

The Bay

Clark & Subic Lifestyle, Leisure & Business

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February - March 2006



HELLSHIP MEMORIAL DEDICATION
KAMIKAZE
THE ZIG ZAG BATTLE



WORLD WAR II PERSPECTIVE

PLUS: BATAAN, PAMPANGA AND ZAMBALES HISTORY & CULTURE

WELCOME

The Bay
Clark & Subic Lifestyle, Leisure & Business

Dear Readers,

So much has been written about World War II and its impact on the Philippines that some said it would be impossible to offer anything new. How wrong they were.

We interviewed people who were there; we interviewed people who have researched for personal satisfaction or profit; and, we interviewed people who have fallen victim to the myths and deceptions that follow any great conflict. In these pages you will find a hundred pieces of surprising information that time and textbooks had relegated to obscurity for one reason or another.

We wanted also to deliver to you a previously little known artifact. We toyed with the idea of discovering a slice of Yamashita's gold but decided on a less controversial item: a downed Mitsubishi Zero fighter aeroplane. In our search for the Zero we failed . . . but we did find something that the US Navy failed to find and in doing so added a new, dramatic dive site to Subic Bay's impressive inventory.

In compiling this issue our intent has been to offer a perspective on some of the events of World War II that have been previously glossed over or misrepresented.

The centerpiece is the new memorial to all of the people who lost their lives on the infamous Hellships during the retreat of the Japanese from South East Asia. It was unveiled on the Waterfront Road in SBMA on 22nd January, overlooking the submerged wreck of the Oryoku Maru.

We have indicated on the foldout map the locations and memorials related to the articles and, with your newfound knowledge, we encourage you to visit these sites yourself. And, if you find the urge to discover more then don't hesitate to also visit our advertisers who will be only too happy to add color and reason to your search.

Sincerely,



Martyn Willes, Editor

THE COVER

Hellship Memorial Dedication, SBFZ

Left: Malcolm Amos, POW

Middle: Duane Heisinger, author of
"Father Found"

Right: Richard Francis, POW

Photo by Kevin Hamdorf ©

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APRIL - MAY 2006
In The Saddle

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Kamikaze :

a splendid opportunity to die

Words by Maryn Willes

"Soaring into the sky of the southern seas, it is our glorious mission to die as the shields of His Majesty. Cherry blossoms glisten as they open and fall." Flying Petty Officer First Class Isao Matsuo of the 701st Air Group; 28 October 1944

The origin of the word "kamikaze" dates back to 20th October 1274, when Mongol Emperor, Kublai Khan, attempting to conquer Japan from a beachhead in Kyushu, was met with a typhoon, which dispersed his invasion fleet of more than 900 ships. The Japanese were convinced that the Gods had gifted them the typhoon and they named it Kamikaze, or "Divine Wind." Undaunted, Kublai Khan returned with an even greater fleet of more than 4,000 ships in 1281; a second Divine Wind struck the fleet on or about 30th July, destroying it almost completely. These events confirmed to the Japanese their belief that Japan and its people had been saved by the Gods for a greater purpose.

At the outbreak of the Pacific War against the Allied forces in 1942 the Japanese aviation industry had created an array of formidable warplanes that all too easily out-performed their rivals. Their warplanes were so capable that they established air-superiority over China, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaya, Burma and Indonesia, and maintained it for almost a year after their fateful attack on Pearl Harbor. However, when Vice Admiral Takijiro Onishi arrived on the Philippine's main island of Luzon

in October 1944 he inherited a distinctly depleted Fifth Base Air Force... a collection of maybe a hundred operable planes. The main reason for the decline in dominance being that the Allies more rapidly introduced faster and more maneuverable aeroplanes. There is also strong evidence that concurrently the Japanese aeroplane industry was plagued with internal rivalries, and necessary ongoing developments fell victim to delays and cancellations as a result of commercial and political infighting.

New designs and increased production were close at hand but with the Allied forces now advancing on Leyte in the central Philippines it became necessary to delay that advance. Onishi reasoned that if he could disable or delay each of the numerous opposing aircraft carriers for a minimum of one week then he would be able to buy sufficient time to be reinforced with new aircraft and swing the battle for the air back in Japan's favor. There being no convenient typhoons in the vicinity he decided to create his own.

The plan was to strap a 250 or 500-kilogram bomb under each aeroplane and require the pilot to deliver it with a precision achievable only through the most personal attention.

To understand why anyone would desire to happily undertake such a delivery one must comprehend the beliefs and motivations of individuals who, from birth, had been encouraged to believe in the importance of passing from this life into the hereafter with honor. What greater honor could there be than passing from this life in defense of a country that the Gods had spent the best part of seven hundred years crafting for a greater purpose?

Thus, on 19 October 1944, the Special Attack Corps was officially organized and the first directed Kamikaze mission took off from Mabalacat East Airfield in Pampanga, Philippines on 20 October. Destination: the Leyte Gulf. Led by veteran fighter pilot Lieutenant Yukio Seki, they failed to find the carrier force and flew each day until the

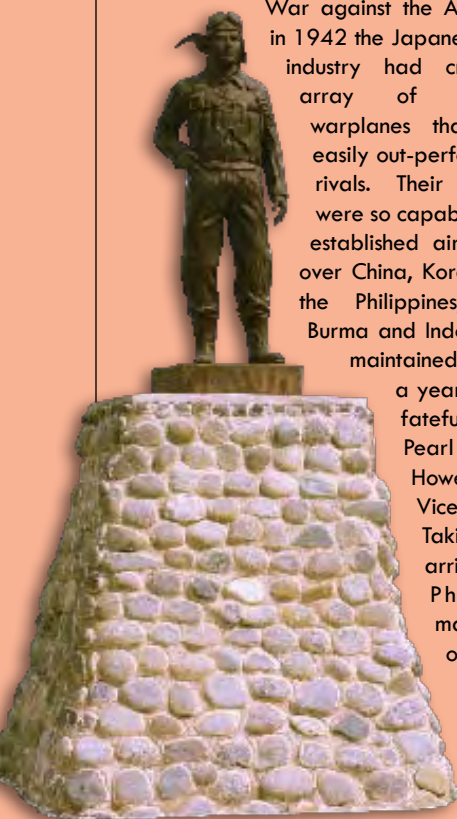


Photo: US Military Archives

25th when they found, hit and sank the escort carrier, USS St.Lo, and damaged a second. Based upon the ship's records, which describe the guile (the Zero joined the landing pattern along with the St. Lo's own returning aircraft) and skill of the pilot (dropping his bomb just above the main refueling and rearming station seconds before crashing onto the foredeck) it is most likely that it was Seki who hit her.

Seki's own motivation for his choice to lead the first kamikaze raid was to protect Japan for the sake of his wife. The pilots that followed, buoyed by the knowledge that they were emulating such a decorated veteran, were committed and enthusiastic participants in the delaying strategy at the same time as being simply human. Reports in Western publications of the time and since, that the pilots were installed (sometimes chained) into the aeroplanes drunk or drugged, can't be substantiated except by imaginative authoring spawned of ideologies that place the self-preservation above a desire to benefit future generations through personal acts of sacrifice.

Indeed, most pilots were well educated and understood very clearly the world in which they lived, right up to the moment of impact. For example, here is a translated extract from a letter by Lieutenant Masahisa Uemura, Kamikaze Special Attack Corps, Yamato Unit, who died in the Philippine



Above: Vice Admiral Takijiro Onishi. "In my opinion, the enemy can be stop only by crashing on their carrier flights decks with Zero fighters carrying bombs!" October 19, 1944. Left: Kamikaze Monument, Mabalacat East Airfield, Pampanga: site of departure of the first Kamikaze pilot, Lt. Yukio Seki, October 20, 1944. Photo by Bernadette Willes

*"But I am willing to take
orders from the high
command, and even from
the politicians, because
I believe in the polity of
Japan."*



Kamikaze pilots. Some 7,465 flew to their deaths.
Average age 20 years. Photo: US Military Archives.



USS Missouri baker, Harold "Buster" Campbell's famous kamikaze impact photograph, April 11, 1945. Ironically, Japan sign the formal surrender documents onboard this same ship in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.

Sea on October 26, 1944. Born in Tokyo, a graduate from Rikkyo University, he writes to his Father the day before his mission:

"The other day I received Lieutenant Otsubo's philosophy on life and death which you so kindly sent. It seems to me that while he appears to have hit on some truth, he was concerned mostly with superficial thoughts on the service. It is of no avail to express it now, but in my 23 years of life, I have worked out my own philosophy.

It leaves a bad taste in my mouth when I think of the deceits being played on innocent citizens by some of our wily politicians. But I am willing to take orders from the high command, and even from the politicians, because I believe in the polity of Japan.

The Japanese way of life is indeed beautiful, and I am proud of it, as I am of Japanese history and mythology, which reflect the purity of our ancestors and their beliefs of the past—whether or not those beliefs are true; that this way of life is the product of all the best things which our ancestors have handed down to us. And the living embodiment of all wonderful things out of our past is the Imperial Family, which, too, is the crystallization of the splendour and beauty of Japan and its people. It is an

honour to be able to give my life in defence of these beautiful and lofty things."

And, from Lieutenant Yonetsu Yoshitaro, to his elder brother, who flew his mission on 13 November 1944:

"I will have to leave everything up to you. It is with an untroubled heart that I fulfill the obligations for which I was born. I am merely carrying out my duties as a man.

The made-in-Manila bar of toilet soap you'll find in my things was given to me by the chief of staff. Please take good care of Mother, and take care of yourself in the coming winter.

Yoshitaro"

From writings such as these it is apparent that the Japanese propaganda machine, which attempted to invoke the deep symbolism surrounding the Japanese nostalgia for cherry-blossom as definitive motivation, may have underestimated the pilots' commitment. On 11 May, 1945, Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki penned this poem in apparent parody of the propagandists:

Flowers of the special attack are falling
When the spring is leaving.
Gone with the spring
Are young boys like cherry blossoms.

Gone are the blossoms,
Leaving cherry trees only with leaves.

So personally did Ugaku feel distressed and betrayed when he heard the Emperor's message of surrender on 15 August, 1945, he led a squadron of 11 planes in the final kamikaze attack of the war on American ships, at Okinawa. All were shot down before they could cause damage; all lost their lives as if cherry blossoms.

No matter the terrible damage and loss of life these airmen caused when they increasingly infrequently reached their targets, they would have been gratified perhaps by the honor accorded them by their victors who sometimes even savored the terrible excitement . . .

From the personal journal of Harold "Buster" Campbell, a baker aboard the USS Missouri, who took perhaps the most famous kamikaze impact photograph:

April 11, 1945: "Well this day will live forever in my memory as the most exciting incident I've ever experienced.

"The USS Missouri photographer, Pat Ferrigno and I were in the Photo Lab. when at 1404 hrs the 'Air Alert' was sounded and we both ran up to the bridge and broke out our cameras.

"While we were shooting this one (kamikaze) another came sneaking up off our

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stern. I got him in the sight of my K-20 (camera) and started shooting. He kept coming through the greatest ack ack I've ever seen. ... He then came direct at the ship and hit us on the starboard quarter on the main deck, burst into flames. I was shaking but felt relieved after he hit. I took a beautiful shot of him as he hit and several as he came burning all along the starboard side till he ended ... It only lasted 15 seconds but it sure was something to see."

The following day the ship's captain ordered a Japanese flag be manufactured and used during a burial-at-sea service for the pilot, complete with a six-gun salute and the bugler blowing taps.

There is some irony here as well, for

it was on the deck of the USS Missouri that the Japanese finally offered their surrender.

Some would say the final irony is that in 1998 a peace memorial to the kamikaze was erected on 500 square meters of donated farmland that now occupies the site of the former Mabalacat East Airfield. But then again, if the modern purpose of war is to discipline an aggressor whose ideology is perceived to be less than humane then to become arrogant and unfeeling in victory is to be perceived transformed into a neo-aggressor with a seemingly equally faulty ideology.

In the past sixty years the word "kamikaze" has been denigrated in western

rhetoric by being associated with acts of terrorism and violence that have had no other purpose than to maim and kill civilians for a headline. This is unfortunate. For, whilst we may never understand fully the circumstance that caused those youthful Japanese airmen to take the kamikaze path from life, from their own writings it is apparent that their purpose was unselfish and bereft of malice for their intended targets.

Note: It is recorded that during the final ten months of the World War II, some 7,465 kamikaze flew to their deaths, 120 US ships were sunk with many more damaged and 3,048 Allied sailors were killed and another 6,025 wounded.

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ZEROING IN ON HISTORY



By Martyn Willes
Photos By Kevin Hamdorf

We set out from Johan's Adventure and Wreck Diving Center filled with boundless enthusiasm that easily counter balanced the weight of



electronics and diving gear we carried aboard the dive boat. Our mission: to rediscover a Mitsubishi Zero that was rumored to lie in about 40 meters of water, somewhere to the Northwest of Subic Bay International Airport.

Mat Caldwell, our electronics specialist and an ANDI (American Nitrox Divers International) dive instructor, complete with his newly acquired side-scan sonar "fish" plugged into an IBM laptop computer, was to be our eyes below the surface. Along with a high-resolution fish

finder we hoped to pinpoint the exact location of a Zero wreck, at which point Mat and the others would make a dive to confirm.

No detailed records of Zeros in Subic Bay were uncovered in our pre-search investigation although records of air battles over the area suggest that there should be at least a baker's dozen in or around the bay area circa 1941 through 1945.

On 5th December 1971 a US Navy P3 Orion submarine hunter was taking off from NAS Cubi Point (now Subic Bay International Airport) when engines #2 and #3 exploded, engines #1 and #4 lost power and all the electronics and

hydraulics failed. The P3 crash-landed in the bay, wheels up, three minutes after takeoff. The aeroplane broke into a number of pieces and it became imperative to recover the militarily sensitive communications equipment aboard.

By chance, a US Navy minesweeper was in the area and was quickly recruited to the task of locating the pieces so that recovery could be expedited.

While making a sweeping turn at the end of one of its many runs along the search grid, sonar operator, Ralph Clay, looked in amazement as there before him on the sonar display screen was the perfect outline of an apparently, completely intact aeroplane. Ralph marked the position on a chart for later investigation and continued his search for the pieces of the Orion.

With the help of the sonar, virtually all of the P3 Orion was recovered but the tail section, with its sensitive listening antenna, was never found, nor were two of its four (less significant) engines.

Ralph shared the location of the intact aeroplane he had seen on the sonar screen with the Navy's recreational diving club. Soon the reports came back that: the aeroplane was almost certainly a Mitsubishi Zero; there was no skeleton of the pilot; there was not much left inside except a couple of instruments and part of the seat; and, the skin of the aeroplane had almost completely corroded, leaving only the structural supports of the wings, fuselage and tail section. The wreck was deemed "interesting but", lacking lobster and any easily removable artifacts, "was not a frequent dive site".

By the time the Navy left in 1991 the location of the Zero was all but a memory. Nobody had any record of its exact location and almost nobody knew that it existed.

Fast-forward to 2005 and amazingly, within three days, through the power of the Internet, we were able to locate and communicate with Dale Sanders, the diver

that Ralph had originally given the chart to. Regrettably he had not kept it after returning to the US in 1984 but he did remember the approximate location.

December 27, 2005, and there we were skipping across the wave tops, accompanied by members of the SBMA Harbor Patrol, intent on using the side-scan sonar, computer and fish finder to locate the Zero for the February issue of The Bay magazine.

Technology is a wonderful thing when it works correctly but after four hours under an unrelenting sun our faith in its capability to discover a 60-year-old aeroplane wreck diminished in inverse proportion to our need to consume liquids.

Overnight telephone calls to the equipment manufacturers in

Canada brought us new encouragement as we tested a new stability configuration for the "fish". A calibration run over the nearby wreck of the USS Lanikai gave reason for optimism so we returned to our search area of the day before.

We received some interesting reflections from unusual items on the seabed but nothing that looked like an aeroplane (or even a part of one) and nothing that was separately verifiable using the high-resolution fish finder.

Ten days and a few hundred dollars in international telephone calls later and the team were ready to try out a new set-up for the "fish". Still nothing of note was observed.

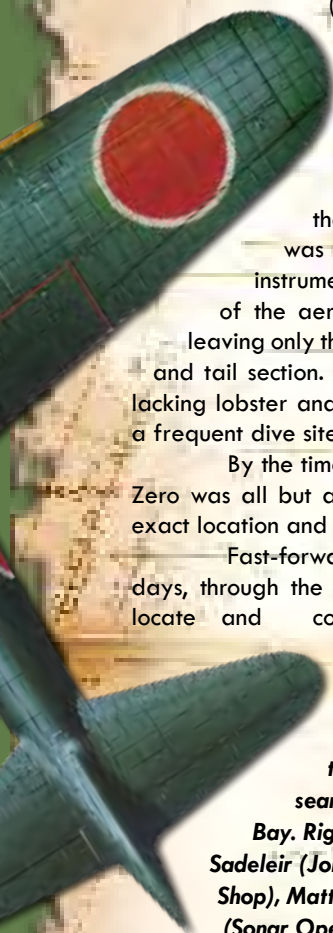
The following day we decided to deploy the proton magnetometer. We had previously refrained from using this device because it is really only effective for metals that affect the Earth's magnetic field – the aluminum alloy used for the Zero's structural components and engine would not likely show up.

Bingo! Aeroplane parts!

We thought we found one of the engines of the Orion almost immediately and then a whole bunch of other stuff that turned out to be mostly discarded construction waste.

Empowered by this modest, albeit the only, success we renewed our determination to find the Zero the following day . . . the last day available under the search permit provided by SBMA.

Then . . . a momentary three meter high blip on the fish finder ... nothing on the magnetometer



Top Left:
Conducting
the sonar
search in Subic
Bay. **Right:** Johan de
Sadeleir (Johan's Dive
Shop), Matthew Caldwell
(Sonar Operator),
Martyn Willes (Author) &
Winches Bulatao (Boat Captain).

Bottom Left: Ralph Clay (former
Sonar Operator aboard the
minesweeper, USS Guide) points
the approximate location of the
Japanese Zero to Johan de Sadeleir.

Above: Japanese Zero fighter.



Recovered wreckage of the P3 Orion, which crashed into Subic Bay on December 5, 1970.
Note: Missing tail section. Photo: US Navy.



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But, as we traced and retraced our path across the wavelets and the sun glided past its zenith, our task again looked fruitless. The computer had finally given up in response to a seawater shower it had received on the first day; time was running out and we only had the magnetometer to provide a broad view of the search area. Then... a momentary three meter high blip on the fish finder... nothing on the magnetometer. Turn and try again... nothing. Turn and try again... a momentary three meter high blip on the fish finder... still nothing on the magnetometer. This could be aluminum (or possibly wood)...

... it is probably thin and rising straight from the seabed... could it be the tail of the Zero sticking up from 60 years of marine sediments and volcanic ash?

Donning dive gear and tri-mix tanks the divers descended; a long wait commenced for the crew on deck.

The position of the "blip" had been marked using a GPS (Global Positioning System) and the boat was now anchored as near to directly above the spot as possible. But what may seem simple when using a GPS to mark a location on the surface can still be

a challenge to find at 40 meters because, even when the sun is still up in the late afternoon, it's almost dark at that depth.

On their third and final dive the dive team split into two groups for a more effective coverage of the area. The first clue they received that they were near a potential something was that, while searching using a very bright HID (High Intensity Discharge) light to expand their vision, one of them noticed the reflection of several fish, way off on the edge of the arc of visibility. Since he



had hardly seen another fish during the previous two dives he realized that this probably meant that either there was an outcrop of a reef in that direction or... a wreck!

Swimming towards the faint reflections, the hairs on the back of his neck started to tingle beneath his wetsuit; something really good was about to happen.

A wreck it surely was. But it was

not until he shone the light up... and up, that he could see the structure extended at least five meters off the bottom. He had found an aeroplane tail, complete with its own marine park, zillions of tiny fish with red groupers sticking their heads out of holes in the broken metal.

The crew above, still ignorant of the find, were watching the sun drift gracefully towards the mountains, resigning themselves to another fruitless day. But jubilation followed as the first of the divers appeared with a thumbs up sign and a smile so wide, it that contorted his facemask.

What

they had actually found was the virtually intact, tail section of the P3 Orion that had eluded the US Navy in 1971. It was sitting bolt upright in 43 meters of water and would make a perfect training dive site for those pursuing a technical diver qualification.

Not a Zero discovery but not a zero result either. As General Douglas MacArthur is reported to have said, "I shall return" another day to find the Zero.



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No one who has traveled the tortuous winding strip of concrete and tarmac through the hills between Tipo and the Calapati monument, three miles on the outskirts of Olongapo, needs to be told why it's called the Zig-Zag. Few know its original name – "Highway 7" -- or that it was the site of one of the most significant and bloody battles during the World War II liberation of the Philippines.

Until 1932 the only way in and out of Olongapo was by boat. That year Highway 7 was completed and opened; later to be known as the Zig-Zag. A year after the road opened an American Officer was sent to make defense plans for the area. He made an inspection of the road as far as Dinalupihan. He returned to Manila to say that no

World Peace Memorial.
In Memory of Capt.
Masanobu Miyasaki,
Commander of the 10th
Company of Japan, Hemiji
39th Infantry Regiment,
one of some 2,750
Japanese soldiers killed
during the Battle of Zig
Zag Pass, February 1945.
Erected by his brother,
Kazunobu Miyazaki,
February 8, 1985.

specific defense plan was necessary. A small force taking advantage of natural defenses could hold Zig Zag Pass against any size force until hell froze over. His name was Major Charles P. Hall.

By 1945, Hall had been promoted to Major General and he commanded the US Army's XI corps.

The Zig Zag Battle

By Bob Couttie

Photos by Kevin Hamdorf

On the morning of January 29, 1945 almost 35,000 American troops of the 38th and 34th divisions under General Hall landed on the north west of the Bataan peninsula. Already, the strategic airstrip at San Marcelino was in hands of Filipino guerillas under Captain Ramon Magsaysay. The only American casualty was a US soldier who was gored by a bull. Subic and Olongapo were recaptured the next day.

Although US intelligence estimated that there would be some 13,000 Japanese soldiers on Bataan, the Japanese commander, Yamashita, had placed just 4,000 troops of the Kembu Group, under Major General Rikichi Trukada, on the peninsula.

Shortly before leaving for the Philippines, recalled a young officer who did not survive the battle, Senior officers held a party and gave each man a bottle of beer. It was subtle indicator that they were embarked on a suicide mission.

So it was that some 2,750 Japanese soldiers dug themselves into the hills around the Zig-Zag pass with plenty of supplies and

ammunition. A labyrinth of tunnels linked some 200 caves, trenches were dug, along with more than 70 pillboxes constructed of logs and dirt.

Then they waited for the Americans to arrive. Their defensive line was just 2,000 yards long, leaving the flank relatively exposed.

General Hall's forces probed the Japanese flanks to the east but the terrain, and the determined defense by the Japanese stalled the American advance.

Facing the Japanese was the inexperienced men of the 38th Cyclone Infantry Division. Recalls Dana Frame "We, the 38th Cyclone Infantry Division, had never been in combat, and this is what we were facing. Our division had just finished a six month assignment in New Guinea, mostly unloading bombs from ships.

"The heat was unbelievable!! We were just ten degrees from the equator. Refrigeration was a luxury not known there. I remember burying our soda & beer in the ground for cooling, which wasn't much cooler. We thought our camp in the jungle was close to hell. We found out later that this was heaven compared to combat."

"We started our push into Zig Zag Pass. The enemy didn't push very easily"

Over the next two weeks, elements of the US 38th Division struggled to take the Pass. In the first three days of fighting the U.S. 152nd had more casualties than

during 78 days of combat in Leyte. Some troops refused to obey orders to go on what they considered to be suicide missions and moral slumped.

Says Frame: "We looked up on the ridge above us, 600 to 700 yards away. There we saw a column of Japanese marines

circling us. I cannot begin to explain the panic in the very depths of my being, And, I'm certain everyone else had the same feelings. I was getting ready to get down in my nice deep fox hole, where I would be pretty safe, when my Platoon Officer called my name, "Frame, you go with these two men, back on the side of that hill, and keep us informed of what the "Japs" are up to.

"He was evidently going by a training manual. It was hard to believe he would send men into a sure



Above: Men of General Hall's 38th Cyclone Infantry Division pinned down by Captain Masanubo Miyazaki's Hemiji 39th Infantry Regiment, Zig Zag Pass, February 1945.
Photo: US Military Archives. Below: Aerial view of Zig Zag Pass, January 2006.

death trap. The Japanese would be coming down that hill at any moment. Our artillery would be zeroing in on them. Our own troops would be turning 30 caliber machine guns at them, and we would be right in the middle."

By the time battle ended, half the US second lieutenants had only a few weeks before been enlisted men who had displayed leadership in taking over when their officers became casualties.

General Jones was relieved and the command given to General Roy W. Easley who used P-47s for air support. The planes began an intensive strafing and bombing program and dropped napalm on the Japanese.

According to Art Jackman, a platoon leader with the 152nd Infantry, the American soldiers cut their way through thick jungle with bolos: "A lot of times, you could be on a Jap before you know it, because you couldn't see him and he couldn't see you. And in the nights, we would dig a round hole and two trenches off of each one. And they dug in a big circle like a table and in the center we would have a command post and we would have radios. And if the Japs bothered us too much at night, we'd call for artillery to shoot around us."

When they were first fighting the Japanese, many times they would have skirmishes at night. Night fighting required the use of knives. "At nights, we did not shoot because . . . the fire will give you away and the Japs will toss a grenade in your hole."

Initially, they found few Japanese dead. It was only later they discovered that the Japanese soldiers tied ropes to their ankles so that if they were killed their bodies could be dragged back.

"When we went down into the valley, there were all these Japs that we'd been killing stacked up like a rick of wood between the trees," he said.

Among the medals won during the battle was Sergeant Joseph Mattioli's, Silver Medal. After a Company of inexperience American soldiers were routed by the Japanese and began to fall apart, Mattioli succeeded in rallying them back into an effective fighting force. He grabbed a machine

continuation on page 20



Yamashita's Gold

A CONVERSATION OVERHEARD IN THE BARRIO



"Ha!" he said, in response to the list of "facts" offered by the second man at the bar. "How can you believe such a story . . . it is incomprehensible that the Japanese were able to bury so much in such a short time using such complex cave and tunnel systems . . . they were only in the Philippines for a couple of years."

"It was part of their one hundred year plan for the conquest of Asia" came the swift reply and a barrage of new facts, "they realized that if they failed militarily they would need a post-conflict solution that would require discrete financing outside of visible channels. Fact. Three trillion dollars worth of gold, precious stones and tradable artifacts went missing during the Japanese occupation of countries in South and East Asia in the run-up to and during the Second World War. Fact. Only a fraction of this loot has ever been accounted for."

"But why the Philippines?" demanded the first man.

"Because compared to Japan and anywhere else in Asia it had a relatively docile population with a fragmented government infrastructure — courtesy of the Spanish — but possessed immense mineral wealth and timber, and in particular gold mines that were capable of producing up to forty tons of the metal every year." He went on, "with the Philippines under their control they could own the South China Sea and control the newly discovered oil reserves in Indonesia, and militarily it afforded their empire a commanding view over the entire West Pacific. Gold, oil, minerals, timber and strategic military superiority . . . what else does an expansionist nation need in order to be recognized as a global superpower." He concluded.

"Ok" said the first man, "let's

say I buy into the idea that the Philippines was a strategic asset for many reasons, a couple of years of occupation does not seem long enough to obtain the necessary knowledge of the country in order to secrete such loot with such precision seeing as they only arrived here in 1942 and were kicked out in 1945."

"That's because since 1920 they had been planting their spies in the country . . . perhaps as many as 10,000 inconsequential looking Japanese teenagers traveled here during the twenties and "fell in love with" local gals, married, built innocuous little

in the Philippines? Doesn't it make more sense to store it back in Japan?"

"That's exactly what happened to most of it . . . transported in hospital ships and the now infamous Hellships . . . until the American's blockaded Tokyo Bay and sank the Awa Maru in the Straits of Formosa on April-fools day in 1945. Then they had to focus entirely on the fallback plan and expedite the burial of the remainder right here in the Philippines . . . mostly in Northern Luzon. In at least 172 mapped sites in fact . . . all



businesses like a bicycle repair shop or a metalwork shop. When war came to the Philippines these men dusted off their long stored uniforms and emerged as colonels and majors with complete inventories of the locales where they had grown up and with excellent contacts amongst the more influential members of society. They weren't here for three years . . . they were here for twenty three!"

"Hmm . ." the first man still unconvinced, "but why leave everything

documented and all recoverable." He added.

"Now you make me laugh" the first man chuckled, "if all you need is a map then how do you know it is still here?"

"Simple." The second man produced a map with markings depicting hills, rivers, roads and with some strange calligraphy and symbols, "they haven't recovered this site yet . . . this is the original map . . . see that clock image?"

For a few moments the first man turned the map this way and that before

finally concluding, "you would have to be a seer to work out where that was."

"Not quite . . . you have to understand the instructions and for that you would have to learn a whole new, or rather very old, language." He spoke more softly and leaned towards the first man, "it is the language of the yakuza." And then more loudly, "and then you would have to invest a few million dollars in equipment and manpower and then, if you are correct with your translation, then you may find what you

second man's turn to laugh.

"But there are many who say that (former President Ferdinand) Marcos obtained his wealth by discovering Yamashita's gold and that there is none left to find." The first man offered.

"It is highly probable that he recovered maybe 17 or so maps . . . and there is little doubt that he had in his possession a number of artifacts that almost certainly came from the missing haul." Confirmed the second man, "but even if we add up all of the gold in all of the bank vaults he is believed to have controlled and if we assume that the large sales of gold bullion on the world market in the mid-eighties that originated in the Philippines were from Yamashita's gold then that still leaves the vast majority unaccounted for."

A flash of inspiration glittered in the first man's eyes. "Maybe that is why there are so many Japanese funded infrastructure projects in the Philippines? Maybe they are in fact slowly recovering the loot?"

"Doubtful." Offered the second man, "because they would not want the local authorities who implement the projects to get involved."

"But for example" the first man not wanting to give up his newly found enthusiasm for treasure hunting so easily, "isn't it curious the route that the new Clark Subic highway is taking? It is not the most direct route and it passes extremely close to the Zambales mountains in places where we know the Japanese dug complexes of tunnels during the war."

"Curious yes" The second replied, "but if they find anything there it will be more by good luck than good planning. If I was looking for a conspiracy for recovery I

would look for the lone Japanese man in his fifties or sixties seeking information about his father who he claimed lived here before the war . . . he would be the one to follow. But the great thing about the Philippines is that there are at least a hundred people who already know where the loot is and they just need a little help from a wealthy foreigner to extract it for a share the profits!" He laughed heartily, grabbed his beer and stepped out onto the beach to watch the setting sun as it passed behind the second ridge on the north side of Subic Bay. However, the observant people-voyeur would notice that his gaze was focused on the fourth ridge and as the sun descended its rays highlight yet another Japanese funded infrastructure project that appeared to him to have more roads than required leading back and up into the valley.

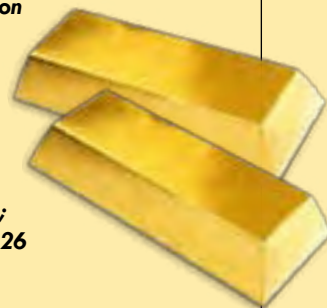
"Hmm . . . I wonder" mused a third man who had overheard the conversation and now followed the second's gaze.

GET A PERMIT FIRST

If you wish to search for Yamashita's gold or indeed to dig at any World War II site, you should be aware that Presidential Decree 1726-A requires you first to obtain a permit from the Bureau of Mines. So far at least 40 such permits have been issued for this purpose from the Bureau's headquarters in Quezon City; many more may have been issued through Regional offices.

The forms required to apply for a permit can be downloaded from the Bureau's website (www.mgb.gov.ph) or through direct representation to:

*The Director,
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2nd Fl., JC
Fernandez Building,
North Avenue,
Diliman, Quezon City;
telephone +63 2 926
0943.*


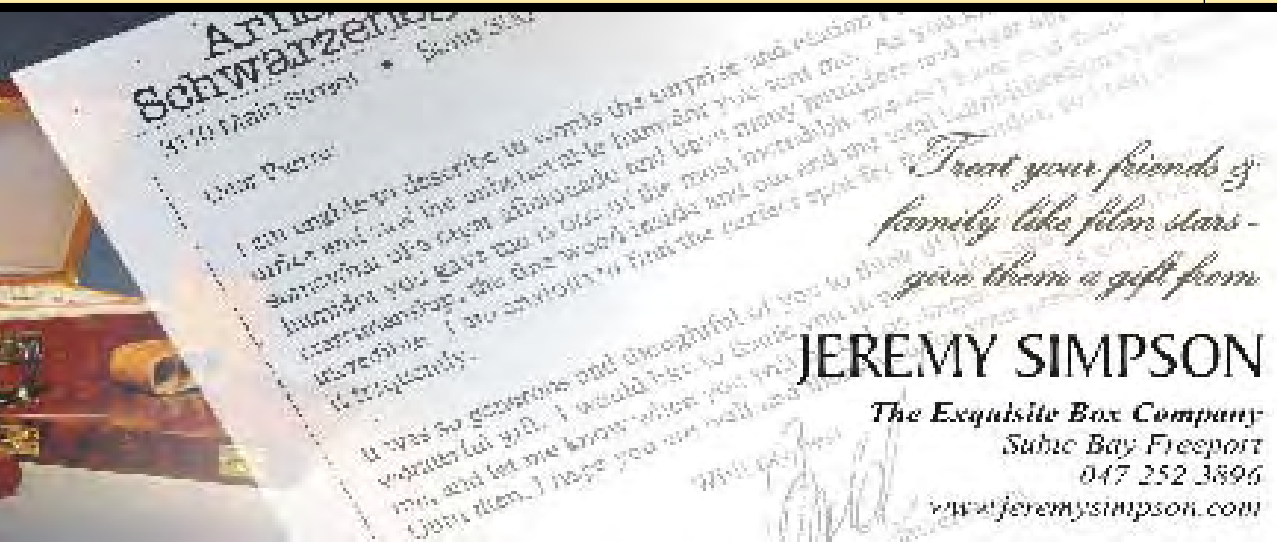


Above: General Yomoyuki Yamashita, Commander of the Japanese forces in the Philippines, 1944-1945 (Photo: US Military Archives) Left: A typical so-called Japanese treasure map. Real or fake?

seek . . . assuming you get past the booby traps, water and bio-hazard defenses, and then survive the local gendarmerie upon departure."

"Sounds like a fool's errand . . . even if it is true." The first man asserted.

"Not if you multiply say one thousand gold bars by two hundred thousand dollars a piece . . . a better return on investment than panning for it!" It was the

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ART'S GOLD

By Martyn Willes

Photos by Kevin Hamdorf



Art Allegar, victimized good samaritan with his 1/3 share of the "Sumatra gold bar". (Inset close up of the bar)

"...he followed the translator down a narrow path into the even blacker black of the forested valley"

In 1991 an ancient gash in the earth's crust erupted in a terrible explosion and engulfed huge tracts of Zambales and Pampanga. As the aftershocks rumbled through the mountains surrounding Mount Pinatubo, fissures and landslides alternately revealed and concealed prehistoric and more modern evidence of man's use and abuse of the land. In one valley, on the Eastside of the Zambales mountains, it was said that a fissure exposed a hoard of gold bars, hidden for the maybe fifty or sixty years, perhaps longer.

One morning an Aeta, known to be an honorable member of the clan living at the Cawag settlement, knocked on Art's front door, and through a translator explained a dire predicament that now beset his group; they had uncovered a shiny metal bar that

they believed might be gold and worried that if some unsavory people got word of the discovery they would take advantage of these simple and naive people. They were even afraid to seek help from the authorities as they had heard of instances where simple mountain people had been overwhelmed by more sophisticated city folk.

Art, who had happily employed the Aeta and several of his clan members as laborers while building his home just a few years before, listened with increasing concern to the story that came via the translator. Seeing how uncomfortable and frightened his former employee was he offered his assistance.

A trip into the mountains was arranged and two of Art's friends were recruited for their special skills: one who spoke Tagalog

and another that was familiar with the Zambales areas and had some experience with all sorts of metals.

The paved road quickly gave way to a four-wheel drive track and eventually to merely a trodden path. The trio, in company of the Aeta man and the translator, waited atop a small rise above the valley floor for the other men who were supposed to meet them with a sample of the metal.

In the gathering twilight two men could be seen approaching from the adjacent valley and by nightfall they presented Art and his two companions with some scrapings from "a bar of yellow metal" that they had found in the mountains. Also offered was a rubbing from the top of the bar, which revealed some calligraphy, the word "SUMATRA", and some numbers, apparently stamped into the bar.

The following morning the metal scrapings were on their way to Manila and by evening a report came back that they were 99.8% pure gold!

Almost two weeks went by before contact between Art and the Aeta, through the translator, was made. And "Yes" they could arrange for a bar of the yellow metal to be extracted as definitive evidence that could be researched to determine its origin. But, a security deposit would have to be paid before the bar could be released. This was to protect the interests of the Aeta clan, as explained through the interpreter.

Art's trio shared the funding for the security deposit with the assurances that they would each be given a portion of the proceeds of sale for their part in helping the Aeta clan. The security deposit amounted to US\$3,000.00, and another week passed before they again traveled to the remote place in the mountains. This time the translator and the Aeta left the trio atop the rise and picked their way down into the valley, ostensibly to encourage the carriers of the bar from fright. They would summon the trio when the bar arrived.

After half an hour the sun had set and the evening slowly encircled them. Art's Tagalog speaking friend was asked to accompany the translator down into the valley and into the gathering night, leaving the duo at the top listening to the frogs and the crickets, singing for their lovers into the blackness of an otherwise deathly-silent night.

Fifteen minutes later the translator reappeared and asked Art, alone, to join them in the valley. He said it was the request of Art's friend, already down in the valley. How strange, thought Art, that he should be summoned alone . . . and still there was no other sound except for the frogs and the crickets competing in song.

Follow or run? Art reasoned that if the Tagalog speaker

had been overwhelmed by a band of gangsters or native warriors then he -- Art, the logistics specialist -- stood no chance at all . . . but then to stay atop the rise offered no safety either, and the Tagalog speaker had the keys to the four-wheel drive.

With the hairs on the back of his neck quivering with terrible excitement he followed the translator down a narrow path into the even blacker black of the forested valley, expecting at any moment to have to fight for his life against an unseen enemy.

It was with great relief then that his friend came into view in a forest clearing, sitting with a couple of Aeta near a small fire and sharing some canned food that they had brought as gifts. With immeasurable relief Art joined his companion and the translator returned up the valley for the last third of the trio.

There was the bar. Appropriately cut into three pieces, there was the calligraphy and the numbers, just as the rubbing had predicted. It was possible even to see where the sample scrapings had been removed for analysis two weeks before. The trio each took one piece and, in the flickering light of a hurricane lamp, turned the metal in their hands examining it for confirmation. It appeared to be genuine.

The translator took charge of the security deposit and the Aeta, after giving wholehearted thanks for the canned goods, dissolved into the night.

The translator took the trio back to the rise and confirmed that he would contact them within the week to give them time to consider the logistics of moving "hundreds" of similar bars across the mountains without the military or anyone else becoming involved.

The four-wheel drive jumbled its smiling passengers along the dirt road and then onto the paved section. Each man giving time to private thoughts about how best to use their good fortune.

Back in the Barrio a small celebration took place, for tomorrow they would be on the way to seeing the Aeta villagers enjoying a great improvement in their lives, and the trio being well compensated for their assistance.

As the light of the new dawn broke across Subic Bay with shafts of pure gold in the heavens, one piece of the bar was already on its way South for definitive analysis and determination of provenance.

Art's neighbors in the subdivision thought that this morning Art had a peculiar manner about him -- he was sort of light on his feet . . . bouncy even . . . and why was he smiling so broadly?

The mid-afternoon telephone call from Manila revealed the amazing truth, the bar was indeed yellow metal . . . but only the kind used for making ship's fittings. The trio had spent US\$ 3,000.00 on a bar worth maybe US\$ 15. It was pure bronze.

That evening Art's companions and he were observed to be back to normal . . . maybe even a little subdued. One neighbor distinctly heard one of them say, "if we ever find that translator or any of his buddies, we'll . . ."



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The Zig Zag...from page 15

gun, shot down a Japanese plane and disabled two Japanese tanks. Thanks to Mattioli, the Americans were able to re-establish new defensive lines.

Dana Frame remembers the battle well: "We started our push into Zig-Zag Pass. The enemy didn't push very easily, they were dug into the ground, with tunnels and bunkers, so concealed you could step over them, or fall into them. It was really slow advancing. We were pinned down with sniper and machinegun fire so much of the time. Our artillery and firebombs from low flying airplanes would clear out the jungle in front of us. They were down deep in the ground and would pop up almost right under you.

"I was walking along the side of a

tank as it moved along blasting at bunkers. A Japanese marine jumped up out of a hole just a few feet away with a TNT charge, ran to the tank, threw the charge under the tank and ran back to his hole. I wasn't fast enough to get a shot at him.

"We had just taken a hill and we were feeling at ease getting ready to dig in for the night when all of a sudden the enemy cut loose with a machine gun. Several men were hit before we could hit the ground. One of my buddies standing beside me got his arm half shot off. Over the hill from us, artillery dropped in on the men in the valley. A man's head flew up over our heads."

DA Taylor, a member of a Naval Advance Ship Repair Unit visited the battle site soon afterwards: "I had the opportunity to travel over Zig Zag a number of times and investigated on foot the various battle

areas when much debris, ammunition and body parts were still in view and the smell which seemed to never clear the nostrils."

The 149th Infantry, The Kentucky Reserves were led on a mission to attack the Japanese at Dinalupihan by Aeta scouts.

By February 8, American forces had finally overrun the Japanese positions. 2,400 Japanese soldiers lay dead, the remaining 300 escaped southwards under Colonel Nagayoshi and joined up with the remnants of the Japanese defenders who on fought until the middle of February. By then the shoreline of Manila Bay had been secured, allowing American forces to complete the task of liberating the Philippines. But the cost had been heavy, fleeing Japanese soldiers had destroyed much of Olongapo and some 1,400 American soldiers had died in the battle.

HELLSHIP MEMORIAL DEDICATION

BY RANDY ANDERSON

By 1941, the Rising Sun had become symbolic of the Japanese resolve that would stop at nothing to expand the empire. Whoever stood in the path of the Imperial Japanese Army had only three choices: subjugation, death, or imprisonment. Throughout Asia, men from America, Australia, Great Britain, and a dozen other nations moved along their own path – a path that would soon cross with Japan's and end in one of the major and largely unknown tragedies of World War II – the Hellships.

As early as the spring of 1942, only a few months after the fall of Allied territories in the Far East, the Japanese began moving prisoners of war (POW) by sea out of the conquered areas and sending them to Thailand, Taiwan, Burma, China, Korea, and Japan itself, to be used as slave labor.

A thousand or more men were

crammed into a cargo hold, often with only enough room to stand, for a journey that could last weeks. The heat was stifling, the stench unbearable. Even the most basic sanitary and medical provisions were refused. Hundreds of men, already weak and suffering from disease after years in POW camps, succumbed. Hundreds more went out of their minds.

Added to these inhumane conditions was the extreme brutality of the Japanese guards. Those who survived the unimaginable nightmare of the Hellships describe their time aboard as the most horrific chapter of their wartime captivity.

There are many stories of the war to be told, but very few are as tragic as the story of the Hellships. According to Japanese figures, of the 50,000 POWs they shipped, 10,800 died at sea. Going by Allied figures, more Americans died in the sinking of one

of the Hellships, the Arisan Maru, than died in the weeks of the Death March out of Bataan, or in the months at Camp O'Donnell, which were the two worst sustained atrocities committed by the Japanese against POWs. More Dutchmen died in the sinking of the Junyo Maru than in a year on the Burma-Siam railroad. Of all POWs who died in the Pacific war, one in every three was killed on the water by friendly fire.

Duane Heisinger, author of *Father Found*, a book detailing the ordeal his father suffered as a POW says, "the story of these ships is an incredible tale of a descent into Hell that left a trail of dead and dying men from the all over Asia to Japan," he said.

One of the most notorious Hellships of them all, the *Oryoku Maru*, was sunk in Subic Bay in December 1944. Transporting Japanese soldiers, civilians, and 1,619 prisoners of war out of Manila, the

Hellship POW survivor, Ben Steele's haunting depiction of the brutal conditions endured by thousands of victims transported in Japanese Hellships.





Left: POW's Charles "Chuck" Towne, 85 yrs. old (survivor of the sinking of Oryoku Maru, December 15, 1944 in Subic Bay); Everett D. Reamer, 81 yrs. old (survivor of the Bataan Death March, 1942 & the Hellship Tottori Maru, 1942); Malcolm Amos, 84 yrs. old (rescued during the Cabanatuan Great Raid, January 30, 1945) and Richard Francis, 88 yrs. old (survivor of the Bataan Death March, 1942 & the Hellship Noto Maru, 1944). Standing before the Hellship Memorial, Subic Bay Freeport Zone. Photo by Kevin R. Hamdorf

Bottom: Col. Rafael Estrada, Commander of the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, pays tribute to the victims of the Hellships. Photo by Efren Fiao-Ag

"...these men lie beneath no headstone or other marker, their bodies impossible to recover from their watery graves..."

unmarked ship suffered repeated attacks from American fighter planes, the pilots of which who had no idea she was carrying POWs or Japanese civilians. The ship, heavily damaged and burning, limped into Subic Bay where the POWs were forced to swim ashore and held on an open tennis court for five days with almost no food or water. The survivors were then loaded on trucks and taken to San Fernando to continue their journey on the Enoura Maru and the Brazil Maru. The Enoura Maru was sunk but the Brazil Maru made port in Moji, Japan on January 29, 1945 with only 500 of the original 1,619 POWs who began the ordeal a month and a half earlier. Less than 300 of these men survived until the end of the war.

My own involvement with the Hellships story began while I was stationed at the U.S. Navy base at Subic Bay in the 1980's. I met a lady who was in Subic Bay to visit the site where she had lost her father in World War Two. Her father had been one the POWs transported on the Oryoku Maru and died while being held at Subic Bay.

I arranged for a boat to take her out over the site of the Oryoku Maru to lay a wreath on the water, retraced the steps of the surviving POWs, and pointed out the area where her father had died and the

survivors confined for several days before starting anew on their terrible journey.

Although I cannot remember the lady's name, I have never forgotten her anguish over the fact that there was no marker or any indication at all of the tremendous suffering her father and the other POWs endured.

After retirement from the U.S. Navy in 1994 and working in the U.S. for a number of years, I returned to the Philippines for a visit. It had been ten years since I had left Subic Bay. Although much had changed since the Navy days - the Americans were gone and the base was now a bustling tourism and industrial center - there was still no marker commemorating the POWs.

In August of 2003, the idea was conceived of a Memorial dedicated to the Hellships POWs and the Hellships Memorial Project was created to formulate plans. I met with Leslie Ann Murray of the Filipino-American Memorial Endowment (FAME), a subcommittee of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, and formed a relationship with them. FAME is best known for placing and maintaining the kilometer markers along the Bataan Death March, and their good work on Corregidor and

other sites.

A Groundbreaking ceremony was held in January 2004. Then SBMA Chairman Felicito Payumo was an early supporter of the Memorial and he, along with Hell Ships survivors John Olson and Carlos Montoya, shared the ritual honor of turning shovels of earth to mark the symbolic beginning of the





Surviving POW's and descendants gather at the newly dedicated Hellships Memorial. Subic Bay Freeport Zone. Photo by Kevin Hamdorf

Project.

At that Groundbreaking I meet Duane Heisinger, shortly after he published, *Father Found*. He readily agreed to become associated with the project and spearheaded the fund-raising effort in the U.S.

Early in 2005, Bob Chester joined the project. His most visible contribution was the striking design of the Memorial. He has also assisted immeasurably in the logistics and hundreds of small details that arise when undertaking a project like this.

The Hellships Memorial is dedicated to all the POWs on all the Hellships. As the inscription on the Memorial says, these heroes came from different homelands, different backgrounds, and different circumstances – but all were courageous and patriotic men whose lives were drastically altered and, in many cases, ended during their terrible journeys on the Hellships. More than half a century later, many of these men lie beneath no headstone or other marker, their bodies impossible to recover from their watery graves. This is the only Memorial many of these men will ever have.

On January 22, 2006, after two years of hard work, the big moment finally arrived– the Dedication of the Memorial! We were fortunate to have Father James Reuter deliver the invocation. Father Reuter arrived the Philippines as a young Jesuit missionary in the 1930's, and was interned at the Los Baños POW camp until Filipino guerrillas and American soldiers rescued him and the other internees during a dawn raid on Feb. 23, 1945. After the war, he returned to the United States to be ordained a priest. When he came back to the Philippines he taught at the Ateneo de Manila University and over the past five decades has become an institution in the Philippines.

SBMA Chairman Feliciano Salonga gave the opening remarks, described his own feeling toward the tragedy of the Hellships POWs, and pledged his on-going support of the Project.

Duane Heisinger delivered a very stirring keynote speech and gave details of the loss of several of the Hellships. Deputy Administrator Bonggoy Atienza delivered the closing remarks.

With the dedication of this Memorial, we have completed Phase One of the project. Much work still lies ahead. During Phase Two, we will construct the POW Tribute - a statue incorporated into the Memorial evoking the emotions surrounding this tragedy, and make other upgrades.

The Memorial Project is conceived as multi-phased for one compelling reason - with each passing day, our links with the greatest conflict the world has ever known quietly fall away. As the drumbeat



Hellship Memorial Project Leader, US Navy Lt. Commander (Retired) Randy Anderson (right) and Memorial Designer & Project Coordinator, US Navy Boatswains Mate Chief (Retired) Robert E. Chester (left).

Photo by Kevin Hamdorf

slows for the World War II generation, it is vitally important that we honor them and thank them personally for their sacrifices while we still can. Four of these men attended the Dedication - men who had survived the horrors of the Bataan Death March, the Fall of Corregidor, the prison camps, and the terrible journey on the Hellships - and then returned to their homeland to try to put their lives back together.

Equally important is that the young generations learn about the momentous events in human history that touched the lives of so many people. They must discover the extraordinary sacrifice of the heroes that this Memorial honors, not only that they may draw inspiration from their example but also to reaffirm the enduring hope of a world set free from conflict. The Hellships Memorial will forever speak of this hope, serving for generations to come as an anchor holding fast against the slow currents of complacency and forgotten loss.

Future generations will pause at this sacred place, to reflect on a great tragedy that transcends all words and on the grief of the families and loved ones left behind - wives who lost the companionship and unfulfilled dreams of their husbands, children who were robbed of their father's kindness, their voice, and their smile. But they must not be filled with bitterness. Duane Heisinger, who lost his father on the Hellships says, that when asked, "Aren't you angry? My answer is always the same, No, I am not angry. I am greatly saddened by the loss of these men—and my father—but I cannot harbor anger or hate; I cannot live my life in anger or hate. My Mother did not, nor can I."

I hope that somehow, someday the lady I met nearly 20 years ago learns of this Memorial and know that it will stand forever to show that we care about her father and the other POWs - and will always care.



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THE ORYOKU MARU

From An Interview With Two Dive Specialists

A thousand warships have passed unseeing above her ghostly form as she lays at rest, just off the main wharf at the former U.S. Naval Base in Subic Bay. Long ago relieved of her most notorious cargoes she now lies as silent testimony to the collateral damage exacted upon the unfortunate during wartime.

Originally conceived as a luxury cruise liner, the Oryoku Maru was pressed into the service of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Her role: to transport supplies and people to and from all corners of its master's fledgling empire. As that empire prematurely contracted under the onslaught of the

Allied advance up through South East Asia, on 13 December 1944 the Oryoku Maru was loaded with cargoes, civilians (about 1,500) and prisoners-of-war (1,619) for a voyage back to Japan. She left Pier 7 in Manila Bay at about 03:00hrs on 14th December.

Despite being loaded with Japanese civilians and prisoners-of-war in full view of Allied intelligence assets in Manila, as the Oryoku Maru left the relative safety of the Manila port she came under attack from the air. Off the coast of Bataan she sustained significant damage and more than 300 casualties (mostly amongst the Japanese civilians who were on the upper decks), and limped into Subic Bay where, under the cover of darkness, the remaining civilians and some of her cargo were unloaded at

the shipyard in the northeast corner of the bay, near Subic town.

By daybreak on the 15th she was making slow progress towards the Olongapo Naval Reservation, near what is now Alava Pier, to unload the prisoners. At around 09:00hrs a second flight of Allied planes from the USS Hornet strafed the superstructure and dropped their bombs with scant regard for the lives they were terminating. Now fatally damaged and down by the stern, the Oryoku Maru finally started to discharge her other human cargo under continued air assault. [there are reports that Allied planes ceased dropping bombs when they saw prisoners swimming for shore but these reports are contradicted by others present] It appeared that the intent was to stop the Oryoku Maru from leaving Subic Bay by



The Oryoku Maru in war-time colors. Painted by artist Mr. Kihachiro Ueda, a soldier with the Japanese Army assigned to merchant ships. He was severely wounded during the bombing of the Kinka Maru in Manila Harbor on November 14, 1944. Loosing his right hand, he learnt to paint with his left.

all means. They succeeded . . . at the cost of nearly 300 Allied prisoners-of-war, 300 Japanese civilians and an unknown number of Japanese servicemen.

What was so special about the Oryoku Maru that allowed friendly fire to cut short the lives of so many non-combatants on that day?

Some would say that it was the cargo of aeroplane parts in her holds amidships -- an estimated 100 engines, propellers and related spares -- while others speculate that it was the rumors of 100 tons of gold bullion hidden in her double-skin hull. There is little doubt that determined attacks would not have continued if the ship had been only carrying civilians and prisoners-of-war.

For sure the aeroplane engines and propellers remain, slowly dissolving, never to be used in anger. There are bodies too, of civilians, Allied prisoners and their captors, unlucky enough to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time on that fateful day. For sure no gold bullion has been found.

Following the Allied advance through the Philippines and on into Japan, Subic Bay became a strategic Allied naval base and the Oryoku Maru, lying in shallow water less than four hundred

meters off the pier, a significant navigational hazard. So, at some point shortly after the war, she was set upon by marine explosives experts who collapsed her superstructure and intermediate decks to provide clear access to the surrounding water for shipping.

"It appeared that the intent was to stop the Oryoku Maru from leaving Subic Bay by all means."

Strangely, unnecessarily it seems, they also disemboweled her keel to expose the area between her inner and outer hulls. Was this the hiding place for the rumored gold bullion?

Those with active imaginations have speculated that the gold had already been removed -- during those moonlit hours when she was anchored at the

shipyard across the bay. Other suspect it was secretly removed later by US military, underwater recovery specialists. The whole truth will probably never be acknowledged but it adds an intriguing facet to the shocking history of this World War II, Hellship wreck.

Today, divers who visit the wreck do so with the understanding that the Oryoku Maru is considered by most to be a unique war grave. Like the other Hellships, she was a fearful place for the prisoners-of-war incarcerated in her holds. Some prisoners simply went insane from the heat, thirst, hunger and the extreme depravity, others were reportedly killed for no other reason than they craved a moment of fresh-air atop the rickety, wooden ladder down which they had been forced to descend -- a crime punishable by death.

Being the most accessible of the notorious Hellship wrecks she is the one that galvanizes the emotions, and the controversy.

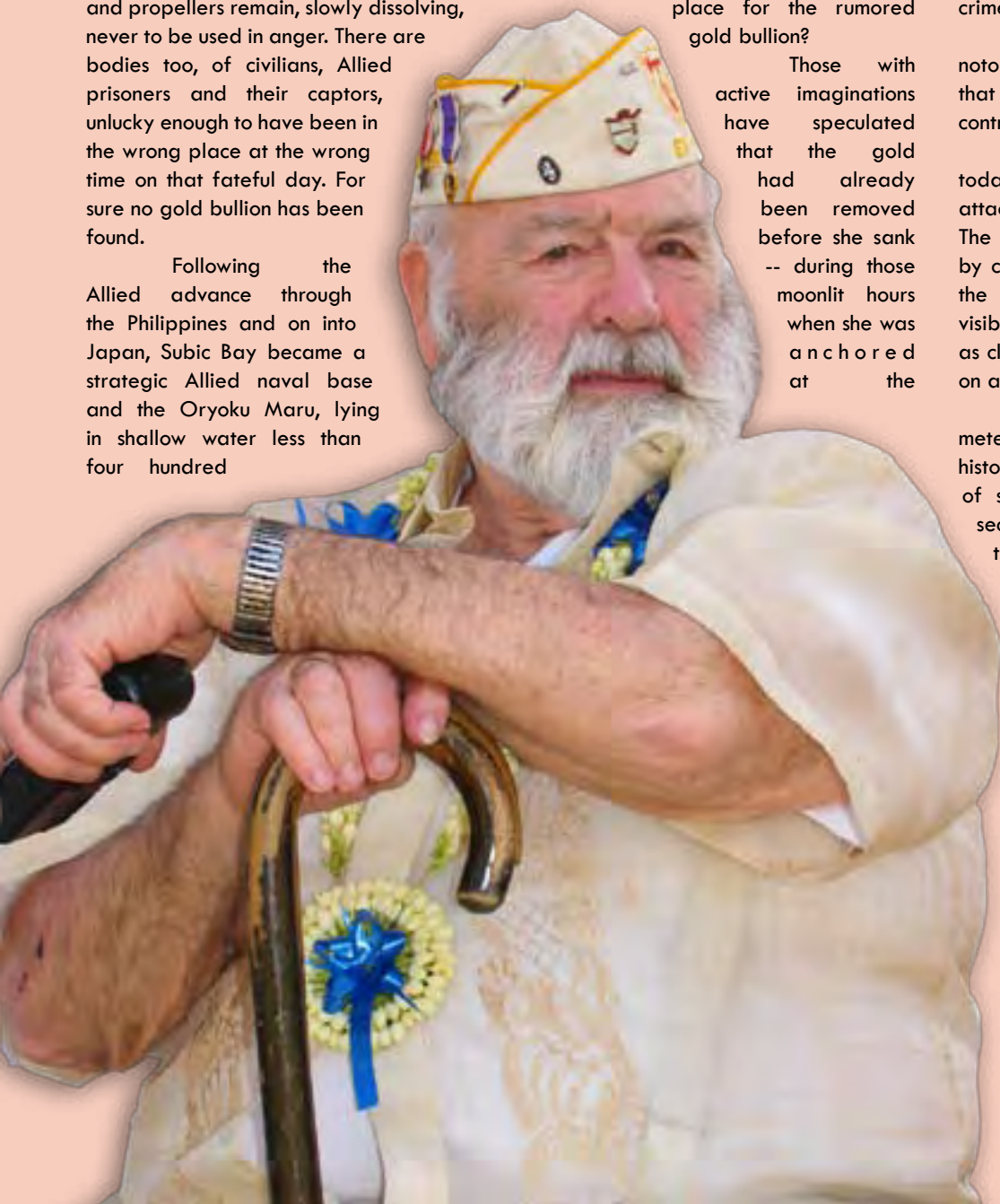
Respectful divers on the wreck today can view the results of the 1944 attack and the later marine demolitions. The twisted metal is sometimes obscured by clouds of murky, river water entering the bay while at other times good visibility, up to fifteen meters, is apparent as clear sea water washes across the site on a favorable tide.

At a maximum depth of twenty meters, diving the Oryoku Maru offers a historic experience for divers of all levels of skill. And, although a broad cross-section of marine life now mingles with the ghosts of that terrible conflict, the wreck is foremost a grave for the unfortunate and should forever be respected as such.

Historic and diving information supplied by: Johan's Adventure and Wreck Dive Center, Baloy Beach.

Top Left: Prison camp photos of POW's who survived their Hellship voyage to Japan.

Right: Charles "Chuck" P. Towne, US Army Medic, who surrendered on Corregidor, survived the bombings of the Oryoku Maru and Enoura Maru. Arrived in Japan aboard the Brazil Maru. Photo by Kevin Hamdorf





POW TENNIS COURT

by Randy Anderson

On December 15, 1944, the Oryoku Maru, a Japanese prison ship carrying 1619 Allied POWs from Manila to Japan, was attacked by American fighter planes. The badly damaged ship limped into Subic Bay and Japanese passengers were landed at Subic town. The POWs were then taken across the bay to the former U.S. Navy base at Olongapo, now held by the Japanese Imperial Army. Nearly 250 of the POWs already were dead from horrible conditions in the ship's holds. Suffocation, hunger, thirst, madness – and American bombs – had taken their toll.

The order to leave the sinking ship came and the men stripped down and plunged into the water. The Japanese set up machine guns on the seawall and fired upon any man that tried to swim to freedom. Once ashore, the long line of thirsty, battle-shocked, ill, and wounded

men straggled slowly and weakly along a coral path next to the seawall. By late afternoon the last of the men hobbled through the gate of a double tennis court.

Undoubtedly, some of the American officers had played spirited tennis games on that court in the pre-war days when an assignment in the Philippines had seemed more like a country club holiday. But now, with its barbed wire and six foot wall, it was to be their prison for the next six days.

It was hot on the concrete tennis court, the blazing sun showing no more mercy than the Japanese guards. The only water came from a slowly dripping faucet near the court, to which the guards allowed only limited access. The days crept by. On the fourth day they got their first meager meal ashore – five spoons of raw rice. On the fifth, as though to off-balance such generosity, there was no food morning or

noon, and at night only two tablespoons of raw rice.

On the sixth and seventh days on the tennis court, convoys of trucks arrived to take the surviving prisoners on to the next stages of their terrible journey. According to official records, 1619 men began the trip, 450 of whom were still alive when the contingent reached Japan. At war's end only about 300 of the men were still living.

The exact location of the tennis court where the survivors of the Oryoku Maru were confined for several days, and many died, has always been a matter of great interest – and contention – for both the families of the POWs and historians. First hand accounts of the location of the tennis court were often contradictory. Most agreed the court was not far from an old Marine barracks. Most also indicated that it was located inside the gate of the

Top Left: Aerial view of Alava Pier area, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, January 2006.

Photo by Kevin Hamdorf

Note: A. Site of the wreck of the Oryoku Maru. B. Site of the infamous POW Tennis Court.

C. Site of the Hellships Memorial

Right: Approximately 11 A.M., December 15, 1944. In this reconnaissance photograph taken from a Hellcat fighter from the USS Hornet, clearly visible are the splashes (left of the burning ship) created by surviving POW's swimming ashore from the burning (A.) Oryoku Maru.

B. marks the location of the infamous Tennis Court on which the POW's were held captive for six days. C. Site of the Hellships Memorial

D. Subic Bay Chapel E. US Navy Gate F. Spanish Gate

pre-war U.S. Navy station at Subic Bay.

This last description has caused the most confusion. Many people assumed that the reference was to the old Spanish-built West Gate, commonly called the Spanish Gate, which still stands today. There was, in fact, a tennis court located close to this gate. But gunsite photos from the attacking American fighters clearly show that the Japanese had constructed a wooden building on the site that was still standing at the time of the Oryoku Maru sinking.

While the Spanish Gate was in fact the main gate for the U.S. Navy base at Subic Bay in the early years of the station, by 1941 the naval facility had expanded to the point that the main entrance was then at the corner of Dewey and Rizal Avenues (NOTE: check this!! The corner where Extreme Expresso stands) where a small Marine guard post stood. The foundation of this guard post was clearly visible until construction in 2005 covered it over. Contemporary photos of the station that I had published in my 1991 book, Subic Bay: From Magellan

to Pinatubo, plainly showed a Marine barracks just inside this gate. These bits of information seemed to indicate that the tennis court was not inside the Spanish Gate as most thought, but located near this later gate. But exactly where?

In 2004, a map of the Subic Bay

Naval Station drawn up in 1940 by the Navy Public Works Center was given to me by former U.S. Navy SEAL Dave Lassard. With this map and the gunsite photos, we could finally determine which of the

continued on page 31

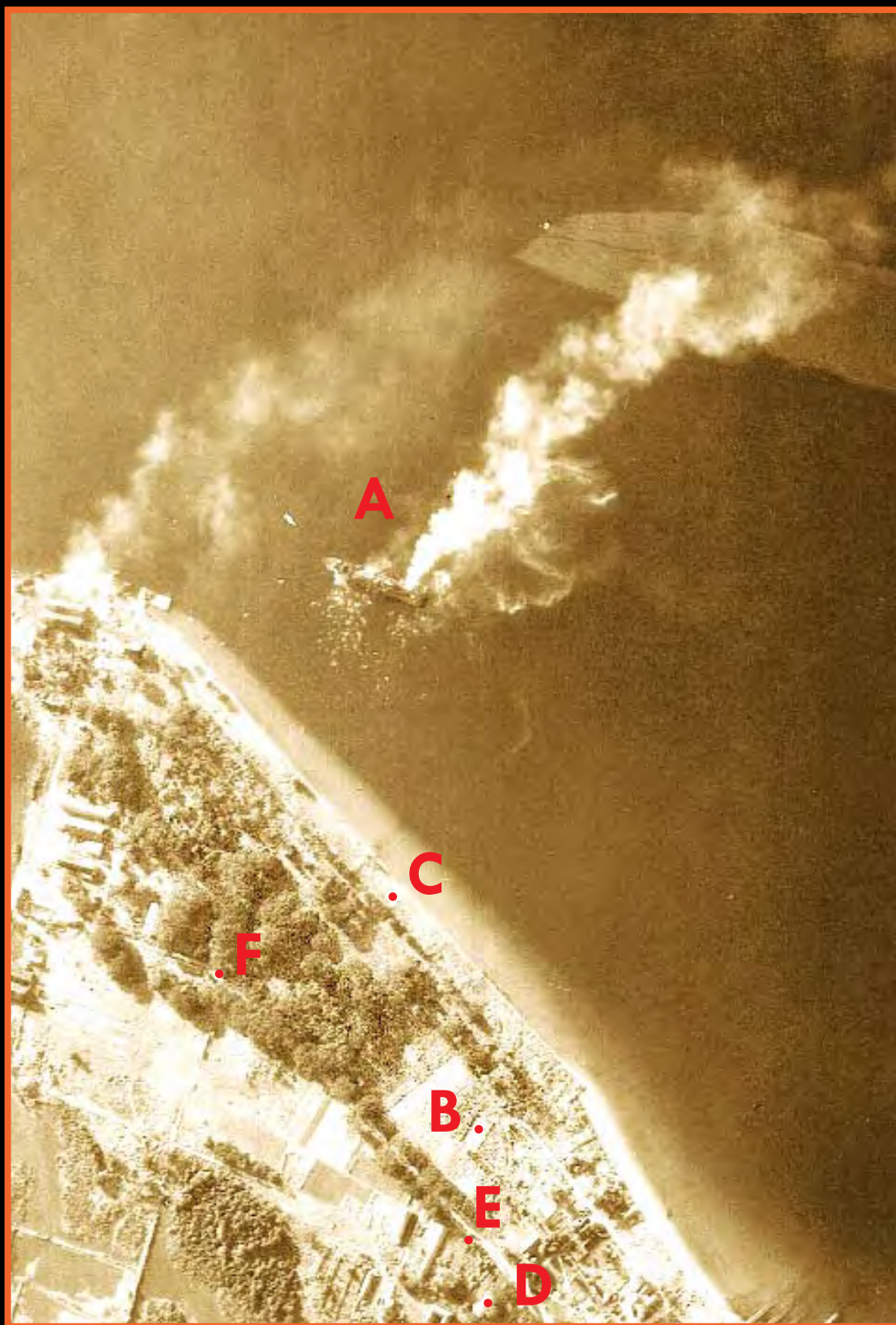




Photo by Kevin Hamdorf

Lest We Forget

By Bruce Curran

Twenty two pensive Americans sat aboard the Buri Princess in a circle of unity clasping



Photo by Kristina Rose Hamdorf

hands, with retired US Navy Captain, Duane Heisinger conducting the wreath laying ceremony. They said a prayer, they listened to the plaintive hymn, "How Great Thou Art" from the seven strong Subic Base Firemen's Male Choir, they laid their wreathes on the dark waters. They had all come from their homeland with one purpose, in memory of their loved ones. On the morning of December 15th 1944, in this exact same spot, their men folk had been POW's crammed into the suffocating hulls of this Japanese hellship, the Oryoko Maru, enroute to Japan as slave labour. Tragically, as is often the case in times of war, planes from the American aircraft carrier the USS Hornet had targeted this vessel. The ship sank with the loss of more than 250 of the 1,619 POW's who had originally board at Peir 7 in Manila, just two days before. Today it was their relatives tears and their saddened smiles that brought such events back to the forefront of human recall. *Less We Forget.*

POW Tennis Court from page 29

presumed locations was actually the site of the tennis court.

Calling on my experience as a former U.S. Navy navigator, I knew that we needed three known points of reference so that the position of the tennis court could be triangulated. I readily found the first two – the foundation of the old gate leading into the station and the steps of the San Roque Chapel that has been standing since the 1930's. The critical third point took a little more investigation and digging. After some searching, I was able to uncover the concrete footings of a pre-war radio tower that stood along the waterfront.

That night, I laid out three lines of bearing on the map, running from the points of reference to where the tennis court were shown on the map. The next morning, standing on each of the three points, I used my GPS receiver to shoot identical lines of bearing. By reading the position where the three lines crossed, the mystery was solved - the delivery bay of the new wing of the Legenda Hotel is built directly over the site of the tennis court.

While the exact location of the tennis court may seem to many to be of little consequence, for the families of the men that experienced the horror of the Oryoku Maru it is vitally important. Standing, reflecting, perhaps offering a silent prayer, on the actual ground where their fathers suffered and died is a very emotional and poignant experience and helps brings closure to this unimaginable nightmare.



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WAR CRIMES, Women & The Internet

By John Smart

*Letter from my father
April 5, 1943*

My dearest Osamu,

I know you must be so happy to start kindergarten this April. I can easily imagine that you attend school happily everyday, wearing a white kindergarten uniform. Please stay healthy.

And watch out for cars and motorcycles on your way to school so you won't get hurt. When you don't feel well, you should tell your mother or grandmother. I insist. I was very happy last night because you



A photograph of my father with a picture of me, Osamu.

appeared in my dream, my dear Osamu. Please do not forget to place the water and flowers for your late brother. Send my regards to everyone. Good-bye.

Mitsuo Komai

I, Osamu Komai, am 68 years old. Our nation is blessed with peace and I myself lead a tranquil life.

Looking back, so many victims perished in "that" war. Yet now, those of us who survived the war live carefree days and seldom remember those victims. This peaceful and quiet time can be most dangerous.

When August 15 (I call it the "Day we lost the war") comes around, I pledge anew, "We shall never fight a war again. We shall never ever fight a war no matter what. A war destroys everything. It is the worst act that human beings can ever commit. But at the same time, it is only human beings that can stop a war."

Visiting Subic Bay for the first time in January, 2006, were Yukako Ibuki and Kinue Tokudome, two charming and very determined ladies working for the US-Japan Dialogue on POWs, Inc. Yukako, a retired English teacher from Tokyo, and Kinue, "a simple housewife", believe that only through education can the horrors of the "Last Great War" (World War II: 1939 – 1945) be avoided.



Major Samuel Lawrence Heisinger departs for the Philippines from San Francisco, April 21, 1941. From left: Mother, Mrs. Heisinger senior, son Douglas, son Gary, wife Grace Heisinger & son Duane.

Their concern is that as the veterans of World War II slowly diminish in number so too will the knowledge of the terrible ordeals, senseless suffering and the meaningless destruction; in losing this knowledge there is a very real risk that the World will find itself embroiled in a similar, but worse, conflict.

Weapons have advanced, not only in their ability to be discharged from greater distances (making them seem less personal) but also in their power to destroy, massively. Kinue: "some leader somewhere with a finger on a button will press it by accident or out of fear and all the other leaders will press their buttons removing nine out of ten of us from the planet . . . and the one in ten that are left will wish that they were not."

"By sharing and publicizing the awful knowledge with those too young to have been directly involved we can make a difference."

The project started when Kinue, based in the United States of America these last 27 years, heard about the court cases (in 1999) being lodged by Allied ex-prisoners of war (POWs)

against Japanese companies, who had forcibly employed them in mines, factories and on construction projects but who had failed to acknowledge the concurrent abuses and depravations suffered. She decided to visit some of the surviving POW's and try to

“It is the worst act that human beings can ever commit. But at the same time, it is only human beings that can stop a war”

understand the truths that had never been mentioned during her schooling in Japan.

“At first I was apprehensive . . . I did not know how he would react to a Japanese person coming into his home . . .” She relates of her first interview with an ex-POW, “but he welcomed me with open arms . . . I was deeply touched to see how he had come to terms with the past without malice”.

More interviews followed and slowly the picture grew in depth and the colors, which the newspapers could not reproduce, became more vivid. Kinue had numerous articles published in high profile magazines while the court cases were in progress, but as soon as the cases were dismissed (during 2004) the interest of the media subsided and the specter of passive ignorance become all too real.

“I started the website because those younger than Yukako and myself rarely read books . . . the Internet is the way to reach people today.”

On the website there are not only articles by Allied POWs but also from retired Japanese servicemen and POWs, and some from relatives of the Allied and Japanese soldiers who died.

One letter stopped me in my tracks. It was written by Osamu Komai, the son of a soldier who was convicted of war crimes in the months following the end of hostilities. His father was executed in Changi Prison, Singapore, on 14 March 1946. The crime was to beat to death two British prisoners and severely beat a third, while they were being interrogated on suspicion of manufacturing a radio inside a POW camp – itself a “crime” in almost any POW camp on either side of the firing line.

Being only eight years old when the news of Osamu’s father’s death came to his family he could not comprehend the meaning of the phrase “war criminal”, and nobody would explain it to him. For the remainder

of his life the phrase became a private and sometimes public barrier that he was forced to overcome. So after his retirement he set out upon a quest for answers.

Through acquaintances and translators he traced and communicated with the third beaten British soldier -- Lieutenant Lomax -- and offered his personal apology for the actions of his father. Through Kinue’s website he has able to contact others, on both sides of the conflict, who empathized with him and have since shared their own stories and feelings.

Finally, at the age of 68, through the Internet, he has received a reply . . . from the son of an American POW -- Duane Heisinger. Duane’s father -- Samuel Lawrence Heisinger -- survived the Oryuko Maru sinking in Subic Bay only to lose his father on another Hellship during the onward journey to Japan. Between these two sons of two fathers, forever linked by tragic bond, there

is a message of hope.

Osamu’s words at the head of this article describe, in a very personal way, the mission Yukako and Kinue have embarked upon. He closes his letter with a prayer, “I know there are other people who are stricken by even deeper grief than mine. I want us to be the last group of people who go through this suffering and sorrow”.

Duane closes his with, “You will have better understanding (with that) which you have sought, and perhaps (are) still seeking, and by your contact with others establishing bridges of friendship—so important in the world today. Your father and my father would have enjoyed knowing each other in friendship and I am enjoying reading your words and thereby knowing you. I wish you well, my friend.”

Kinue’s website, offered in both English and Japanese, can be found at:
www.us-japandialogueonpows.org



Yukako Ibuki (Left) and Kinue Tokudome (Right) of the US-Japan Dialogue on POW’s project with Father James Reuter, who gave the invocation during the Hellship Memorial Dedication. Father Reuter was a civilian internee at the Los Banos Japanese prison camp from 1942 to 1945. Photo by Kevin Hamdorf.

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THE BATTLES OF THE POINTS

22 JANUARY TO 13 FEBRUARY, 1942

by TOM HUNTSMAN
Photo by KEVIN HAMDORF

At the beginning of 1942, the Battle for Bataan and Corregidor was in full swing. The United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFEF), led by General Douglas MacArthur had retreated to defend Corregidor and the Bataan Peninsula in an effort to halt the progress of the invading Japanese Army.

The American forces were on the ropes: short of food, weapons, medical supplies, ammunition and, increasingly, trained fighters. However, the Japanese High Command unwittingly offered a brief respite when they reassigned the experienced 48th Division under General Homma, to the Dutch East Indies and replaced it with the recalled reservists of the 65th Brigade, 20th Infantry.

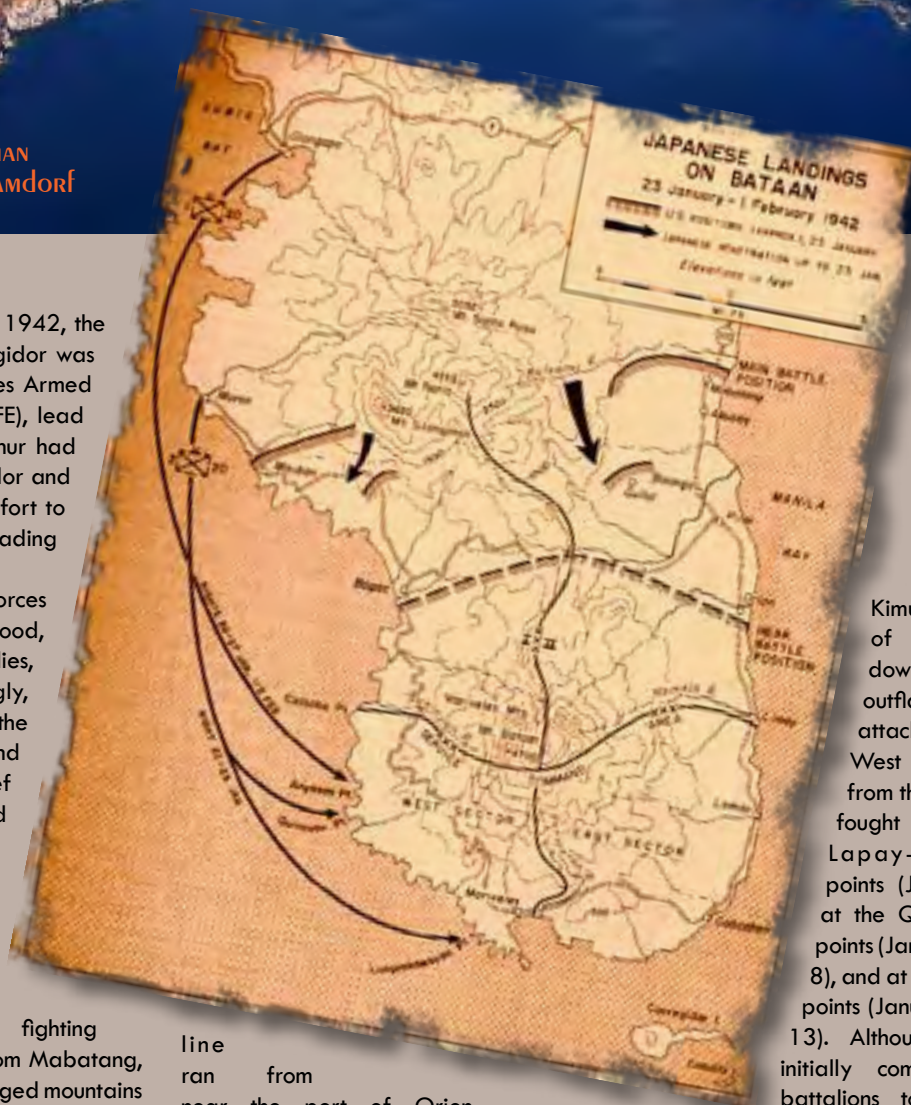
Engaged in fierce fighting along the main battle line (from Mabatang, on Manila Bay, through the rugged mountains and jungle to Mauban on the South China Sea coast of the Bataan Peninsula) since 6th January, 1942, General MacArthur strategically withdrew to the second defensive line on 22nd January; the second

line ran from near the port of Orion westward to Bagac, perhaps six miles South of Mauban.

Finding the defenders better positioned for their task along the new line, General Homma suggested to General

Kimura, commander of the force driving down the West Road, to outflank the enemy and attack the South and West of the peninsula, from the sea. Battles were fought ferociously at the Lapay-Longoskawayan points (January 23 - 29), at the Quinawan-Aglaloma points (January 22 - February 8), and at the Silalim-Anyasan points (January 27 - February 13). Although the Japanese initially committed only two battalions to this amphibious venture, it posed a threat out of all proportion to the size of the forces engaged.

The South and West of Bataan was thickly forested almost to the shoreline,



Top: The Longoskawayan Point area with Mariveles Harbor in the background. Bottom: Japanese landing sites on the west coast of Bataan. Map from "The Fall Of The Philippines" published by The National Historical Society

where the foothills of the central ranges end in abrupt cliffs. Sharp points of land extend from the solid curved dark shore to form small bays. A short distance inland, and connected with a few of the more prominent points by jungle trails was the single-lane, badly surfaced West Road, which wound its way slowly northward from Mariveles.

In this area, being far behind the current frontline, the defenders were a mixed force of sailors (without boats), airmen (without aeroplanes), Constabulary (without jurisdiction), Philippine Army troops, and a small group of Marines attached to an anti-aircraft battery at Mariveles Quarantine Station. There had been no time to train the group as a cohesive fighting unit and some did not even know how to load a rifle let alone fire one.

Brig. General Clyde A. Selleck, 71st division Commander, and his small ragtag group were charged with defending the 10 miles of coastline reaching from Mariveles Northward to Caibobo point. One of the officers quipped that in one group of 220 men there were only three bayonets, but "that was all right because only three men knew anything about using them."

Without knowing the condition or makeup of the defending forces, Colonel Tsunehiro's 2d Battalion, 20th Infantry, then stationed in Olongapo, was ordered to make their amphibious assault at Caibobo Point. They boarded barges at Morong and headed out into an angry sea with only a 1:200,000 scale map for navigation -- at this scale, from sea-level, it is almost impossible to relate the visible terrain to details on the map in daylight . . . at night it would have been impossible.

The night was so dark and the sea so wild that a U.S. Navy motor torpedo boat, PT-34, commanded by Lt. John D. Buckeley chanced upon the invasion force but saw only one barge, sank it, and continued

on patrol. Some time later Buckeley saw another barge and sank that, but not before he boarded the stricken vessel and was able

"THEY WOULD ATTEMPT TO DRAW JAPANESE FIRE BY SITTING DOWN, TALKING LOUDLY AND LIGHTING CIGARETTES"

to capture two prisoners and a dispatch case containing current orders and related information.

The invasion flotilla lost its bearings and was separated into two groups by the foul weather. Not a single Japanese soldier reached Caibobo Point. The first group, carrying about one third of a battalion, came ashore at Longoskawayan Point, ten miles southeast of the objective. The rest of the battalion landed seven miles up the coast, at Quinuan Point.

For the inexperienced defenders the tactics of the Japanese were somewhat confusing. Conventional wisdom amongst the Allied troops at the time suggested that in jungle engagements it was prudent to dig-in at nightfall and await the light of the new day before continuing an engagement. The Japanese on the other hand preferred to counterattack after dark and regain the advantage under the cover of darkness.

However, these tactics were sometimes no more confusing to the defenders than their own tactics were to their attackers. For example, a Japanese soldier recorded in his diary that he had observed among the Allies a "new type of suicide squad" dressed in brightly colored uniforms. "Whenever these apparitions reached an open space they would attempt to draw Japanese fire by sitting down, talking loudly and lighting cigarettes." The brightly colored uniforms that the Japanese noted were the result of an effort by the sailors to dye their ceremonial whites, khaki.

As January merged into February the defenders beat back the Japanese

to the tips of the points with a menagerie of vintage and current, small and medium weapons, but found them difficult to dislodge completely without heavy artillery from Corregidor Island and ships offshore.

Weapons improvisation became a repeating theme: the steep cliffs along the points afforded little cover from the defenders above who, lacking traditional grenades, fashioned dynamite grenades from four sticks with a 30 second lit fuse. Many Japanese perished as they found shelter from the blasts in caves that eventually collapsed upon them.

On the 28th January a Filipino patrol on the opposite side of Bataan found a mimeographed order on the body of a dead Japanese officer. When translated, it revealed the Japanese intention to reinforce the beachheads along the points and drive toward Mariveles. Removing the attackers from the points therefore became of paramount importance and all efforts were focused on the task.

Finally, only Silaiim Point was still occupied. General Kimura and about 200 troops attempted to breakout in a counterattack on 12th February but failed and the Battle for the Points had been won.

Of the 2,000 Japanese troops that participated in the assault it is known that 34 were rescued by sea and probably returned to their units. Apart from the handful that allowed themselves to become prisoners, the remainder achieved their objective of dying for their Emperor. General Homma ceased hostilities in Bataan until March while he awaited reinforcements and replenishment of food, medical supplies and ammunition.

Of greater significance, the Allied troops were reduced in number by 925 of which about a third had died. Unlike his opponent, General MacArthur could not expect reinforcements or fresh supplies. It was only a matter of time now until Bataan would finally fall.

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Reflections of a Veteran Photographer

REFLECTIONS



Top: Americans dug-in on the Bataan Peninsula, March 1942. Photo by Carl Mydans. Mydans, was a civilian who worked for Life Magazine, was captured but released as part of a diplomats exchange. He was subsequently assigned to photograph General McArthur and took the famous images of McArthur wading ashore at Leyte beach and the formal Japanese surrender onboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, Sept 2, 1945. Center: Hellcat fighter from the USS Bunker Hill flies over Subic Bay, January 1945. Photo: US Military Archives. Bottom: The infamous Death March commences from Mariveles, April 1942. Photo: Unknown Japanese photographer.



by Angelo Reyes

In modern warfare, the propaganda battle is as often decisive in its significance as is the actual outcome of combat. Both the Japanese and Fil- American forces fielded photographers to document the unfolding Pacific War from their respective points of view.

One such photographer was Severino Marcos (above), who was barely out his teens in 1941 when the clouds of war had began to gathered and he decided to join the Philippine Army, enlisting in his hometown of Santa Cruz, Zambales. A simple farmer to that point of time, he had also taken keen interest in photography and had learnt the craft from a local photographic studio. Severino soon found himself shooting photographs instead of bullets and was assigned as a





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correspondent with the Philippine Army's 51st Infantry Brigade on the Mount Samat battle front. A week later, the Japanese commenced their final Bataan offensive and within days, amongst the chaos of battle, he and his fellow surviving soldiers were informed by their immediate officer that General King, Commander of Fil-American forces on Bataan, had surrendered. "We were out of supplies, ammunition and totally cut off, stranded on the mountain". Severino carefully weighed his options and wisely decided (as the subsequent infamous Death March was to prove) to take his chances and made his escape into the jungle.

Turning over his camera and film to an officer, Severino retained only his bayonet and by traveling at night managed to avoid Japanese patrols. "I knew where to get water, because I lived on a farm and knew which plants to uproot and eat". "I witnessed

the horrors of war, comrades were dying of starvation, disease and being spotted and shot by the enemy – men were dropping in front of you" After two weeks of struggling over difficult terrain, Severino, managed to make it safely back to his home town, where he resumed his farming way of life through to the end of the war.

"It was an adventurous time in my life", he contemplates. "I must have done something wrong. Why is God keeping me alive? I don't know. But God is good".

Severino's pictures appear to have been consumed by the destructive forces of the war. In spite of a search in surviving photographic archives, no image of his has been identified. Thankfully, other's images have endured and they continue to serve as a graphic reminders to the folly of the world's most destructive man made event.

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