



## From the Commander

These days, when a hunger pang strikes us, we simply stick our head in the refrigerator to see what tasty leftovers are available, or hit a convenience market to get a granola bar or a fast food place to get a triple cheese burger, large fries, and supersized soda. It wasn't so easy when we were prisoners of the Japanese.

In the early days of internment, hunger was not that big an issue. The food was unappetizing but was adequate in quantity, and we could supplement it with food purchased from the Filipino population on the outside. As time passed, the amount of food available declined, and though our hunger was seldom satisfied, our stomachs and body weight were shrinking to accommodate the shrinking rations. Two Red Cross packages, called comfort kits by the internees, helped the thrifty to extend their food supplies for a time. Also, food from black market supplies could be purchased at exorbitant prices.

Everything changed in February of 1944, when the Japanese Military Police took over the management of the camps. Their first move was to completely isolate the camps from the outside population – no people allowed in or out, and no packages allowed in. Perimeter security was enhanced to prevent any communication with the outside. The Japanese took full control of nutrition, purchasing, storing, and issuing food supplies to the camp. That 12-month period until the liberation in February 1945 is called the year of starvation.

The amount of food issued during this period declined from about 1,500 calories per internee per day to less than 700 calories just before liberation. A survey showed that from time of internment until January of 1945, women had lost an average of 32 lbs. and men an average of 51 lbs. People were skeletal and deaths from starvation and related diseases were claiming 1 to 2 a day. The accompanying article titled, *Starvation in STIC*, is a summary of the last three months at Santo Tomas taken from the testimony for the War Crimes Tribunal by Elvessa Ann Stewart, a dietician in Santo Tomas.

How did we cope? Food was constantly on the minds of the internees. We talked about it, exchanged recipes, and swore to keep comfort kits under our beds after liberation. People wrote in their diaries how hungry and desperate they were. Cats, dogs and pigeons disappeared. We cut down banana palms and stripped the outer layers of the trunks so we could eat the cores. We ate pigweed and the leaves of the talinum bush. We turned a blind eye to the vermin in our rice ration. One man admits that as a boy he stole food for his family from the pig pen where the Japanese were fattening them for their own meals, until warned that the Japanese were becoming suspicious that their pigs were not fattening as expected.

Those were the darkest days for the internees, and yet

Commander continued on Page 2

## Starvation at STIC

An article in the New York Times in November of 1945 reported on the testimony of Lt. General Shiyoku Kuo of the Japanese Imperial Army at the war crimes trial of General Tomoyuki Yamashita who commanded Japanese forces in the Philippines before the surrender. Gen. Kuo was responsible for POW and Internment camps on Luzon from Oct. 1, 1944 to Jan. 6, 1945 and testified that conditions were good in Cabanatuan and Santo Tomas. He said the Daily ration was 500 grams of rice with meat, vegetables, and fruit, and that he did not believe there was any mistreatment of prisoners.

Now let's turn to the other side of the story, taken from a deposition for the same trial by Elvessa Ann Stewart who was a teacher and dietician imprisoned in Santo Tomas. She had resided in the Philippines since 1913 and was a qualified dietician after graduating from the University of Nebraska and doing two additional years of postgraduate work. She worked for the Philippines Bureau of Education, spending many years working on issues of nutrition. She was visiting schools in Mindanao when the war broke out and was eventually transferred to Santo Tomas in March of 1943 after being captured on Negros.

In her deposition, she stated that everyone did some kind of work in Santo Tomas, and she repaired men's clothing, but also spent at least two weeks a month studying the nutrition provided to the prisoners. She presented her reports to the doctors, so they would know exactly what the prisoners were getting in the way of food. In her work, she made an accurate measurement of the number of calories being provided with each person's ration.

For her testimony, she was asked to provide the number of calories provided by the Japanese from October 9, 1944 until liberation. She said that the number of calories required per day for a healthy adult doing light labor was 3,000. For a properly balanced diet, this should consist of 70 grams of protein and 65 to 100 grams of fat. Her calculations for the daily ration in Santo Tomas were accurate and were summarized at the end of each month, as follows.

October 1944	1012 calories per person per day
November	997 calories
December	960 calories
Early January 1945	700 calories
End of January	500 calories

Calories tell only part of the story because they must come from certain types of food that include vitamins, minerals, and protein. Initially, the decline in internee health was due to lack of vitamins C and B, which is the first to show as very little are stored in the human body. Vitamin C prevents scurvy and vitamin B prevents beriberi. The diet had no eggs or milk, and

Starvation continued on Page 2

there was hope as American bombers appeared and started to punish the Japanese. Perhaps that ray of hope is what kept many more from dying as they hung onto those last threads of life in anticipation of being liberated. And when liberation finally came, some still had to let go. When the final tally was made, it counted 435 people who had died from the brutal conditions.

Angus Lorenzen

Starvation continued from Page 1

very little in the way of fruits and vegetables. In October, the diet had only 15 grams of fruits and vegetables, and that dropped to 3 grams per person per day in November. As a comparison, a tablespoon of chopped cabbage weighs 11 grams. So, the amount of vitamins and minerals in the diet during December and January being received by adults was only about 1/100<sup>th</sup> of what they should have been getting. Children over 10 years of age, until they stop growing, need 50% more calcium and other minerals than an adult. Also, according to the doctors, many people were anemic from lack of iron and copper.

The diet may have included a little more vitamins and minerals had the vegetables been good, but what was provided appeared to be the sweepings from the market. The white radishes received were not bad because the tops could be eaten to get a little bit of green needed for the iron. But the tops were often so rotten and so wilted that there wasn't much fit to eat. The women sometimes put them in the food anyway - what we ordinarily wouldn't eat, or couldn't eat, but it was eaten anyway because the people were starving.

Miss Stewart was asked how much she weighed, and said her normal weight before the war was about 145 lbs. and at liberation she weighed 82 lbs. When asked whether she was able to supplement her diet she said that she picked grass growing along the drainage ditches, though this was dangerous because it could cause amoebic dysentery and she tried to heat it before eating, though this wasn't always possible. She also picked hibiscus leaves because they could be eaten raw without danger. When others observed her picking the grass, they too started to do the same, and pretty soon the grass was all picked. On several occasions she tried to get off-limits to pick grass, but a Japanese guard drove her back with his bayonet, and when she told him that she was just trying to get some grass to eat, he just laughed.

When questioned by the defense attorney, he tried to lead her into saying that it was normal for Filipinos to die of beriberi, tuberculosis, and malaria, implying that the prisoners in Santo Tomas were no worse off than the general population. She replied that it was part of her job with the Bureau of Education to educate the people to follow a diet that would prevent beriberi and tuberculosis. It is only a problem because of their diet and the form of the food they eat, not the amount. The conclusion is that the exceedingly small amounts of food that the people in Santo Tomas received exacerbated their ability to avoid the debilitating diseases that killed them.

In the study by Lt. Col. Emmet F. Pearson, he reported that 60 people died directly from malnutrition and beriberi, while others died from diseases exacerbated by malnutrition. The death rate peaked at 43 in January and 52 in February, then declined thereafter through May. Many of the deaths occurred after liberation because the patients were already at the point where their they were unable to respond to treatment.

## The Army Nurses in STIC

In her book, *We Band of Angels*, Elizabeth Norman describes the Army nurses who served on Bataan and Corregidor, and after the surrender of Corregidor were transferred to Santo Tomas Internment Camp. On Bataan their field hospitals were sometimes clearings in the jungle subjected to Japanese artillery fire. Just before Bataan fell, the nurses were evacuated to Corregidor, where they served in the hospital wards buried in the tunnels and subjected to heavy Japanese artillery.

When Corregidor surrendered on May 6, 1942, the men captured, including military and civilians, were marched through the streets of Manila to Bilibid, the old Spanish prison which the American Federal Bureau of Prisons had declared unsuitable and had started to tear down before the war. From there they were transferred to Camp O'Donnell, Cabanatuan, and eventually back to Bilibid for transport on the Hell Ships to the slave labor camps in Japan, Korea, and Manchuria. But what to do with the women nurses was a dilemma for the Japanese, and they chose to imprison them with the civilians in Santo Tomas Internment Camp.

On July 2, 1942, the 68 captured Army nurses arrived at Santo Tomas from Corregidor and were temporarily isolated in the dormitory of the Santa Catalina Hospital across the street from the main campus. Shortly afterwards, the Japanese Commandant approved the rental of Santa Catalina as a hospital for the camp. Joining the 12 Navy nurses who had been interned in Santo Tomas since March 8, the Army nurses were assigned to staff the Santa Catalina hospital as well as the isolation hospital inside the camp and assist at various clinics. In May of 1943, the Navy nurses all transferred to join in organizing the Los Baños Camp.

For the first two years, the medical staff within the camp included doctors and nurses from outside the camp, and with the ability to transfer patients to Manila General Hospital and other hospitals outside the camp, the medical staff was able to work effectively, though with a chronic shortage of medications.

In early 1944, the Japanese forbid any outside doctors or nurses to enter the camp. This put a strain on the camp doctors and nurses, which was further exacerbated by a lack of critical medication and surgical supplies. This would have been a greater crisis if not for the presence of the Army nurses, who had to take on the added burden of the outside nurses who were no longer permitted into the camp.

On February 3, 1945, the night of liberation, the flying column arrived with some casualties incurred on their way into Santo Tomas and during the firefight that ensued when the Japanese took hostages in the Education Building. The Army nurses assisted the Army doctors and corpsmen in operating on these troopers and providing other medical assistance. Their assistance was also invaluable during the Japanese shelling of the camp with the deaths of 21 people and wounding of 100.

On February 9, 100 new Army Nurses flew in from Leyte to relieve them. The ones who had been in Santo Tomas remained on duty with the new nurses to help orient them. Then on February 12, while the Battle of Manila was raging just a little over a mile away, they boarded an Army truck and were taken to a temporary airstrip for their flight to Leyte. The group of 71 included 67 nurses, the physical therapist, the dietician, and the Red Cross representative, plus the Lt. Col. in charge of the nurses. Many internees were there to see their departure from camp and to cheer them and wish them luck.

They boarded a C-46, which developed engine trouble and landed on Mindoro. There they changed to two planes, which landed at the Tacloban Air Strip, where they were taken to a convalescent hospital. Some of the nurses were hospitalized due to

malnutrition and fatigue, but the rest stayed at the convalescent hospital located on a wide, spacious beach. There they were issued the latest nurses uniforms, which were quite different from what they had before, which delighted them, specially since they had been wearing the same shirts and skirts that had been made by the Quartermaster on Corregidor, supplemented by a few items they had picked up during internment.

Just before their departure for the U.S. on two deluxe C-54s, they were lined up and awarded the bronze star and a promotion in rank to one grade higher.

Arriving in the States, they realized that they had so much to catch up with and to learn with the advances in medicine and surgery that had been developed during the war. They had missed a lot, but now had time to catch up with those advances and to continue with their careers. And we will remember what they did for us when we were prisoners of the Japanese.

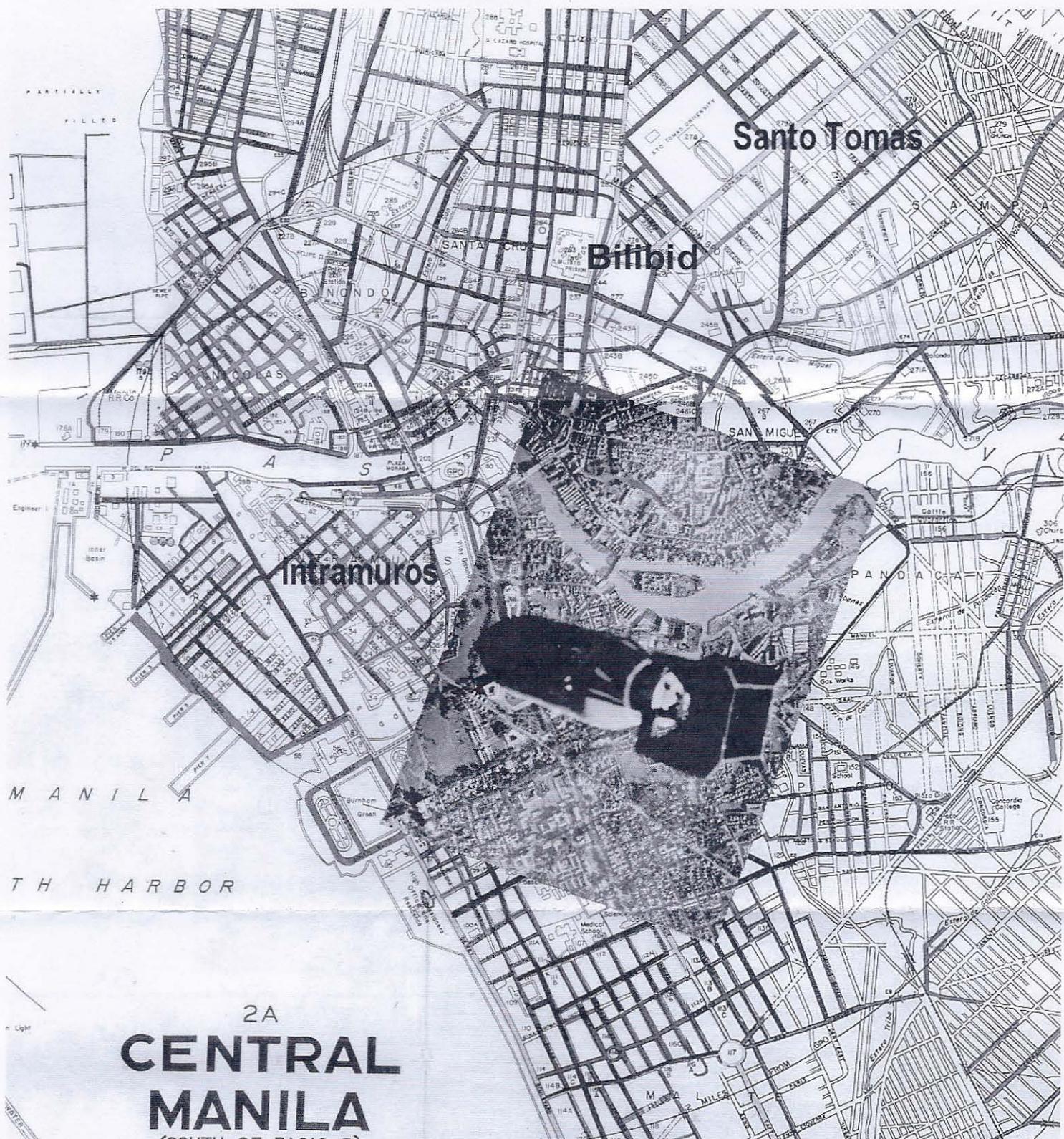


The nurses board trucks for their departure from STIC



The nurses pose for one last picture before boarding their plane to return to America

# Bomb Drop on Manila



A photo posted to Maurice Francis's e-mail by Jim Faggiano shows a bomb being dropped over Central Manila. Further information provided by Rod Hall indicates that it is a US Navy Photo taken from a Grumman TBF-1 Avenger bomber from the American aircraft carrier USS Essex during an air attack over Manila on November 14, 1944.

The photo has been overlaid on a military map of Manila, which shows Santo Tomas, Bilibid, and the Intramuros. It is estimated that the aircraft was in level flight at about 225 MPH at an altitude of between 5,000 and 6,000 feet, and the target is what appears to be an industrial complex near the mouth of the Pasig River.

Those who were in Santo Tomas and Bilibid would have been able to see the aircraft, though may not have noticed it since dive bombers attacking the harbor area were much more interesting, and also the Japanese forbid prisoners from observing US aircraft.

## The Book is Here!

This publication, *Beyond the Wire*, that documents what happened in the Philippines internment camps has now been published for over 10 years. It includes personal stories and history, with many people contributing articles. We have taken the first 30 issues and compiled a book titled, *We Were There Too Uncle*. It includes the important articles plus additional material and pictures.

Why the strange title? First, it is a reminder to many people who think that only Japanese civilians were held in Internment camps by America, forgetting that the Japanese held 14,000 American civilians, and more than 100,000 of our Allied civilians, under far worse conditions. Second, it is a reminder to our government that, despite giving large bonuses to Japanese-Americans (and also Japanese citizens who returned to Japan after the War), they have not recognized the American civilians held as prisoners by the Japanese. As we finished compiling this book, it became amazing how dramatic, and devastating, the internment of Americans and Allies really was. Of 13,996 Americans held by Japan in East Asia, 992 died, and 544 disappeared without any accountability. The suffering by the Japanese Internees in America is in no way comparable.

Many of the questions asked by friends and family about the conditions in the camp, the dangers, the crowding, the diseases, the deaths, the administration, and how we endured are answered in this compilation.

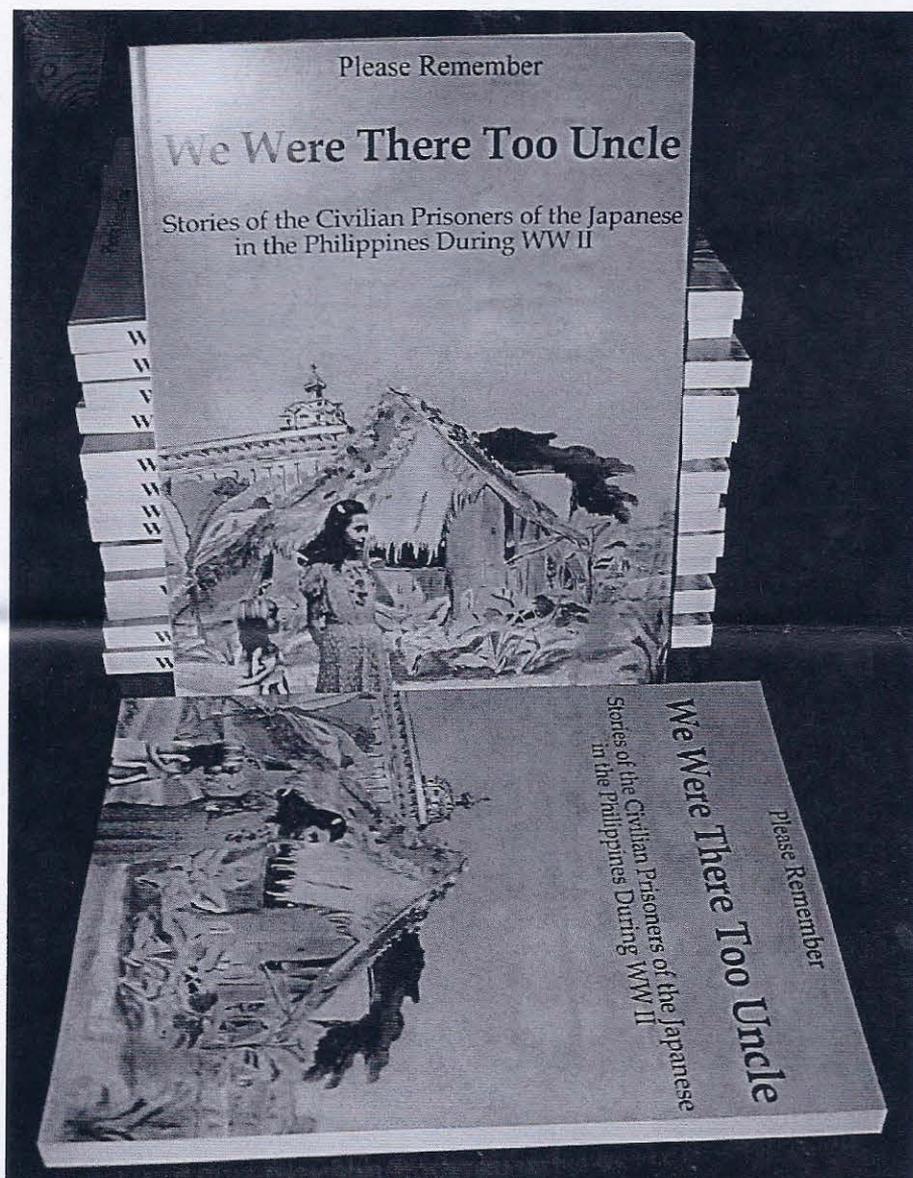
The book is organized by subject and broken into 15 chapters, as follows:

Historical Background  
Prison Camp Profiles  
For Just 3 Days  
Camp Life  
Health

Fine Dining  
Liberation  
The Battle of Manila  
Going Home  
War Ends

Post War  
Philippine Odyssey  
Japanese Propaganda  
The People of BACEPOW  
The Other Internees

The premier for this book will be at the BACEPOW reunion in Sacramento from April 27 to April 29, and books will be available for a donation of \$25. Subsequently, books can be purchased from Philippine Expressions Bookshop in San Pedro, as shown below.



The book can be purchased from our distributor: **Philippine Expressions Bookshop** either directly at the store in San Pedro or by mail order. For mail order include shipping address.

Mailing address is:

Philippine Expressions Bookshop  
PO Box 4201, Palos Verdes Peninsula,  
CA 90274, USA Tel (310) 514-9139 or  
(310) 548-8148 voice mail.

Visit the shop at:

479 W Sixth St, Suite 105  
San Pedro, CA 90731 Open Thurs. & Fri. 3-  
6pm or by appointment

Purchase Price \$25.00  
Sales Tax 2.38 Tax applies only to  
CA residents.

Shipping & Handling \$3.75 per copy; \$3.50 for  
the second copy and \$3.00 for all succeed-  
ing copies if ordered at the same time.

Check out the website  
[www.philippinebookshop.com](http://www.philippinebookshop.com)

For information and orders, please use the fol-  
lowing:

[info@philippinebookshop.com](mailto:info@philippinebookshop.com)  
[orders@philippineexpressionsbookshop.com](mailto:orders@philippineexpressionsbookshop.com)

All major credit cards are accepted, including  
Discover as well as PayPal. If paying via Pay-  
Pal, pay to [linda\\_nietes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:linda_nietes@sbcglobal.net)

For credit card orders please provide this infor-  
mation:

Type of card  
Name on Card  
Card Number  
Security Code  
Expiration Date  
Zip code of cardholders address

# N is for Never Forget

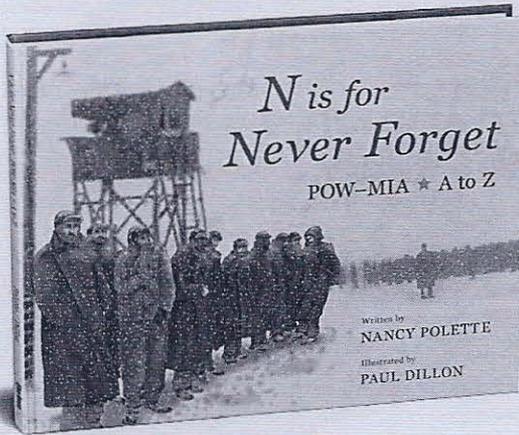
## POW-MIA ★ A to Z

by Nancy Polette, illustrated by Paul Dillon

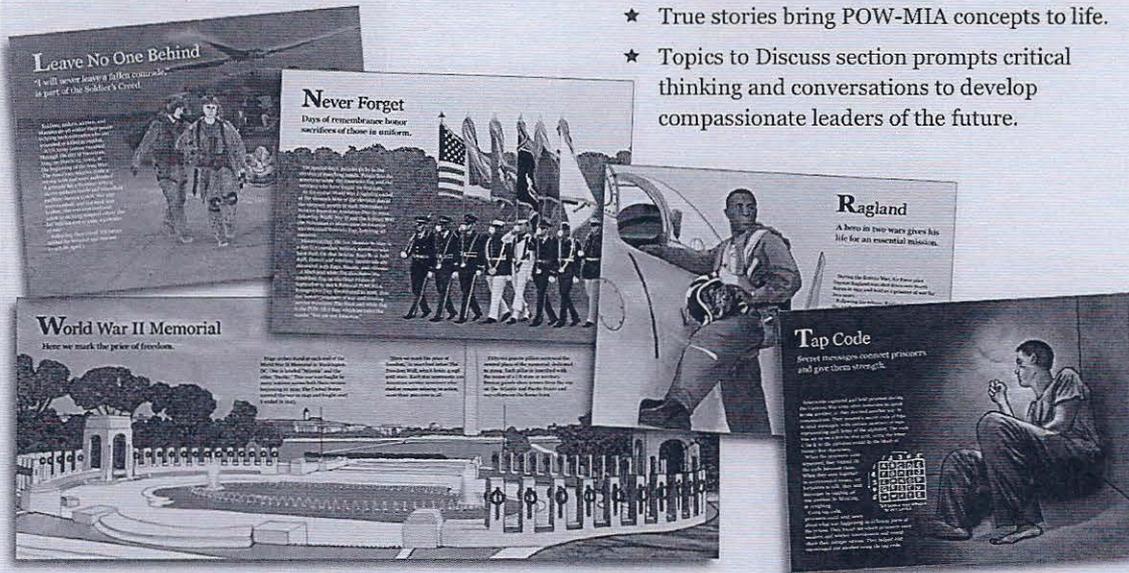
### POW-MIA Middle Grade Alphabet Book Honors Legacies, Prompts Conversations

A is for Artists painting the hardships of prison life. E is for Escape as determined prisoners make daring plans to gain their freedom. From Geneva Conventions to Internment, Operation Homecoming to Quartermaster Corps, Tap Code to Yellow Ribbon, *N is for Never Forget* takes readers on a compelling journey through wartime history. Poignant illustrations and stories capture key people, concepts, and memorials to help readers understand and honor the sacrifices endured by men and women prisoners of war and missing in action on behalf of freedom.

- ★ Engaging format interests readers of all levels. Single lines of text describe each letter's key message, while detailed stories complement full-page color illustrations.
- ★ True stories bring POW-MIA concepts to life.
- ★ Topics to Discuss section prompts critical thinking and conversations to develop compassionate leaders of the future.



Publication date: December 7, 2017  
 ISBN 978-1-934617-36-6  
 8-7/8" x 11-7/8" Hardcover, 40 pages  
 \$16.95 each, \$433/case of 32 books  
 Ages 8+, Grades 4+  
 Juvenile Nonfiction / History / Military & Wars



The Missouri Chapter of the American Ex-Prisoners of War (AXPOW) has created the Jefferson Barracks POW/MIA Museum near St Louis, which is now under construction. It commissioned, and just got published, a children's book *N is for Never Forget* by award-winning children's book author Nancy Polette. It was written in partnership with the Jefferson Barracks POW-MIA Museum and is the first (we believe) child friendly book about the POW-MIA experience. It includes a chapter about the internment of civilians. To purchase, write to:

**JB POW-MIA Museum**  
**P.O. Box 67**  
**St. Charles, MO 63302-0067**

The price is **\$16.95 plus \$5** for shipping and handling.

Provide your name and mailing address and make your check to **JB POW-Museum**.

For credit card provide:  
 Type of card  
 Name as it appears on card  
 Card No., Security code,  
 Expiration date  
 Your signature.

BACEPOW Newsletter  
 15 Diamonte Lane  
 Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275