



## *From the Commander*

The BACEPOW reunion held this year in Fremont was an incredible success, attended by about 300 people as described in the accompanying article on this page. Our many thanks go to Sascha Jansen who organized it, and to Margie Wagstaffe, MaryJane Laznibat, John and Joan Montessa, Sally Connelly, and John Ream who all pitched in to make things run smoothly, and to Karen and Mark Lewis for organizing the Descendents Forum.

Attendees were so enthusiastic that they acclaimed the idea of having another reunion next year, and Sascha went right to work to start setting it up. It will again be held at the Fremont Marriott, on the weekend of February 13 -16, 2009.

Some of the highlights of the reunion included a letter to BACEPOW from Arnold Schwarzenegger, which is shown in this newsletter. Cecily Mattocks Marshall, author of *Happy Life Blues* about life in the Philippines before and during the war, described how to self publish your book. Dr. Audrey Maurer discussed her research on women in prison camps and how they fared. Kinue Tokudome discussed her efforts to inform Japanese about the American POW experience through her *US-Japan Dialogue on POWs*, which is discussed in another article in this newsletter. Sascha Jansen told about the making of the Ken Burns documentary, *The War*. There was a forum where liberators of the Santo Tomas, Bilibid, and Los Baños camps discussed those events. Finally, Members of the Mukden POW Remembrance Society (MPOWRS) and a delegation from Shenyang, China showed a model of Mukden POW camp, where nearly 1,500 American POWs were held, and which the Chinese government and the city of Shenyang are turning into an historical museum.

Many of the attendees at the reunion were from Southern California, and they were enthusiastic about having their own luncheon get-together. If that interest still exists, please e-mail me at [bacepow@earthlink.net](mailto:bacepow@earthlink.net) or write to 15 Diamonte Lane, Rancho Palos Verdes 90275. If we get enough people interested, we'll pick a central location in the Southland and have our own mini-reunion.

Angus Lorenzen, Commander

## **Prison Camp Profiles**

Of more than 200 Japanese POW camps in East Asia during World War II, almost 100 held civilians. Approximately 14,000 American civilians were in these camps. This is the first in a series of profiles of the larger camps that held American civilians. The series starts with Santo Tomas Internment Camp in Manila because it held more American civilians than any other camp.

### **Santo Tomas Internment Camp**

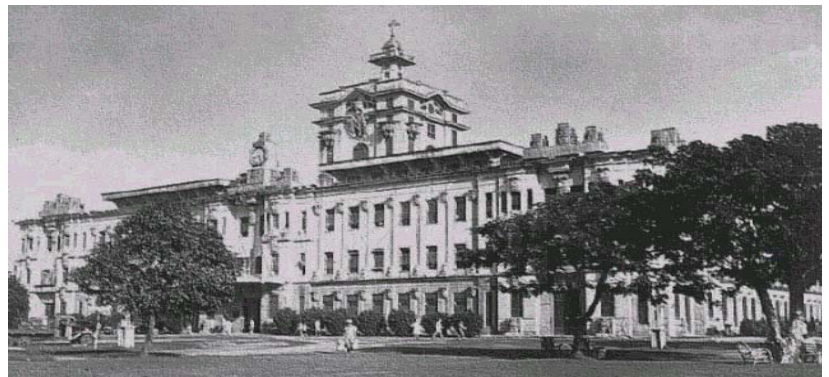
In January of 1941, a group of businessmen in Manila formed the American Coordinating Committee with the express purpose of preparing for war with Japan by selecting safe places for civilians to assemble and stock piling food and medical supplies. When the war abruptly started on December 8, 1941, the committee wrote a letter to the High Commissioner, the American governor of the Philippines, recommending that civilians considered enemy aliens by the Japanese be gathered at a central place for their safety. It recommended the University of Santo Tomas and two alternate locations.

The Japanese entered Manila on the evening of January 2, 1942, and by January 4, all civilians rounded up started being placed in "protective custody" at Santo Tomas. The University facility came to be known as Santo Tomas Internment Camp or STIC.

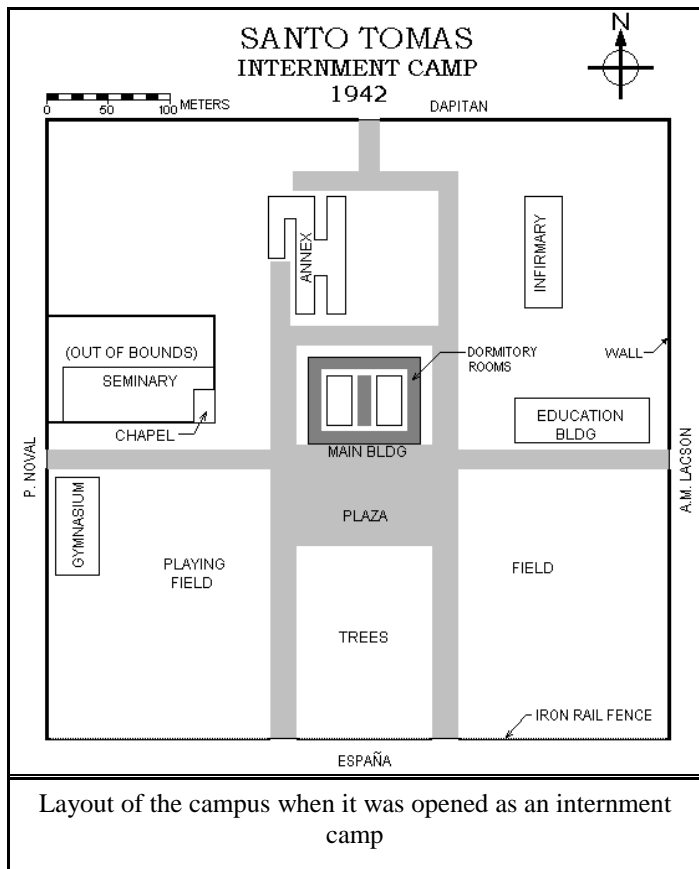
**The University** The University of Santo Tomas was established in 1611 by the Dominican fathers in the Intramuros of Manila. In 1927, it was moved to a new 65-acre campus in North Manila surrounded on all sides by a high wall or iron fence, making it an ideal location for confinement of a large number of people. Its permanent facilities included the Main Building and the Education Building, both 3-story concrete structures mainly containing classrooms, and a gymnasium. In addition, there were two light construction one-story buildings called the Annex and the Infirmary.

**Administration** When the first prisoners were brought into Santo Tomas on January 4, 1942, the Japanese appointed a civilian leader who

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The Main Building of Santo Tomas as it appeared during the tranquil days before the start of World War II



was responsible for setting up an organization to oversee the operation within the camp. The original organization evolved with time into an elected Executive Committee with a number of support committees to organize every aspect of the internees' existence.

The Japanese were responsible for controlling the civilian organization, issuing all regulations, and overseeing every activity of importance. Initially the commandant was a member of the Japanese gendarmerie of Manila. A member of the Japanese Consular Service replaced him after a short time. In January of 1944, the Japanese Military Police took control of the camp, and life became miserable for the prisoners.

**Population** The population of Santo Tomas grew rapidly as people were brought in from various districts of Manila, and by the end of January 1942 it held 3,300 people. The population continued to expand as others were brought in from various locations on Luzon and from other islands. By the middle of 1943, the population was almost 4,000 and the Japanese decided to move everyone to a new camp at Los Baños. 800 men were transferred to the new site to build housing using native materials, but eventually the Executive Committee convinced the Japanese that moving the whole camp to a primitive location was inadvisable. Only volunteers were moved and eventually Santo Tomas held about 3,800 prisoners and Los Baños 2,200.

The distribution of nationalities represented by the prisoners was approximately as follows:

- 73% American
- 20% British
- 5% British Empire

2% Netherlands, Norwegian, French, Spanish, German, Slovak, and Swiss

**Housing** Providing accommodations for the large number of people was a problem from the outset. Sanitary facilities suitable for a daily student population were extremely inadequate for the size of the permanent population. The classrooms were converted to overcrowded dormitories, with women and children housed in the Main Building and Annex. Men were crowded into the gymnasium. Teenage boys and young men were housed on the third floor of the Education Building, with the Japanese garrison occupying the first two floors.

In mid-1942, the Japanese agreed to allow the construction of shanties on open space in the campus. Shantytowns were laid out in the northwest quadrant, adjacent to the north wall, between the Annex and the Infirmery, and along the east wall. Individual families who could afford to buy the native construction materials built the shanties, and they were unique in design. Initially, the shanties were permitted for daytime use only and all prisoners were required to be in their dormitories after curfew. However, as overcrowding continued, eventually some 400 families were allowed to live in their shanties.

**Recreation** In the first two years, the population established an active recreation program. Sports were organized, clubs were established, and groups gathered to put on entertainment. A movie screen was built in the plaza and occasionally movies were obtained from theaters in Manila for outdoor viewing enjoyment. The recreation programs declined in the last year as starvation stalked the camp and people no longer had the energy.

Schools for all grades through high school were established, and started functioning shortly after Santo Tomas was populated. In many cases, students and teachers from Manila took up their classes almost seamlessly, and were later joined by students from other locales. The schools were permanently closed in the autumn of 1944 when American air raids increased in frequency.

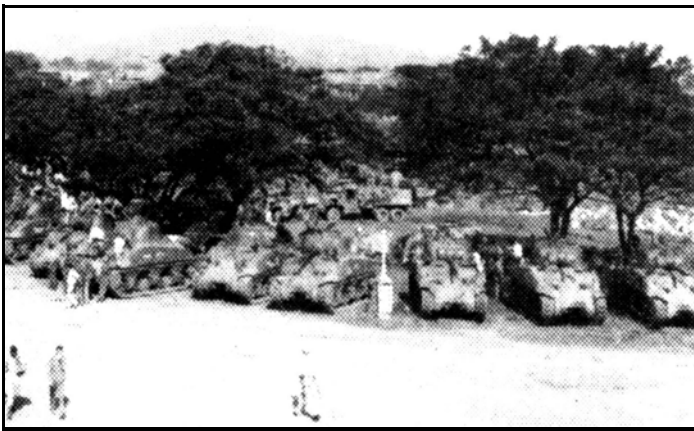
**Food** The Japanese made no provision for feeding their prisoners. Initially, they were able to buy food from Filipinos through the iron bars along Calle España, and a package line was established to allow people in the Manila community to pass food and sundries to their friends. The Executive Committee soon established a committee to purchase food for everyone in the camp from the outside community, and a central kitchen was set up to feed everyone. Initially, the Philippine Red Cross provided the funds, but the Japanese confiscated their money. The Japanese then agreed to pay a stipend that was considerably less than what had previously been provided by the Red Cross. Quality and quantity of food declined with the lower food allowance and as shortages and inflation reduced the amount of food that could be obtained. This plan continued until early 1944, when the Japanese forbid the food purchasing committee from leaving the camp, and started allocating food to the prisoners. They reduced food supplies to 700 calories per person by the end of 1944, and death by starvation and related diseases increased rapidly.

**Liberation** The first indication that American forces were in the vicinity of Manila was on September 21, 1944 when Navy dive bombers attacked shipping in the harbor and military installations ashore. Unknown to the prisoners was that this was a preparation for the landings on Leyte, which occurred on

(Santo Tomas Continued from page 2)

October 20, about which they received a coded message on the camp PA system. B-24 bombers started hitting the city in December of 1944, and were followed by bombing and strafing attacks by B-26s at the end of the month, flying from bases on nearby Mindoro where American forces had landed in mid-December. P-47 and P-51 fighter aircraft joined the attacks in mid-January of 1945. The prisoners did not know that MacArthur's forces had landed on Luzon on January 9 and were advancing towards Manila, but the short-range aircraft indicated that they were close.

American intelligence had intercepted a message from Tokyo to local commanders in the Philippines to kill all prisoners before they could be liberated, and there was an urgency to reach several POW camps before the Japanese could carry out the order. Then they received a message from a clandestine radio in Santo Tomas saying that the Japanese appeared to be preparing to execute the prisoners. MacArthur ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry to immediately race to Manila to free the prisoners at Santo Tomas. At one minute after midnight on February 1, the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry led by the 44<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion, forming a flying column, broke through the Japanese lines and raced 100 miles to Manila in 3 days.



American tanks parked adjacent to the Plaza after liberation

The column reached the outskirts of Manila late in the afternoon of February 3, where a Filipino guerilla unit joined to lead it through the streets to the gate of Santo Tomas. The column reached the España gate shortly before 9 PM, where it was briefly delayed by a skirmish with Japanese guards who wounded the American battalion commander and mortally wounded the Filipino guerilla captain. Finally, a tank broke through the gate, and the column progressed into the campus, almost immediately freeing most of the prisoners. However, the Japanese garrison took 228 people hostage in the Education Building where they were held until February 5 until released in exchange for allowing the Japanese troops to be released beyond the American lines.

**Battle of Manila** Santo Tomas briefly became an armed camp with 800 American defenders surrounded by a Japanese force of 26,000. More 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry units entered North Manila starting on February 4, and the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry arrived on February 5. Because of their surprise, the Japanese initially put up little resistance, and it appeared that Manila would be spared. However, on February 7 the Japanese resisted further American advances into the city. They shelled Santo Tomas for 3 days,

killing 18 civilians and wounding 65. They withdrew across the Pasig River, blowing up all of the bridges and setting fire to huge swaths of buildings to delay the American advance, and set up their defenses in the Intramuros and central business district, refusing to surrender. The resulting 4-week battle was the most intense urban engagement fought by American forces during World War II, and left Manila the second most destroyed city, after Warsaw.



American artillery battery firing from inside the Santo Tomas campus during the battle of Manila



A Japanese shell hits the Main Building of Santo Tomas

**Mortality** 3,768 surviving internees were rescued at Santo Tomas. The toll of those who did not survive was high. The statistics are only an estimate, since many internees removed from the camp by the Japanese simply disappeared, the approximate figures are as follows. This doesn't count people who died later as a lingering result of their treatment in the camp. It accounts for 1 in 8 of the internees.

7 executed by the Japanese  
19 killed by enemy action  
450 died of starvation, deprivation, and other natural causes



# BOOK REVIEW

By Sascha Jansen

## CHILD POW – A Memoir of Survival by A.L. Finch

It is hard to live with oneself and among others, who lived through The Philippine-American experience during WW II in the Philippines, without commenting on the book by A.L. Finch – Child POW – A Memoir of Survival.

Military and civilians who have survived such an experience and shared our collective war history on foreign soil know where they have been and certainly know the history of their imprisonment. Years later we band together, to share and relate and teach these moments in history. Many of us write books, columns, articles and are featured in various documentaries; We also share the rostrums as diligent speakers and lecturers of the past. As we are sought after to bring our collective war history to life we need to be knowledgeable and accurate. We have to be accurate.

Our bamboo telegraph goes into overdrive when any of us, who read and dissect these articles and books, are aware of any inaccuracies. Most of the time we find a few discrepancies – other times the read is just too unbelievable for words. In my opinion, Child POW - by A. L. Finch – falls in this latter category.

To people in this country of ours who were never in the Philippines during WW II, this may seem an extraordinary story of adventure and horror - a magnificent masterpiece to believe in. But to we military and civilian prisoners who were there and experienced the real thing, her story is simply the proverbial hogwash tied up in a parcel of bovine scatology, being spoon fed to the unsuspecting public.

Finch blatantly displays great historical inaccuracies and leaves absolutely no paper trail to fall back on for those of us who research the history of the World War II prisoner experience. Finch comments:

- No passports are needed to leave the U.S. (Huh?)
- Their Pan Am flight in 1941 stopped at an uninhabited atoll. “These extemporaneous stops were left up to passenger votes to hunt for shells and picnic.” (Trippe just had a coronary) (Who is Trippe and would readers know why this is pertinent? If Pan Am ever did do this, which sounds highly unlikely, then this statement is dangerous)
- A bout with polio in Manila sent her to a hospital, Nuestra Senora de Socorro de la Santa Spirito, for weeks. Her assessment of her polio months does not add up. (No such hospital ever existed in Manila – but there is one in Equador)
- After the Japs bombed on Dec 8, 1941, her mother asked Pan Am to get them out on the flight leaving but was turned down by saying they do not take people who had polio. (In fact there was not a single Clipper in Manila on that date. Hong Kong and Wake, yes. Manila no!)

- She refers to Gen Douglas MacArthur as the United States High Commissioner of the Philippine Territory. (In fact, Francis B. Sayer was the U.S. High Commissioner and General MacArthur was Commander, U.S. Forces, Far East (USAFFE).

- Finch says that truckloads of civilians without men were trucked to the Bay View Hotel in December/January of 1942, a holding area for women and children prisoners. She mentions that The Bay View Hotel was a 2<sup>nd</sup> rate hotel, definitely “across the tracks.” She mentions the Bay View was in down town Manila and a horrendous place. Finch also states the halls were filled with blood where women and children were naked on top of each other, beaten and dead. (Revelation! This reviewer was there with many other families who came into Manila for protection, where the transition to Japanese authority was smooth and without incident. The civilians at the Bay View were transported to Santo Tomas after the Japanese entered Manila without much fuss, and it was not the picture Finch painted. Perhaps she is confusing it with an atrocity that occurred there during the Battle of Manila in 1945.)

- Finch tells the readers of her horrible time as a child prostitute (8 years old) for a very elite Jap Officers R&R camp in Baguio. Why was she not interned at Santo Tomas along with the other American civilians in Manila if she was at the Bay View Hotel? She claims her time was spent in military prison camps, on hell ships, as a laborer in tin mines in Japan, as witness to beheadings and atrocities, on the Gripsholm, etc. And if she was on the Gripsholm, then she returned to the U.S. in either 1943 or 1944 on one of its two voyages to Asia, and could not have spent 4 years as a prisoner. Apparently never once did the Japanese place this troublesome pair in any of the civilian camps available. (Pass the Maalox, please.)

- The pictures she so blatantly displays in her book are true war photos we all are familiar with, with her own tales of intimacies with each one: The bombing of Ford Island at Pearl Harbor becomes the “Bombing of Clark Field.” (With sailors in the picture mind you.)

- Pictures of Quonset huts in Baguio with nary a pine tree in sight. If one looks closely there is a bay of water in the background with a ship on it. (A miracle to be sure.) And Quonset huts were not shipped to the Philippines until after the U.S. forces returned.

Trust me, there is much more, each more unbelievable than the next. Someone wrote, “One does not appropriate real life traumas of real victims for self gratification unless there is a deep longing for recognition and belonging, no matter what the consequences.” In my opinion, Finch’s disgraceful memoir is a fabrication that would only be recognized as such by actual victims of war, true historians, researchers and scholars. She makes a mockery of the truth and puts a blight on the real history of veteran POWS of that war. (Please - Pass the Johnny Walker)

## BOOK REVIEW

By Sascha Jansen

### Happy Life Blues – A Memoir of Survival – by Cecily Mattocks Marshall

The first page simply reads: **Dedicated To My Parents** “Whose legacy serves as inspiration for my family...and the generations to follow.”

Even as the storm clouds of war were gathering in the Pacific, the Mattocks family was living a happy and productive life in the Philippines. **Happy Life Blues** tells the story of how their lives changed forever after the events of December 8, 1941.

The contrasting developments from the peaceful, prewar days to years of hiding and imprisonment, shows the reader how they adapted to these dramatic events. The spirit of optimism, prayer and humor sustained them during the over 3 years of war, despite the uncertainty of the future.

Those of us who have survived such a fate being imprisoned in Santo Tomas, Baguio, Bilibid, Los Baños and other familiar camps in the Philippines, all know the drill. What fascinates me, however, in such a story of these familiar hoof beats, is the audacity of young single people in those early years of commitment and passion to follow their eager dreams to the unknown. I salute them all for that. As in Cecily’s parents, Henry Mattocks and Dorothy Latham, their stars shined over China and the Philippines luring them from the safety and comfort of their New England homes. Religion and teaching became their new life of adventure on foreign soil and thus a new beginning with each other was eventually complimented by their three children – Jeffrey, Cecily and Shirley.

Mauraders in the hills of Mindanao, cobra nests under mat-

tresses, slicing wounds from ever present cogon grass, tossed on high seas by torrential rains in open bancas, perils of raining bullets strafing them on land, and the small acts of kindness attentively given in the light of a moment were daily encounters. Manila, Baguio, Zamboanga, hiding in the hills, Davao and finally Santo Tomas prison camp in Manila, remain their legacies of a path well trampled on by the vicissitudes of war.

The timing was devastatingly wrong when arriving in Santo Tomas, as the Mattocks family encountered severe changes brought on by The Japanese Imperial Army to those in prison. A severe cut in food rations, supplies, medicine and supplements became the new order. Prisoners were mistreated and the regime of constantly bowing to your captors, were in line for each day. They fell into the demoralizing routine of camp life and became part of the history of Santo Tomas during that last critical and devastating year.

Their bodies, ravaged by the malnutrition we all know so well, received the gift of freedom on the night of Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1945 when the Flying Column of the 1st Cavalry Division crashed through the gates of Santo Tomas. Cecily writes in her diary: “The euphoric feeling and the exuberance all of us experienced the night of our deliverance is impossible to put into words.” The liberation of Santo Tomas prison camp began the siege that was known as the month long holocaustic fight of The Battle for Manila.

It amazes one still, the miracle of the human body and the human mind, how durable – how fragile – how expendable. So now – come meet Cecily who reminds us that we can laugh at our selves, and we can bury small momentary delights in our thoughts under great danger and duress to survive. Her insights are far from fastidious but generous, innocent and intuitive. As her **Dedication** to her parents reminds us - “Who’s legacy serves as inspiration for my family...and the generations to follow.”

This is a well written new book – an easy read. I heartily recommend, **Happy Life Blues**.

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## RECIPE CORNER

Do you remember some of those lovely recipes from our days as Japanese guests? In every camp, prisoners had the opportunity to supplement their bland and calorie deficient diets in some unique way. There was a time when weevils and maggots were considered protein supplements, and roasted rat was a delicacy. But it wasn’t all bad, and some of our more innovative cooks developed wonderful dishes, or so they seemed at the time.

This is a new feature of our newsletter, so send us your favorite recipes from camp days. Include those from the early days when native ingredients were available for exotic dishes, or from the days of starvation where strange and exotic plants were included along with smuggled goods, and cosmetics were used as substitutes for wholesome food. Tell us how you could make a single can of corned beef serve a family for several meals or even to last for several months. Let us know what you obtained on the black market, and how much soy meal a diamond engagement ring could purchase.

Our first recipe was published in Frederic Steven’s book, Santo Tomas Internment Camp, which was published in 1946

when the memories were still fresh, and was written by Mrs. Jesse Bell Hanson. People today will remonstrate, “How could you eat a pet?”. Well, maybe people didn’t eat their own pets, but when one went missing, they looked suspiciously at the family in the shanty down the row who were looking a little too smug lately, or perhaps the people down the other way where the smell of cooking was a little too rich. However it happened, which it certainly did, here is the recipe.

### Curried Cat

One lady who wishes to remain anonymous gave us a recipe for preparing curried cat. According to her, it tasted much like rabbit. After the cat was skinned and cut into small pieces, it was dropped into boiling salt water and boiled until tender. This sometimes took several hours, if one were cooking a mangy old tom cat. While the boiling was going on a curry sauce was mixed up with the eternal garlic and allowed to simmer until thick. When the meat was tender, it was dropped into the sauce and cooked slowly until they forgot what it was. Then it was served over rice. Several families in Santo Tomas had this delectable dish for their Thanksgiving dinner in 1944.

Bon Appetit! Send us your recipes.