



# Beyond the Wire

**CPOW**

Civilian Ex-Prisoners of War  
(Formerly BACEPOW)

A CHARTERED CHAPTER OF  
AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR

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## From the Commander

The CPOW Reunion, held April 14-16 at Embassy Suites Riverfront Hotel in Sacramento, was a success! Unfortunately, some attendees at the last minute, including myself and key event organizer, Cindie Leonard, were unable to be there. This left Angus Lorenzen to single-handedly lead all the sessions, but of course, there is no one more capable of doing that than Angus. Thanks to Cliff Mills, who handled Zoom logistics on site, those of us who couldn't attend were still able to watch the presentations streamed live. Big thanks to our presenters, and also to everyone who helped make this event happen, especially Angus and Cindie for the many months of planning to pull it all together. The talks were well-received and photos from the Reunion are included throughout this newsletter.

At the Board of Director's meeting on April 16 (also conducted live and over Zoom), the Board invited a new member, Cliff Mills, to join and he agreed. Cliff offers significant expertise on WWII in the Philippines including his in-depth website, [PhilippineInternment.com](http://PhilippineInternment.com), which chronicles civilian internment. Other updates from the Board meeting include that the deadline for the Membership Directory has been extended to August 1 (info on page 4), and the newsletter schedule will be reduced to two rather than three times per year. This change was proposed because it is difficult to generate content and pull together a newsletter as often as we've been doing it. The specific timing for the schedule change will be rolled out in the next edition. Also, if you'd like to contribute an article or a memory, please reach out to me by email, we have guidelines for content that I can share with you.

Thinking ahead, two years from now will mark 80 years since liberation, and we anticipate holding another reunion in the spring of 2025 to commemorate that occasion. In the meantime, the Descendants group expressed interest in organizing a trip to the MacArthur Memorial in Norfolk, VA (see page 2 for information on their upcoming exhibit). This cannot happen without volunteers to organize the trip, and several people at the Descendants meeting indicated a willingness to help. If interested, please contact Dan Doolan, by emailing me ([Commander@CPOW.org](mailto:Commander@CPOW.org)) and I will relay the message to Dan.

Stay well and enjoy the summer.  
Sally Meadows

## Update from the Descendants Meeting

By Daniel M. Doolan  
(son of *STIC* Internee Roy F. Doolan)

On April 15th at the 2023 Civilian ex-Prisoner of War (CPOW) Reunion, the descendants of former internees met. This descendant's meeting has become a tradition in recent years at CPOW reunions. I led the meeting as the Board Descendants Representative and there were about two dozen descendant meeting attendees. All meeting attendees were welcome to attend the descendants meeting, although it was predominantly attended by friends and family of former internees. We started by taking time to share our connection with the internment camps. There was a certain joy in having a few moments to tell our story and our connection in the camp. Some reflected that starting reunions with an open mike for people to share some of their connections to the camps is a nice ice breaker to lead things off and that this has been done in some prior reunions with the larger group.

After introductions and reflections, we turned to an agenda item relevant to upcoming reunions. I posed the question to the group of whether there was interest in a future reunion and, if so, if members of the descendants group might be open to playing a substantial role in the planning process. This resulted in a lively discussion. Some were apprehensive of what would become of CPOW over the next decade given the diminishing number of survivors of internment. Still, when I asked the question, "In 2 years, if there were to be another reunion would you be likely to attend?" everyone raised their hand. Additionally, several members of the group volunteered to assist in planning a future reunion.

We went on to discuss the concern that so much of the history of World War II in the Pacific Theater remains unknown to the general public. We discussed some of the unfinished projects descendants have taken on related to getting content associated with the history to the public. As it happens, the week after the conference I shared a poster presentation about Santo Tomas Internment Camp and former internees I interviewed at the Western Institute of Nursing research conference in Tucson Arizona. While I was glad to disseminate some of the research I've conducted relevant to the internment camps, I also could not help but share with the descendants group that there are

(Descendants, continued on page 2)

(Descendants, continued from page 1)

challenges getting the history of the camp and stories of former internees out into the public domain. Just as survivors of the internment camps are, at times, strategic and reserved regarding who they share their stories with, I sense that, like me, the children and family of former internees have had some of those reservations rub off on them. As descendants, we do not want to do injustice to such important and sensitive stories and we're also profoundly aware that they are not our stories but rather the stories of a loved one(s). Nonetheless, descendants did voice interest in being more participatory in future newsletters and in playing a positive role keeping the history alive.

Having attended these descendants meeting since they became a fixture in the reunions, one of the joys is hearing descendants describe behaviors of their internee family member and hearing someone respond, "My uncle in the camp used to do just that!" Hearing the stories of other attendees helps descendants appreciate their own family member's experience with new perspectives. For years attending CPOW (BACEPOW) events was an important thing that my dad, Roy Doolan, did to connect with people within his community and I enjoyed tagging along to support him. Over time I gained an enhanced personal interest in attending. Now that my dad has died, I was not completely sure how that might affect my experience attending CPOW events and collaborating

with internees and their descendants. I was pleased to discover that attending the CPOW reunion and descendants meeting this year was every bit as rewarding as it's ever been, and I look forward to future gatherings with former internees and descendants!

A new special exhibit, "*The Price of Unpreparedness: POWs in the Philippines During World War II*", will be opening in late September 2023 at the **MacArthur Memorial** in Norfolk, VA.

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

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

For more information, sign up for the Museum's monthly e-newsletter at [www.macarthurmemorial.org/129/Support-Join](http://www.macarthurmemorial.org/129/Support-Join).

### Advertisement

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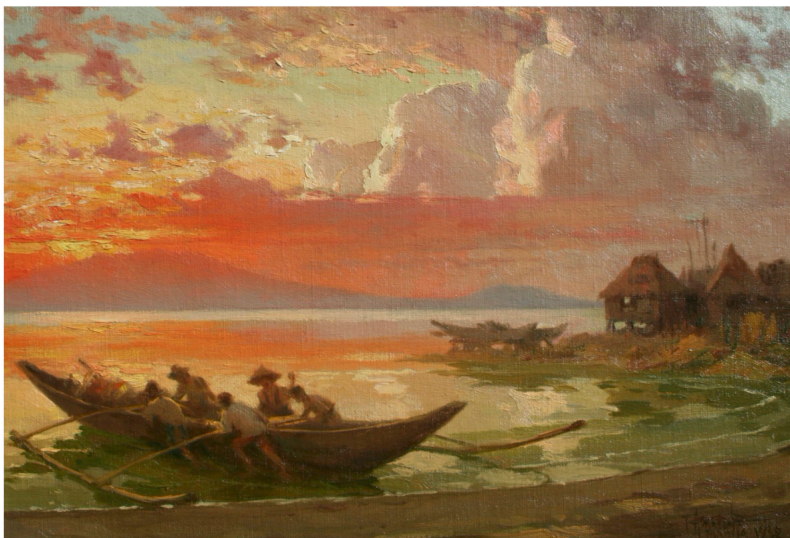
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Painting,  
"Manila Bay", by  
Fernando Amorsolo.



# The April 2023 Reunion

*Photographs courtesy of Sharon Davis, Dan Doolan and DJ DeJong*



Ann Laurence, Ric Laurence, Gail Layman, and Derry Dean (L-R)



Dan Doolan (R) and his mother, Pamela Doolan



Former internees with Joe Pisano in front of his artwork.

Carol Knott, Angus Lorenzen and Tom Crosby (L-R)



Suzie Reynolds, Sharon Davis, and Edna DeMattia (L-R)

Karen Kerns Lewis (center) with sons Kern and Mark, and daughter, Arden (L-R)







Hunger in Internment panel speakers (L-R), Angus Lorenzen, Curtis Brooks, Don Thompson, Mary Beth Klee, Karen Kerns Lewis

## CPOW Membership Directory

By popular demand, we are creating a membership directory, we already have over fifty members who have contributed their stories. Our directory is open to internees, relatives, and friends. Please include your name, mailing address, email, and phone number. For ex-POWs, also include which camp(s) you were in. This directory is for members only. If you are not a member but want to participate, include a check for \$15 for your membership dues, made out to CPOW. Deadline for inclusion in the directory is August 1, 2023.

Please fill-out this form (or for more space, feel free to use your own paper) and mail to:

**Cindie Leonard, 1675 S. Lake Crest Way, Eagle, ID 83616**

or send by email to: [cindieleonard@gmail.com](mailto:cindieleonard@gmail.com)

Only those who participate will receive a directory.

**Name:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Email:**

**Phone Number:**

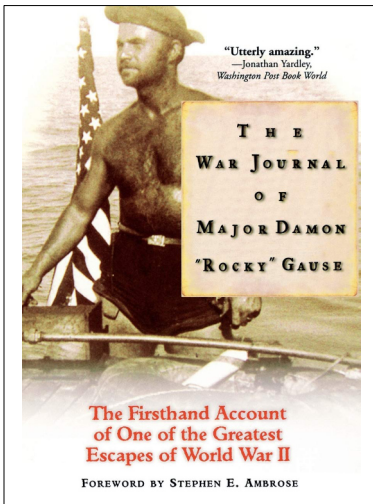
**For Ex-POWS: Camp (s)**

Feel free to share whatever information you like (e.g. your story in the Philippines, your family, work history, etc.), but especially tell us about your connection to the camp(s) and how you or your family got there.



## Book Review by Angus Lorenzen

### The War Journal of Major Damon "Rocky" Gause By Major Damon Rocky Gause | Hyperion Books, 1999



It is not often that we encounter a detailed adventure story that is published more than 55 years after the author's death. In this case, "Rocky" Gause died in 1944 testing a P-47 in England while on duty with the 365th Fighter Group which had been assigned to escort bombers over Germany. He was in a modified P-47 Thunderbolt which was to be used with new dive-

bombing tactics during the Normandy landings. His son Damon, who had just been born and that he saw for only a few minutes while under orders to leave for England, found his journal for the Philippine escape and edited it and wrote an introduction.

Rocky was a lieutenant and a pilot when he was shipped to the Philippines in November 1941. Before leaving, he eloped with the woman with whom he wanted to spend the rest of his life. His ship arrived in Manila on November 27, and his unit had a temporary billet at Fort McKinley until their equipment, supplies, and aircraft arrived on another ship. On December 8, he and his fellow pilots were setting up a communications station when the first Japanese raid arrived from Formosa. The raid did a great deal of damage, and the raids would continue for days. Right before Christmas, Rocky's unit loaded into cars and moved to Bataan.

On Bataan, the Air Corps men formed into an infantry regiment and Rocky was put in charge of a machine-gun company. His company steadily retreated as the Japanese advanced and they started to exhibit signs of starvation while their ammunition ran low. Fighting next to them were Filipino troops of the 31st infantry, and though they could desert and stay with families in the mountains, they doggedly remained to fight. The weary troops continued to retreat and on April 9, 1942, Rocky took a truck to a supply dump further behind their lines and loaded it with rations.

On the way back to his troops, he was crossing a bridge when he met a Japanese gun carrier. The enemy shouted at them to surrender, but Rocky and his sergeant each jumped out of their truck and over the side of the bridge into the river. The Japanese scoured the riverbank on both sides

through the rest of the day and night, but they hid in the mud and brush along the river. The next night, they had to escape and made their way through a large number of sleeping Japanese. They followed the beach south and the two of them became separated. At dawn Rocky was taken by a Filipino to a rough shed and told him that the American Army had surrendered. That day, Rocky was captured and shoved into a prison enclosure with many other American troops. He was exploring the enclosure when a Jap guard passed, giving him a chance to jump on his back and slide his knife into him. Pursued, he jumped into Manila Bay and started to swim to Corregidor.

After reaching Corregidor, Rocky was assigned to beach defense, a hazardous duty since the Japanese shelling was intense, and they lost men daily from enemy action. On May 5, General Wainwright ordered all units to surrender to the Japanese who had landed on the island. With a Filipino friend, he launched a rickety outrigger, and they paddled their way in the direction of Bataan. By daybreak they still had a long way to go, and a Japanese aircraft fired at them and wounded his friend. Another night on the water left him exhausted, but then he felt sand beneath him and crawled up on the beach and fell into exhausted sleep.

He was awakened by a jarring kick but didn't move. It was a group of Japanese and they assumed he was a dead American. When they left, he started to walk into the mountains, and was eventually found by some Filipinos who warned him of the location of Japanese soldiers. For days he wandered, avoiding Japanese troops, with Filipino guides, eventually reaching a village on the bay where he and his guide were given a small outrigger canoe to try to reach Mindoro. He was unable to reach Mindoro but landed on the island of Lubang, in view of Corregidor and occupied by Japanese who didn't bother the Filipinos who lived there. After several weeks, he got word that the Japanese were about to take over the island, so he left for another island where an American was reportedly living. There he met Captain William Lloyd Osborne who had been captain of a Filipino infantry company before escaping from Bataan.

He heard about a boat lying unused on a neighboring island and arranged with its owner to steal it from the Japanese. With the help of the Filipinos from Lubang, they got the boat afloat and provisioned and its balky diesel engine running. They were now ready to make the voyage. It was a sorry sight – poorly equipped, leaked, needed a sail, and had a questionable engine, and they had 3,200

(Rocky Gause, continued on page 6)

(Rocky Gause, continued from page 5)

miles to travel to reach Australia. The second half of the book details the travails of their voyage, where they were helped in many ways by Filipinos and later by natives from the Dutch East Indies. Their adventure included several attacks by Japanese warships and aircraft, but with luck and skill, they were able to continue on their voyage.

With practically no navigational equipment, the pair made it to Australia, arriving at an Australian military base at Wyndham in mid-October. In Rocky's case, it took 159 days from the time he escaped from Bataan. Thinking of all the people who had helped them, and those who had died, Rocky attributed the fact that he, a lone hunted American, had survived was by the grace of God and the Filipinos. The next morning, a plane took them to General MacArthur's headquarters. They arrived in the filthy clothing in which they had reached Australia and everyone at the bustling headquarters stared at them as they walked in. When he was announced, Rocky walked to the General's desk and saluted, "Sir, Lt. Gause reports for duty from Corregidor!"

The general returned his salute, peered intently at them, slowly rose, and exclaimed, "Well, I'll be damned!"

Rocky was flown back to the U.S. and after taking leave, he was told he would spend the rest of the war making personal appearances at war bond rallies. He believed that he could better serve his country as a fighter

pilot. He made a personal appeal to Army Air Corps Chief of Staff Hap Arnold, who allowed him to return to active duty. He joined the 365th Fighter Group that had already been issued orders to deploy to England. He made a quick trip to visit his wife who had just delivered his baby son, then returned to his unit to meet his destiny in the European war.



Rocky Gause and Lloyd Osborne shown with their escape boat, *Empress of Mindoro*, which they renamed and christened *Ruth-Lee* after their wives.