide organization. Our important historical past as participants in the WWII experiences need to be nurtured and continued. We can do that, by simply joining BACEPOW, which will give us a voice. Save Our Heritage! Strengthen Our Future!

BACEPOW is a Chapter of the Congressionally chartered American Ex-Prisoners of War (AXPOW). To be a voting member of BACEPOW, it is also necessary to be a member of the national organization. Our Membership Chairman can provide you with the necessary application. But those who are not eligible for membership in AXPOW are very welcome to participate in BACEPOW. We particularly welcome family and friends of ex-POWs, members of the military, and people interested in military and World War II history.

With membership, you receive a subscription to *Beyond the Wire*, our comprehensive newsletter with many articles about the prison camps and people who were there, receive notification of reunions and other gatherings, and can attend meetings at a discounted price. When you pay your dues, fill out the attached membership card for your own records and for discounts.

### Annual Dues through 2011

**\$15.00**

Make checks out to: BACEPOW  
Mail to: Richard Laurence – Membership Chairman  
120 Canal Street  
San Rafael, CA 94901  
(415)-457-2965  
E-Mail: riclaurence@comcast.net

### If a new member, please provide the following information:

Name.....Amount.....  
Include registered name in camp

Spouse.....Amount.....  
Only if applying for membership

Address:.....

Phone No. ( )..... E-mail.....

Major Camp Where Interned or Military Unit.....

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