

TRANSNATIONAL BATAAN MEMORIES:  
TEXT, FILM, MONUMENT, AND COMMEMORATION

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of the politics of historical commemoration relating to the Bataan Death March. I began by looking for abandonment but instead I found struggles for visibility. To explain this diverse set of moves, this dissertation deploys a theoretical framework and a range of research methods that enables analysis of disparate subjects such as war memoirs, films, memorials, and commemorative events. Therefore, each chapter in this dissertation looks at a different yet interrelated struggle for visibility.

This dissertation is unique because it gives voice to competing publics, it looks at the stakes they have in creating monuments of historical remembrance, and it acknowledges their competing reasons for producing their version of history. My research is historical, archival, and ethnographic and thus consistent with the interdisciplinary nature of American Studies. Prisoners of War or POWs write memoirs in order to be recognized. Movies internally contradict themselves as a challenge to a preferred reading. Survivors construct monuments as a means of transforming space and to save a dying legacy. Finally, old and new generations both ritualize events and reenact battles to remind themselves and others of their past.

The official narrative of Bataan is set through the development of key works written for the various branches of the armed forces that function as diaries of military operation. In these works, the experience of the POWs is absent. By writing personal recollections POWs become part of a discourse where once they were not included. Moreover, American veterans and expatriates not just write and build their new visibilities, they also perform them. Thus, this study shines a light on discourses that change the learning landscape and impacts what is visible.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Battle of Bataan was one of the most intense chapters of the larger story of Japan's invasion of Southeast Asia. After a long engagement, on April 9, 1942, the combined American and Filipino forces in Bataan laid down their arms in surrender to the Japanese Army.<sup>1</sup> The final capitulation of Corregidor and the Philippine Islands occurred on May 6, 1942. The Bataan surrender was the largest of its kind by an American force in the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Approximately seventy thousand Filipino and American combatants surrendered and became prisoners of war (POWs). Suffering from illness, injuries, and deprivation, they walked fifty-five miles from Mariveles in the south of the Bataan peninsula to San Fernando in the province of Pampanga. While some rode in boxcars for the final eight miles, most had to march the entire distance. Only an estimated fifty-four thousand completed what became known as the Bataan Death March. The loss in Bataan, the Death March, and the subsequent handover of the Philippines to Japan was a catastrophe for the Americans.<sup>3</sup>

The Philippines had been a colony of the United States since 1898. The Americans, beginning as early as 1902, had developed Corregidor Island and parts of the Bataan peninsula into a military reservation, giving the Japanese cause for concern. The Japanese attacked the Philippines on December 8, 1941. Victory would let them secure

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<sup>1</sup> For details see: John W. Whitman's *Bataan: Our Last Ditch: The Bataan Campaign, 1942* (1990), Richard C. Mallonee's *Battle for Bataan: An Eyewitness Account* (1997), William H. Bartsch's *8 December 1941: MacArthur's Pearl Harbor* (2003), Gordon L. Rottman's *Japanese Army in World War II: Conquest of the Pacific 1941-42* (2005), and John Burton's *Fortnight of Infamy: The Collapse of Allied Airpower West of Pearl Harbor* (2006).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Norman and Elizabeth Norman, *Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March and Its Aftermath* (New York: Picador, 2009), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Ambrose, *The Pacific: Hell Was an Ocean Away* (New York: NAL Caliber, 2010), 438.

their flanks as well as control crucial resources in the Pacific.<sup>4</sup> The Americans were caught off guard,<sup>5</sup> but the combined Philippine and American forces, despite the odds, did manage to crucially delay the Japanese conquest in the Pacific.<sup>6</sup>

In part because the sites of the Bataan Death March are located outside the continental United States, they have been neglected in official U.S. state-run commemoration. The Bataan sites are spaces of defeat and of memories of horror, and, most importantly, they remind veterans of their abandonment by the highest levels of government. From the POWs' perspective, Bataan Death March's memorializing is conspicuously absent, despite its historical significance. In addition, however, the POWs had no place in the triumphalist narrative of the Bataan Death March, which emphasizes joint sacrifice and Allied victory. In the hegemonic narrative developed in a variety of government reports, the POWs were absent.

Despite the resilience of an official narrative that occludes Bataan, the Death March is noticeably present in public history. In contrast to state-run commemoration, "public history describes the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world."<sup>7</sup> Veterans from both the U.S. and the Philippines have sought redress from marginalization through their own participation in public history, including building monuments and the performance of ritual events. With the POWs leading the way, stakeholders who are seeking new visibilities and recognition beyond the margins are the driving force behind the public history and thus the resulting public commemoration of

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<sup>4</sup> Saburo Hayashi and Alvin Coox, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War* (Virginia: The Marine Corps Association, 1959), 120–32.

<sup>5</sup> "Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos (CST-R) Alumni," *The Tomasians*, <http://cstr.cebusoft.com/>, accessed June 11, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Norman and Norman, *Tears in the Darkness*, 114.

<sup>7</sup> "What is Public History?" <http://ncph.org/cms/what-is-public-history/>, accessed June 29, 2012.

the Bataan Death March. This dissertation therefore is an examination of the public history of Bataan. The dissertation is unique because it gives voice to competing publics in Bataan such as the work of the veteran group the Battling Bastards of Bataan, the efforts of various administrations in the Philippine government, and other modes of expression in unofficial history that exemplify a need to be recognized. It looks at the stakes they have in creating monuments of historical remembrance, and it acknowledges their competing reasons, however problematic, for producing their version of history.

In contrast to state commemoration efforts, public history as it is described in this dissertation comprises practices of remembering as applied to real-world issues. Public history discourses reflect what historian Peter Novick calls popular history.<sup>8</sup> In this dissertation, I extend Novick's concept by including in the popular realm such unofficial modes of remembering as personal memoirs, private memorials, feature films, and documentaries, as well as different forms of celebrations such as reenactments and living history. Living history is an activity that combines artifacts, activities and costume into an interactive presentation whose objective to provide on-lookers as well as participants a feel for a bygone era. Criticism of living history includes the amateur nature of the process, its insistence on replication over interpretation, and its touristic rather than historic aims.<sup>9</sup> One sees the Bataan Death March commemorated in books, movies, monuments, and events in non-U.S. state-sanctioned remembering. Such an abundance of alternative remembering attests to the resilience of public history discourses about the Death March and the incarceration of the POWs. In this dissertation, I treat the Philippine

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 510–21.

<sup>9</sup> Jenny Thompson, *War Games: Inside the World of Twentieth-Century War Reenactors* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2004), 118.



government as one of the “unofficial” entities in the sense that Philippine public (or popular) history is situated against the official U.S. state historical apparatus. I consider different “publics” as well as different modes and locations of public-ness. In this sense a “public” is not static and is not an easily definable entity. Here I consider a public within a sliding sense of “paying attention-ness.” In this sense, a public can be constructed and maintained but it can also be undermined or subverted. This dissertation explores the politics of commemoration as it relates specifically to the Bataan Death March in written texts, cinema, monuments, and events. It interrogates why Bataan is absent from official U.S. state-sanctioned commemoration. Bataan is, in fact, a “present absence”; in other words, Bataan is not simply overlooked; it is also absent by its presence.

The Bataan Death March continues to live in the hearts and minds of several publics, such as official Philippine government remembering, the veterans, and the Filipino people. This is evidenced through their respective mobilization of the yearly *Araw ng Kagitingan*<sup>10</sup> and the existence of both the Capas National Shrine and the cross at Mt. Samat. The Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument and the Capas National Shrine – managed by the Battling Bastards of Bataan and the Philippine Government respectively – are the premier Bataan Death March memorials in the Philippines. In view of the significance of Bataan in World War II (WWII) history, this second abandonment by the U.S. state historical apparatus (the first abandonment being MacArthur’s abrupt departure from the Philippines in 1942) is telling of the lack of importance the state puts on the event itself, its veterans, and the legacy of Bataan. It is vital to call attention to this passing over and discuss it because it preserves a historical legacy and reminds the

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<sup>10</sup> *Araw ng Kagitingan* (Day of Valor) is a national holiday in the Philippines in commemoration of the fall of Bataan in WWII. The event is marked by a speech made by the current Philippine president addressing diplomats on current concerns.

veterans that they matter. Bataan continues to trouble both the U.S. and the Philippines, and the history of abandonment it evokes continues to shape U.S. involvement with the Philippines. Bataan is a phantom of a colonial legacy that is marked by and continues to manifest neglect.

Two main motivations structure this will to neglect. First, the American need to maintain a narrative of victory and sustained patronage through the Cold War encouraged the U.S. to avert its gaze from Bataan and seek sites that fit its Cold War narrative.<sup>11</sup> In terms of Cold War geopolitics, by 1945 the U.S. had become an imperial power and the Philippines assumed a new importance for the United States. In other words, the U.S. had lost the Philippines as colony but the islands were seen as ripe for reinclusion in the American sphere of influence. The fierce competition for the limited budget allotted for commemorating WWII in the Pacific meant that Bataan was once again deprioritized. This partially explains why segments of the U.S. state apparatus lacked the political will to assist the Battling Bastards of Bataan with funding to create an American monument at Capas but elected to assist the West Pointers with their project at Cabanatuan. Cabanatuan, unlike Capas, is a site of victory. It is the site where “The Great Raid” took place. The move to focus on Cabanatuan and ignore Capas compelled the veterans and the families of those who perished in the Death March and subsequently at Capas to look elsewhere for money to build and maintain the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument. When it referred to Bataan, the U.S. mobilized it as a site of joint suffering, which made the Philippines a Cold War ally by virtue of its mutual interest. The construction of the

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<sup>11</sup> Although this is not new, memorials are not simply about the past. Memorials can be seen as mobilizing the past with an eye towards a particular future.

Capas National Shrine and the speeches made during Araw ng Kagitingan provide examples of continuing U.S.-Philippines interconnectedness.

Second, because Bataan was an exemplary site of U.S.-Filipino cooperation, it symbolizes and proves Filipino involvement in a U.S. war effort. As such, it is a crucial point of entry for Filipino demands for citizenship and veteran compensation. At the same time, the American soldiers who were likewise abandoned leverage Bataan as their moment of valor. Both Filipinos and American claim to the state are thus mobilized through Bataan. By ignoring the over three thousand Americans who came home with symptoms that would later be called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the American government also conveniently avoided veteran claims. In the end, Americans make certain groups the “heroes” and render the less successful groups invisible; the Filipinos conversely focus instead on sacrifice and to remind the American state of joint suffering.

The Philippine government-sponsored commemoration through Capas National Shrine and the Araw ng Kagitingan celebrations remind the American state of joint heroism during the Bataan campaign and subsequent Death March. The end of the Cold War and the tarnished relationship between the Philippines and the U.S. (the eventual outcome was the elimination of both the naval base at Subic and the air base at Clark) created a need for the Filipinos to remind the Americans of their ongoing fiduciary responsibilities as well as the as yet-unresolved issue of reparations for Filipino veterans. The Battling Bastards of Bataan constructed the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument to challenge the lack of recognition and support by the United States government, while at the same time maintaining the idea that military events require recognition.

War commemoration is a product of complex negotiation between winners and losers. Remembrance of the Battle of Bataan and the Bataan Death March is no exception. Thus, my purpose in conducting this study is to expand scholarly notions of Bataan commemoration. Most scholarly work in this area attends to factual correction and a critique of militarism in the region. In this dissertation, I shift the trajectory of commemoration studies by examining various competing publics, the stakes they have in creating monuments of historical remembrance, and their competing reasons for writing their version of history.

Bataan is a signifier of many things to many people. To the veterans the Battle of Bataan meant fighting on despite being abandoned by the government. To the Philippine government, Bataan is a malleable symbol. Bataan and Corregidor exist in conjunction with the narrative of pushing away from a colonial legacy and the reality of connectedness in a globalized network of post-colonial relations. The joint war on terror and the recent Spratly Islands dispute exemplify this on-going relationship. For the U.S., Bataan is both absence and presence; it is an open wound that requires and resists both physical and psychic finality. On many levels, a Bataan counter-narrative of defeat undermines the overarching narrative of joint sacrifice and Allied victory that is the preferred narrative. Abandoned by a system that no longer recognizes their efforts, veterans – both American and Filipino – remain in a liminal state caused by history wars. Studying the mobilization of Bataan in war memory discourses of both the Philippine government and war veterans exposes how themes of continued abandonment, which

began at the Bataan surrender. Unpacking what war memories mean to particular stakeholders also reveals a discourse of counter-memory and the end of victory culture.<sup>12</sup>

### **Bataan's Alternative Archive**

Each chapter in this dissertation looks at a different yet related struggle for visibility. I began this research by looking for abandonment; what I also found were struggles for visibility. Integral to this discussion of visibility is Michel Foucault's notion of discipline<sup>13</sup> where "discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" allowing me to explore how subjects navigate in contested spaces.<sup>14</sup> In this dissertation, I undertake a discourse analysis through mobilizing theories developed by Jacques Rancière, Foucault, and several other theorists to explain how the subalterns redistribute the visible.<sup>15</sup>

To explain this diverse set of struggles, this dissertation deploys a theoretical framework and a range of research methods, including discourse analysis, which enable a close examination of disparate objects such as war memoirs, films, memorials, and commemorative events. My research is historical, archival, and ethnographic and thus consistent with the interdisciplinary nature of American Studies. While over sixty years have passed since the Death March in Bataan, the passing decades have allowed for the rise of a dominant narrative about the whole Bataan experience, concurrently allowing

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<sup>12</sup> Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Lives of Infamous Men" in *Power (The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol. 3)* (New York: New Press, 2001), 157–75.

<sup>14</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 215.

<sup>15</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.

for resistance to it. Therefore, this dissertation is, on one level, a discourse analysis of the formation of and resistance to the dominant narrative about the Bataan Death March.

In its struggle with the state, public historians and the public deploy a vast archive of objects. POWs write memoirs in order to be recognized. Movies internally contradict themselves as a challenge to a preferred reading. Survivors construct monuments as a means of transforming space and to save a dying legacy. Finally, old and new generations both ritualize events and reenact battles to remind themselves and others of their past. Consequently, the very act of reading a book, looking at a monument, and participating in an event is an action that confirms or modifies that distribution.<sup>16</sup> Within this framework, the viewer is always observing, comparing, and interpreting.<sup>17</sup>

This dissertation begins by exploring the development of the hegemonic narrative regarding the Bataan Death March as it is set and challenged in text. Chapter 1 “Textual Bataan: Foundations of Commemoration,”<sup>18</sup> outlines and examines both the textual narrative of the military operations up to the fall of Bataan and Corregidor and then recalls counter narratives of Bataan through POW and other unofficial recollections.<sup>19</sup> This chapter examines narratives related to General Douglas MacArthur’s command of USAFFE after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the records of events surrounding the

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<sup>16</sup> Michele Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 215.

<sup>17</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, *Artforum* (XLV) 7, 2007, 277.

<sup>18</sup> To write Chapter 1, I examined books, newspaper articles, and journals, because the written word is the primary historical and historiographic record. Since I am examining popular culture and public history, newspapers helped me answer contextual questions of commemoration. Studying Philippine newspapers helped me understand the larger geopolitical questions concerning the Bataan Death March sites and events. Specifically, I collected clippings from the *Manila Chronicle*, *Manila Times*, *Manila Bulletin*, and a few other periodicals both at the Ortigas Foundation Library and the archives of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

<sup>19</sup> Marxist Antonio Gramsci begins his examination with cultural values. For Gramsci, consent rather than direct force defined the workings of coercion. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, Volume 3 (European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism)*, trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 9.

engagement at Bataan and Corregidor, the Bataan Death March, the escape of Army Air Forces Captain William Edwin “Ed” Dyess from the Davao Penal Colony, and the rescue mission to recover POWs from Cabanatuan.

The sanctioned official narrative of Bataan was set through the development of key works written for the various branches of the armed forces that function as diaries of military operations. In these works, the experience of the POWs is absent. By writing personal memoirs and autobiographies the POWs mimic the official writers, disrupting a narrative that insists on rendering them invisible.<sup>20</sup> Through these publications the POWs problematize the hegemonic narrative, insisting on their inclusion in this narration of WWII history.<sup>21</sup> We will see discursive moves of this kind in the examination of the Dyess Report, the MacArthur discussion, and more vigorously in the post-Death March memoirs of POWs.<sup>22</sup> Through the writings of the various branches of the U.S. military we see at play the workings of what Jacques Rancière calls the Police Order, or the general law that determines the distribution of roles in a community.<sup>23</sup> The notion of the Police Order features prominently in this dissertation through its relevance in books and then later in cinema. The fundamental role of the police order, therefore, is not

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<sup>20</sup> The uprising at Aventine Hill in 494 BC anchors Rancière’s examination of the distribution of the sensible. He saw that the existing distribution of the sensible constituted the upper classes’ “understand(ing) the noises that came out of the plebeians’ mouths.” Jacques Rancière and Davide Panagia, “Dissenting Words: A Conversation with Jacques Rancière,” *Diacritics* Summer 2000 (30) 2, 116.

<sup>21</sup> The lower classes (or plebeians) had to first “redistribute” the sensible in order to make themselves understood, in this case by mimicking the upper classes, “speaking beings sharing the same properties as those who would deny them these.” Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 24.

<sup>22</sup> Politics “does not happen just because the poor oppose the rich [...] rather Politics exists when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part.” This disruption is aesthetic. It “makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise.” Rancière, *Disagreement*, 11.

<sup>23</sup> “Rancière, Jacques – Glossary of Technical Terms,” <http://www.scribd.com/doc/58950405/Ranciere-Jacques-Glossary-of-Technical-Terms>, accessed June 11, 2012.

repression. Instead, the police order manages what is seen and seeks to prevent public politics or alternative discourses. What matters then is not right or wrong policing, but rather how the police order helps to control disruptions to the “establishment” of a “natural” logic. In chapter 1, by writing in the official narrative and setting aside the POW narrative in the official diaries, the police ensure that this venue is clear of anything less than heroic.

Another key task in this chapter is to historically ground and introduce the Bataan Death March. Based on this same history, this chapter outlines the details of the Battle of Bataan and begins to situate memorializing as performing opposing functions in different national project.<sup>24</sup> For the Americans, Corregidor is a site of resilience. Despite poor planning on the side of MacArthur and the U.S. government’s abandonment of its soldiers, Bataan and Corregidor held for four months. However, Bataan is also a site of surrender and Japanese brutality. The Filipino recollection of WWII is multifaceted.

In the final section of Chapter 1, I examine several veteran memoirs as counter narratives to official records. I do this to retrace POW experiences that are structured around a sense of abandonment, and which are extensions of the narrative of neglect that began with Dyess. In numerous ways, these stories challenge the valor and innocence narratives, which explains why Bataan and Death March stories are absent from official narratives. This dynamic is extended but also challenged in film.

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<sup>24</sup> This dissertation focuses on nationalism. I acknowledge that memorializing can be examined through other fields such as gender, religion, etc. However, to keep the dissertation manageable, I am limiting its discussion to the phenomenon of nationalism.



Chapter 2 “Celluloid Bataan: Cinematic Representation and Legacy”<sup>25</sup> explains how films help establish the dominant narrative, but also how they internally contradict themselves as a challenge to a preferred reading. Motion pictures occupy a dual role in creating images of history. On the one hand, film can capture reality, providing viewers visual and auditory experiences of historical events. On the other hand, film can also mobilize empathy in viewers. This empathy oftentimes comes at the cost of occluding harsher realities and removing significant players from view. Tessa Morris-Suzuki writes that “reality and reconstruction...come to be closely intermingled” when the main agenda of historically based movies is to create realistic memories that draw viewers in emotionally.<sup>26</sup> Films are powerful to the extent that viewers are able to connect with characters and storylines and “cannot simply become an object of media studies”<sup>27</sup>

Regardless of whether the medium is mainstream films or the written word, we need to study it with a careful eye, and popular movies such as *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* should not be excluded from this scrutiny. Moreover, we need to understand that “film creates a world of the past that must be judged on its own terms.”<sup>28</sup> We need to also be cognizant that cinematic narratives are more a reflection of an era’s political and social concerns than the actual film subject itself. War films are no exception. Therefore,

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<sup>25</sup> In Chapter 2, I do a close reading of Bataan Death March films. From the universe of Bataan related films I focus on *Back to Bataan* (1945) and *The Great Raid* (2005). Films function as a unique prism to view cultural production. Specifically, cinema provides insight into the complex process of the development of the mythology of the Death March.

<sup>26</sup> Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us: Media, Memory, History* (New York: Verso, 2005), 126.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 122. Morris-Suzuki is reflecting on her experience watching *Night and Fog* (1955). The movie allows viewers to connect with the Nazi concentration camp experience. Movies such as *Back to Bataan* (1945) and *The Great Raid* (2005) also draw the audience in at a personal level, concurrently teaching how heroic and positive war is (ethical regime) while violating all the rules of hegemony formation through their internal contradictions (thwarted fable).

<sup>28</sup> Robert A. Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 45.

historical narratives in any medium cannot be absorbed as literal. Films' meanings are imbued with the creators', actors', and designers' values, as well as mimetic values placed on historical props and backdrops. Cinematic historical depictions are "shaped and limited by the possibilities and practices of the medium in which the past is conveyed."<sup>29</sup>

The war films *Back to Bataan*, released in 1945, and *The Great Raid*, released in 2005, helped establish as well as reify the triumphalist state narrative. This thematic resiliency despite the sixty year gap illustrates the continuing legacies of WWII in filmic representation. In this cinematic discourse, Hollywood moviemakers are the handmaidens of the state propaganda apparatus. *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* perform a very specific pedagogical function. However, inconsistencies within the films themselves generally give the viewer new agency. These internal contradictions make films modes of resistance, but the films also make powerful contributions to the official narrative, establishing a natural logic through a redistribution of what is seen, heard, and ultimately felt; that is, the "sensible."

The "sensible" in this case refers to what is being apprehended by the senses. Rancière looks at three distinct but related regimes of *partage du sensible*: the ethical, the representative, and the aesthetic.<sup>30</sup> In the ethical regime of art, images are measured or weighted based on their usefulness to society. In this sense, it is less about the artist or what the art does than about what the art teaches. In the representational regime of art, images function differently than they do in the ethical regime. Art moves beyond "craft." It is given meaning in relation to its maker. Finally, the aesthetic regime of art destroys the various other regimes, allowing for new and more democratic spaces of consideration.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>30</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (London: Continuum International, 2004), 85.

The mechanism becomes more complex when one narrative is promised but another one is delivered. Both *Back to Bataan* (1945) and *The Great Raid* (2005) promise one fable but deliver another; this notion of reversal is at the core of Rancière's notion of the "thwarted fable."<sup>31</sup> "Fables" consist of two elements: visual and discursive. These move in unison and yet at times in opposition to each other. The newness of cinema allows movies to work differently from other, more conventional forms of art. Within this framework, a movie has both conscious and unconscious parts. The first allows us to recognize the director's goals. The second regulates what the camera shows. This unconscious revelation is independent of the director's control. The knowing eye of the filmmaker works in tandem with the unknowing eye of the camera. Seen this way, a movie by its own internal contradictions performs a "critical" task independent of the viewer. A film also becomes a space where an internal contradiction encourages interpretation. Interpretation allows entry into different spaces where politics and aesthetics are diverse and productive.

The movies I discuss elide the true conditions of Bataan while highlighting valor and innocence in its place. "There are two ways in which popular media impinge on this process of attending to varied accounts of the past, and thus on the process of historical truthfulness," Morris-Suzuki argues.<sup>32</sup> In 1945, RKO Radio Pictures released *Back to Bataan* (1945), marking an effort by Hollywood to assist in establishing the "Good War" narrative.<sup>33</sup> In *Back to Bataan*, by playing up the post-Leyte Gulf landing rescue missions

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<sup>31</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables*, trans. Emiliano Batista (New York: Berg, 2001), 11.

<sup>32</sup> Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us*, 29–30.

<sup>33</sup> Miguel Llorca, "Bataan Summer 2008," *Remembering and Forgetting the Bataan Death March in Textbooks*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_2.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_2.htm), accessed June 6, 2012. Note: This and several other passages used in this dissertation have previously appeared in

to save soldiers from the POW camp, Hollywood becomes the artistic arm of a society that is working hard to find or create closure and atonement.<sup>34</sup> The portrayal of American resilience in *Back to Bataan* celebrates American toughness – this becomes the natural logic of the filmic section of the Bataan discourse.<sup>35</sup> These immediate postwar narratives also relegate Filipino involvement in Bataan and Corregidor to the sidelines. *The Great Raid* (2005), a rescue movie about Cabanatuan, reifies triumphalism. These two movies reverse the abandonment narrative that began with the 1944 Dyess report. Finally, both cinematic representations note American staying power and resilience but are uncritical of the exchange between General MacArthur and President Roosevelt.

Chapter 3 “Spatial Bataan: Redistributing Memorial Capas”<sup>36</sup> builds on both the textual and cinematic examinations of the previous chapters and moves the discussion of the Bataan Death March to a spatial context. In this chapter, I explore how Bataan Death March survivors construct monuments as a means of transforming space to save a dying legacy. This chapter examines how publics attend to their agendas by using monuments and memorials. The place where the Bataan Death March ended is a contested site for

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“Bataan Perspectives: Whose Bataan Death March” a project undertaken for a course in Museum Studies at UH Mānoa.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 89.

<sup>36</sup> For background for Chapters 3 and 4, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork and interviews in the Philippines and in the U.S. I focused on the “lived experience” in the Bataan-related spaces of commemoration. An investigation into the American Battle Monuments Commission’s (ABMC) Camp Cabanatuan revealed that it is also site of contention. The juxtaposition of the Cabanatuan American Memorial against a local park, Pangatian Concentration Camp, demonstrated how each nation memorializes and commemorates. On one side of the fence, there are the nicely manicured lawns of the ABMC’s site and the barbed wire fences enclosing Camp Cabanatuan. The investment and upkeep of Camp Cabanatuan speaks to a sense of reverence Americans place on sites of commemoration. Conversely, locals continue to use the Pangatian Concentration Camp and Shrine as a park for picnics and outings despite its slippage into disrepair. Absent are the trappings of glorification that demarcate this space as a site of reverence, glory, or ritual. Through experiencing these spaces and events hosted in them, I seek to understand how the sites are read and negotiated by a wide range of users.

both Filipinos and Americans.<sup>37</sup> The appearance of two monuments at a place where both American and Filipino soldiers died a gruesome death after having to endure the Bataan Death March is a curious oddity. Why are there two monuments instead of one? Why did the Battling Bastards of Bataan feel compelled to commemorate a tragedy rather than victory? Why did the Philippine government feel the need to reply? What is the significance of the juxtaposition? Finally, what are the implications of the union? This chapter answers these questions by examining both monuments within two wider networks of monuments and scrutinizing their juxtaposition.

Constructing monuments, at least in these spaces, is a clear example of challenges to a dominant narrative. Building a monument reshapes the landscape, giving rise to new conversations and making future discursive moves and the performance of new rituals possible. Both the Capas National Shrine and the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument challenge certain favored visions of history. At the Capas National Shrine and Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument, I observed visitors moving through the space seemingly unaware of how discourses shape their behavior. It is, however, aesthetics that demarcates that world and defines the location a person occupies within it. At the center of this analysis is the individual. However, individuals join with each other to form collectives, publics, and assemblages. Publics locally contend for recognition by altering both the physical and discursive landscape and subsequently performing rituals of commemoration in them. As a result, these monuments have become sites of continuing and new rituals. The presence of the Philippine government's officially sanctioned Capas

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<sup>37</sup> Miguel Llorca, "Bataan Summer 2008," *Remembering and Forgetting the Bataan Death March in Memorials*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_3.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_3.htm), accessed June 6, 2012. Note: This and several other passages used in this dissertation have previously appeared in "Bataan Perspectives: Whose Bataan Death March" a project undertaken for a course in Museum Studies at UH Mānoa.

National Shrine and the cross at Mt. Samat and their uses during Veterans Week celebrations are proof that Bataan continues to live in official Philippine government remembering, as well as in the memories of the Filipino people and the U.S. veterans. The Battling Bastards of Bataan defied conventional wisdom regarding assemblages and joined with local, regional, and national governments in the Philippines in order to build a monument and reconfigure the commemoration landscape. We see veteran groups such as the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor and the Battling Bastards of Bataan coalescing as the state apparatus denies their efforts.

The confluence of two monuments: the Capas National Shrine and the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument, exemplifies how separate but interrelated publics vie to be noticed. By refusing to acknowledge Capas, the U.S. government can continue to conceal its broken promises, and continues to maintain a narrative of benevolent patronage. The Battling Bastards of Bataan therefore privately funded the construction of the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument. The Battling Bastards built the monument so as to be included in the discussion of Bataan commemoration and to save the legacy of their fallen comrades. The Philippine government constructed the Capas National Shrine to commemorate the Filipino and American soldiers who died in Camp O'Donnell.<sup>38</sup> This is a significant space, as it has recently been introduced as one of the sites to be visited

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<sup>38</sup> Interviews were crucial to the entire dissertation. In the Philippines, I interviewed Filipino Historian Ambeth Ocampo regarding the various sites of contention. I inquired about the larger issues surrounding the Bataan Death March, its place in Filipino history, and about the contemporary function of Capas National Shrine. I also interviewed Hubert Caloud of the American Battle Monuments Commission to better understand Cabanatuan and Rafael Evangelista of the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor to fill in gaps regarding the Capas National Shrine. In the United States, I interviewed Federico "Fred" Baldassarre to learn about the history of the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument and John Joe Martinez to inquire into the genesis and construction of the Bataan Death March Memorial at Las Cruces, New Mexico. I rounded out these interviews by speaking to several twenty-first century reenactors both in the United States and the Philippines to delve into the world of Bataan-related living history.

during Veterans Week, an annual, week-long celebration that culminates with the Day of Valor (Araw ng Kagitingan). On one level, this space can be seen as a space of quiet coexistence. On the other hand, one can see in this site an active and productive contestation between two competing perspectives of the Camp O'Donnell experience.

Chapter 4 “Globalized Bataan: Transnational Araw ng Kagitingan”<sup>39</sup> examines Araw ng Kagitingan in some detail. In this chapter, I examine how both an old and a new generation ritualize events and reenact battles to remind themselves and others of their past. The yearly celebration of the Araw ng Kagitingan is akin, on many levels to religious celebration, or ritual. In the Philippines, April 9<sup>th</sup> is Araw ng Kagitingan or the “Day of Valor” where the incumbent Philippine president gives a speech to both Filipino veterans and foreign dignitaries at the Shrine of Valor (Dambana ng Kagitingan) at Mt. Samat as part of the ritualized commemoration.<sup>40</sup> This form of secular sacrament, beyond being a reminder of the past, is also a platform for communal memorializing.

People memorialize significant events from their collective past. In the Philippines, for instance, several commemorations mark the April 9, 1942 surrender at Bataan. The end of hostilities one month later in Corregidor is also remembered each year on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The seventieth anniversary of the fall of Bataan and Corregidor and the Death March was extensively celebrated in early 2012 in several venues. These rituals recall tragic events; in the process they reify notions of valor and sacrifice. As they have

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<sup>39</sup> In Chapter 4, I seek to understand Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor) as an international as well as transnational event. My work investigates the connection between the Day of Valor and the whole discourse of Bataan and the Death March. To look into this, I retraced the Death March route in the Philippines by both bus and foot. I also attended two annual Araw ng Kagitingan ceremonies in Punchbowl, Honolulu, Hawai‘i at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Observing these goings-on was informative in relation to studying the events as a transnational phenomenon.

<sup>40</sup> “Araw ng Kagitingan,” *Manila Bulletin Publishing Corporation*, <http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/251685/araw-ng-kagitingan>, accessed on May 1, 2012.

been for close to four decades, the commemoration ceremonies were held at old and new war monuments, places where soldiers and civilians were incarcerated, killed, or buried. As a result, a new generation of reenactors, dressed in period costume, commemorated by-gone military campaigns. On that day, Filipino, American, and Japanese former soldiers in their eighties gathered together at locations in the Philippines where they had once been adversaries. They participated in rituals designed to ensure that the younger generations see, hear, and never forget them.

Commemorations are rituals.<sup>41</sup> The annual ritualized commemorations of Veterans Week provide order, coherence, and stability.<sup>42</sup> These citadels of continuity are transition rituals, however.<sup>43</sup> I describe Araw ng Kagitingan as a palimpsest of time, in which the celebration's integrity is both strengthened and coming undone. As each president places his or her unique stamp on the Araw ng Kagitingan by writing a different meaning on the palimpsest, he or she erases the former and is subsequently erased by a future president. In contrast, American veterans prefer to commemorate in smaller venues like Camp O'Donnell because the site focuses on American veterans. In this way, American veterans and expatriates do not just build their new visibilities, they also perform them.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> James Pennebaker, Dario Paz, and Bernard Rime, eds., *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspective* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997), 110.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> While all this is occurring, historical edutainment has gone unexamined by Philippine studies scholars. Educational entertainment is designed primarily to entertain but seeks to educate as well. In this context, any media with a combined educational and entertainment content is deemed edutainment. On the one hand, there also exists content that is first and foremost educational but is seen to be entertaining. On the other hand, there is content that is primarily entertaining but is seen to contain some educational value. It is important to pay attention to edutainment, as its study will shed light on how entertainment impacts what is visible and what changes the learning landscape. Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 169.



The celebration of events and reenactments gives voice to a previously marginalized group, effectively opening up new possibilities regarding visibility. However, in text, film, sites, and celebrations a complex combination of acceptance and resistance operates to provide these new visibilities. On many levels, “readers” make meaning in historical sites, in theaters, and while reading books. How? Through the combination of the information collected regarding the conception of the Capas National Shrine (the encoded message) and studying the lived experience of the “readers” or consumers of the Shrine (the visitors) I discovered a whole range of diverse meaning making at this site.<sup>45</sup> This chapter examines how and why key events and players become a part of a people’s collective psyche. Drawing on the work of Pierre Nora, this chapter examines how history can create new streams of cultural affinity, and how the meaning ascribed to an event can become as celebrated as the event in question.<sup>46</sup>

Finally, in this chapter I also examine how Filipinos and Americans use the Araw ng Kagitingan festivities in contemporary war memory discourses. I will examine what various Philippine presidents, from Ferdinand Marcos to President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III, said during the Araw ng Kagitingan celebrations – looking at both audience and message. They have commemorated, at times, the fallen Filipinos and, at other times, both fallen Filipinos and Americans, in speeches combining local and national issues.

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<sup>45</sup> In “Encoding, Decoding,” Stuart Hall writes that there are at least three hypothetical interpretative codes for the reader of a text: preferred, negotiated, or an oppositional reading. In a preferred reading, the reader fully accepts the coded message. In a negotiated reading, the reader incompletely accepts the text’s encoded message. Finally, the reader directly resists the hegemony through what Hall describes as an oppositional reading. In this final scenario, the reader understands the preferred reading but rejects it, allowing for different and productive ways of seeing things. Stuart Hall, “Encoding, Decoding,” in Simon During (ed.) *The Cultural Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 507.

<sup>46</sup> The works of Pierre Nora feature prominently in this chapter, as I explore the concept of *lieux de memoire*. *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past* is a three volume set where Nora deals with war memories in various media.

The Araw ng Kagitingan celebrations also remind everyone of joint heroism. In these celebrations, the Philippine government can remind the United States of its special relationship with and responsibility to its former colony and ongoing ally. The National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawai‘i also hosts an Araw ng Kagitingan celebration, which provides a space to examine the transnational connections and disconnections that exist between the Philippines and Hawai‘i. Araw ng Kagitingan is a testament to the flexible mobilization of Bataan in relation to shifting geopolitical and local considerations.

The Bataan Death March Memorial at Las Cruces, New Mexico, built by a local New Mexican relative of Bataan veterans and POWs, forms a unique pocket of commemoration. This memorial illustrates how publics locally contend for recognition by altering both the physical and discursive landscape as well as subsequently performing rituals of commemoration in them. Doing so causes discussions to continue, as it is not closed out, into larger and even more productive spaces. The Capas National Shrine, the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument, and Araw ng Kagitingan converge. Moreover, these commemorations have crossed over to the U.S. and have impacted each other locally in the Philippines. At the two memorial sites in the U.S., Araw ng Kagitingan now commemorates “The Sacrifices of the Fall of Bataan and Corregidor.”<sup>47</sup> To perform “Bataan Day” or Araw ng Kagitingan at Punchbowl and Las Cruces is crucial, for it includes previously excluded groups who continue to struggle for inclusion.

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<sup>47</sup> “Araw ng Kagitingan,” *Manila Bulletin Publishing Corporation*, <http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/201805/araw-ng-kagitingan-april-9-1942>, accessed May 1, 2012.

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POWs had no place in the triumphalist narrative of the Bataan Death March. In the text and movies about Bataan, the POWs were absent. So, veterans from both the U.S. and the Philippines sought redress from this marginalization through rewriting books, building monuments, and the performance of ritual events. Stakeholders, with the POWs leading the way, who are seeking new visibilities and recognition beyond the margins, are the driving force behind Bataan Death March public history resurgence. War commemoration in the Philippines therefore is the end product of a complex set of negotiations between a determined government bureaucracy and an equally resilient citizenry. This configuration is further convoluted by the confluence of two country narratives. Adding to the complexity is the fact that Filipino and American notions of remembering follow very different patterns that both drive and inform each other. In the end, Americans in the Philippines prefer to commemorate separately both in the Philippines and in the United States. The Bataan Death March is noticeably absent from official U.S. state run commemoration because the sites are located outside the continental U.S. and in areas where they would be subject to vandalism. Moreover, the sites were the subject to Cold War deployment and limited by funding constraints. These sites are spaces of defeat and of memories of horror, and, they remind veterans of abandonment at the apex of government. This dissertation is different because it recognizes competing publics in Bataan, it looks at the stakes they have in rearticulating the story of Bataan because it acknowledges their competing reasons in text, films, monuments, and rituals, however oftentimes problematic, for writing their account of history.

## CHAPTER 1

### TEXTUAL BATAAN: FOUNDATIONS OF COMMEMORATION

The aim of this chapter is to outline, examine, and problematize the dominant textual narrative of both the Bataan Death March and the subsequent incarceration of American and Filipino troops at Capas and Cabanatuan. This chapter also outlines, examines, and problematizes several counter narratives, including the Dyess Report and other key Bataan Death March prisoner of war (POW) stories that veterans use to effect new visibilities. The analysis in this chapter will look at narratives relating to the Bataan Death March, the incarceration at Capas and Cabanatuan, the escape of Army Air Forces Captain William Edwin “Ed” Dyess and his group from the Davao Penal Colony and the U.S. rescue mission of POWs at Cabanatuan.

What I refer to as the dominant or hegemonic narrative about Bataan developed out of the official records of U.S. military operations up from December 8, 1941 to the fall of Bataan and Corregidor. The detailed recounting by the various branches of the armed forces is important because it excludes by what it includes. These official volumes elide much of what went on during the Death March and in the POW camps by crowding out the less heroic narratives, in particular the story of the incarceration and death at Camp O’Donnell and Camp Cabanatuan. Exaggeration and denial are almost unavoidable in war commemorations and remembrance of war is always controversial, especially when it concerns failed war policies, misjudgments, and victimization and atrocities suffered by prisoners of war. Even within the official recounting there are multiple negotiations, challenges, and collisions. Yet despite this, a sense of triumphalism marks the official narrative. The official textual conversation over the Bataan Death March

begins with loss but ends with victory and redemption – in short, triumphalism. Tom Engelhardt writes about Cold War narratives of WWII that “there was no place in the story for a defeat that was not a birthing moment for a culture of triumph or for a war that ended well short of victory.”<sup>48</sup> Engelhardt posits that “the only acceptable defeats or last stands would be those that were the end of the beginning for us and the beginning of the end for them.”<sup>49</sup> For the military record keepers, the defeat and surrender could not constitute part of a triumphalist narrative, unless it could operate as merely the initial defeat of a larger and victorious war.<sup>50</sup> Once the military historians included the successful rescue mission at Cabanatuan, Bataan was a redeemable defeat. The rescue excused all setbacks and folded defeat into a victory narrative.<sup>51</sup>

The official narrative ends where military operations stop. The account I scrutinize, therefore, is the military history of events just prior to the fall of the Philippines, the sacrifice and adversity encountered in the fall, and the problematic surrender. Officially there is no mention of the subsequent Death March and captivity. In other words, from the very beginning, official military records excised Bataan because it was no longer part of a record of military maneuvers and strategies. In contrast, the unofficial history – memoirs written by combatants and prisoners – insist on centering

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<sup>48</sup> Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 25. The first appearance of this sentiment in Philippine war commemoration discourses was in 1969, in the then senate minority floor leader Ambrosio Padilla’s speech at the Araw ng Kagitingan: “The sides of the allies lost one battle with the fall of Bataan and other battles in the course of WWII, and in the crusade of righteousness, they came back strong to defeat the enemy, liberate the Philippines and finally win the war.” “Bataan Remembered,” *Philippine Herald*, April 9, 1969.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> John D. Lukacs, *Escape from Davao: The Forgotten Story of the Most Daring Prison Break of the Pacific War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 325–332. Careful examination of headline stories of the Bataan Death March in the early 1944 editions of the *Chicago Tribune* show how atrocities were invoked to spark the Fourth War Bond campaign.

<sup>51</sup> Anton Bilek and Gene O’Connell, *No Uncle Sam: The Forgotten of Bataan* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2003), xviii.

Bataan and its carceral aftermath. Within the realm of public history, what I found were marginalized voices and a sense of abandonment among the American POWs and Filipino combatants. Their stories of physical abandonment fill out a lacuna in military history: they refused the latter by narrating the former. It is crucial to study these narratives because of the way in which these histories become the basis for future commemorations of Bataan. The Bataan narrative discussed in this chapter is predominantly American. I focus on the American story not just because there is much more of it but also because U.S. POWs are the focus of this dissertation.

To open up the Bataan story, I explore various counter narratives that disrupt (as well as reinforce) the dominant Bataan Death March account. This chapter shows how unofficial accounts concurrently reinforced the nationalistic narrative in the process of challenging the resilient hegemonic account. First, I examine the Dyess account, a report written by an escaped POW in 1943 and published in 1944. The Dyess Report is important because even before the official narratives were penned, Dyess and his group were already challenging the state propaganda machinery by depicting defeat, suffering, and abandonment. Second, I problematize Dyess's story through Stanley Falk's discussion of the Bataan Death March which squarely situates blame on the U.S. government for abandoning the troops. Falk is important because he was an assistant to Louis Morton, deputy chief historian in the Office of the Chief of Military History in Washington, D.C., during the writing of the official Army story. Finally, I end the chapter with a close reading of POW biographical and autobiographical accounts published between 1956 and 2003. I finish with counter narratives because they also reveal the ideological grounding of war remembrance in the U.S. and the Philippines. More broadly,

we can study the implications of counter narratives on the definition of national identity since WWII. These challenges to the conventional narrative emerged as soon as the Bataan story began, with the major branches of the armed forces, separately and together, writing their version of what happened in Bataan.

### **The Military History: Hiding Broken Bodies in Heroism**

To examine the official version sanctioned by the military apparatus, I utilize four separate collections, each officially commissioned by branches of the American armed forces. In print for over fifty-two years, these war histories by the U.S. Army, Army Air Force, and the Navy function as source documents for past and present discussions on the war in the Pacific. Certainly, according to Ronald H. Spector, “in some cases they are the *only* source since many battles and campaigns of the Pacific War have not received subsequent serious treatment by historians.”<sup>52</sup> First, Commander Walter Karig and Lieutenant Welbourn Kelley authored a seven-volume *Battle Report*. Farrar and Rinehart published this series in 1944. Commissioned by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, this series contains the official Navy narrative of WWII. Second, Wesley Frank Craven and James Cate edited a seven-volume series called *The Army Air Forces in World War II*. The University of Chicago Press published this series in 1948. For this dissertation, I focus on *Volume 1: Plans and Early Operations January 1939 to August 1942*. Third, the Office of the Chief of Military History at the Department of the Army commissioned a twenty-volume history titled *United States Army in World War II*. The U.S. Government Printing Office published this series in 1953. I focus on Louis Morton’s *The Fall of the Philippines*, which is part of the four-volume subset *The War in the Pacific*. Finally,

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<sup>52</sup> Ronald Spector, *Eagle against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 569.

Samuel Eliot Morison penned a fifteen-volume series *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*. The set was published by Little, Brown and Company in 1965. I draw extensively from Volume III, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific 1931–April 1942*. All of these official publications left out narratives regarding what happened to Bataan’s prisoners of war. The top-down approach of these extensive volumes left little room for unpleasant realities such as the details of the Bataan Death March and the subsequent imprisonment of abandoned POWs. I focus on these four sets of official narrations because of the frequency with which these volumes are cited as primary sources by secondary and tertiary scholarship on Bataan and the Death March. With this chapter’s summary of this extended military history, I illustrate the official framing of what happened in Bataan and Corregidor. To augment the four sets, I draw from other texts that use and emulate the officially sanctioned collected volumes. Several auxiliary texts used in this section include: General Jonathan M. Wainwright’s *General Wainwright’s Story*, Ronald Spector’s *Eagle against the Sun*, John Lukacs’s *Escape from Davao*, Michael and Elizabeth Norman’s *Tears in the Darkness*, and John Whitman’s *Bataan: Our Last Ditch*, which all reference the work of Craven and Cate, Morton, and Morison. Only Lukacs uses Karig’s *Battle Report*.

Official articulations of Bataan and Corregidor continued to maintain a narrative of resilience “despite the odds” by emphasizing how Bataan’s story is a story of American suffering and heroism. As early as 1944, Walter Karig’s *Battle Report: Pearl Harbor to Coral Sea* hinted at the triumphalism that continues today when he characterized the Navy’s accomplishments in the war effort as heroic: “Lieutenant Bulkeley’s swashbuckling, hip-shooting PT boats, equally handy at knocking over Jap



ships or aiding in the rescue of General MacArthur and President Quezon, captured the imagination of an entire nation.”<sup>53</sup> This type of description of heroic men just doing their jobs is typical of Karig’s account. Karig stops his narration of the Philippine story with MacArthur leaving for Davao. There is no mention of the march to Tarlac. Likewise, Morison’s *The Rising Sun in the Pacific 1931–April 1942* ignores the Death March. Since the surrender and eventual incarceration had no bearing on naval operations, they simply do not appear. He writes: “It has been argued that the last-ditch defense of Bataan was futile and costly, without influence on the Japanese overall strategy. This may or may not be true. The question is one of relative value.”<sup>54</sup> Despite Morison’s evasion of Bataan’s abandonment, he recuperates elements of the narrative that fit into a triumphalist story, such as the dogged resistance and sacrifice of soldiers “remaining.” He claims that it is a universally understood that “the sacrifice of General Wainwright’s men and the remaining naval units did deny Manila Bay to the enemy until May 1942, and that was important.”<sup>55</sup> Further, he writes that after Wainwright surrendered, “resistance continued – a fascinating story of individual initiative and jerry-built intelligence organizations in the hills.” He adds: “Guerillas, partly supplied by United States submarines from Australia, harassed the enemy in many parts of the islands and kept the flame of Philippine independence alive.”<sup>56</sup> Referencing abandoned troops insofar as they operated in a resistance movement, Morison’s text re-narrates abandonment into a larger victory narrative. However, the Bataan Death March is conspicuously absent. The volume moves

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<sup>53</sup> Walter Karig and Welbourn Kelley, *Battle Report: Pearl Harbor to Coral Sea* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1944), 304.

<sup>54</sup> Samuel Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, vol. 3: The Rising Sun in the Pacific 1931–April 1942* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1965), 199–200.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

directly back to Pearl Harbor and then on to the engagement on Wake Island with no mention of the Death March.

A close reading of the official texts reveals both a diary of military operation as well as various themes that add up to an overarching narrative of triumph. The military reports followed distinct themes that trace a passage from failure, necessity, despair and hope. First, official texts were replete with references of Japanese effectiveness and efficiency. Second, a majority of the text, almost by default, highlight the acute sense of American unpreparedness. Coupled together, the Japanese efficiency and American unpreparedness added up to the theme of retreat as *necessary*. According this narrative, Americans had no choice but to retreat to Bataan and Corregidor because of the lack of aid from the U.S. mainland. This lack of aid is also explained in official text as a military necessity. The Philippines was “justifiably” deprioritized in favor of the global strategy with Europe as the priority. Fourth, Americans, and as a result the Filipinos, developed a profound sense of hopelessness. Finally, the official text begins to write in resistance in light of defeat – writing in with a sense that against all odds the Americans will be victorious – which fits into a story of triumphalism, bookended by Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 and V-J Day in the summer of 1945.

The official accounts describe Japanese efficiency in carrying out its invasion of the Philippines with sense of detached objectivity. According to Army General Marshall, Army Air Force General Hap Arnold, and Navy Admiral Ernest King, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese moved to cripple U.S. air support to ensure the land invasion would go as planned. They argue that immediately following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked the Philippine Islands. On December

10, 1941, soon after the air attacks of December 8, Lieutenant General Masaharu Homma led his 14<sup>th</sup> Army into Manila. They focus their early war analysis on the Japanese planning to bomb Pearl Harbor and the air bases in the Philippines on the same day. The top down reportage incorporates suggestions of both a formidable as well as cunning opponent in the Japanese, who despite the short delay, executed attacks efficiently.<sup>57</sup> Army Air Force historians Wesley Craven and James Cate add that close to eighty Japanese bombers struck Clark Field, an airfield sixty miles north of Manila. After this initial salvo of the war in the Pacific islands, the Far East Air Corps estimated that fifty percent of its planes had been destroyed.<sup>58</sup> Published in 1947 and 1948 respectively both these early reports focus on military strategy and engagement and begin the trend of limiting the narrative to military operations.

Marine Corps historians Hayashi Saburo and Alvin Coox articulate their version of the past as if in awe of Japanese efficiency. While their narrative has almost a sense of admiration for Japanese military strategy, it also suggests a single-mindedness bordering on fanaticism. Ready and efficient, according to Hayashi and Coox, the Japanese began landing troops in Aparri, Vigan, and Gonzaga in northern Luzon and Legaspi in southern Luzon. Not too much later, Japanese troops landed in both Lingayen and Lamon Bay. Homma's first significant assault consisted of 43,110 men. The systematic invasion

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<sup>57</sup> George C. Marshall, H. H. Arnold, and Ernest J. King, *The War Reports of General of the Army George C. Marshall (Chief of Staff), General of the Army H. H. Arnold (Commanding General, Army Air Force) & Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King (Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations)* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1947), 76.

<sup>58</sup> Wesley Craven and James Cate, Eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II, vol. 1: Plans and Early Operations January 1939 to August 1942* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 213.

began on December 21, 1941.<sup>59</sup> Louis Morton, deputy chief historian for the Army, also notes the systematic nature of the Japanese attack. He describes how on December 22, 1941, the primary attack by the Japanese Fourteenth Army started at Lingayen Gulf in Pangasinan and Lamon Bay in Tayabas. Subsequent to capturing the beachheads, the Japanese put into effect a considerable dual flank attack. Homma's initial forces overpowered MacArthur's army troops at the beachhead. MacArthur decided to fall back after his defense plans collapsed.<sup>60</sup> Morton's almost academic discussion of Japanese strategy offers an explanation of how the invasion sequence was carried out. From reading Morton as well as Saburo and Coox one gets a sense of Japanese invincibility. All three suggest that Japanese efficiency and American unpreparedness made defeat not just justifiable, but also inevitable.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Saburo Hayashi and Alvin Coox, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War* (Virginia: The Marine Corps Association), 224.

<sup>60</sup> Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), 91–95, 144.

<sup>61</sup> These official narratives rely on testimonies of field operatives to articulate American unpreparedness in order to present a compelling military story. General Jonathan Wainwright, aide-de-camp to MacArthur, arrived at Clark Field right after the attack. Identifying the glaring unpreparedness of the joint U.S. and Philippine forces, he commented: "We were in a war for which we were no more prepared than a child is prepared to fight a cruel and seasoned pugilist" (Jonathan Wainwright, *General Wainwright's Story: The Account of Four Years of Humiliating Defeat, Surrender, and Captivity* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1946), 22). Reference to the U.S. troops in the Philippines as unprepared children also suggests innocence. With Clark Air Base neutralized, Wainwright lacked air and sea support to slow down any Japanese land advance.

The real problem, according to military historian John Whitman, was America's inability to wage war and Filipinos abandoning their post (John W. Whitman, *Bataan: Our Last Ditch: The Bataan Campaign, 1942* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1990), 106). They were not ready (Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture*, 35, 37, 48, 49, 50, 51. This is mentioned in passing in the preambles of movies like *Corregidor* (1943), *Bataan* (1943), *Back to Bataan* (1945), and *The Great Raid* (2005), but the movies work very hard to occlude facts like this in favor of a more celebratory mode in the process of creating a "victory culture," a topic explained in more detail in Chapter 2). Whitman writes that MacArthur's defending forces were ill-equipped and only partially trained (Whitman, *Bataan: Our Last Ditch*, 51–52, 65). By way of illustration, the Thirty-First Division was one of the four divisions commanded by Wainwright in the North Luzon skirmishes against the occupying Japanese. The soldiers fired their weapons for the first time ever only after the hostilities began. The Thirty-First Division's infantry had no combat

In retrospect, the fall of Bataan arguably began in September of 1924 with the development of War Plan Orange (WPO). War Plan Orange was, at this time, designed as a combined army-navy plan to protect the Philippine Islands in case of a Japanese attack.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, the Philippine Army was at least, according to most conservative estimates, four years away from preparedness. According to the plan modified by MacArthur and Wainwright, should the U.S. forces be unable to stave off an attack from the Japanese, they would retreat to the Bataan peninsula and Corregidor Island.<sup>63</sup> Some military strategists opposed the plan and argued instead that the topography of the Philippine Islands should be the basis of its defense. By the latter half of 1940, both generals believed that it was a fatal scenario and voiced trepidation at the very idea of ever having to utilize WPO. In the end, it was decided that, in case of a Japanese attack, MacArthur was to move his troops to Bataan, buying time for supplies and reinforcements to arrive. When the Japanese invasion became a reality, Wainwright and MacArthur retreated to Bataan and Corregidor respectively as per the original plan and waited – for as long they could – for supplies and reinforcements to arrive from America.<sup>64</sup> To allay fears of unpreparedness in the event of a Japanese attack, Chief of Staff Marshall in Washington made arrangements, as early as July of 1941, for troops to

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training prior to engaging the enemy. They had never even fired a training round. Moreover, most, if not all, the guns used were out of date. So archaic were these guns that ammunition for them was no longer available (Ibid., 4–7, 8, 18, 21, 39, 47; Marshall, Arnold, and King, *War Reports*, 75; and Wainwright, *General Wainwright's Story*, 13–17). Whitman is different from Hayashi and Coox as well as Morton in that his report lingers over outdated equipment while the others focused on lack of training. Sounding like an apologist for MacArthur, Whitman is later implicated in suggesting that this situation could have been mitigated if the Filipinos had not abandoned their post.

<sup>62</sup> Wainwright, *General Wainwright's Story*, 8–10.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 31–38, 55–58, 60, 183, 334.

<sup>64</sup> Wainwright, *General Wainwright's Story*, 8–10.

be sent to the Philippines.<sup>65</sup> He identified 19,000 American troops, 12,000 Filipino Scouts and 100,000 from the Philippine Army for the aid of U.S. troops.<sup>66</sup> On December 26, 1941, MacArthur had no choice but to put WPO into effect. By doing so, he resurrected an archaic plan designed solely to protect the Bataan peninsula and Corregidor Island as a stopgap measure. WPO provided for retreating forces to reorganize and hold out for six months. It is the subject of continuing debate whether MacArthur knew all along that there would not be any assistance from Washington.<sup>67</sup>

Over and above Japanese efficiency and American unpreparedness, one other element looms large in the formation of the war narrative – the necessity of retreat. A triumphalist narrative cannot have a victory without an initial defeat. In the case of Bataan, the writing suggests that MacArthur had no choice but to retreat in light of the lack of aid from the U.S. government.<sup>68</sup> According to John Lukacs, taking his lead from the official narrative of Morton, with no fresh troops or supplies arriving, MacArthur ordered the withdrawal of all American forces to Bataan and Corregidor, December 24, 1941. MacArthur also instructed President Manuel Quezon, that he, his family, and top government officials were to be removed to headquarters in Corregidor Island, along with MacArthur's staff. MacArthur then declared Manila an open city, confirming both American and Filipino's worst fears that defeat was imminent. MacArthur also ordered

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<sup>65</sup> Morison, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific*, 153.

<sup>66</sup> Marshall, Arnold, and King, *War Reports*, 76.

<sup>67</sup> Wainwright, *General Wainwright's Story*, [].

<sup>68</sup> Marshall, Arnold, and King, *War Reports*, 77; Wainwright, *General Wainwright's Story*, 15–16; Craven and Cate, *Plans and Operations*, 223. In December of 1941, MacArthur was under the impression that the forces on the Philippines Islands would be reinforced. He believed that Secretary of War Stimson was a steadfast supporter. Stimson held to the idea of supporting the Philippine until he changed his views on the strategic and political importance of the islands. Both Marshall and Roosevelt seemed to share the same sentiments regarding the Philippine Islands as of December 15, 1941. In communication with MacArthur, Roosevelt specifically mentioned that he had requisitioned aid to be sent.

that Corregidor Island be supplied first with enough provisions to last the 10,000-man defense force for half a year. Only a few thousand tons of food and supplies remained available because the entrance to the Bataan peninsula was blocked. After engaging the Japanese for less than half a year with dwindling provisions and ammunition, the Bataan contingent of USAFFE surrendered on April 9, 1942.<sup>69</sup>

The struggle over who gets access to valuable resources is also narrated through the theme of military necessity. At a Washington conference, the U.S. government confirmed, between December 24 and January 14, their earlier pronouncement that dealing with Germany was priority number one, downgrading MacArthur's stand in the Philippines to priority number two. Military necessity determined the fate of the Philippines.<sup>70</sup> The Japanese army took possession of Manila on January 2, 1942, without significant resistance. Meanwhile, MacArthur retreated into Bataan with practically no

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<sup>69</sup> The hegemonic narrative contains internal contradictions. I argue, just like the analysis of the Dyess Report below suggests, challenges to the dominant narrative began as early its initial articulation. Wainwright, captured after the fall of Corregidor, reserved judgment against MacArthur. However, Wainwright began to question whether MacArthur knew more than he let out. This form of questioning foreshadows the more consistent critique of MacArthur as well as the U.S. government in the POW autobiographies. MacArthur, according to Wainwright, knew well of the inevitability of the fall of Bataan and triaged Bataan for Corregidor. Wainwright writes: "Now, in Tarlac Prison, I learned from officers who had served on Corregidor before I reached there that as far back as January 1942, at the beginning of the Battle of Bataan, the question of the survival of Bataan and Corregidor had been discussed pessimistically" (Wainwright, *Wainwright's Story*, 165). He added: "At a conference on January 24, MacArthur agreed with staff men that Bataan was doomed, as indeed it was, though our forces held it against appalling odds through the first week of April. [...] At the same conference, it was ordered that supplies of food and ammunition be withdrawn from Bataan and a stockpile rose on Corregidor which would be capable of supplying 20,000 men for the proposed defense of the Rock" (Ibid., 166). The Island of Corregidor is commonly referred to as "The Rock" due to its "rocky" geography and also because it is the site of a significant Spanish and American fortification. Wainwright contended that MacArthur was optimistic and "believed at that time that Corregidor could stand until July 1, and predicted that Bataan might fall by middle of February" (Ibid.). In the end, MacArthur abandoned the Philippines for Australia on March 11, 1942, by presidential order, to fight another day. Wainwright is MacArthur's scribe, he writes: "On this date I hereby pledge myself that unless ordered by higher authority to do so I will not move my headquarters to the south, in the event that the fall of Corregidor is imminent, but will, if necessary, surrender myself with my troops. No other course of action would be honorable" (Ibid., 165).

<sup>70</sup> Craven and Cate, *Plans and Operations*, 232–233; and Morton, *Fall of the Philippines*, 240.

assistance from the air force except perhaps scouting operations. The food shortage was direst problem. An inventory by the Bataan quartermaster on January 3 revealed a supply level to feed 100,000 troops for a month. As a result of the inventory, on January 5, MacArthur ordered that everyone on Bataan and Corregidor be limited to half-rations.<sup>71</sup> As Morton's rendition of events goes, the following day USAFFE forces arrived at Bataan without losing a single unit. Alleged Filipino desertion reduced Wainwright's North Luzon force to two-thirds of its original strength.<sup>72</sup> According to Morton, the Filipinos that did stay were both tired and disheartened and that the Japanese lost only 2,000 troops. No mention is made of Filipinos abandoning their post.<sup>73</sup>

In light of the overwhelming odds against them, the Americans began to adopt a sense of hopelessness. Food, medicine, and munitions shortages, the inevitable defeat, MacArthur's hasty departure funnels down to despair and desperation. According for historian David Bernstein, on January 7, the Japanese were all situated for the attack, concurrently the Americans and Filipinos were digging in for Bataan's defense.

Strategically, Bataan is ideal for a defensive campaign. The Bataan peninsula is a dense, twenty-five-mile-wide jungle with rugged mountains. Yet, the Americans were lacking provisions, medical supplies, and ammunition, and the Filipino contingent was mostly

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<sup>71</sup> Morton, *Fall of the Philippines*, 256–257.

<sup>72</sup> Whitman, *Bataan: Our Last Ditch*, 583–603. Several conversations point to Whitman's *Bataan: Our Last Ditch* unfairly vilifying the Filipino soldiers. In my July 2011 interview with Defender Rafael E. Evangelista, he mentioned the alleged Filipino abandonment in Whitman's text. The Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor are working to ameliorate the impression through Ricardo Trota's upcoming book (discussed below and in Chapter 3). Further, in a May 17 phone conversation with reenactor Victor Verano (more on the reenactors in Chapter 4), he mentioned that Whitman acknowledges the lack of training but focuses mainly on desertion. In an extended phone conversation in June of 2008 with Federico "Fred" Baldassarre of the Battling Bastards of Bataan, he mentioned that both Whitman and Falk are canonical readings for those in the field. Whitman extensively cites Louis Morton's 1953 state-sanctioned tract *The Fall of the Philippines* but calls it incomplete. Whitman's story, despite his critique of the incompleteness of Morton's official tract, also ends with the April 9<sup>th</sup> surrender.

<sup>73</sup> Morton, *Fall of the Philippines*, 230.



fresh recruits.<sup>74</sup> In the Bataan related text, defeat seemed inevitable for the American combatants yet they fought on.

According to General Wainwright history, the theme of hopelessness reappears.<sup>75</sup> Wainwright is important because he straddles that liminal position between official and unofficial. On the one hand, his reflections read like POW reflection. On the other hand, most of his POW accounts are second hand and he reflects the writing style of military diarists. Wainwright writes that the troops were constantly clamoring for food, medical supplies and ammunition.<sup>76</sup> The tropical rain forest was hot and humid. Quinine provisions in Bataan were nil to nonexistent. Horse meat augmented the soldiers' rice provisions to compensate for the lack of other protein. The *Voice of Freedom*, meanwhile, announced that assistance was forthcoming, but the pronouncement was no more than an American propaganda effort aimed at confusing the Japanese. The dour scenario inspired United Press Bureau Chief Frank Hewlett, a friend of Wainwright's, to pen the following lyrics:

We're the battling bastards of Bataan:  
                                   No momma, no poppa, no Uncle Sam,  
 No aunts, no uncles, no nephews, no nieces,  
                                   No rifles, no guns or artillery pieces,  
 And nobody gives a damn.<sup>77</sup>

The hopelessness of the state of affairs was obvious to all in the Philippines. The situation was of a unique disquiet for President Quezon, who suggested, on February 8,

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<sup>74</sup> David Bernstein, *The Philippine Story* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1947), 155–156.

<sup>75</sup> Wainwright, *General Wainwright's Story*, 52–54.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

that discussions be opened with the Japanese. According to his plan, American soldiers could be removed and the Philippine Army dispersed. According to Australian official war historian Lionel Wigmore, MacArthur intimated that the plan was noteworthy and sent a communiqué to Roosevelt to that effect.<sup>78</sup> Presaging the sense of utter abandonment that would be felt not just by his own forces but the Filipino nation, MacArthur warned Roosevelt that “the temper of the Filipinos is one of almost violent resentment against the United States.”<sup>79</sup> In Wigmore’s history, according to MacArthur, “every one of them expected help and when it has not been forthcoming they believed that they have been betrayed in favor of others.”<sup>80</sup> In reply, Roosevelt gave MacArthur latitude to decide if and when the giving up of the Filipino contingent was appropriate. MacArthur, in response, guaranteed Roosevelt that the Filipino and Americans soldiers would stand firm by their Commander-in-Chief.<sup>81</sup>

The dominant Bataan narrative, that began while the war was being fought, is so resilient that we hear echoes of it as late as 1994. In William Breuer’s history, the theme of resistance despite-the-odds is a recurring theme. He writes about the raid on Cabanatuan and echoes the sentimental notion that MacArthur needed to leave in order to fight another day.<sup>82</sup> Breuer writes that on February 22, Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to

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<sup>78</sup> Lionel Wigmore, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945, Series One Army vol. IV: The Japanese Thrust* (Adelaide: The Griffin Press, 1957), 391.

<sup>79</sup> Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York: Harper, 1948), 398

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Several high level meetings were taking place in Washington. Representatives from Australia, Holland, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. met to discuss the security of their colonial territories in the Asia-Pacific region. The outcome of these meetings had the U.S. responsible for the Philippines, Australia, and the East Indies – the “eastern side” – leaving the “western side” the responsibility of the United Kingdom.

<sup>82</sup> William B. Breuer, *The Great Raid: Rescuing the Doomed Ghosts of Bataan and Corregidor*. (New York: Hyperion, 2002), 18–20.

leave Corregidor and establish a base of operations in Australia, whereupon he would head operations to regain the eastern half of the Pacific territory.<sup>83</sup> It took several weeks for him to comply with the order, however, as he preferred to remain with his troops on Corregidor. On March 11, MacArthur at last made plans to leave for Australia. On March 12, he departed for Davao along with his wife, child, and personal maid as well as the bulk of the USAFFE officers in Patrol Torpedo (PT) boats. Shortly before MacArthur left, he handed command over to Wainwright.

New writers like Whitman wrote on the theme of the hopelessness of the situation in both a logistical as well as a corporeal sense. One central avenue of expression of hopelessness is the constant reference to the lack of supplies. With supplies running out, Wainwright, cut back on rations even further, on March 15. These rations were not standard issue but locally provided fish and rice. To compensate for the lack of basic caloric intake, he ordered more horses shot and the meat added to the daily fare. No reference is made to how each soldier is feeling, reacting, or handling this deprivation. Two issues aggravated the supply problem: with the order to move to Bataan the number of troops almost doubled from 43,000 to 80,000; and local laws prevented the rapid movement of much needed rice or sugar inter-provincially. Provincial governments – on both sides of the borders – denied the U.S. and Philippine military permission to move material across provincial lines. Whitman writes: “The Philippine Government Rice Central at Cabanatuan held 10,000,000 pounds of rice and was abandoned partly because Commonwealth regulations forbade transfer of rice from one province to another.”<sup>84</sup> This denial by the provincial governments suggests that the Filipino state was not monolithic

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Whitman, *Bataan: Our Last Ditch*, 46.

and did not speak with one voice. Even if “permission to move the rice was requested, authority to do so did not arrive in time, and enough rice to feed Bataan’s garrison for a year was lost.”<sup>85</sup> Whether it was or was not miscommunication between the governments or rogue opportunism, the results were nonetheless disastrous. Supplies remained under Japanese control in Manila. The limited number of routes to Bataan added to Wainwright’s woes. Large scale looting by the military and a desperate civilian population made matters worse.<sup>86</sup> A sense of hopelessness prevailed but in its wake would develop a glimmer of hope – resistance.

In John Toland’s version of the Bataan history, the story of resistance provided a sense of hope in the midst of despair despite MacArthur’s departure resulting in the termination of the USAFFE. Wainwright moved to Corregidor and entrusted Major General Edward P. King with the Bataan peninsula. Homma’s men marched forward with supplies of food and ammunition, taking over Manila while Wainwright and King commanded a starving, sick, and frightened yet determined lot. Toland writes in *But Not in Shame*, hearkening back to a sense of Japanese efficiency, that Homma had 50,000 troops of which 15,000 were new arrivals. General Homma felt “there is no reason why this attack should not succeed.”<sup>87</sup>

The engagement started again on April 3, 1942 after a brief lull in the month of March. Under huge pressure from the High Command to follow an impressive Malaya invasion carried out by General Tomoyuki Yamashita, Homma prepared himself to complete this attack in a week. MacArthur pressured Wainwright to continue fighting.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 50; Morton, *Fall of the Philippines*, 254, 256, 372.

<sup>87</sup> John Toland, *But Not in Shame: The Six Months after Pearl Harbor* (New York: Random House, 1961), 281.

Wainwright ordered both King and General Arnold J. Funk to get ready to attack.<sup>88</sup>

However, King, now the highest ranking officer in Bataan, saw the senselessness of continuing to fight and began negotiating surrender. Two things informed King's bleak assessment: all units were without food, medicine, and ammunition; and most commanders on the peninsula had not been in touch with their troops. The situation on the ground was one of chaos, threatening his forces with total disintegration.<sup>89</sup> The risk of a court martial notwithstanding, King disobeyed direct orders and decided to surrender.<sup>90</sup>

Toland writes about this – in seemingly objective terms – but falls prey to slight sentimentalism bordering on hero worship. King, in Toland's eyes is a defiant, proud, but realistic hero. While the Japanese officers demanded unconditional surrender, King, who was understandably concerned about how his troops would be handled after capitulation, sought assurances that they would be fairly treated as prisoners of war. All he got was Homma's Chief of Staff telling him: "The Imperial Japanese Army are not barbarians."<sup>91</sup>

This section is written in a cold and fatalistic tone. Edward Langley version of the Bataan Death March in *The Knights of the Bushido* is written with a sense of hopelessness. He wrote that with nothing else in the form of guarantees, King had little choice but to content himself with these words.<sup>92</sup> USFIP soldiers came under the control of the Japanese forces of General Kameichiro Nagano shortly thereafter.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Wainwright, *General Wainwright's Story*, 78–82.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 65–66.

<sup>90</sup> Toland, *But Not in Shame*, 299.

<sup>91</sup> Edward Frederick Langley, *The Knights of the Bushido: A Short History of Japanese War Crimes* (London: Corgi Books, 1965), 138.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Morton, *Fall of the Philippines*, 458.

According to Wainwright, by the time he heard about King's surrender, there was little he could do to reverse the situation.<sup>94</sup> The reactions ranged from shock and dismay to accusations of betrayal. As per Toland, Wainwright reported to MacArthur that he disapproved of King's action.<sup>95</sup> In Charles Willoughby's history, MacArthur stated, "Bataan starved into collapse."<sup>96</sup> Learning of the new developments, Roosevelt directed Wainwright to continue to hold out on Corregidor while giving him a free hand to do what he saw fit under the circumstances.<sup>97</sup> Wainwright officially surrendered Corregidor on May 6, 1942. The official narratives end here. What we see from the official reports, the broad story of which I have aggregated here, is a narrative that at once relays the bare chronology of war from the perspective of strategic decision-making. This official rendition also includes thematic elements and tropes that translate as the foils for the triumphalist rebirth and eventual victory narrative.

In these battle reports, as well as other battle related non-official text, there is no reference post surrender, the POW experience, or how they were treated while incarcerated. Louis Morton's volume, *The Fall of the Philippines*, provides us with a quintessential example of exclusion: "The individual surrender of units and the death march are not treated in this volume since they did not affect the course of military operations on Bataan."<sup>98</sup> As they congeal together, the emergent official narrative is

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 463–464.

<sup>95</sup> Toland, *But Not in Shame*, 302.

<sup>96</sup> Charles Willoughby and John Chamberlain, *MacArthur, 1941–1951* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), 64.

<sup>97</sup> Wainwright, *General Wainwright's Story*, 83–85.

<sup>98</sup> Morton, *Fall of the Philippines*, 467. Morton continues: "The documents dealing with the march can be found among the prosecution exhibits and in the testimony of the trial of General Homma" (Ibid). Morton suggests we read what will become a familiar source, saying that "the death march has been covered in an M.A. thesis prepared by the author's research assistant, Stanley L. Falk, at Georgetown University, entitled *The Bataan Death March*." Close readings of

devoid of all references to prisoners until the successful rescue at Cabanatuan in 1945 which caps off the triumphalist narration. In between, there is official silence. In order to get a fuller story we need to consult the unofficial memoirs and biographies of the prisoners of war.

### **The Bataan Death March: Exposing Broken Bodies in Anguish**

What follows is the story of surrender and incarceration that is not included in the narrative of military operations. This unofficial surrender narrative is composed of unofficial responses, some rather controversial ones, as well as veteran/POW biographies. However, the intervention in this case is patently from below. Because of its bottom up contribution, the unofficial narrative incorporates notions of brutality, starvation, and deprivation. On many levels, both the march itself and the subsequent incarceration would set a new standard on which much discussion about Japanese brutality during the war would be based.<sup>99</sup>

Extensive physical abuse and killing exacerbated the 60 mile (or 97 kilometer) march of an estimated 75,000 American and Filipino POWs. This section is premised on the idea that POW accounts highlight the starvation conditions and physical abuse that characterized the Death March experience and subsequent incarceration. And that the details on the hardships wrought by food and water shortages, illness, and torture are a way of opening up the official closed book on Bataan. The short narration that follows

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the tertiary texts reveal that Falk's *Bataan: The March of Death* – the book that resulted from the thesis – shows up just as extensively as the official sources listed at the beginning of this chapter. Both Falk and Morton have become *de rigueur* citations when it comes to Bataan. As an example, both Hampton Sides in *Ghost Soldiers* (2001) and William Breuer in *The Great Raid* (2002) highlight Morton and Falk as important sources.

<sup>99</sup> Stanley L. Falk, *Bataan: The March of Death* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1962), 194–199.

below of the details of the route and feeding stations, looks and feels like a military report thus it is treated in a footnote. Both Colonel Toshimitsu Takahatsu (from Mariveles area to Balanga) and General Yoshikata Kawane (from Balanga to San Fernando then from San Fernando to Capas) handled the logistics of moving and feeding the POWs. The journey to Capas, on the surface, seemed to be part of a systematic plan to get the POWs to O'Donnell. The Japanese plan included a total of four feeding stops: Balanga, Orani, Lubao, and San Fernando. The main march was to end at San Fernando, another anticipated eight miles beyond Lubao. From San Fernando, the prisoners were to be placed in railroad carts for the projected twenty-five-mile ride to Capas. The POWs were to walk the final segment from the train station in Capas, for eight miles, to Camp O'Donnell. The feeding at these centers by the Japanese captors was sporadic and minimal. Water was also sparse and unclean. Conditions in the feeding stations fell within a range of unhealthy to downright lethal. Coupled with the fact that most of the marchers were already sick and compromised, conditions and the lack of available food and water exacerbated the POWs already poor physical condition. Along with sickness and starvation, torture and executions resulted in a high number of killings, both military and civilian, by the Japanese Army.

Several POW stories, such as those of Richard Gordon, Sidney Stewart, Tony Bilek, and Manny Lawton focus on incarceration over their Death March experience. However, their experiences are nonetheless compelling and include the same references to deprivation, suffering, and torture as Colonel William "Ed" Dyess. According to an account by Dyess, beheading, throat-cutting, shooting, bayonet stabbing, rifle-butt striking, starvation, and dehydration during the march in the tropical heat were



commonplace occurrences.<sup>100</sup> In some instances, stumbling or not being able to continue on the march was punishable by death. Japanese captors struck prisoners for keeping fellow prisoners from stumbling. The exact death count is difficult to place. Some historians have put the minimum death toll between 6,000 and 11,000 men. The death toll in the POW camp was much higher.<sup>101</sup>

### **The Dyess Report: The Government, the Public and Unfinished Business**

The Dyess Report is important because the Davao group of Army Air Forces Captain William E. Dyess and the other escapees from the Penal Colony triggered the beginning of the end of the victory narrative. Written alongside the official narrative, press releases in the January and February 1944 *Chicago Tribune* and the publishing of Dyess's book (1944) tested the would-be hegemonic Bataan story. Yet Morton's *The Fall of the Philippines* (1953) deliberately omitted the Dyess story. Karig and Kelley were already busy with the official Navy narrative in 1944 when the reports concerning the Davao escapees appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*. The Dyess narrative is absent in the Navy story despite the fact that the material was available. It would be four more years until Craven and Cate released the official Army Air Force version of the Bataan story. Another five years would pass until the duo of Morton and his assistant Falk released the Army's version of the fall of Bataan in 1953. None of them include the Dyess Report about Bataan and the prison conditions in the early narrative.

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<sup>100</sup> William E. Dyess, *The Dyess Story: The Eyewitness Account of the Death March from Bataan and the Narrative of Experience in Japanese Prison Camps and of Eventual Escape*, ed. Charles Leavelle (New York: G. P. Putnam's Son, 1944), 79.

<sup>101</sup> Robert Greenberger, *The Bataan Death March: World War II Prisoners in the Pacific* (Mankato, MN: Compass Point Books, 2009), 40; Michael and Elizabeth M. Norman, *Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March and Its Aftermath* (New York: Picador, 2009), 171; Falk, *Bataan: March of Death*, 46–47; and Langley, *Knights of the Bushido*, 137–148.

The Dyess recounting of the tragedy of Bataan, however, is the single most important counter narrative that destabilized the overdetermined triumphalist arc of these military reports. The story of the capture, imprisonment experience, and escape of Dyess and the other escapees from Davao opened up new plots that did not shy away from the ideas of defeat and abandonment. Indeed, these less flattering accounts featured prominently. As such, it undermined an overall narrative of American victory – which explains its exclusion from official military accounts – even as Dyess was a soldier.

Dyess began his career as a pilot for the 21<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Squadron.<sup>102</sup> When this group experienced heavy losses and ran out of aircraft, Dyess joined the infantry and served at the Battle of the Points. Dyess began his post-surrender incarceration at Camp O'Donnell then was transferred to Cabanatuan. On November 7, 1942, Dyess found himself at the Davao Penal Colony. He escaped on April 4, 1943, along with a group of nine American POWs that included Army Major Stephen M. Mellnik and Navy Lieutenant Commander Melvyn H. McCoy, and two Filipino convicts. In July 1943, Dyess, Mellnik, and McCoy journeyed by submarine to meet MacArthur in Australia.

Dyess and his cohort relayed their account to MacArthur, who then wired their accounts to Washington. These reports were the earliest *bona fide* accounts from Americans about what was going on with POWs in the camps and beyond. MacArthur wanted to use the Davao escape story for propaganda purposes.<sup>103</sup> However, the president, the secretary of war and navy, the Office of Censorship and War Information, and the Pentagon anxiously silenced Dyess, McCoy, and Mellnik<sup>104</sup> because they feared that the publication of Bataan-related stories would result in further mistreatment of the

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<sup>102</sup> Dyess, *Dyess Story*, 23.

<sup>103</sup> Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, 273–276.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 277–290.

POWs in the Philippines by the Japanese.<sup>105</sup> This formal censorship of the Dyess crew was the first test against a hegemonic military narrative. So resilient, in fact, was the victory narrative that even MacArthur had something important to say on the issue.

The Dyess story was at risk of never seeing the light of day. Sober recollection by MacArthur in his *Reminiscences* (1964) records the general's frustration at the government's unwillingness to broadcast the details of the Death March and presages its glaring absence in official text. MacArthur writes: "It was not until several months later, when three Americans who escaped prison with the help of the guerillas and were later brought to Brisbane by submarine told me the story, that I received the agonizing details of the 'Death March' and the atrocities of the prison camps in which its survivors were confined."<sup>106</sup> Even as late as 1953, during the collation of the official Army reports, the story of the Death March was still absent. MacArthur attributed the censoring of the Dyess story to the possible critique of the Europe-first policy adopted by the Roosevelt

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<sup>105</sup> Walter Trohan, "Calls for New Blows against Pacific Enemy: Attack by Massed Fleet Urged," *Chicago Tribune*, January 29, 1944, 1; "Texans Demand a Visitation of Death for Japs: Home State of Dyess is Fighting Mad," *Chicago Tribune*, January 29, 1944, 4. There were two basic concerns regarding the release of information about the Bataan Death March and the subsequent incarceration. First, there were fears that the publicized stories would jeopardize the delivery of Red Cross aid.<sup>105</sup> Second, and this was the more immediate concern, was the "9-1 rule" (James D. McBrayer, *Escape!: Memoir of a World War II Marine Who Broke Out of a Japanese POW Camp and Linked Up with Chinese Communist Guerrillas* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1995), 13). The Japanese divided POWs into groups of ten. For every one that escaped, the other nine would be summarily executed. One question that haunts most POWs is: Why did so few try to escape? Fear is arguably the main reason for the low numbers. POWs, particularly those who articulated their experience, argue that the odds favored those who remained in the camps. Despite the high death rate in the camps, the deaths would arguably have increased if POWs had attempted more escapes. Judging from past experience, the captors dealt harshly with escapees (Raymond Cronin, "Cruel Slavery at Prison Camp in Philippines," *Chicago Tribune*, January 31, 1944, 3). Escapee McBrayer writes that "it was an old issue among the prisoners, many of whom believed that no one should try to escape as it would be to the detriment of the group." He argues that the reasons were purely practical and that "others believed that their best chance of living through the war was to remain a prisoner of war. Still others thought, as did we, that it was the duty of an individual to try to escape" (McBrayer, *Escape!*, 13–14).

<sup>106</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 146.

Administration, who feared that American public opinion would clamor for revenge against Japan.<sup>107</sup> Here MacArthur, in an ironic twist as a master of propaganda, reflects, “but whatever the cause, here was the sinister beginning of the ‘managed news’ concept by those in power.”<sup>108</sup> MacArthur concludes that this form of censorship was an affront to freedom of expression and a violation of fundamental human rights.<sup>109</sup> MacArthur, whose legacy is central to both Filipinos and Americans – even to those who criticized him for abandonment – remember his contributions to the war efforts. His reflections are representative of a view from the top. Yet, even he is critical of the police order of which he is a part.<sup>110</sup> Part of the function of the police order is to teach people what is important to remember and to forget by establishing a commonsense understanding – in this case, about the Bataan Death March and the subsequent incarceration. The ideological work done by official texts inculcated readers with the expectation that Bataan was lost but was later redeemed – heroically. Absent in such texts is the reality of ultimate defeat, abandonment, broken bodies, and death camps. MacArthur, despite the instrumental use of the POW story was also insisting on its revelation, however. The Dyess story was both a bane and a boon to the project of POW visibility. Ironically, it would serve many functions, one of which would be to assist the military in a fund raising bond drive.

Yet a fearful White House and an apprehensive Pentagon suppressed the Dyess story because they were worried that an incensed public would demand vengeance on the Japanese and blame the government for not looking out for the soldiers abroad, not to mention anxious about the possible retribution that would be meted out to POWs still

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 146-147.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> “Rancière, Jacques – Glossary of Technical Terms,” <http://www.scribd.com/doc/58950405/Ranciere-Jacques-Glossary-of-Technical-Terms>, accessed June 11, 2012.

incarcerated in the camps.<sup>111</sup> Notwithstanding, Dyess labored with *Chicago Tribune* journalist Charles Leavelle to bring to the public stories relating to atrocities committed by the Japanese during the internment. The government banned the Dyess Report and the books of both Mellnik and McCoy for fear of their possible negative effects. Later, in an interesting change of heart, the state used the stories to launch the Fourth War Loan Drive. American newspapers syndicated the Dyess, McCoy, and Mellnik reports that first appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*.<sup>112</sup> Of these three, it was only the Dyess narrative that achieved widespread press recognition resulting in a book that became a national bestseller.<sup>113</sup> Thanks in part to the *Chicago Tribune*'s efforts, the perception in the U.S. of what went on during the Death March came entirely from a single participant's perspective: Dyess's. Arguably, this was because he was the original utterance of a first-hand account of what occurred during the Death March. He also added several other accounts from others who recounted their stories.<sup>114</sup> Americans not only took Dyess's narrative as representative; they took things one step further. According to Falk, the Death March was allegedly part of a more comprehensive plot by the Japanese to slaughter and torment POWs.<sup>115</sup> In reality, Dyess writes about his Death March experience.

To get a sense of the inflammatory nature of the Dyess report, it is worth looking more closely at how Dyess narrated the experience. According to Dyess, several of his

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<sup>111</sup> Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, 323–324.

<sup>112</sup> Lt. Col. William Edwin Dyess, "Epic of Bataan 'Bamboo Fleet' Told by Dyess. P-40 Joined by 5 'Boneyard Ships,'" *Chicago Tribune*, February 1, 1944, 1; Charles Leavelle, "Late Col. Dyess Displayed Courage in Life and Death," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 January 28, 1944, 2; and Charles Leavelle, "Pals Tell What Made Ed Dyess a Great Leader," *Chicago Tribune*, January 29, 1944, 1.

<sup>113</sup> Falk, *Bataan: The March of Death*, 204–205.

<sup>114</sup> Dyess, *Dyess Story*, 70.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 205–208.

compatriots died of unjustifiable brutality along the way. After the joint U.S./Filipino troops under King surrendered to the Japanese, the group in the custody of Homma walked to Camp O'Donnell and Cabanatuan. The already weak and starving survivors were, according to Dyess, compelled to walk close to 60 or 70 miles to a harsh and oppressive POW camp. Here is an example of what Dyess experienced while on the Death March:

When I thought I could stand the penetrating heat no longer, I was determined to have a sip of the tepid water in my canteen. I had no more than unscrewed the top when the aluminum flask was snatched from my hands. The Jap who had crept up behind me poured the water into a horse nosebag, and then threw down the canteen. He walked on among the prisoners, taking away their water and pouring it into the bag. When he had enough he gave it to his horse. [...]

A squat Jap officer grinned at him and picked up a can of salmon. Then smashed it against the colonel's head, opening the American's cheek from eye to jawbone. The officer staggered and turned back toward us, wiping the blood off. [...]

We knew now the Japs would respect neither age nor rank. Their ferocity grew as we marched on into the afternoon. They no longer were content with mauling stragglers or pricking them with bayonet points. The thrusts were intended to kill.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Dyess, *Dyess Story*, 76–77.

This kind of detail provided by Dyess was the first description of the Bataan Death March to reach the American public. While later renditions, such as those of Sidney Stewart, Richard Gordon, Anton Bilek and Manny Lawton, also dealt with the same issues and sentiment, Dyess's rendition gives the reader the impression that these atrocities occurred constantly and throughout the line. It is understandable therefore that the authorities in the U.S. found this initial introduction to Japanese atrocities just too much for the American public to handle. Censored by American government officials, Dyess, et al. were suffered to silence about what went on during the Death March and subsequent incarceration. Arguably Dyess's story was the first real chance for an, albeit problematic, authentic voice. Eventually, for better or for worse, the POWs were getting a public hearing. Arguably because of the harsh nature of the narrative and the physicality of it all, the story was never included in the official military narrative. Despite its exclusion, the kind of detail provided by the Dyess story stirred a nation's imagination in 1944. Dyess's revelations of suffering are written in language that defies easy explanation. His writing is journalistic, one could even argue, a sensationalist style. He writes: "I want to picture in stark detail the barbaric cruelties inflicted upon the survivors in a succession of Japanese prison camps; the horrors of hunger and thirst, of sickness and neglect, and of a daily existence in which the sight and stench of death were ever present."<sup>117</sup> Dyess's reflection on his experience is one that is close to the body. Dyess corporeal musings include: "In the days that followed I saw the Japs plunge bayonets into malaria stricken Americans and Filipino soldiers who were struggling to keep their feet as they were herded down the dusty roads that led to hell. I saw an American colonel

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 25.

flogged until his face was unrecognizable.”<sup>118</sup> Dyess sharing his deeply personal stories are significant because, to date, the public had been fed a steady dose of news releases that narrated military operations and advancement. The Dyess story disrupted tales of advancement and brought to presence the actual conditions of the POWs and revealed details of their abandonment.

Dyess was not only changing the trajectory of the triumphalist narrative, his story also threatened to “blow the lid” on the whole sordid affair of abandonment, at the highest level. Dyess, over Mellnik and McCoy, was present at the Death March. Therefore, his incredible tales forced Washington to account for the atrocities to an increasingly hostile public. Adding to this already extensive graphic narrative, Dyess wrote: “But what I want you to understand and to ponder upon is the truth of what happened to America’s fighting men and their brave Filipino comrades after the stars and Stripes had been hauled down on the battlefields of Bataan.”<sup>119</sup> This last quote is most telling. On the one hand, it is clear that he is fighting to be heard amidst the tidal wave of resistance from the White House and the War Department. The resistance Dyess felt was so powerful that even someone like MacArthur struggled to overcome it. On the other hand, in the same utterance, Dyess lends credence to a victory narrative articulating a gallant and heroic last stand. Through his story of survival and escape, Dyess and his Davao group defied overwhelming odds. In this case, Dyess is both an instrument of the police order and a challenge to its code of silence. Nonetheless, Charles Leavelle writes: “The Dyess story stirred the nation more deeply probably than any event since Pearl

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.



Harbor.”<sup>120</sup> Dyess’s story prompted Secretary of State Hull to warn the Japanese that “those responsible for the crimes against American prisoners of war will be made to pay in full.”<sup>121</sup> The Death March details, when they became known to the public, raised the ire of Americans against the Japanese as MacArthur predicted. Calls sounded to bring those responsible for this atrocity to justice.<sup>122</sup> Americans were moved to anger and they purchased war bonds as the government desired.<sup>123</sup> Total bond sales all over the U.S. increased by a hundred percent in the first week after the public release of the account of Philippine atrocities. The initial success of the bond drive prompted the release of several other stories and the participation of other escapees.<sup>124</sup>

Despite the graphic nature of Dyess’s narrative, it is really only a small part of a larger story. In a way, the attention bestowed on Dyess made him *sine qua non* regarding all things Bataan Death March. In fact, Dyess was simply one among equals. Dyess, McCoy, and Mellnik, as well as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Mike Dobervich, Jack Hawkins, Robert Spielman, Lieutenant Leo Boelens,<sup>125</sup> Lieutenant Samuel Grashio,<sup>126</sup> Lieutenant Colonel

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., Introduction.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>122</sup> Dyess, *Dyess Story*, 209.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 224. In the Chicago area alone the bond sales increased an astonishing fifty percent eight days after the Dyess story broke. See: “War Bond Sale Tops 50% Mark in Chicago Area. Bataan Clan to Hold Rally in Loop Today,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 4, 1944, 11.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> According to Lukacs, “a civilian led him [Sgt. Wenceslao ‘Ben’ del Mundo] to the edge of the airfield, where he found the mutilated body of Boelens. The Japanese had finally reclaimed one of the Depacol [Davao Penal Colony] escapees and their punishment had been severe. Leo Arthur Boelens, the master mechanic who escaped the Davao Penal Colony, alone has the distinction of eventually being killed by the Japanese in early 1944.” Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, 318.

<sup>126</sup> Samuel “Sam” Grashio escaped with his squadron commander, Ed Dyess. He joined the Mindanao guerrillas under the command of Wendell Fertig. Grashio was evacuated to Australia by the submarine USS *Bowfin*. Grashio, along with Dyess, Mellnik, and McCoy, debriefed the American Pacific Command on Japanese atrocities. Later, due the untimely demise of Dyess, Grashio became the group’s spokesman during the Treasury Department’s Fourth War Bond Drive circuit. Grashio garnered both the Distinguished Service Cross and Silver Star. See Lukacs,

Austin C. “Shifty” Shofner,<sup>127</sup> and Private First Class Paul Marshall all planned and successfully executed the prison break. The ten-person escape was arguably one of the most significant escapes of its kind from a Japanese POW camp by an American crew.<sup>128</sup> Aside from its importance as a self-contained narrative of a soldier’s experience, the report was important as a symbol of struggle and survival. Stories such as those penned by Dyess, Mellnik, and McCoy were just the start of survivor stories. Although Dyess paved the way for alternative narratives, several more spoke guardedly about feelings of abandonment forming the archive that I examine in the last part of this chapter.<sup>129</sup>

The Dyess story under close scrutiny has some problems, however. Americans read into Dyess’s report that the Death March was a single procession of POWs, with

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*Escape from Davao*, on Grashio: background 17–18; at Cabanatuan 97–110; at Camp O’Donnell 81–82; at Davao 119–126, 152–166, 171–176, 179–196; as War Bond drive spokesman 337–339; evacuated by USS *Bowfin* 288–290; and postwar career 339.

<sup>127</sup> Austin “Shifty” Shofner, escaped on April 4, 1943, with Leo Boelens and Sam Grashio. Shofner was evacuated, with Jack Hawkins and Mike Dobervich, to Australia by the submarine USS *Narwhal*. Shofner, along with Dyess, Mellnik, McCoy, and Grashio, debriefed the American Pacific Command regarding Japanese atrocities. Shofner was awarded a Marine Corps Silver Star for his service on Corregidor and an Army Silver Star for his involvement with the local underground militia. MacArthur awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross. He never stopped being helpful as his expertise and experiences assisted with the raid at Cabanatuan. See Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, on Shofner: background 26–27; at Cabanatuan 97–110; on Corregidor 24–26, 48–49, 86–89; and postwar career 341.

<sup>128</sup> Dyess, *The Dyess Story*, 166–182; and McCoy and Mellnik, *Ten Escape from Tojo*, 69–106.

<sup>129</sup> Both then Commander Melvyn McCoy and Lieutenant Colonel Steve Mellnik also wrote of their POW experience. In tandem, Mellnik and McCoy spoke to Lieutenant Welbourn Kelley USNR (the same Kelley that would pair with Walter Karig to write the Navy version of WWII in the seven-volume *Battle Report*) to publish *Ten Escape from Tojo*. Mellnik, on his own, wrote the more extensive *Philippine Diary/1939-1945*. Although these publications provided an avenue for a voice as well as new visibilities for the POWs; the former was published in 1944 with the imprimatur of the United States Navy. Another difference between these versions and Dyess’s is that neither McCoy nor Mellnik experienced the Death March. They were in Corregidor until its fall on May 6, 1942. Bataan fell on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Both provided second hand information about the atrocities of the march and mention O’Donnell in passing. Their extended POW experience really began in Cabanatuan. Their versions echo the military history in their focus on the “heroic” escape from the Davao Penal Colony. Commander McCoy retired from the Navy as a Rear Admiral. Lieutenant Colonel Mellnik, an assistant to MacArthur in Corregidor, retired from the Army a Brigadier General.

Dyess's recounting as representative of what went on during the entire Death March.<sup>130</sup> This simplistic narrative is evidenced through filmic representations where there is no mention of boxcars and the railroad. The impressions formed in the U.S. with reference to Bataan were informed by the Dyess's report.<sup>131</sup> The historian Falk, who served as Morton's assistant during the writing of *The Fall of the Philippines*, argues that by taking Dyess's report on the Bataan Death March and the subsequent incarceration as representative, the U.S. government and public may have been misinformed. It is important to study his thesis because, in its own way, it also problematizes the heroic official narrative. The story of Dyess, according to Falk, may not have been as representative of the whole Death March as was originally believed. Falk argues that Dyess's experience was no more than an isolated incident rather than representative of the entire line. Falk writes: "In the American mind, the Death March was a single, long column of walking prisoners, each constantly harried by brutal guards and subject to planned and well-organized atrocities in an over-all pattern of Japanese malice."<sup>132</sup> One can easily verify this resilient image when viewing films such as *Back to Bataan* (1945) and *The Great Raid* (2005), where visuals and voiceover narratives both show generalizing scenes of the Death March. According to Falk, this picture is both inaccurate and misleading. He suggests that Dyess was in the segment of the march that suffered the worst that the Japanese had to offer, but that the officials in Washington, the press, and the public saw Dyess's experience as actually "what had happened to all the

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 212–213.

<sup>131</sup> Llorca, *Introduction*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_1.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_1.htm), accessed June 10, 2012.

<sup>132</sup> Falk, *Bataan: March of Death*, 212.

prisoners.”<sup>133</sup> Falk laments: “It is hardly surprising, then, that most Americans viewed the Death March as the result of a deliberate Japanese policy to torture and kill prisoners.”<sup>134</sup> The conclusion drawn from the Dyess report, he contends, explains why the public believed it was planned – that no other explanation of how prisoners who surrendered under conventional martial rules were so savagely treated seemed plausible. Despite the disjuncture between reality and perception, Falk argues that many people still believe that, “only a carefully planned and organized policy of deliberate cruelty could have brought about such an end.”<sup>135</sup> As practical measure, one can also see why the police order wished to suppress the release of this explosive material.

According to Falk, most of the responsibility over what happened at the Bataan Death March and beyond lies with the U.S. government. This could also explain why the U.S. government was anxious to censor, not only Dyess, but the entire Davao crew. The American government allowed both its own soldiers and the Filipino troops to physically deteriorate.<sup>136</sup> Soldiers were abandoned at this early stage of WWII in the Pacific. Had supplies and reinforcements arrived, perhaps the soldiers would not have been in the dire physical condition they were in and more could have survived.<sup>137</sup> The struggle over Bataan Death March visibilities continues to this day. While the discussion that raged previously was over American responsibility, contemporary discussions point the finger

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 212-213.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 164. One could speculate that Falk had access to records of the activities of Colonel Tsuji and the officers that acted on (or rejected) the anonymous orders. However, as of now, no credible sources exist that such orders were officially issued from the high command. With the official formation of the Comfort Women system and Special Research Unit 731 speculation in the public realm persists.

<sup>136</sup> Llorca, *Introduction*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_1.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_1.htm), accessed June 10, 2012.

<sup>137</sup> Falk, *Bataan: March of Death*, 214.

at the Japanese. Since the Japanese have embraced defeat, discussion over Japanese responsibilities has further complicated the POW's struggle for new visibilities.

Lack of closure regarding suspicions of a plot to kill Americans complicates POW's chances to create new spaces for new visibilities. On the one hand, Falk, in his groundbreaking thesis, is adamant that the American soldiers' reduced physical condition and benign neglect caused the deaths of the POWs. Moreover, the lack of vehicles to transport prisoners, disorganization on the part of the Japanese, and bureaucratic bungling on the part of General Homma exacerbated the situation for the prisoners. Furthermore, Falk suggests that the "Japanese character" – a callousness born out of martial discipline and motivated by revenge for fallen comrades – aggravated the situation. Falk concludes that the combination of these conditions intensified the already dire situation for the POWs.<sup>138</sup> Counter arguments suggest that "certainly beheading and running over men with tanks had nothing to do with disciplinary failures or administrative incompetence."<sup>139</sup> In conjunction with the breakdown in discipline and bureaucratic bungling theory, there also exists a more sinister speculative possibility of nefarious foul play. As late as 2010, persistent rumors reappear that "virulent ultranationalism and racial hatred helped spiral the situation out of control. No doubt a direct malignant influence was the fanatical Colonel Masanobu Tsuji, [...] was responsible for myriad massacres and war crimes in Singapore and China."<sup>140</sup> The consistency and resilience of this discussion,<sup>141</sup> which begins with an extensive treatment by John Toland, keeps alive the

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<sup>138</sup> Stanley Falk, "The Bataan Death March" (MA Thesis, Georgetown University, 1952), 138–160.

<sup>139</sup> Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, 69.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> In 2009, Michael and Elizabeth Norman included a section on Colonel Tsuji in their controversial book *Tears in the Darkness*. In their notations, they claim to have asked the Central

belief that some form of systematic attempt to perform mass execution was underway. The fact that Colonel Tsuji escaped prosecution and lived to write about his exploits continues to haunt the legacy of the Death March. Most, if not all, references to episodes that included Colonel Tsuji allude to a rogue mid-level officer acting on his own accord with General Homma oblivious of this and the conditions of the Death March. The implications, if true, are staggering. As will be evidenced by the abundance of reference in the POW memoirs below, the issue remains unsettled. So, we need to turn to yet another sustained counter narrative, the very personal stories of the abandoned. Also offering up often internally conflicting legacies, this section will display yet another challenge to the military history.

### **The Expendables: The Subaltern Assault on the Citadel of History**

Building on the preceding discussion, this section will look at several veteran memoirs that retrace the development of a counter narrative to the official Bataan Death March military history. At the center of this discussion is Major Richard Gordon's *Horyo: Memoirs of an American POW* (1999). While patriotic and celebratory on the surface, Horyo and other similar books give the reader a strong sense of the suffering they experienced on the Death March and during incarceration at O'Donnell and Cabanatuan. These volumes also illustrate how the POWs felt about the abandonment of the military and their government. In many ways, these stories defy the state-sanctioned narrative that emphasizes valor, innocence, and triumphalism by focusing specifically on

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Intelligence Agency for information on Tsuji and to have been told: "In response to your request for information pertaining to "Masanobu Tsuji, former officer of the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II [...] we are neither confirming nor denying that such documents exist. It has been determined that such information – that is, whether or not any responsive records exist – would be classified for reasons of national security" (Norman and Norman, *Tears in the Darkness*, 420).

incarceration, suffering, and death of POWs. Along with Gordon's *Horyo*, I look at Sidney Stewart's *Give Us This Day* (1956), Manny Lawton's *Some Survived* (1984), and Anton Bilek's *No Uncle Sam: The Forgotten of Bataan* (2003).

The Bataan story, as chronologically examined in this dissertation, consistently returns to the body through the articulation, in graphic detail, of specific remembering of the Bataan Death March and the subsequent incarceration. The early writings by Dyess and Stewart, which appeared between the early '40s to late '50s, provide a more vivid description of the Death March. The subsequent volumes by Lawton and Gordon – published between the early '80s to late '90s – open up the larger story of incarceration. These later Bataan explorations expand the discussions by including the complexities of camp life and the horrors of the Hell Ships. The latest examination by both Bilek and Gordon contain a look at the lives of POWs beyond Capas and Cabanatuan. Bilek wants us to know what it was like to be a POW in Japan. This development suggests that POW memoirs differ in emphasis rather than substance. The stories are similar but what each memoir focuses on changes depending on the time it was published. In a similar fashion to the role the Dyess narrative played to undermine the state-sponsored narratives, the later discussion will, although at time mimic military history, further complicate an already internally conflicted hegemonic Bataan story.

These unofficial accounts contest the hegemonic narrative, but it took a considerable amount of time and much effort to make veteran concerns visible. According to social psychologists James Pennebaker and Becky Banasik, “political repression of speech about an occurrence, then, will have the unintended consequence of

consolidating collective memories associated with the repressed event.”<sup>142</sup> Most of the books in this set, with the exception of Stewart’s, were written after the 1960s. In these publications, survivors claim a sense of distance from the event after a long process of healing as an explanation for having “come out” to articulate their stories of abandonment. Pennebaker and Banasik also note that “over time, people tend to look back and commemorate the past in cyclic patterns occurring every 20 to 30 years. Monuments are erected, movies made, and books written about national events for a number of reasons.”<sup>143</sup>

One of the more poignant recollections belongs to POW Sidney Stewart, a U.S. Army enlisted soldier. Much like the military history recounted earlier, *Give Us This Day* (1956) describes American forces were woefully unprepared for war. Stewart writes about the inevitability of defeat in the Philippines: “We dug in again and again, trying to hold, trying vainly to keep from being forced farther down the tiny peninsula of Bataan. There was nothing wrong with our men. I can say that very proudly. But good God, if only we had had anything adequate to fight with.”<sup>144</sup> This foreshadowing of abandonment is clear, and although conditions were never ideal during Stewart’s incarceration they became increasingly unbearable toward the conclusion of the war. Stewart writes: “I began to fasten my mind on the thought of water, how good it would taste. My mouth was terribly dry and my tongue felt rough and swollen in my mouth. The dust tasted gritty on my cracked lips. I licked my tongue across them, thinking of water and its

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<sup>142</sup> James Pennebaker, Dario Paez, and Bernard Rime, Eds., *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspective* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997), 17

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Sidney Stewart, *Give Us This Day* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1956), 57



taste.”<sup>145</sup> This graphic description of Stewart’s experience is similar to Dyess’s report of the Bataan Death March. Stewart, much like Dyess before him, is continuing to fill in the gaps so glaringly absent in official narration. So resilient is the official version that it will take several years after the end of the war before Stewart begins to narrate the view from below.

Much like Dyess, Stewart and his companions were deprived of water, beaten, and starved. Stewart’s story is not unique but is nonetheless brutal in its detail. Stewart writes: “Suddenly the Japanese soldiers began to lose restraint. They jerked off watches and fountain pens. Then they lost their tempers, slugging and beating the men up and down the line. A boy who stood near me cried out with pain as one of the Jap guards smashed a fist into his face.”<sup>146</sup> For the most part, Stewart’s experiences as well as those of his fellow prisoners are vivid and it is not surprising that readers develop a keen interest in them as well as Stewart.

The hungry and defeated men experienced a myriad of emotions and reactions during the surrender at Bataan on April 9, 1941. Stewart writes that some just lacked the energy to fully appreciate the enormity of the situation. What is clear from his narrative is that POWs did not just experience deprivation but they also expressed rage and feelings of rejection and abandonment. Stewart writes: “The flames licked up through the red and white stripes toward the blue [...] I gritted my teeth, almost hating America. Hating America who had left us here.”<sup>147</sup> A visceral rage developed among some of the POWs. At first, Stewart’s rage was leveled at the U.S. government for abandonment then it was turned towards the Japanese for their cruelty. A far cry from the grand narrative that

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 73

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 68–70.

hangs over the military history, Stewart's writing is very personal. In speaking of one of his companions, Stewart writes: "The body convulsed, shuddering, and the fingers grabbed the ground. Then it lay still. One of the Jap soldiers laughed and kicked the dead American with the toe of his shoe. Suddenly I hated them with a violent hatred."<sup>148</sup> The personal nature of these reflections contains both a dangerous potential for long term effects on the soldiers but also contain within them the potential to be mobilized into other areas such as calls for accountability and blame. It is no surprise that official channels deemed this and the Dyess story and their potentialities risky enough to suppress.

Stewart's descriptions POW life leaves nothing to the imagination. The conditions that the prisoners were forced to bear were horrific. Stewart writes: "Within twenty days, twenty-three thousand Filipinos and Americans died. Their bodies were stacked inside the compound."<sup>149</sup> The atrocities, misery, and agony seem to echo from POW narrative to POW narrative similar in most accounts. However two things set Stewart apart, the element of faith and the surreal sense of connectedness he brings to the table. Stewart articulated this eerie sense of the surreal: "Sometimes I think we all died on the march. Sometimes I feel sure that all the things that came later were just a fevered dream, and that somewhere back on those blood-soaked miles there is another body..."<sup>150</sup> Stewart was not the only one who experienced the desecration of both live and dead bodies, so did Manny Lawton, Richard Gordon, and Anton Bilek.

In *Some Survived* (1984), Army Captain Marion Russell "Manny" Lawton is different from everyone else in one crucial aspect: he is obsessed with death all around

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 73-74

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 88

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 81.

him and preoccupied with his own survival. Lawton begins his reflections on the Death March with sensations of pain, deprivation, and suffering. Lawton writes: “No one could stretch out and relax. Some were fortunate enough to be near shade trees. Most were still in the hot sun. [...] Neither food nor water was made available.”<sup>151</sup> According to Lawton, “The march continued all that day with only occasional brief stops but no food. Hunger, thirst, and the intense heat took their toll.”<sup>152</sup> Similar to Dyess and Stewart, Lawton also begins to fill in the missing pieces of a narrative that continues to insist on their absence.

Aside from suffering, a sense of abandonment is also missing from official narration. With regard to a sense of abandonment, Lawton writes: “Day by day the plight of the defenders grew more desperate. Of the less than 80,000 troops in Bataan, only 27,000 were listed as combat forces. Of those, three-fourths were suffering from malaria; all were hungry and faced starvation. Wainwright notified Washington that the meager food supplies would be completely exhausted by April 15.”<sup>153</sup> According to Lawton’s account, after the April 9 surrender, he and his fellow American and Filipino combatants set out on the infamous Bataan Death March. He estimates that five thousand Americans died along the way to Capas (where they were bayoneted, clubbed, or shot), in Cabanatuan, or in any one of the prisoner transport ships (*Oryoku Maru*, *Enoura Maru*, or the *Brazil Maru*).<sup>154</sup> *Some Survived* is unique because it spends more time on the Hell Ships than any other POW story. However, close to half of the combatants who surrendered in Bataan perished.<sup>155</sup> Lawton writes: “We didn’t expect to be coddled, but we did feel entitled to a reasonable chance to survive. We expected to be marched out of

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<sup>151</sup> Manny Lawton, *Some Survived* (New York: Warner Books, 1984), 19.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

the war zone, which was accomplished in the first fifteen miles.” Lawton further writes: “However, sixty-three miles for starved, dehydrated, and exhausted men proved to be unbearable. For many it was impossible.” Much like Dyess, Lawton writes that the tragedy did not end with the Death March: “They and many more who were to die later would have been better off if they had been massacred on the first day of capture.” He continues that “of the 12,000 Americans who fought in Bataan, half were to meet lonely, cruel, inglorious deaths within the first six months.” Many more were to die under conditions of friendly fire in prison transport ships. Beyond the Death March, Manny Lawton and his cohort experienced disease, physical and mental deterioration, and torture in places like Davao, and eventually Japan.

Death was heavy on Lawton’s mind. He writes: “When we were aroused the next morning to begin marching again, many did not get up. They had died in their sleep. Perhaps they were the fortunate ones, for more torment lay ahead for those who marched out. Further, it is more dignified to slip away in quiet slumber than to be crucified under an unbearable burden.”<sup>156</sup> These references to the body are very different from the impersonal official body count. Personal references such as Lawton’s begin to articulate the horrors of war in a very personal way. All the POWs are in agreement that the Death March was hell on earth. However, they are also in agreement that the train ride to Capas was even worse than the march. Lawton is no exception.<sup>157</sup> Lawton writes: “The Death March had been hell, but O’Donnell was a new kind of torment. Malaria and dysentery were rampant and there was no medicine to treat them. [...] Meanwhile, we continued to witness the shocking daily spectacle of the burial detail hauling away thirty to fifty

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 23.

emaciated corpses.”<sup>158</sup> These reflections of bodies in close proximity and the immediacy of death help to articulate fears and concerns that are absent from the official narration. Undermining the sense of victory over defeat, these reflections are deemed by official storytellers who prefer to remain heroic, better left unheard. The consensus among the POWs is that the Japanese either wanted them dead or were criminally negligent. In conversation with another POW, Lawton begins to think differently. He writes: ““They want us to die,” he answered with bitterness. “The more we bury, the less they will have to feed. The camp commander told us on the very first day that we were his enemies forever. They feel that soldiers who surrender should die.””<sup>159</sup> As conditions improved, Lawton’s determination to survive is recorded through improving bodily health.

All four authors examined in this section shared the same emotional travails, bodily harm, and sense of loss. Army Major Richard Gordon’s *Horyo* (1999), however, is the quintessential Bataan POW narration. On one level, he shares the same experiences that Stewart, Bilek, and Lawton describe: the deprivation, the physical and mental torture. They all also decided to write a book in order for their experience to be remembered and to challenge a narrative that insisted on their absence. Gordon, however, decided to also change the physical landscape of commemoration with regards to Bataan. Gordon was a key figure in the Battling Bastards of Bataan’s construction of the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument that I discuss in the next chapter. In order to understand why Gordon decided to both writes his book and built his monument, we need to explore how he frames his personal narrative of the Bataan Death March.

The Bataan Death March narrations, on many levels, can be read as a catalog of

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 28.

the physical sufferings endured by American POWs. Gordon's narration is no different, but he does add another dimension: that the abandoned soldiers were beginning to feel like they were expendable. Much like Stewart and Lawton, Gordon also begins his discussing the Death March with the body at the center. Gordon writes: "During the march it was quite common for us to be sat down in an open field for up to three hours. The sun would beat on us until we would be dripping sweat merely sitting still. This "sun treatment" was a calculated effort at torture by the Japanese."<sup>160</sup> Aside from water, the POWs were also deprived of food. In an articulation that sounds similar to Stewart, Gordon adds that: "Days of marching slipped by without any food or water from our Japanese captors. Instead there were bayonetings and shootings for those who broke ranks to obtain either."<sup>161</sup> As the situation deteriorated, according to Gordon, the violence increased. Although not as intense as Dyess, the situation was nonetheless caustic. The situation moved from bad to worse. Gordon writes:

Near the town of Lubao I witnessed an act of barbarism I have never forgotten. As we were walking along I noticed an American sergeant lying extremely close to the road, fast asleep. His group had stopped for a break and was gathered in a field by the road. As our group approached him I noticed a Japanese tank bearing down on the sergeant's body. The tank driver making a positive effort to come as close to the edge of the road as possible, ran over the soldier. The man was instantly crushed to death, his body pressed into the earth. Each succeeding tank, about four or five of them, veered off the road and deliberately crushed the body further

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<sup>160</sup> Richard Gordon, *Horyo: Memoirs of an American POW* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1999), 90.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

into the roadway. When the last tank had passed one could only see the headless corpse's outline in the road.<sup>162</sup>

Gordon's reflections form the centerpiece of this examination because he will be important in future commemoration of the Bataan Death March. This privileged position, with regards to the preservation of the Bataan legacy makes a close reading of his memories important. However, Gordon's reflections are important for a myriad of other reasons. As evidenced from the quote above, he too addresses the needless brutality meted upon the American and Filipino soldiers. Moreover, Gordon is important because he begins to speak about the unspeakable: camp homosexuality and fellow inmate exploitation. Atrocities, excesses and developments such as those previously mentioned never saw the light of day in the official military history. According to Gordon, the perpetrators never paid for their crimes.<sup>163</sup> And, in the end, to Gordon, the camps were worse than the march.

According to Gordon, the atrocious conditions in the camps killed more people than the actual Death March. Along with 75,000 other soldiers, Gordon endured and survived the Death March his incarceration in Camp O'Donnell.<sup>164</sup> One month after he began, he and the rest of the Americans were transferred to Cabanatuan. *Horyo* illustrates the life and death situations in these locations and outlines Gordon's experience in relation to "predators," a term that describes the behavior many soldiers sank into under such dire conditions. He makes two very powerful statements that speak to a strong sense of abandonment, "At no time do I recall ever throwing a hand grenade in practice, and when it came time to use one in combat I almost killed myself. If we were not fully

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 71.

trained however, it was not the fault of our regiment. It was the fault of our government, which gave a higher priority to Europe. We thus became ‘the expendables.’”<sup>165</sup> Another reason these narratives are dangerous is that they record what happens to “expendable” soldiers. The graphic nature of the quote above describing Gordon’s experience confirms Dyess’s assertion that the Death March was one long stream of suffering. Gordon’s narrative however also adds the horrors of the camp to the catalog of suffering folding incarceration into the larger narrative of the Bataan experience.

Gordon reserves his criticism for the highest government levels. Notwithstanding his defense of MacArthur, Gordon does lay a large portion of the responsibility on the general but continues to maintain his indictment against Washington: “The blame however goes beyond MacArthur and his staff.”<sup>166</sup> Gordon argues that elements in Washington placed little, if any, value on the Philippines. Therefore, according to Gordon, the real responsibility for the disaster in the Philippines ultimately began with Roosevelt and was a result of a Europe-first policy. Gordon closes with this statement: “Roosevelt’s thinking however came from his military advisers who felt the Philippines were a lost cause anyway in the event of war, and that supplies and material should not be wasted in that part of the world.”<sup>167</sup> In this memoir then, Gordon also illuminates the very

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>166</sup> Earlier on the same page Gordon argues, “Many officers including MacArthur’s classmates and peers felt that he had blundered badly in his assessment and planning. Could this burden of conscience explain MacArthur’s subsequent obsession to return to the Philippines?” Ibid., 80.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 80–81. Gordon provides two very interesting insights in his prologue: he defends MacArthur’s decision to continue fighting, and he explains Wainwright’s decision to order both King and Major General William F. Sharp to continue fighting and not surrender. On the first issue, Gordon writes, “MacArthur of course was completely unaware of the nightmarish conditions on Bataan or the impossible situation facing Wainwright on Corregidor” (Ibid., xxiv). On the second issue, he writes, “Wainwright, confronted not only with defeat but annihilation on Corregidor, did attempt to keep the southern forces fighting in the Philippines while contemplating surrender” (Ibid., xxv). Criticism therefore is reserved for Washington who



real experience of the abandonment, not just by Washington during war itself, by the official “military necessity” argument foisted in the official narration. Gordon’s narrative, on one level, does reify the survival against the odds story so resilient in the official story. However, Gordon’s story, not any less than Dyess and Stewart, also undermines the impersonal military diary.

Army Air Corps Staff Sergeant Anton “Tony” Bilek’s story *No Uncle Sam* (2003) is also poignant and merits attention because, unlike Dyess’s intensity, Stewart’s epiphany, and Gordon’s cynicism, this rendition is personal but begins a slide back to an official sounding narrative. Bilek litany of woes begins with the Death March. He writes: “A half hour into march, we lost our only shade. The dense walls of snarling jungle gave way to the coastal plain and a blistering sun. With haggard faces and bodies far too lean, we trudged silently forward under a vigilant guard. Already the heat was beginning to sap what little strength we had left.”<sup>168</sup> His story is also full of the same kinds of angst, physical and mental torture and the savage heat of the sun. Arguably because this book was written much later than Dyess’s and the other POWs featured here, Bilek had more time to reflect. The account, albeit as stark as the previous volumes analyzed here, follows a slower and more deliberate cadence. For the most part, the majority of the action taking place happens to someone else. Bilek observes everyone else but is very conscious of what is happening inside of him. Bilek adds: “They moved us on the road. No rest, no food, not even a little extra water. [...] Along many stretches we could see Manila Bay off to our right. Its calm and sparkling waters only added to our thirst.”<sup>169</sup>

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promised aid but in the last minute denied it. In this rendition MacArthur and Wainwright are heroes.

<sup>168</sup> Bilek and O’Connell, 49.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

Dead bodies are also a recurring theme in *No Uncle Sam*. Reflections of dead bodies cast gloom over this apologist rendition. Bilek intimates: “There, sprawled in the ditch, lay an American, a red pool of blood soaking through his shirt. “Bayonet, still fresh.” [...] On the other side of the road were two dead Filipino soldiers, one body flung atop the other. [...] The grass for about twenty yards had been beaten down. Near the outer edge lay the would-be escapee.”<sup>170</sup> In a lament that foreshadows Bilek’s true feelings of abandonment, he slips into despair. Bilek writes:

We weren’t forbidden to talk, but there wasn’t much to say, just a hell of a lot to think about. We were the “Bastards of Bataan,” left behind, forgotten, hungry, thirsty, sick, dejected, and demoralized. So why talk? Instead, we thought our own thoughts in a wandering, disjointed, confused, way. Did our loved ones back home know that the American forces had fallen and that their sons were driven like animals to some unknown fate? Was help finally on its way? Well if so, it was too damned late now. I wondered. And most of all: Mom, Dad, Marie – I love you. Wait for me, please wait for me. I’ll be –”<sup>171</sup>

With musings this intense, it is no wonder that all the POWs stories were excluded from official narration. The Camp O’Donnell experience was no less savage.

O’Donnell, after the boxcar trip,<sup>172</sup> did not provide respite. Conditions were unsanitary and therefore lethal. The POW’s welcome to O’Donnell also echoed with rumblings of abandonment – but this time, it came from the Japanese. Bilek informs us that, “Then, Captain Tsuneyoshi burst into another tirade [...] “You think you are the

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 68.

lucky ones. Your comrades who are dead on Bataan, they are the luck ones! You are forgotten men. Your country will not help you now. You have dishonored yourselves, are no better than thieves and dogs.” End of lecture.”<sup>173</sup> According to Bilek, “we were the only large force in the history of the United States to be surrendered *en masse* as a matter of political expediency.”<sup>174</sup> He continues: “The political climate back home was one of isolationism, and the solution was to let the front-line soldier get caught in the middle.”<sup>175</sup> Bilek’s tale of survival is also one of resistance, as he writes that “we improvised, repaired, cobbled-up, and concocted equipment to hold off the enemy until we just plain ran out of everything. We had ‘No Mama, No Papa, No Uncle Sam.’ We were the battlin’ bastards of Bataan.”<sup>176</sup> Bilek relates internal struggles both he and his fellow inmates experienced. He articulates the different stages of that voyage as well as his time at both O’Donnell and Cabanatuan, on a Japanese ship to Japan, and finally at Camp 17 and on the coalmines in Omuta.

Much of Bilek’s narrative relates to issues of health. Like Dyess, Stewart, and Gordon, Bilek suffered from multiple diseases – beriberi, malaria, and pneumonia – so their stories are mutually reinforcing. While at the Japanese coalmines in Omuta, he seriously injured his hand and needed a few fingers amputated.<sup>177</sup> Narrating the removal of his fingers with the cold calculation of a military diary, Bilek was thankful that the doctors could save his hand. Bilek – and this is the significance of his book – covers almost every facet of life as a POW in the custody of the Japanese military. Bilek writes about collaborators, air raids, abuse by Japanese soldiers and civilians, prisoner work

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 172–173.

details, prison camp facilities, as well as the constant lack of food.<sup>178</sup> Despite being critical of the failure of the U.S. to provide better support for the Battling Bastards of Bataan, Bilek still defends his government's policy and decisions, particularly during the last month of the war. Bilek closes out *No Uncle Sam* with musings about the appropriateness of dropping the bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. According to him, several critics have argued about the morality of dropping the bombs. The discussions, Bilek laments, are beyond the comprehension of the POWs. As far as he is concerned, "the decision was not only appropriate, but it was probably the only reason we left captivity alive."<sup>179</sup> By speaking to the issue of the bomb, Bilek writes his narrative into the historical record to make more acceptable the unspeakable horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This textual move makes it more acceptable to being to fold these alternative narratives into the larger military story of WWII in the Pacific.

As evidenced from this review of Bataan related pieces, a change in time led to a different emphasis of the multi-faceted Bataan POW story. Bilek's contribution is important because none before him took this detailed a look at POW life in Japan. Dyess and Stewart highlight the Death March. Lawton focuses on the horrors experienced in the Hell Ships. Gordon pays more attention to his and the other POW experiences at O'Donnell and Cabanatuan. Bilek's *No Uncle Sam* brings complexity to an often neglected portion of the POW story – life in Japan. Since each POW came to the discussion with his own focus, the combination of this set of stories gives the reader a fuller and more complete picture of Bataan. Combining the POW narratives also gives them a new voice, expanded agency, and increased visibility.

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 75, 77–80, 179.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 255.

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This chapter undertook a review of the American conversation about Bataan. The dominant narrative, despite being so resilient, was challenged by the complex counter narrative of Colonel Dyess and the problematic personal memoirs of American POWs. On the one hand, these textual moves illustrate that power generates resistance. On the other hand, the POW narratives of Dyess, Stewart, Lawton, Gordon, and Bilek are not simplistic challenges. To be included in the Bataan conversation, they also reify the hegemonic narrative. On many occasions these personal narratives mimic military history. The bright side of this discussion is that we have a system that allows an educated citizenry to present new data about historical event, ask unsettling questions about decisions made in the past, and bring new examinations to old books and a growing archive. These text not just elucidate the past, they also bring new visibilities in the present.

## CHAPTER 2

### CELLULOID BATAAN: CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS AND LEGACIES

This chapter seeks to explain how films helped establish the dominant narrative about Bataan and the Death March. Analyzing this medium is important because the cinematic discourse of Bataan also insists on rendering the POWs invisible. Much like its textual counterpart cinematic representations of Bataan are not simple. Like books, films have moments where they internally contradict themselves, problematizing any preferred or straightforward readings. Films – and war films in particular – bring history to life, but at a cost; they trade truth for emotional effect. Even as they operate on a register of visual realism – to provide audiences with a feeling of experiencing a historical event – war films also work to invoke empathy in audiences. This empathy oftentimes comes at the cost of hiding much harsher realities than are portrayed onscreen and removing significant participants from the filmic visual narrative. *Back to Bataan* (1945) and *The Great Raid* (2005), two versions of the Cabanatuan rescue, provide viewers with a sense of reality through stories that tug at our heartstrings but occlude the actual suffering of the POWs. Finally, all historical films contain inaccuracies. War movies, and both *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid*, are no exception. What is unique in each film is how specific historical inaccuracies work to reify specific colonial notions that have a specific relevance to the time of their release. While *Back to Bataan* promises – as per the Office of War Information (OWI) edicts – to set the stage for post-war equality, historical inaccuracies create spaces for neo-colonial dependency. *The Great Raid* also promises to correct notions of inequality. However, invoking the position of rescuer through the historically inaccurate Cabu Bridge scene, Americans once again “saved” the Filipinos.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how Hollywood moviemakers helped establish the natural logic of Bataan by redistributing what is seen, heard, and felt about it. Historically based films can function as a prism for thinking about the invention of hegemonies or “natural” logics and both *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* claim to be historically accurate portrayals of a historic event. They enshrine a hegemonic narrative about World War II (WWII) by utilizing cinematic flourishes, dramatic music, ideological speeches, symbolic actions, and sympathetic characters. However, both are actually just entertaining fictions based loosely on what happened on the battlefield and in the POW camps. Their creators are less concerned with depicting historical reality than with offering viewers a way to experience the past. It is therefore the responsibility of public historians to struggle with such “claims to realism [that] offer the audience no hint of the point at which facsimile fades into interpretation and fiction.”<sup>180</sup> I will thus perform three tasks in this chapter: First, I will examine how “crowding out” in both films mask the painful truth of war. Second, I will expose the historical inaccuracies, in both films, that disrupt a straightforward watching of the movies. Finally, I will show how both masking the truth and the historical inaccuracies function as internal contradictions. That all films take creative license is not new. However, in this case, specific creative license is integral to the creation of the Bataan narrative. A comprehensive reading of movies as texts enables one to decipher multiple ways to “make meaning” out of films.<sup>181</sup> To tease out how this process can occur, I offer multiple possible readings of *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* to demonstrate what is considered worth remembering about Bataan.

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<sup>180</sup> Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us: Media, Memory, History* (New York: Verso, 2005), 130.

<sup>181</sup> Stuart Hall, “Encoding, Decoding,” in Simon During, *The Cultural Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 507.

Historical movies perform a very specific pedagogical function; unlike books, movies provide a partial mimetic experience. However, inconsistencies within the films themselves give the viewer agency by allowing for interpretations that diverge from these pedagogical goals. Both *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* promise one fable but deliver another. As mentioned previously, *Back to Bataan* promised to level the playing field by making Americans and Filipinos partners in a war effort that was going to change their patron-client relationship forever. *The Great Raid* promised to lift the historical elision of Filipino contribution to the war effort; it delivered instead a movie fashioned on the heroic formula of its release era. This notion of reversal is at the core of Jacques Rancière's notion of the "thwarted fable."<sup>182</sup> Internal contradictions result in a thwarted fable and movies are a type of media that is especially likely to stumble over its own storytelling. Both *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* begin with one tale and conclude with another. Taken this way, through the examination of internal contradictions, both movies are self-critical. The internal contradictions allow for alternate readings of both films. I contend that the audience, through discovering these internal contradictions, is liberated from a monolithic narrative. The spectator is emancipated and encouraged to experience multiple interpretations of what went on at Bataan, Corregidor, Capas, and Cabanatuan.

Cinematic narratives are less a reflection of the actual time they seek to represent. By folding in political and social concerns of the times, films are exemplars of the era in which they are made. Therefore, historical narratives of are not merely literal. Whether mainstream film or the written word, all such texts are ones we need to study with a careful eye. *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* should not be excluded from this

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<sup>182</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables*, trans. Emiliano Batista (New York: Berg, 2001), 11.



scrutiny. We need to understand that “film creates a world of the past that must be judged on its own terms.”<sup>183</sup> Films’ meanings are flexible, multiple, and dynamic. Cinematic historical depictions are “shaped and limited by the possibilities and practices of the medium in which the past is conveyed.”<sup>184</sup> For *Back to Bataan*, WWII provided the historical context and not merely the subject of the filmic narrative. *The Great Raid*, while portraying WWII events, must also be understood within the framework of 9/11 and the wars on terror. In other words, the historical context in which the film is produced adds complex layers of meaning to the subject/event that is depicted onscreen. Although produced sixty years apart, *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* both teach their audiences to forget defeat. In a sense, their message is that if it is not possible to disregard loss then it should be folded into a larger story of eventual victory. Developing this triumphant narrative hides the grimmer realities of war. At the very least, the POWs of the Death March (including the initial surrender and subsequent incarceration) are no more present in these cinematic depictions than they are in textual narratives.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Robert A. Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 45.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>185</sup> *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* are integral to the discussion of what is visible and invisible about the Bataan Death March in popular media. However, there are other films that are important yet peripheral to this specific discussion about the Bataan Death March. These other films also contribute to the narrative of triumphalism that marks most WWII films, a much larger issue. They include: *Corregidor* (1943), *Bataan* (1943), *Cry “Havoc!”* (1943), and *They Were Expendable* (1945). These movies are thematically linked, centering on early WWII events in the Philippines, but they do not directly address the Bataan Death March, and therefore they are excluded from the main analysis. *Bataan* depicts soldiers and nurses sacrificing themselves for a “greater good.” The soldiers never question their orders or the situations they are in; this it has in common with *Back to Bataan*. In 1943, Atlantic Pictures released *Corregidor* and Loew’s released *Bataan*. The first film depicts the turn of events at General MacArthur’s headquarters on Corregidor. *Bataan* shows soldiers delaying the Japanese advance by repeatedly blowing up the same bridge. The lack of the depiction of nurses is problematic and thus also needs to be recognized. Both *Corregidor* and *Bataan* include nurses in their stories, but soldiers are still the most important characters. In contrast, *Cry “Havoc!”* and *So Proudly We Hail* (also released in 1943) focus on American nurses who are captured and held in POW camps in Bataan. The

Originally released by RKO Radio Pictures at the end of May 1945, *Back to Bataan* aimed at reversing a developing narrative of abandonment started by the public release of the Dyess Report.<sup>186</sup> The “back” in *Back to Bataan* hints at redemption. The film played up the POW rescue missions to help establish the “good war” narrative and in line with “victory culture.”<sup>187</sup> The film focuses on MacArthur’s efforts to return using the information provided by the fictionalized Colonel Madden (John Wayne) to rescue the Philippines from Japanese occupation. As Tom Engelhardt writes: “The only acceptable defeats or last stands would be those that were the end of the beginning for us and the beginning of the end for them. [...] Americans never experienced an armed foreign threat, no less an invasion; nor did they have to account for defeat in war.”<sup>188</sup> Engelhardt contends that Americans reject initial defeat unless victory is the final outcome. After a short absence during the post Vietnam era, the triumphalism returns with *The Great Raid*. In this version of the Bataan story, the Rangers came to rescue the five hundred plus prisoners at act that marks the beginning of the end for the Japanese. As a rescue story, *The Great Raid* signals that Americans need to return to a time of victory. The early to mid

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seventy-eight nurses who were incarcerated at either Santo Tomas or Los Baños were the subject of Rainer Loeser’s (2008) documentary, *Angels of Bataan*. These nurses’ stories are relevant to the larger story of Bataan, but are not directly related to the memorials at Capas and Cabanatuan, and are therefore not included in this dissertation (For a more detailed examination of the experiences of the nurses, see Elizabeth M. Norman, *We Band of Angels: The Untold Story of American Nurses Trapped on Bataan by the Japanese* (New York: Pocket Books, 1999)) *They Were Expendable* is also important but is tangential because it focuses on the escape option provided to MacArthur by the Navy. This fictionalized story is, however, relevant to the textual story of the Navy and it gets treatment in official texts. *They Were Expendable* concerns the Patrol Torpedo (PT) boats thus reinforcing the textual narrative of Bataan. However, it too again ignores capture and incarceration. *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* depict the rescue mission at Cabanatuan; thus, they are the focal point of this filmic analysis.

<sup>186</sup> William E. Dyess, *The Dyess Story: The Eyewitness Account of the Death March from Bataan and the Narrative of Experience in Japanese Prison Camps and of Eventual Escape*, ed. Charles Leavelle (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Son, 1944).

<sup>187</sup> Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 25, 34, 39, 51.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 25–26.

2000s was a time when the Philippines and the U.S. worked together on the war on terror. The U.S., since losing Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base, has been trying to reestablish a presence in the region through the back door via Mindanao. *The Great Raid* concurrently illustrates that despite Bataan falling and MacArthur abandoning the Philippines, the U.S. returned to save the day, implying that it can be counted on to do so again. In effect, the film suggests that U.S.-Philippines relations have not changed significantly since 1945. *The Great Raid* as a rescue movie also brings back triumphalist sentiments lost with Vietnam. *The Great Raid* reverses the abandonment narratives started with the 1944 Dyess Report by highlighting American resilience and celebrating both MacArthur and Roosevelt.<sup>189</sup>

### ***Back to Bataan (1945): Renewing Colonization by Denying Partnership***

Films about and made during WWII were self-censored. Movies, through a process of *quid pro quo*, were managed by the Office of War Information (OWI) and executed by the major Hollywood studios.<sup>190</sup> The OWI was a U.S. government agency designed during WWII to bring together branches of government that provided information services. The OWI, considered an emergency unit, was active from June 1942 to September 1945. It also distributed domestic war news and produced posters.

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<sup>189</sup> To discuss *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid*, I draw primarily from specific texts: Robert Sklar's *Movie Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (1975); Rolando Tolentino's edited collection *Geopolitics of the Visible: Essays on Philippine Film Cultures* (2000); and Michael Sweeney's *Secrets of Victory: The Office of Censorship and The American Press and Radio in World War II* (2001). These books frame the conversation primarily around the role that two censoring agencies – the OWI and the Office of Censorship (OC) – played in influencing these Hollywood products. The authors of these books also examine the power of such government offices to determine domestic and international distribution of films made in the U.S.

<sup>190</sup> U.S. Office of War Information, *A Handbook of the United States of America: Pertinent Information about the United States and the War Effort*. Produced by the Features Division of the News and Features Bureau, Overseas Branch (New York: Hutchinson and Company, 1944).

The OWI's mandate extended to advancing patriotism, encouraging spying on foreigners, and recruiting women into the war effort. Along with its domestic responsibilities, the OWI also formed a network to manage a propaganda program overseas.<sup>191</sup> Hollywood moviemakers enthusiastically internalized the OWI guidelines primarily to gain access to the OWI's international distribution network. Moreover, cooperation with the OWI made studios appear domestically as patriotic and helping with the war effort. As a result of this will to cooperate, major Hollywood studios producing sanitized war movies that did not speak of the conditions of the POWs. Major studios like RKO Radio Pictures (RKO) highlighted valor and innocence. They hid by what they showed. Therefore, war films including *Back to Bataan*, helped enshrine notions of victory, but concurrently, because the OWI allowed particular problematic scenes to pass, these releases also posed a problem for the dominant triumphalist narrative.<sup>192</sup> In this specific discourse, both military historians and Hollywood moviemakers are the handmaidens of the state propaganda apparatus.

The OWI determined film suitability during and for a short time after WWII. Close examination of the exchanges between the OWI and major studios provides a glimpse into how government policy influences cultural production. In *Projections of War*, Thomas Doherty argues that “to reinvigorate flagging interest in the Pacific war and to deter complacency, atrocity material was approved if not tacitly encouraged by both the OWI and the War Department.”<sup>193</sup> In deciding what was “sayable” on film, the OWI

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<sup>191</sup> Allen M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 142.

<sup>192</sup> *Back to Bataan*, directed by Edward Dmytryk, Los Angeles, California, 1945, DVD; and *The Great Raid*, directed by John Dahl, Los Angeles, California, 2005, DVD.

<sup>193</sup> Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 136.

acted as an unofficial censoring arm of the government; thus the state and the public (i.e., Hollywood executives, etc.) worked together to create a functioning hegemony. Despite today's radically unrestricted public access to film, movies are still subject to the same narrative-making rules that shaped them in the 1940s.

The government did not directly pressure film studios to produce propaganda. Hollywood's major studios assisted the OWI in shaping the dominant discourse regarding the Bataan Death March because they wanted to appear cooperative with the wartime effort.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, they were aware of possible legal ramifications of going against OWI guidelines. On the other side of the fence, the U.S. government did not want to directly censor major studios. Hollywood and the state came to an informal arrangement whereby filmmakers submitted scripts to the OWI for review, then, upon receiving feedback, adjusted the scripts to accommodate OWI guidelines.<sup>195</sup> Through this unofficial exchange, the OWI reviewed and guided the content of all the war films produced between June 1942 and September 1945. The rescue mission plot for *Back to Bataan* resulted in several exchanges between RKO representatives and the agents of the OWI.<sup>196</sup>

As the discussion of *Back to Bataan* script examined in this chapter illustrates, the Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) and the OWI were able to monitor film production and inform studio executives about the political suitability of movie content. The BMP had more power than the OWI to block circulation of a film, but again there was no need for heavy-handed censorship. The BMP suggested changes to scripts to movies such as *Back*

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 43–44.

<sup>195</sup> Clayton Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 28.

<sup>196</sup> *OWI Feature Script Review of the Invisible Army*. September 21, 1944. Reproduced from the National Archives; and the *OWI Yardstick for War Pictures*. Also reproduced from the National Archives.

to *Bataan* as well as the other movies identified above in conjunction with the Office of Censorship (OC). The OC was created under the 1917 Espionage Act to review foreign films for import and domestic exhibition.<sup>197</sup> The OWI through the OC and the BMP also reviewed Hollywood films for both local distribution and the more lucrative foreign export market.<sup>198</sup> How did Hollywood studios benefit by waltzing with the BMP, the OC, and most important, the OWI? Since the OWI determined the distribution of national and international films, its suggested revisions had economic ramifications. Films could be distributed through the OWI network only if suitably altered. Studio heads viewed cooperation as ensuring their bottom line and helping with the war effort.<sup>199</sup>

Hollywood studios, newspapers, and radio stations all understood the advantages of wartime self-censorship.<sup>200</sup> The exchanges between RKO studios and the OWI provide evidence of the very real influence of the various censoring arms of the government. Michael Sweeney notes that “with one exception, involving the *Chicago Tribune*’s reporting of the battle of Midway in 1942, the government never considered any journalist’s code violation severe enough to warrant prosecution under the Espionage Act.”<sup>201</sup> Even if the OWI balked at cinematic transgressions, they trusted that journalists would attempt to adhere to the guidelines given by the OC. News executives, like Hollywood executives, evidently self-censored out of concern not to compromise national security or be judged unpatriotic. The producers knew crossing the line would

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 100, 112.

<sup>198</sup> David Slocum, “Cinema and the Civilizing Process: Rethinking Violence in the World War II Combat Film,” *Cinema Journal* 44, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 40.

<sup>199</sup> Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 80.

<sup>200</sup> Doherty, *Projections of War*, 49–51.

<sup>201</sup> Michael Sweeney, *Secrets of Victory: The Office of Censorship and The American Press and Radio in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 5. The *Chicago Tribune* seems to have been one of the few holdouts regarding direct censorship. It also fought to publish the Dyess Report in 1944.

lead to mandatory censorship. But what may have been more important was that no one wanted to be identified a traitor because it would undermine their business interests. Being branded a code violator could jeopardize a newspaper's circulation or turn away a radio station's, newspaper's, or studio's audience share. Any change in the customer base could reduce profits or even threaten the continued existence of that newspaper, radio station, or film studio. RKO did not wish to follow the *Chicago Tribune* and risk impacting its bottom line.

Hollywood executives also realized that accommodating major OWI stipulations would allow minor discrepancies to be overlooked. Originally established to manage a nationwide propaganda campaign, the OWI provided "truthful" information to the (war bond-buying) American public and overseas audiences.<sup>202</sup> This *quid pro quo* allowed studios more creative flexibility. Meanwhile, the OWI wrestled with sometimes contradictory mandates in defining appropriate movie content. The OWI pamphlet "Yardstick for War Pictures" lists the criteria for acceptable film content:

1. Will this picture help win the war?
2. What war information problem does it seek to clarify, dramatize or interpret?
3. If it is an "escape" picture, will it harm the war effort by creating a false picture of America, her allies or the world we live in?
4. Does it merely use the war as a basis for a profitable picture, contributing nothing of real significance to the war effort and possibly lessening the effect of other pictures of more importance?

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<sup>202</sup> Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, 35.

5. Does it contribute something new to our understanding of the world conflict and the various forces involved, or has the subject already been adequately covered?
6. When the picture reaches its maximum circulation on the screen, will it reflect conditions as they are and fill a need current at that time, or will it be out-dated?
7. Does the picture tell the truth or will the young people of today have a reason to say they were misled by propaganda?<sup>203</sup>

By all counts, *Back to Bataan* fulfilled most of these criteria. It was bound to succeed in some and fail in others. The beauty of adhering to some is that in time when one slipped and failed in others it was excused. It is these exceptions that begin to slide into areas of contradiction. In the case of *Back to Bataan*, while the Filipinos were seen (or at least written in) as partners the excesses in terms of melodrama were excused by the OWI. The portrayal of American resilience in *Back to Bataan* celebrates American toughness and highlights military necessity – this becomes the natural logic.<sup>204</sup> This immediate postwar narrative eventually downplays Filipino involvement in Bataan and Corregidor. The accommodations the government made to Hollywood producers regarding OWI guidelines resulted in myriad internal contradictions in early and mid-war films. For example, according to film historian Charles Hawley, “despite OWI criticism for excessive American flag waving and the ‘sometimes condescending’ treatment of Filipinos, *Back to Bataan* was deemed valuable for postwar overseas distribution in the

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<sup>203</sup> *OWI Yardstick for War Pictures*. Reproduced from the National Archives.

<sup>204</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (London: Continuum International, 2004), 89.



Philippines.”<sup>205</sup> The OWI sent the movie overseas, despite minor criticism, because Washington promoted neo-colonial paternalism, and this enabled RKO to draw significant profits.<sup>206</sup> Overall, the OWI and OC’s power to screen content and decide film distribution served the socio-political purpose of depicting WWII as a good war and perpetuating victory culture. My analysis of *Back to Bataan* below demonstrates that the OWI ultimately determined what was to be occluded from view and what was to be plainly visible to this film’s audiences. Despite all attempts by both the OWI and RKO to come up with a purely celebratory movie, several internal contradictions remained.

*Back to Bataan* promises to level the playing field by making the Filipinos equal partners in the war effort. This narrative is thwarted on many occasions when the Filipinos are denied partnership through reminders of a colonial past. In May 4, 1945, in an OWI internal memo, reviewer Gene Kern praised *Back to Bataan* for its: “Recognition of part played by Filipino underground in liberation of the Philippines.”<sup>207</sup> In the same memo, Kern identified “Negative Propaganda Content” that included a, “Lack of objectivity and [...] flag waving.”<sup>208</sup> Kern identifies that this weakness can be its greatest strength. Kern writes:

The film, BACK TO BATAAN, follows the story line of the final screenplay, although there are evidences of innumerable last minute dialogue and narrative changes. Unfortunately, -- from the point of view of overseas policy, -- the emphasis has been shifted from a sincere,

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<sup>205</sup> Charles Hawley, “You’re a Better Filipino than I Am, John Wayne: World War II, Hollywood, and U.S.-Philippine Relations,” *The Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 3 (August 2002): 408.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> *OWI Feature Script Review of the Invisible Army*. September 21, 1944. Reproduced from the National Archives, 3.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

undiluted tribute to the Filipinos to a glorification of American arms and justice. Whereas “The Invisible Army” was primarily the story of Filipino guerillas, “Back to Bataan” emerges more as a story of Americans returning to liberate fellow Americans and Filipinos -- although the point is strongly made that the Filipinos do more than their share in the fight for freedom. The narration has been expanded and is read behind the written word with an excess of braggadocio. The opening and closing “frame” features shots of Americans freed from Jap prison camps, marching victoriously -- with name, rank and branch of service superimposed. All this is, of course, obviously slanted for domestic distribution, and reduces the film’s value overseas.<sup>209</sup>

*Back to Bataan* stimulates audience interest in the wartime era depicted in the film.

Dramatizing the events relating to the Battle for Bataan, the film allows the audience to emotionally connect with the characters and the storyline. However, as pointed out by Kern above, a critical audience -- both domestic and foreign -- could very easily draw different readings from the recognized condescending quality of the film.

The story starts with a recreation of the January 1945 rescue at the POW camp at Cabanatuan in Nueva Ecija. The raid on the POW camp is important because as MacArthur rapidly moved north from his landing site in Palo, Leyte, the risk of reprisal against POWs loomed large. Both *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* start with statements that they are based on actual incidents and real people, even though their chronology conveniently portrays heroic deeds that undermine their factuality. In both, a raid is planned and executed due to fears of Japanese reprisals. They both begin by

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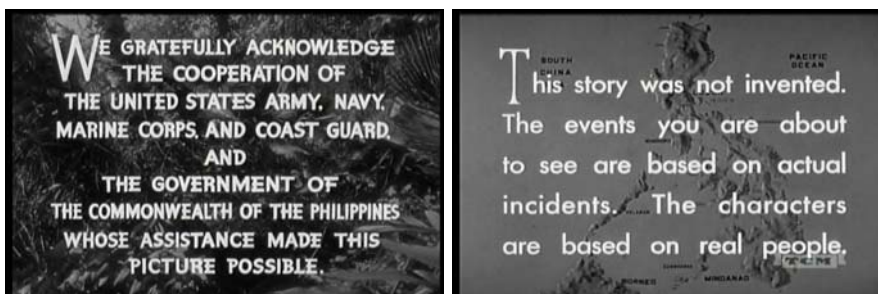
<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 4.

setting a tone of historical realism by including statistics about the length of the Philippine struggle and the high body count from the Bataan Death March. And the layout of the scenes in *The Great Raid* follows the same formula used in *Back to Bataan*.

*Back to Bataan* quickly returns to pre-fall of Bataan in 1942. As the USAFFE forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur reassess their situation in Bataan and Corregidor, the fictitious Colonel Joseph Madden (John Wayne) remains with the guerrillas to set up a network to fight the occupying forces of the non-fictitious General Homma. After MacArthur's departure, Colonel Madden joins forces with the Filipino resistance in the person of fictitious Captain Andres Bonifacio (Anthony Quinn) to free the POWs from the prison at Cabanatuan. A subplot outside of the main narrative is the relationship between Captain Bonifacio and his fiancée Dalisay Delgado (Fely Franquelli). Bonifacio is heavily weighted with responsibility. First, he is the grandson of Andres Bonifacio, the non-fictitious legendary Katipunero and national hero from the anti-Spanish struggles. Second, his love interest, Delgado, is the voice of the Japanese military occupying forces – a Filipino version of Tokyo Rose. Unbeknownst to Bonifacio, however, nothing could be further from the truth. Using her position as broadcaster, Delgado has access to the Japanese high command in the Philippines. She provides much-needed intelligence to the Americans. To ensure her safety and to continue the flow of information, the truth about Delgado remains with Colonel Madden and his superiors. This conflicted romance plays out against the larger backdrop of the Filipino resistance and rescue raid.

The movie starts with a map of the Philippines, just after the dedication and opening credits. Above the map is a message read out in a voiceover evoking an

emergency broadcast recording: “This story was not invented. The events are based on actual incidents. The characters are based on real people.” Positing this does not make the story factual and the people genuine. However, this statement conveyed in this manner is an example of ingenious semiotics. This exercise gives the film, what OWI reviewer Kern calls, a documentary quality. It follows a message showing a ceremonial dedication of the film, to “gratefully acknowledge” the cooperation of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard and the Commonwealth of the Philippines with RKO (Figures 1 and 2 below). The cut from the dedication to the map cast an official aura over the narrative. The authoritative-looking introduction and the institutions that support this movie – the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard – together suggest an official imprimatur.



Figures 1 and 2: Acknowledgement (left) and “This story is not invented” (right). Screenshots: “Credits and Foreword,” *Back to Bataan*, DVD.

The film’s first message of grateful acknowledgement works together with the subsequent frame emphasizing “actual incidents” and “real people” relay a message that the victory was achieved through an alliance between the Filipinos and Americans. The male voiceover emulates a 1940 era newscaster, and “give[s] a sense of authority”<sup>210</sup> to the film. The film director, Edward Dmytryk, claims that “the voice will not only initiate action to come but will also provide ‘documentary’ information on the historical reality

<sup>210</sup> Dana Polan, *Power and Paranoia: History, Narrative, and the American Cinema, 1940–1945* (Columbia University Press, 1986), 64.

that has come before.”<sup>211</sup> In conformity with OWI criteria 5 of the “Yardstick of War Pictures,” this introduction overtly states that this war was a joint effort. Later in the film, the story suggests that without the return of MacArthur and the much needed supplies, the Philippines would have been lost. The film’s arc establishes a celebratory story of cooperation and alliance with the U.S. as a senior partner. To do this the film alters what happens in real life. Shortly after the film’s opening scenes that focus on the raid on Cabanatuan, the battle scene ends with the release of the prisoners, reminiscent of the actual rescue. The story seamlessly rolls with the freed men reunited with their brothers-in-arms who are waiting for them in the fields. Waiting to cover their rear is Captain Bonifacio and a troop of Filipino guerillas. Despite being rather close to what actually occurred, the scenes are historically inaccurate. In reality it was Filipino guerilla leaders Captains Juan Pajota and Eduardo Josen who covered both ends of the road and allowed the Americans to leave on carabao carts. This historical inaccuracy will be repeated in *The Great Raid* (2005). In effect, this elision violates a sense of truthfulness demanded by OWI criteria 7, which asks: “Does the picture tell the truth or will the young people of today have a reason to say they were misled by propaganda?” Again as Kern outlines in his memo prior to the release of *Back to Bataan*, these alterations and their resultant melodrama illustrates an “over-all apparent lack of objectivity.”<sup>212</sup>

Aside from historical elisions, *Back to Bataan* also reifies a sense of paternalism. Paternalism violates the sense of cooperation that was evoked by the opening messages. Depictions of Americans include the idealized characters of the benevolent educator or the heroic soldier working tirelessly towards Filipino civilization and maturity (Figure 3).

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> *OWI Feature Script Review of the Invisible Army*. September 21, 1944. Reproduced from the National Archives, 4.

Paternalism is embodied in the school teacher, Bertha Barnes (Beulah Bondi). In one of the more important scenes in the movie, “Lessons,” Barnes instructs a class of Filipino students about the virtues of imperialism using the Socratic Method. Reminiscent of the early U.S. colonial project in the Philippines, such scenes unsettle the “benevolent” project of that first instantiation of empire, as well as WWII tutelage. Barnes questions Filipino children about what both Spain and the U.S. gave the Filipinos. The children reply that Spain civilized them through introducing religion and the U.S. provided them freedom through democracy (Figure 3 below). Colonel Madden, in a similar fashion, instructs Captain Andres Bonifacio (Anthony Quinn). In the scene “Act like a soldier” (Figure 4 below), Madden tells Bonifacio to “stop acting like a schoolboy.”



Figure 3: (left) Beulah Bondi as school teacher Bertha Barnes. Screenshots: “Lessons,” *Back to Bataan*, DVD. Figure 4: (right) Colonel Madden advising Captain Bonifacio. Screenshots: “Act like a soldier,” *Back to Bataan*, DVD.

Even the OWI review of the film noted that *Back to Bataan* may have gone beyond paternalism and, in places, even racist. In a September 21, 1944 internal OWI memo, reviewer Eleanor Berneis writes:

Reiteration of Japanese racial propaganda, even when it is appropriate for the story, is most undesirable from the overseas standpoint as appealing to emotional prejudices which resist logical refutation. Re-working of dialogue between Dalisay and Yamashita (page 19) and Dalisay’s statement, “The domination of the white man in the Philippine Islands has

come to an end,” (page 53) could eliminate this problem. As in other Japanese propaganda speeches throughout the script, emphasis might be placed on anti-American sentiment rather than on the “Asia for the Asiatics” propaganda line. Also in connection with Dalisay’s propaganda broadcasts, Andres’ statement that “She’s doing us more harm than the Nip guns” (page 16) seems to cancel the value of her work as a loyal Filipina spy.”<sup>213</sup>

These interactions are shot in a matter-of-fact way, suggesting that, to the filmmakers, it is a simple truth that the Americans know better than the Filipinos they are interacting with. There is no attempt to hide that the power relations here are not equal; what is shown is the “natural order.” Despite OWI criteria 5 to “contribute something new to our understanding of the world conflict,” instead of genuine cooperation, the film continues to reify a sense of American superiority. While the OWI guidelines, which define the films’ societal usefulness, seem to have the goal of moving foreign relations forward, the contradiction contained in this film’s reification of inferiority thwarts the guidelines’ projected narrative. In these moments of reversal the film fails to reach its stated objectives, replacing a sense of a shared destiny with paternalism, inequality, and racism. This discrepancy was noted prior to the international release of the film. Returning to the May 3, 1945 memo by reviewer Gene Kern, *Back to Bataan* (originally called *The Invisible Army* – a title that hints that the initial emphasis was to highlight Filipino contributions and cooperation) had already violated several of the OWI guiding principles. Kern writes: “The documentary quality of the picture is disturbed by mediocre

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<sup>213</sup> The idea that the movie is “racist” appears in the OWI review of *Back to Bataan*. *OWI Feature Script Review of the Invisible Army* submitted on September 21, 1944. Reproduced from the National Archives, 2.

production of the sensational scenes of the story. The “March of Death” and other Jap atrocities, as well as the majority of the battle scenes, will not be believable to critical audiences. There is an over-all apparent lack of objectivity and understatement.”<sup>214</sup> Kern includes a caveat in his final comments that “despite these negative aspects, and although the film does not realize the potentialities of the script, *BACK TO BATAAN* does constitute an American tribute (albeit a sometimes condescending one) to our Filipino allies – and may thereby be of value to the Government’s Information Program.”<sup>215</sup> By using Bonifacio, the narration occludes a series of informative colonial subplots. First, it hides the fact that the U.S. sold out General Emilio Aguinaldo, assuming possession of the territorial Philippines through the 1898 Treaty of Paris. The American lust for possession won out over the mandate to assist the Filipino people, resulting in the Philippine-American War. The bloody history of the Philippine-American war, if portrayed, would contradict the OWI coda of fair and positive portrayals of the Filipinos as partners.

The characters of Bonifacio, Delgado, and Madden may appear straightforward, but their presence is full of contradictions, thus opening the movie up to even more alternate readings. In the character of Bonifacio, the filmmakers dubiously connect WWII to a revolutionary past. Captain Bonifacio is the fictional grandson of a very real Filipino revolutionary with the same name. If a viewer’s only introduction to the Bonifacio legacy is *Back to Bataan*, then the connection to the past is wasted. However, possessing of cursory knowledge of Filipino history, the viewer recalls that Andres Bonifacio had very early given up hope that the Spanish government would administer the affairs of Filipinos

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.



with justice and dignity. In response, he established a revolutionary society, the *Katipunan*, on July 7, 1892. An underground society loosely based on Freemasonry and the Liga Filipina (La Liga Filipina is an association founded by the *ilustrado* (intellectual) Jose P. Rizal on July 3, 1892). The *Katipunan* recruited members in the periphery of Manila and in the Central Luzon provinces. By August 1896, membership in the *Katipunan* had reached an estimated 30,000. The Philippine Revolution broke out prematurely on August 23, 1896, in the event commemorated as the “Cry of Pugadlawin.” A reign of terror by the Spanish authorities quickly followed. The Spaniards arrested, jailed, and executed Rizal along with hundreds of others suspected of joining the *Katipunan* and the Revolution. Despite sincerely wishing to divest his country of colonials, the historical Bonifacio, ironically, did not shine in the battlefield. This issue alone makes his fictional descendent and namesake a problematic character to lead the guerrillas in *Back to Bataan*. At the time of the revolution, internal rivalry within the *Katipunan* and between Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo divided the ranks. Aguinaldo charged Bonifacio with treason and executed him on May 10, 1897. A cloud of suspicion still hangs over this incident.

In 1908, former Philippine Governor-General William Howard Taft found it necessary to assuage Filipino peasant concerns over the *ilustrado* oligarchy that he had fostered. At the time, Taft needed a hero, and it was Rizal, the Hispanophile, who emerged as the “untarnished” national hero: not the ultra-nationalist (and Bonifacio murderer) Aguinaldo, nor the radical *ilustrado* Apolinario Mabini, and certainly not the belligerent peasant Bonifacio. While to Filipinos, Bonifacio is an ardent patriot but a

failed soldier, to the American colonial administration, the historic Bonifacio was far too belligerent and democratic a figure to nominate as the country's national hero.

Nevertheless, it is Bonifacio who is deployed in *Back to Bataan* as a reincarnation of the revolutionary. Bonifacio is played by Anthony Quinn, who is Mexican-American. A possible alternative read of the film sees Quinn as an American actor (Figures 5 and 6). Quinn going brown-face lends both a tragic and comic duality to his character. On the tragic side, he is an American. What happens is that Quinn stands in for the Americans, instead of the Filipino Bonifacio, who is saving Delgado. This read maintains that an American saving a Filipino/a takes the whole decolonization project backward, rather than forward. Back to a time when the power relationship between savior and saved equates to colonizer and colonized. As the grandson of revolutionary Andres Bonifacio, Quinn's character metonymically references the Philippine Revolution. An American stand in for a Filipino also replicates a national narrative of savior and saved created in the Philippines in 1898 and remobilized in 1945.



Figures 5 and 6: Anthony Quinn as Captain Andres Bonifacio (left) and the real Andres Bonifacio (right). Screenshots: "Act like a soldier," *Back to Bataan*, DVD; Sources: "Andres Bonifacio," reocities.com, <http://reocities.com/CollegePark/pool/1644/bonifacio.html> (accessed October 7, 2012)

Another fertile area for highlighting the thwarting of promised equality is the fictitious character of Dalisay Delgado. Delgado might be traitor on the outside but she is a patriot on the inside. She is not apologetic about her role as spy and in this sense makes

no distinction between interior and exterior (Figure 7 below). Bonifacio wants to rescue Delgado but is repelled by her complicity with the Japanese. While he is strongly attracted to her, he cannot believe what he hears her saying on the radio. Echoing the nationalistic sentiments of its day, the attraction/repulsion between Quinn and Delgado reflects the tenuous relations between the Filipinos and Americans of the 1940s. Moreover, Delgado is rescued by Bonifacio (as played by an American) from the enemy. She symbolizes a familiar plot of the Philippines needing rescuing by the U.S. The seductive voice of Dalisay Delgado also signifies a deeper underlying coding in the film. Her musings issue through the emotionally charged air a few scenes after the opening sequence. In this scene, the Filipino people and American military personnel are working together. Delgado is a dangerous seductress threatening to come between America and the Philippines. Because she is not really a traitor, only playing the role of one, film audiences see her as a noble prisoner of the Japanese and symbol of the courageous and self sacrificing Filipina. Delgado conjures up images of the sacrificing Maria Clara of Rizal's famous novels *Noli me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* (Figure 7 below). Delgado is saved from the Japanese and becomes an overt patriot again (Figure 8 below). Dalisay's rescue is the Philippine's rescue. What happened to equal partners?



Figure 7: (left): Franquelli as the problematic Dalisay Delgado. Screenshot: "Scene," *Back to Bataan*, DVD. Figure 8: (right): Franquelli as the "Rebel" Dalisay Delgado. Screenshot: "Unwavering faith," *Back to Bataan*, DVD.

Madden is the third character that requires special attention. After surviving a body-tossing blast, he engages in heart-to-heart exchanges with several of the Filipinos in the trenches creating an impression of familiarity by showing his participation in these events with Filipinos. Initial reading suggests a sense of equality. Madden is not a distant elitist as he is in the trenches with his men. But Madden *is* different. He is the protective father of Bonifacio and a keeper of secrets. A key scene shows Madden getting orders from General Jonathan Wainwright, known as “Skinny” (John Miljan) (Figure 9 below).



Figure 9: Madden with General Jonathan “Skinny” Wainwright. Screenshot: “New assignment,” *Back to Bataan*, DVD.

In the scene of the meeting between Skinny and Madden, the shadow is put in service of the heroic victory theme. Before Madden receives his orders, Skinny cuts a cigarette in half to share in confidence. The cutting of the cigarette fosters a sense of desperation; supplies are running out. The scene also establishes their camaraderie. The scene unfolds as an exposition of that earlier intimacy between Skinny and Madden. Shot from behind, the two men walk away. Shadows darken, creating a vague and suggestive space as the two men grow vertiginously larger in the frame. The camera closes in on their conversation. The next shot is a tight one. The camera captures two men angling toward one another tensely in the shadows. Light is cast on Madden’s uncomprehending

face as Skinny, still in shadow, tells Madden the truth about Dalisay Delgado (Figure 9 above). This scene shows that MacArthur's leaving is a military necessity. Skinny mentions to Madden that MacArthur has left for Australia, but nothing more is said about him. MacArthur looms large in written texts and monuments but remains nearly invisible in the filmic story of Bataan. Madden and Skinny's silence about MacArthur in the film elides the abandonment of the troops at Corregidor. In *Back to Bataan*, MacArthur must live to see another fighting day. The abandonment of the soon-to-be POWs in Bataan is thus part of a textual narrative of military necessity. If they are abandoned, it is only to be rescued later. When the movie later focuses on the Death March and rescue of Bonifacio, the notion of rescue is replayed. The film never portrays the extent of the carnage on the Death March, and it never really links the abandonment of the soldiers by elite members of the U.S. military (including MacArthur) and their suffering. Instead, in place of suffering is the pragmatic but never fully self-sufficient Filipino who remains in need of U.S. paternalism. Filipinos need American supplies and know-how. In the middle of the film, Bonifacio learns the truth about Delgado, but the soldiers never learn the "why" about MacArthur's abandonment. Sixty years into the future, another movie with the same theme will promise to address the historical shortcomings, inaccuracies and inequalities contained in *Back to Bataan*. *The Great Raid* will not continue to foster this sense of inequality but will further elide the POW reality by adding to this discourse its version of American paternalism.

### ***The Great Raid* (2005): Renewing Paternalism by Changing History**

*The Great Raid* serves a similar societal function as *Back to Bataan* did sixty years earlier, even in the absence of official OWI criteria. Although there was no

censoring organization by 2005, the OWI's giant footprint remains stamped on contemporary films. In the 2004 documentary *Operation Hollywood*, Emilio Pacull reveals how all branches of the U.S. military cooperate with major Hollywood studios.<sup>216</sup> The American Armed Forces has understood the usefulness of films about war and combat to war efforts since the earliest days of motion pictures. Hollywood studios compare the costs of cooperating with the military and altering scripts to depict the armed forces in a positive light with the costs of making more authentic war movies without the assistance of the military. Film producers save millions of dollars by using stock footage, equipment, and labor obtained from the military. Thus, OWI triumphalism is repackaged but the situation is the same – resulting in economic advantage to filmmakers and propaganda victories for the military.

Timing also plays an important role as *The Great Raid* was released four years after Ridley Scott's successful *Black Hawk Down* (2001).<sup>217</sup> That film and the book it is based on tell the story of how 123 U.S. soldiers tried and failed to capture Somali warlord Mohammed Farrah Aidid in 1993. *Black Hawk Down* – both the book and the movie – along with a string of Vietnam-based movies were serious disruptions of the victory narrative. Roger Ebert notes: “Like the jazzier but equally realistic *Black Hawk Down*, it [*The Great Raid*] shows a situation that has moved beyond policy and strategy and amounts to soldiers in the field, hoping to hell they get home alive.”<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> *Operation Hollywood*, directed by Emilio Pacull, Paris, France, 2005, DVD.

<sup>217</sup> Mark Bowden's book *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* both inspired and informed Scott's movie. *Black Hawk Down*, directed by Ridley Scott, Los Angeles, California, 2001, DVD; and Mark Boden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (New York: Grove Press, 1999).

<sup>218</sup> Roger Ebert, “The Great Raid,” *rogerebert.com*, <http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050811/REVIEWS/50803001/1023> (accessed May 2, 2012).

The release of *The Great Raid* in 2005, I argue, countered *Black Hawk Down*'s bleak scenario. Ebert argues, however, that *The Great Raid* was produced to counter 9/11; he writes that "the history of the movie is interesting. It was green-lighted by Harvey Weinstein of Miramax just a few days after 9/11; perhaps a story of a famous American victory seemed needed."<sup>219</sup> He continues: "It was completed by 2002. ... *The Great Raid* is perhaps more timely now than it would have been a few years ago. ... Now that we are involved in a lengthy and bloody ground war there, it is good to have a film that is not about entertainment for action fans, but about how wars are won with great difficulty, risk, and cost."<sup>220</sup> Indeed, this movie is a tonic for the setbacks suffered on 9/11 and connects *Back to Bataan* through *The Great Raid* to the war on terror.<sup>221</sup>

Although sixty years divide *The Great Raid* and *Back to Bataan*, both films follow the same formula and teach the same lessons. *The Great Raid* essentially promises to explore the Filipinos as partners but changes history through historical inaccuracy and in the end reifies paternalism. The use of clips from actual WWII film footage is a shared technique despite the sixty-year divide between the movies. *The Great Raid* includes the soldiers rescued from Japanese prisons at both the beginning and end of the film. By starting out with such stock footage, both movies are framed as historically accurate portrayals of true events and individuals. Effectively, audiences again saw a sanitized version of the colonial past that followed the OWI's wartime guidelines adhered to by *Back to Bataan*. Released in 2005, during the height of the troubles in the Middle East, *The Great Raid* could have been designed to support both the war effort in the Pacific and the neocolonial relationship anticipated for the postwar period to follow.

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. Ebert wrote his column in 2005, coinciding with the release of *The Great Raid*.

By centering their narratives on the heroism of the U.S. military in rescuing their American and Filipino brothers-in-arms, both films add a touch of melodrama and emphasize the values of freedom and bravery thus stoking American patriotic fervor (compare the rescue scenes in Figures 10 and 11 below). In both rescue scenes, the same dramatic techniques are employed to produce a sense of tension and release common to this genre of filmmaking. The action begins with tense scenes of concealment and the ever-looming threat of discovery, and when the time is right they commence with the attack, which serves as a release. Crowding out the very real suffering experienced by the POWs, the films choose to focus on these heroic moments rather than the historical missteps that caused the incarceration to begin with. *The Great Raid*, directed by John Dahl, is a twenty-first century remake of *Back to Bataan*. Although close to six decades passed between the two movies, they nonetheless serve the same triumphalist agenda.



Figure 10 (left): The village raid scene from *Back to Bataan* (1945). Screenshot: “Taking the Village,” *Back to Bataan*, DVD. Figure 11 (right): Rescue scene from *The Great Raid* (2006). Screenshot: “The Raid,” *The Great Raid*, DVD.

*The Great Raid*, however unhampered by OWI edicts, follows the same guidelines. The ramifications of altering the facts of the historical reality, in both these cases are significant. Historically, in both films, the participation of the Filipinos has been downplayed. These scenes were opportunities to rectify historical elision. However, with



the inclusion of the American rescue of Pajota's team at the Cabu River a historical misrepresentation of the actual events is preserved and American paternalism persists.

The movie is loosely based on the actual joint American Army Rangers and Filipino guerillas rescue mission that occurred in Pangatian, close to the town of Cabanatuan in Nueva Ecija. On October 20, 1944, MacArthur landed at Red Beach, in Palo, Leyte. Up until that time, the American forces had only threatened to reoccupy the Japanese-controlled Philippine Islands. The Japanese, having had close to three years occupation, held several hundred American POWs in places such as Palawan and Cabanatuan. The movie begins with the panic massacre of POWs on Palawan Island. Palawan suggested that the same fate awaited the POWs in Camp Cabanatuan.

The first we see of the American Army Rangers is at Lingayen Gulf. Lingayen was the site of a large landing by American troops, including the 6th Ranger Battalion under the non-fictitious Lt. Col. Henry Mucci (Benjamin Bratt). With the incident at Palawan still fresh in everyone's mind, Mucci is ordered to free the POWs that remained at Cabanatuan in anticipation of similar Japanese panic executions. This version of the rescue mission at Cabanatuan is more complex than *Back to Bataan* with its inclusion of the Rangers, Alamo Scouts from the 6th Army, and the Filipino guerrillas Joson and Pajota all involved in the operation to rescue the POWs. Throughout the film, the point of view alternates between three distinct but interrelated perspectives, the POWs at Cabanatuan, the Rangers and the Filipino guerillas, and the Filipino resistance that includes a heavily fictionalized Margaret Utinsky (Connie Nielsen). The joint team of Mucci and Captain Robert Prince (James Franco) together with guerilla leaders Captain Juan Pajota (Cesar Montano) and Captain Eduardo Joson (Richard Joson) plan and

execute the raid on the POW camp. The exploits of Mucci, Prince, and the Army Rangers display triumph against the brutish and much larger Japanese imperial army (Figures 12 and 13 below).



Figure 12: (left) From left, Freddie Joe Farnsworth, James Franco, and Benjamin Bratt in “The Great Raid.” Source: *New York Times*, August 12, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2005/08/12/arts/12raid.ready.html> (accessed May 2, 2012). Figure 13: (right) Major Daniel Gibson (Joseph Fiennes) at the center assisted by another soldier at Camp Cabanatuan. Screenshot: “Day 4 – January 30th,” *The Great Raid*, DVD.

*The Great Raid* is historically inaccurate and this is its main problem. Although we have come to expect historical movies to be inaccurate, the historical inaccuracies are at the core of its destabilizing properties. The film begins with film clips, photographs, and stock images of real people awarded medals for their contributions and valor during WWII. The filmmaker thereby invents a connection to the past. Predictably, the scenes illustrate American heroism in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. The filmmakers also fabricate a romance between Utinsky and Gibson. Inventing characters is an old Hollywood technique. Moviemakers invent characters to move a particular narrative along. However, as in *Back to Bataan* were both Bonifacio and Delgado are fictitious; what makes *The Great Raid* different is that Gibson is a fictitious characters but Utinsky is not.



Figures 14 and 15: Margaret Utinsky (left); and Connie Nielsen (right) as Utinsky in *The Great Raid* (2005). Sources: “Margaret Elizabeth “Miss U” Doolin Utinsky,” findagrave.com, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=21904597> (accessed May 2, 2012); Screenshot: “The Raid – January 31st,” *The Great Raid*, DVD.

Utinsky’s interrogation by the Japanese connects her to a real past.<sup>222</sup> The *Kempeitai* discovered the “Miss U” operation, arrested Utinsky, and held her in the Fort Santiago prison.<sup>223</sup> The real Utinsky states that she spent six weeks recovering from the injuries resulting from the beatings she received.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, there is no record of Utinsky ever having had a lover, and upon recovering from the beating she fled the metropolis to work as a nurse with the Philippine guerrillas until the Philippines was emancipated in February of 1945.<sup>225</sup> Utinsky’s torture scenes do not show the true extent of her suffering, however. The movie’s interrogation scenes suggest that the torture inflicted a minimal amount of pain. The real Utinsky was brutally beaten for thirty-two days. In her autobiography, “*Miss U*,” Utinsky describes her bones, jaw, and ribs as broken. She was given neither water to drink nor the most rudimentary medical attention. Forced to kneel on bamboo razors, she recounts her shins being cut to the bone. That Utinsky survived seems miraculous; that she did not divulge information about the

<sup>222</sup> Margaret Utinsky, “*Miss U*” (New York: The Naylor Company, 1948).

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 127–137.

resistance movement even more so. It would be unrealistic to expect the filmmakers to depict the full extent of the horrors she endured, since it would not conform to the triumphalist narrative.<sup>226</sup> However, eliding this truth betrays both her legacy and that of the POWs who suffered similar tortures. The introduction of the character of Utinsky suggests a real and sustained attempt at historical accuracy. Adherence to her historic character suggests good faith and a protection of her legacy. Yet, the addition of a romance undermines a larger sense of altruism and disrupts from the needed seriousness of the film. The fictionalizing of her motivation as romantic gesture is pure formula and a sorry testament to her 1946 Medal of Freedom award.<sup>227</sup>

In addition, Utinsky's otherwise celebratory autobiography includes scenes that evoke the abandonment felt by the POWs. She recounts that a POW at Cabanatuan asked her for correspondence instead of money, food, or medicine: "Dear Miss U, I don't need much money but if some of them Miss U group would write me a letter it would build up my morale. [...] We're the forgotten men of Bataan, Maybe some can prove our worth, and some will tell some strange tale of this horrible Hell on earth."<sup>228</sup>

Besides elisions, filmic misrepresentations are second missed opportunities to provide redress. Two elements of the film provide especially problematic misrepresentations of historical situations. In the U.S. master narrative of Bataan as represented in *The Great Raid*, the fact that Filipino soldiers voluntarily enlisted to fight in the battle between the U.S. and Japan is still absent. Director John Dahl's inclusion of two Filipino soldiers, Pajota and Joson, seems grudging. Historically, the raid at Pangatian saw Filipinos assisting the 6th Ranger Battalion all the way through the

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 108–115.

<sup>227</sup> The Medal of Freedom honors civilians who helped win the war for the U.S. and its allies.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 72.

Japanese-occupied areas to the camp where 514 POWs were incarcerated. There was some disagreement between Mucci, Prince, and Pajota - over the most effective means to complete the operation. Pajota (and Joson), were to stay on the scene longer than the Americans. It was decided that they could slip into the brush after delaying the raid for at least a day to allow the Americans to take the POWs to safety. In the film, Mucci hesitates before allowing the Filipino guerrillas, headed by Pajota, to assist the American soldiers. In reality, Mucci knew the guerrillas were integral to the success of the operation. More importantly, they worked alone and were successful at their backup role. The Army Rangers worked closely with them throughout the planning and executing of the rescue.<sup>229</sup> Moreover, the scene where Pajota is protecting the entryway through the Cabu needing Mucci's help is a falsehood. Mucci was nowhere near the Cabu as he was assisting the POWs. The misrepresentation of Mucci doubts coupled with Pajota needing help at the Cabu River suggest that the Filipino were less than able thus lesser partners. No prior historical knowledge of the Cabu is needed to recognize this slippage. Filipino ineptness is visible in plain sight. These scenes strongly suggest the need to remind audiences that America continues to dominate any and all military scenarios thwarting the fable setup early on regarding an American and Filipino partnership.

A strong move proclaiming America's "victory culture" comes in a single sentence at the end of *The Great Raid*: "The raid on Cabanatuan remains the most successful rescue mission in U.S. military history." While this line grudgingly acknowledges the abandonment of American soldiers, the line remains problematic since in the end, the U.S. military saves the day by rescuing them. Americans may have

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<sup>229</sup> Captain Pajota's story will get a much deserved revisit in the tiny town of Pangatian, Nueva Ecija. The local government honored both him and Captain Eduardo Joson with a park beside the Cabanatuan American Memorial. For more on this see Chapter 3.

surrendered initially, but they eventually won the war. The U.S. has redeemed itself by returning and setting at least some of the prisoners free. By emphasizing the bravery and heroism of its main characters and bringing “the most successful rescue” to light, the movie hides the original loss of faith in U.S. military commanders. Rife with repeated messages of American military machismo, *The Great Raid* delivers an expurgated version of history. The filmmakers engineered the movie to sell to a contemporary mainstream mass market nostalgic for successful fights against foreign malevolence.

*The Great Raid* aims to strengthen American-Filipino cooperation in fighting the global war on terror. The film that was produced may have been effective for this purpose, but to make it so, the filmmakers would have to leave out even more pieces of history. *The Great Raid* also failed to include the imperial aspirations of the U.S. and Japan. It elided the truth about both the U.S.’ and Japan’s geopolitical aspirations that led to POW imprisonment in the first place. Also hidden from view are the alternative perspectives of independent Filipinos who were neither guerillas nor freedom fighters. Other missing pieces include the social aftermath of the liberation of Cabanatuan.

*Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid*, both individually and collectively, serve propaganda purposes by vilifying the Japanese and valorizing the American soldiers. The presentation of the “Japs” in both films shows them as conniving, heartless, brutal, violent, and sinister. Extending the discussion to include other movies of the era, *Bataan* (1943) used the same techniques to boost morale in a time of war. In the film, the character Leonard Purckett (Robert Walker) is at the Gatling gun saying, “Dirty, dirty, dirty, dirty” (Figure 16 below). Such scenes reinforce racist attitudes. In *Bataan*, *Back to Bataan*, and *The Great Raid* the Japanese is subhuman. Camouflaged Japanese soldiers in

*Bataan* mimic shrubbery, dehumanizing and depersonalizing them. In *Back to Bataan*, the “sneaky” Japanese scheme among themselves and deceive the Filipinos. In *The Great Raid*, the Japanese are as heartless, murderous, and cold. No alternative view is provided in any of these films.



Figure 16: Seaman Leonard Purckett (Robert Walker) hoping to kill some “Japs” in *Bataan* (1943), directed by Tay Garnett. Screenshot: “Foggy-Eyed Sailor,” *Bataan*, DVD.

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As a historical film, *The Great Raid* is no improvement over *Back to Bataan*. Taken together, the two films are a classic example of how constant repetition instills ideas that then become memories among movie-watchers. In *Back to Bataan* that WWII was fought only between Japan and the U.S. As with the texts I examined in Chapter 1, in these movies all the suffering was done by Americans and very little by Japanese and Filipinos. Both *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* teach that if we (Americans) were in the Philippines to fight the “Good War” against the Japanese. Filipinos just happened to be there, too. The Americans were the heroic men who came to help Filipino soldiers and women, and the broken bodies of POWs have no place in this scenario. *Back to Bataan* and the *Great Raid* promised one thing but delivered another. *Back to Bataan* promised a partnership but delivered neo-colonialism. *The Great Raid* promised recognition but

delivered paternalism. These internal contradictions create spaces for alternate interpretations and allowed for the possibility of oppositional readings.

Both *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* foreground American soldiers fighting for victory, while in the background Filipino and Japanese soldiers die *en masse*. The POW stories are absent. Moreover, those that are present are lies mobilized to perpetuate a neo-colonial agenda. Audiences may feel bad for the dying Filipino soldiers while watching the movies, but they forget just as quickly as President Truman did when he reneged on the promise of veteran benefits for the Filipinos who fought side by side with the Americans. The POWs could not rely on books and films to tell their story; they would have to wait for the construction of monuments and the performance of rituals to placate restive veterans whose legacy was dying a textual and filmic death.



### CHAPTER 3

#### SPATIAL BATAAN: REDISTRIBUTING MEMORIAL CAPAS

In 1999, a small contingent of Bataan Death March survivors calling themselves the Battling Bastards of Bataan (BBB)<sup>230</sup>, accompanied by family members, visited the Philippines on a sentimental journey and changed Bataan commemoration in the Philippines forever. Their itinerary included paying homage to the monuments of General Jonathan Wainwright on Corregidor Island and General Edward P. King, in Lamao, Bataan, as well as a visit to Camp O'Donnell. Camp O'Donnell, in Capas, Tarlac was the terminus of the Bataan Death March. Upon their arrival in Capas, the group was greeted by an unfinished Filipino shrine. They saw no tribute to the Americans who died while incarcerated at Camp O'Donnell. Their group decided to build one. The BBB's construction of their own monument illustrates how various publics vie for recognition. In the case of the BBB, this also challenged a hegemony that kept the American story in Capas on the margins. This chapter therefore focuses on how monuments and memorials have been used to preserve legacies. The chapter does so by looking at the complexity that exists around a network of Bataan-related sites. At the center of this exploration are two monuments that share the same space in Capas, Tarlac: the Capas National Shrine and the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument. These two monuments commemorating the same event from different points of view – exemplify how separate but connected discourses intersect and what tactics different publics use to be included in the historical record. In this case, the BBB's privately funded construction of the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument meant being included in the discourse of Bataan commemoration.

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<sup>230</sup> The Battling Bastards of Bataan is an American organization comprised of both American and Filipino WWII Veterans and their descendants.

The BBB constructed their own monument in response to Filipino war commemoration in Capas. Filipinos – a group that is by no means homogenous – were also looking to enshrine their legacy in the area. Their move, however, had larger implications for the region. In 1991, the government of President Corazon Aquino had reclaimed the area from the former Clark Air Base military reservation and transformed it into a park. She did so to both commemorate the fallen and promote economic development in the region through tourism. During their visit to the area, the BBB found an obelisk to honor the Filipinos who died in Camp O’Donnell. The BBB countered by building their memorial with a cross at the center. This cross became the centerpiece of the BBB’s efforts to reconfigure what is seen at Capas. At one point, there had been a seven-foot cement cross at Camp O’Donnell, built by POWs in 1942 and called the Sack of Cement Cross. The Japanese had supplied the cement to build this cross so that surviving POWs could commemorate their fellow Americans who died at the camp. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), to save the cross, relocated it to the National Prisoner of War Museum, in Andersonville, Georgia just prior to the closure of the U.S. bases in 1991.<sup>231</sup> When the visitors came in 1999, there was nothing left that commemorated the American dead. According to Fred Baldassarre of the BBB, “when we got to O’Donnell and saw nothing but the obelisk and the small marker the Japs built in ’42 he [Major Richard M. Gordon] began telling [us] about the burial details, the terrible conditions in the camp, and about all the young men who died there. [...] One of us uttered it was a shame that there was nothing on those grounds to mention or show that approximately 1600 young American men who died there. We felt those who died there

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<sup>231</sup> “The Sack of Cement Cross,” National Parks Service, <http://www.nps.gov/ande/historyculture/sackofcementcross.htm> (accessed June 13, 2012).

deserve something that depicted their sacrifice at O'Donnell, something their relatives could come and see.”<sup>232</sup>

In order to be part of the conversation, the BBB first needed to disrupt the natural logic that existed in Tarlac. Prior to re-boarding their bus, Gordon, his wife Lyn, and Baldassarre decided they needed to build a shrine of their own. At that point, the BBB began to “redistribute” what was visible at Capas. The American government had already built official Bataan-related markers in Corregidor and Cabanatuan. Corregidor has the Pacific War Memorial which recognizes both Filipino and American servicemen who fought in the Philippines during WWII. The memorial was finished in 1968 with a generous contribution from the U.S. Congress. At the time of the group’s visit there was an American memorial in Cabanatuan. The Cabanatuan American Memorial was initially built by the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, a private group, and later enrolled into the American Battle Monument Commission (ABMC)’s family of monuments. The Cabanatuan monument is situated at the site of the former POW camp and honors the Americans who died during their incarceration. The site has been ABMC’s responsibility since 1989. Nothing significant in Capas gave recognition to the American fallen, nor was there a place for the next of kin to pay their respects. Since nothing American existed in Tarlac, the message from the American government was clear: it was not important enough to commemorate. Building an American monument in Capas would inevitably result in making visible that which effectively had no business being seen – the disappeared history of U.S. prisoners of war.

The first chapter of this dissertation explored how the hegemonic narrative of the Battle of Bataan and the Bataan Death March was both created and contested through

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<sup>232</sup> Federico “Fred” Baldassarre – Interview, February 23, 2012.

written text. The second chapter articulated how that same story was reified but internally challenged in film. Here we consider the Bataan story spatially: the building of the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument was a spatial disruption to the hegemonic narrative. Building a monument is very different from writing a book or making a movie. Monuments give special significance to a site and are constantly visible in plain sight. Moreover, they transform space, giving memories a sense of permanence. However, commemorating the broken bodies of Capas was problematic because it interrupted a narrative of victory. This is where our exploration begins. At least two discourses are apparent in the two monuments at Capas. In order to comprehend the larger significance of the seemingly innocuous confluence of the two monuments, it is important to study both discourses in order to understand their resilience and why they are so important to those who seek to maintain them. It is crucial to note that the BBB were entering into an ongoing Filipino discourse that inadvertently elided American POWs. When the Americans – and this group, too, is not monolithic – entered this conversation, there was already a considerable Filipino discourse for them to engage with.

The U.S. state, another crucial stakeholder and the keeper of the national narrative, situates America as a nation of benevolence and humanitarianism, a nation that fought a Good War.<sup>233</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, this triumphalist narrative leaves no room for memorializing defeats unless they ultimately result in victory.<sup>234</sup> In the

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<sup>233</sup> Edward Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, Eds. *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996), 61; and Miguel Llorca, “Bataan Summer 2008,” *Introduction*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_1.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_1.htm) (accessed June 6, 2012). Note: This and several other passages used in this dissertation have previously appeared in “Bataan Perspectives: Whose Bataan Death March” a project undertaken for a course in Museum Studies at UH Mānoa.

<sup>234</sup> Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 25.

Philippines during WWII, redemption had to wait until the “Great Raid” at Cabanatuan (known locally as Pangatian). Cabanatuan, however it is related to the main narrative, is seen as a space of its own, and an American space, by the ABMC. This chapter therefore extends the discussion through a spatial exploration of that same narrative as it is continually challenged by American POWs and their descendants.

In order to understand how Capas went from a vacant to a contested place, and then to its current situation as a site of tenuous coexistence between two monuments, it is important to begin by situating Capas within a larger network of Bataan-related Filipino sites. It is important to do this because it articulates what the BBB were going to challenge by building their memorial. Placing Capas within a larger framework of remembrance allows for the inclusion of similarly situated sites – such as Cabanatuan – in this discussion. Both of these sites are spaces of juxtaposition. Encountering two or more monuments at one site gives one pause; the juxtaposition poses the question of why there is a need for more than one. The juxtaposition also allows for the observation of similarities and differences between Filipino and American commemoration and how each attends to competing and intersecting agendas. I finish this chapter by looking into the future of Bataan spatial commemoration, historic preservation, and public history in places such as San Fernando in Pampanga through museums and memorials.

Camp O’Donnell is significant to both Filipinos and Americans because it is the site where approximately twenty thousand Filipinos and one thousand six hundred Americans died. According to attorney Rafael E. Evangelista, speaking on behalf of the Philippines Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor (DBC), the Capas National Shrine,

among all the Bataan-related monuments and memorials, is the “holiest of holies.”<sup>235</sup>

Various Philippine administrations added to the Capas National Shrine to commemorate those who died at the POW camp. The Americans POWs, to their credit, contributed to the discussion by building their own monument.

Unlike the books and movies discussed in the previous chapters, monuments embody a unique sense of permanence. According to Kirk Savage, monuments “are the most conservative of commemorative forms precisely because they are meant to last, unchanged, forever.”<sup>236</sup> Builders of war monuments effectively decide what is worth recovering.<sup>237</sup> Monuments are very important to contemporary politics since “what is remembered is defined by assumed identity.”<sup>238</sup> Sites of remembering remind us constantly (and visibly) of the past, in the process naturalizing it so we don’t lose sight of both the origins and the new meanings of monuments. The monuments discussed here pose an interesting challenge: Like books and movies, the monuments also honor the brave men and women who died for their country. However, they also naturalize the presence of the military and in many cases glorify war. A monument also preserves and exemplifies what is worth remembering and conveniently ignores the rest. The absence of a monument, following the same line of thought, speaks volumes about what the dominant discourse classifies as material to forget.

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<sup>235</sup> The Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor (DBC) is a local Filipino association of WWII Veterans who defended the Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor Island, as the last hold-out in the Philippines. Several of the members are survivors of the Death March. Their offices are now located at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. Rafael E. Evangelista – Interview, July 13, 2011.

<sup>236</sup> Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monuments in Nineteenth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 4.

<sup>237</sup> Charles Griswold, “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography,” *Critical Inquiry* 12 Summer 1982: 688–719, 689.

<sup>238</sup> John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.

War monuments and memorials also reflect the prevailing political climate and social sentiments of the spatio-temporal milieu that surrounds them. The Capas National Shrine and the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument therefore serve as chronotopes of the discourses that made them. *Chronotope* is Bakhtin's term to describe the combination of space and time as applied to literature. Applying this concept to monuments allows us to see monuments in a different way. Chronotopes, Bakhtin argues, are "points in the geography of a community where time and space intersect and fuse. [...] Time takes on flesh and becomes visible for human contemplation; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time and history and the enduring character of a people."<sup>239</sup> In a sense, collective memories, as rooted in respective monuments, animate symbolically laden sites.<sup>240</sup> Most of the monuments discussed here are located in specific spaces but they have larger implications with regard to both their symbolic function and their role in the birth of new rituals. And, according to James Young: "Both a monument and its significance are constructed in particular times and places, contingent on the political, historical, and aesthetic realities of the moment."<sup>241</sup> Geography and events do not simply constitute a "theater of history"; the two are intrinsically linked and constitutive in making meaning. For instance, President Corazon Aquino set aside the Capas National Shrine to encourage tourism and development, and the BBB constructed the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument as a symbol of a dying legacy five decades after the fact. Notwithstanding, these were very specific local moves; all the

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<sup>239</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 7.

<sup>240</sup> Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past, Vol. 1, Conflicts and Division* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xv.

<sup>241</sup> James E. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory," *Harvard Design Magazine*, Special edition: "Constructions of Memory: On Monuments Old and New," Fall '99 6–13.

commemorative sites discussed in this chapter are chronotopes that not only act as monuments to a community itself, but also function as symbols of it. In effect, Capas is, on one level, defined by the shrine. The monuments discussed here are used as forces that work to shape people's sense of self and teach them how to act as citizens.

Although monuments appear permanent, in reality they are vulnerable to the ravages of time as well as the contestations of various publics. While Americans fastidiously maintain their monuments and memorials – at least the ones they deem worthy of remembering – the Filipino sites are in a state of dangerous disrepair. For the Filipinos, the question is: What will happen when these monuments disintegrate as they are already starting to do? As I examine the larger framework of both Filipino and American Bataan Death March–related monuments, I always return to the more fundamental issues by asking the following questions: Why are there two monuments at Capas instead of one? What is the significance of juxtaposing these two monuments? What are the implications of uniting them in one space? Why did the Philippine government feel the need to commemorate a day of surrender rather than victory? Why were the BBB compelled to reply? I address these questions by examining all of the Bataan commemoration sites, articulating their intended functions as well as their significance in public discourses both in the U.S. and the Philippines. The spatial discourse of Bataan begins with the Filipinos.

### **Memorializing War in the Philippines: Filipinos Seeking a Space of Their Own**

The entire Bataan peninsula and its related sites are spaces of defeat. Both the Americans and the Filipinos lost at Bataan and Corregidor. When a nation like the U.S. loses a battle it experiences a sense of loss, defeat, and sacrifice. For a country like the



Philippines, which has been repeatedly colonized for most of the last several hundred years, the story is not so simple. Studying the collection of sites known as the Freedom Trail, which includes historic sites in Laguna, Manila, Cavite, Batangas, and Bulacan, one gets a clear sense that this remembrance is pegged mainly to a “revolutionary struggle”<sup>242</sup> against Spain. Within the framework of this commemoration, citizens do not remember victories in grand battles with external enemies but instead focus on the martyrs that struggled against an ever-present colonial yoke.

A major distinction between the U.S. and the Philippines, therefore, is the way each nation treats defeat. While the Americans glorify almost every military endeavor (or find a way to justify its questionable episodes), the Filipinos try to make the best out of constantly losing. To redeem their struggles, thus giving the national narrative a sense of heroism, the Filipinos have had to tell a story of their own. In the case of Bataan, the story is complicated by one other issue (one with long term ramifications for both the American and Filipino POWs), the haunting memory of abandonment.

The juxtaposition of the two memorials in Capas begins with the network of three other leading sites of Bataan commemoration in the Philippines. In an interview with Rafael E. Evangelista, a member of the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, in July 2011, he described what he considered the four premier sites of WWII commemoration in the Philippines: the Libingan in mga Bayani (Cemetery of the Heroes)<sup>243</sup> in Taguig City,

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<sup>242</sup> The quoted phrase is from the foreword to *On the Trail to Freedom: People, Places, and Events of the Philippine Revolution (A Historical Adventure on the Centennial Freedom Trail: Laguna, Manila, Cavite, Batangas, and Bulacan)*, a guidebook created by the Philippine Department of Tourism.

<sup>243</sup> *Libing* means “burial, internment”; *maglibing*, *ilibing* mean “to inter, to bury.” *Inilibing nila ang patay* means “They buried the dead” or, literally, “Heroes Burial Place.” *Tagalog Dictionary*, <http://www.tagalog-dictionary.com/cgi-bin/search.pl?s=libing> (accessed June 13, 2012).

Metro Manila; the Dambana ng Kagitingan (Shrine of Valor)<sup>244</sup> at Mt. Samat in Pilar, Bataan; Isla ng Corregidor (Corregidor Island), situated at the entrance to Manila Bay; and the Paggunita Sa Capas (Capas National Shrine)<sup>245</sup> in Capas, Tarlac. Before we delve into the details of each site, it is important to have a sense of how these sites interrelate. Evangelista stated that there is disagreement over whom or what should be commemorated at these four sites. First, he viewed the Libingan ng mga Bayani as a great leveler, because of the “ordinary folks who became heroes,” who performed extraordinary deeds during wartime and merit burial at the cemetery. The Libingan both contains the remains of those disinterred from Capas and has a small obelisk to commemorate the Bataan struggle. However, it is not solely dedicated to Bataan but includes several other war efforts as well. Evangelista worried that the Libingan was in danger of being “bastardized” if the Graves Services Unit (GSU) of the Libingan buried controversial political figures and non-military citizens there. Second, Evangelista considered the Dambana ng Kagitingan to be more inspiring than the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Despite being a premier site and a memorial to Bataan, it is not designed to recognize the POWs on both sides. It is, however, the focal point of the Philippine Veterans Week’s Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor) celebration held annually on the ninth of April (discussed further in Chapter 4). The construction, deployment, and later

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<sup>244</sup> *Dambana* can be translated as “shrine, altar.” A *dambana* has a religious context and embodies almost three hundred years of Spanish and Catholic influence in the Philippines. Related phrases include *banal na lugar* “a sacred place”; *altar, dambana* “an altar in a church”; *templo* “temple”; and *libingan ng santo* “tomb of a saint.” “Tagalog English Dictionary,” Bansa.org., <http://www.bansa.org/dictionaries/tgl/?type=search&data=altar> (accessed June 13, 2012).

<sup>245</sup> *Paggunita*, literally “review,” also has the meanings “to study again, to look at again, to look back on, to look at again with care, to examine again.” “Tagalog English Dictionary,” Bansa.org., <http://www.bansa.org/dictionaries/tgl/?type=search&data=paggunita> (accessed June 13, 2012).

lack of interest in the Dambana ng Kagitingan is a function of different presidential administrations' levels of interest and use. Created by former president Ferdinand Marcos as homage to the Battle of Bataan, subsequent administrations until Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino's have consistently played up (or down, depending on geopolitical or local political conditions) its importance. As the more specific analysis of each site will show, the creation, mobilization, and subsequent lack of care of all the Filipino sites is pegged to specific presidential administrations. Third, Corregidor, which has been privatized, is arguably the most commercial of the Filipino commemorative sites. Deviating from the original vision of the former Philippine Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor National Commander, Alfred Xerez-Burgos Sr., who wanted to enhance its appeal and accessibility to ordinary folks, the island's Malinta tunnels were restored to make them safe for tourists.

Evangelista's general comments suggest that the Filipino public does not fully appreciate the sites, that all the sites are in dire need of maintenance and upkeep, and that it is difficult to maintain the military shrines as places of honor without commercialism. Echoing what is happening in the U.S., the duality of commemoration and commercialism is starting to gain a foothold in the Philippines as well. Evangelista lamented that Capas is the least cared for, and that slabs fall off at the Dambana ng Kagitingan, the best kept and least commercialized of the four sites. However, he lauded the national shrine at Capas, the fourth and final site, as the most important. It is the "holiest of holies" because close to thirty thousand died at Camp O'Donnell.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Just as people argue over who should be buried in the Libingan ng mga Bayani, so is there controversy over who is named on the walls at the Capas National Shrine. Evangelista argued that the Dambana should only honor those who died at Camp O'Donnell. He asked if the Capas

### **Libingan ng mga Bayani (Cemetery of the Heroes)**

Aside from the outright victory of Datu Lapu Lapu over Ferdinand Magellan at Mactan Island, the Filipino war narrative is replete with glorious defeats and memorable sacrifices. In short, a defeated people, like the Filipinos, do not see things in simple dualities such as victor and vanquished, and find that they are almost duty-bound to seek redemption. Burying their dead as heroes is their mode of choice. In May 1947, President Manuel Roxas founded the Republic Memorial Cemetery at Fort McKinley to properly inter Filipino soldiers. On October 27, 1954, President Ramon Magsaysay transformed the site, rechristening it the Libingan ng mga Bayani. On May 28, 1967, President Ferdinand E. Marcos designated 142 hectares of Fort Bonifacio for the Libingan. Shortly thereafter, the Military Shrines Services of the Philippine Veterans Affairs, which is under the Department of National Defense, took control of administering the Libingan. The Libingan is jointly managed by the GSU and the Military Shrines Services (MSS). The GSU make available grave and funeral services to deceased military personnel. The main features and structures at the Libingan include: the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Heroes Memorial Gate, the Black Stone Walls, the Korean Memorial Pylon, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Pylon, and the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Pylon.



Figures 17 and 18: The Heroes Memorial Gate at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (July 2011).

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National Shrine was really “about the dead or for those who survived but were there.” Rafael E. Evangelista – Interview, July 13, 2011.

Visitors are greeted by the Heroes Memorial Gate as they enter the Libingan (see Figures 17 and 18 above). On June 26, 1998, President Fidel Ramos inaugurated this monument. The gate is a tripod with three entrances and pillars enclosing a sculpture. The use of threes in the designs throughout the Libingan (and elsewhere) symbolizes the Philippines' main island groups: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao; or the guardians of the country: Army, Air Force, and Navy; or martial qualities: Fraternity, Gallantry, and Virtue. Circles symbolize life, perpetuity, and vigor. Doves represent renewal.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is the centerpiece of the cemetery (Figures 19 and 20 below). Bureaucrats, politicians, and diplomats visit the Libingan and perform wreath-laying ceremonies at the tomb as part of Veterans Week in April. Veterans Week is the tie that binds all the sites identified by Evangelista. The Tomb is inscribed: "Here lies a Filipino soldier whose name is known only to God." Once again we see the deployment of the triad symbol. In this monument, three marble pillars, similar to the Heroes Memorial Gate, represent Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, the main island groups in the Philippines.<sup>247</sup>



Figures 19 and 20: The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (July 2011).

<sup>247</sup> "Libingan Ng Mga Bayani," <http://corregidorisland.com/bayani/libingan.html> (accessed June 13, 2012).

Figures 21/22 below depicts the Black Stone Walls, two twelve-foot high walls on opposite sides of the main road that culminates at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, adjacent to the Heroes Memorial Gate. General Douglas MacArthur's words "I do not know the dignity of his birth, but I do know the glory of his death"<sup>248</sup> are inscribed on either side of the walls. The presence of MacArthur at the Libingan ng mga Bayani is a testament to the general's resilience both as a hero and as a cultural icon. The almost seamless inclusion of MacArthur at this space gives the Libingan new meaning. This wall both shapes and is shaped by its surroundings. The myth of MacArthur and the ties of the Philippines to the United States, as discussed in Chapter 1, are as resilient as ever. And although cultural meaning does not stop with the text of a particular object, it is important to note what is produced during what Marita Sturken identifies as the act of "consumption" at a memorial. Sturken is talking specifically about the walls of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C.; in a similar way, the meaning of the slabs at Libingan matters as the viewer/citizen engages with the object.<sup>249</sup> Remembering, in this case, is a form of forgetting. The viewer reads the utterances of MacArthur, the hero, which in this case hide his very real abandonment of those who became the POWs.



Figures 21/22: Two views of the Black Stone Walls at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (July 2011).

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 257–258.

It is worth mentioning that two non-Bataan monuments and one Bataan-related monument share the Libingan. The Korean Memorial Pylon remembers twelve Filipino officers and men of the Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea (PEFTOK) who died during the Korean War. And the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Pylon is for Filipinos who served in Vietnam as Philippine Contingents and the Philippine Civic Action Group (PHILCONV or PHILCAGV), and who provided support services for the military. From 1964 to 1971, the role of the PHILCAGV expanded to provide security. The pylon walls read: “To build and not to destroy, to bring the Vietnamese people happiness and not sorrow, to develop goodwill and not hatred.”<sup>250</sup> The inclusion of these monuments joins all the events into a singular “contribution” saga. The Filipinos contributed to the Korean conflict, the Vietnam police action, and WWII in Bataan.

Filipino veterans built the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial to honor WWII Filipino guerrillas (Figures 23 and 24 below). On April 5, 1977, Defense Secretary Renato S. De Villa dedicated the shrine to the WWII veterans’ sacrifice. The inscription reads: “A monument dedicated by a grateful generation to their gallant DEFENDERS who willingly chose to take the Supreme Sacrifice to assure their country’s peaceful and prosperous future.”<sup>251</sup>



Figures 23 and 24: The Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Pylon at the Libingan (July 2011).

<sup>250</sup> “Libingan Ng Mga Bayani,” <http://corregidorisland.com/bayani/libingan.html> (accessed June 13, 2012).

<sup>251</sup> “Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial,” <http://libingannmgabayani.blogspot.com/2008/06/defenders-of-bataan-corregidor-memorial.html> (accessed June 13, 2012).

All three of the pylons described here culminate with the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Pylon (or Memorial), which has “become part of one’s identity and one’s memory.”<sup>252</sup> The three-pylon design suggests that it, in part, inspired the obelisk design at Capas. Deceptive in its design, the obelisk at Capas is also three pylons that converge into a unified whole. As part of the nation building process, the troika of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao serves to unite the three larger geographic regions. This monument also directs the visitor to remember what is deemed important by the builders – the heroism of those who died in combat – ascribing once again a heroic meaning to death in battle while inadvertently leaving out those who were incarcerated.



Figures 25/26: Two views of the graves of active and retired AFP at the Libingan (July 2011).

The cemetery was intended for those who fell in battle or otherwise died in the line of duty, honorably discharged military personnel, and Filipino veterans who died after returning to civilian life. On the graves are distinct white cement crosses (Figures 25/26 above). The Libingan ng mga Bayani is problematic on many levels. One area of continuing discussion is who gets to be buried there. Discussion has arisen about the burial of non-military citizens (e.g., nationally acclaimed artists, government dignitaries) or military personnel later convicted of an offense involving moral turpitude. Two former

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<sup>252</sup> Robert David Sack, *Homo Geographicus: A Framework for Action, Awareness, and Moral Concern* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1997), 135.



Philippine presidents, Carlos P. Garcia (tomb depicted in Figure 27) and Diosdado Macapagal (Figure 28), have been interred at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. President Ferdinand Marcos has so far not been buried there due to pending corruption charges. The controversy over Marcos's burial thematically links the Libingan ng mga Bayani to the Dambana ng Kagitingan, discussed later in this chapter.



Figures 27 and 28: The tombs of former presidents Carlos P. Garcia (left) and Diosdado Macapagal (right) at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (July 2011).

Part of what makes Filipino commemoration unique is the complexity involved with local current events and contemporary political issues. The problem with this complexity is that it distracts from the project of giving genuine visibility to the veterans and POWs. The intent of this section is to show the complexity in order to get an appreciation for the distraction. The Marcos family is currently looking to have Ferdinand Marcos buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Why? There are certainly many good reasons why they would want him buried with all those military, political, and artistic luminaries. Some arguably are his friends and he put them there. There are also several practical reasons for wanting him interred there. First, certainly the symbolic capital of being buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani would have more of an impact on

contemporary politics than on restoring his legacy.<sup>253</sup> By having the former strongman buried at Libingan ng mga Bayani, the Marcos family would be able to erase his questionable (and yet unresolved) past. As a corollary, Ferdinand and Imelda's son Ferdinand "Bong Bong" Marcos "can package himself as the son of a hero."<sup>254</sup> Since the ultimate objective is to see the return of all their ill-gotten gains and the "unfreezing" of their overseas assets, this low-traffic site is ideal because the requirement for burial at the Libingan is a clean record.<sup>255</sup> Reminiscent of the Enola Gay controversy at the Smithsonian in 1995 and the textbook controversy in Japan in the late 1990s, schoolbooks, according to Raissa Robles, "have kept silent on the Marcoses."<sup>256</sup> Robles optimistically speculates that a hero's burial at Libingan ng mga Bayani could literally "bury" the long-pending court suits accusing both Ferdinand and Imelda of financial wrongdoing.<sup>257</sup> It is important to study the Marcos burial drama not just because it further elides the broken bodies of the POWs from Capas (who have been disinterred from the camp and are now at the Libingan), but because it explains why commemoration is so complex in the Philippines.

The Marcos clan might also wish to consider the Dambana ng Kagitingan as Ferdinand's final resting place, which would be a way of following in the footsteps of the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco. Since Franco's monument and burial site, Valle de los

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<sup>253</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), 291; and Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 171–183.

<sup>254</sup> Raissa Robles, "Why the Marcoses want Ferdinand buried a hero," <http://raissarobles.com/2011/04/13/why-the-marcoses-want-ferdinand-buried-a-hero/> (accessed June 13, 2012).

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

Caídos in Spain, is the inspiration for the Dambana (see section on the Dambana ng Kagitingan below), it would be logical to have Marcos interred at the Dambana.

However, considering the problems the Valle de los Caídos has had with former Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's Historical Memory Law, the prospects for either a Libingan or Dambana burial for Marcos are bleak. In the end, public opinion has it that it is simply not appropriate to bury him at the Libingan.<sup>258</sup> Another reason to explore these connections to the Dambana is to illustrate yet another major distinction between American and Filipino commemoration: presidential administration attention.

There was an outcry against allowing Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes, who had been a military chief, to be buried at the Libingan after he committed suicide following allegations of corruption.<sup>259</sup> To further complicate the matter, the remains of Katipuneros, generals of the Filipino-American Revolution, Philippine National Police generals, and generals retired from the Armed Forces of the Philippines are interred in the VIP section of the Libingan. Some significant citizens who are interred in the VIP/dignitaries section include: Carlos P. Romulo (statue in Figure 29 below), Chief Justice Claudio Teehankee, Sr. (Figure 30 below), Manuel Syquiao, and Lt. Gen. Rafael Ileta.<sup>260</sup> The Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor and other veterans are troubled by the inclusion of these non-military people at the Libingan. It is no surprise then that when we get to Capas, problems exist there as well about who should be commemorated at that site.

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<sup>258</sup> "Prelate Opposed to Marcos Burial at Libingan ng mga Bayani," <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view/20110219-321177/Prelate-opposed-to-Marcos-burial-at-Libingan-ng-mga-Bayani> (accessed June 13, 2012).

<sup>259</sup> Reyes committed suicide in the middle of an investigation in which it was alleged that he had received fifty million pesos in "send-off" money after he retired from the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

<sup>260</sup> Military Shrines Services of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, "Libingan Ng Mga Bayani" (PowerPoint Provided. Camp Aguinaldo. Quezon City, July 5, 2011).



Figures 29 and 30: Statue of Carlos P. Romulo (left) and tomb of Chief Justice Claudio Teehankee Sr. (right) at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (July 2011).

There has also been controversy regarding how visitors should behave at the Libingan. In early 2011, a scandal erupted when Ruskin and Priscilla Magat had a pre-nuptial photo shoot at the memorial, illustrating a general Filipino sense of commemoration. Although it began as a farce, the online Filipino community continues to smolder with criticism over the incident. The couple, to invoke the concept of “till death do us part,” chose the Libingan as a backdrop for a photo shoot before their wedding.



Figures 31 and 32: Ruskin and Priscilla Magat’s pre-nuptial photo shoot at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Source: Although the original photos came are East Digital Studio, they also appeared on the *Philippines Defense Forces – Compiled Threads* as part of a discussion on grave desecration. These photos were also the seeds for the Facebook page “100,000 likes to condemn desecration of graves of Filipino soldiers,” causing a change in visitor policy at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Source: “Philippine Defense Forces–Compiled Threads,” SkyscraperCity.com, <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=455536&page=550> (accessed April 25, 2012).

This might not have been problematic had the couple adopted serious poses. Instead, they frolicked on gravesites, seemingly oblivious to the field of crosses behind them. In one photograph posted on-line, they appeared in drag, Ruskin wearing Priscilla's black dress while smoking and sitting on a cross, Priscilla wearing Ruskin's traditional Barong Tagalog (Figure 31 above). In another photograph, Priscilla sat on a cross toasting with a glass, three bottles of alcohol on a bench in the background (Figure 32 above).

Internet users debated the appropriateness of using a cemetery for Filipino soldiers and dignitaries as a site for pre-nuptial photographs. Because of this incident, anyone now wishing to take photographs in the Libingan must be escorted by Philippine Veteran Administration staff. The cavorting of this couple suggests that Filipinos view historically laden public spaces as parks rather than serious spaces of commemoration. The Magat case also suggests that both of them assumed that memorial sites are not spaces of reverence and solemn introspection but simply places for family events and leisure activities. This is further illustrated in the discussions of the Dambana ng Kagitingan below and the Pangatian Concentration Camp later in the chapter.

### **Dambana ng Kagitingan (Shrine of Valor)**

Both Filipinos and Americans continue to harbor conflicting emotions over the outcome at Bataan. The military and civilians alike continue to debate the inevitability of both nations' surrender to the Japanese. The more optimistic voices claim that they could have, if properly provisioned, defeated the enemy. Others continue to argue that it was a lost cause from the beginning. The Americans continue to use political rationalization and argue military necessity to explain their actions in Bataan. Many Filipinos, as well as

many Americans, still ask: “Why did they [the Roosevelt administration] have to abandon us?” Both Americans and Filipinos have been resentful toward their respective governments as well as one another over the defeat and surrender, the Death March, and the lethal incarceration. In these trying circumstances, an opportunist neophyte president chose to employ one of the most important symbols of Filipino commemoration, the altar, in a Bataan memorial.

Soon after taking the office of president, Ferdinand Marcos began planning the Dambana ng Kagitingan as a tribute to the Filipinos who had fought and died in Bataan. Marcos wrote: “What I’d like to see is more young people visiting this place because they do not know, aside from reading their Philippine history, of the tremendous sacrifice their elders offered here in Bataan.”<sup>261</sup> According to historian Ambeth Ocampo, Spain’s Valle de los Caídos (Valley of the Fallen) was Marcos’s inspiration for the Dambana ng Kagitingan (Figures 33 and 34).<sup>262</sup> The Valle de los Caídos is a combined basilica and memorial in San Lorenzo de El Escorial near Madrid. It was built by Fascist Francisco Franco to honor those who died in the Spanish Civil War. It now serves as Franco’s final resting place. Inspired by Franco, Marcos hired architect Lorenzo “Chito” del Castillo to draw up plans for a similar memorial to be built on Mount Samat in the Bataan National Park Reservation. As originally envisioned, the memorial would have a cross, chapel, and museum surrounded by open public spaces.<sup>263</sup> Marcos ordered the National Shrines Commission (now the Military Shrines Services) to remove all impediments to the Mount Samat Memorial project. The foundation stone of the Dambana ng Kagitingan was placed on April 14, 1966, as part of that year’s Bataan Day celebration. On April 18, 1966,

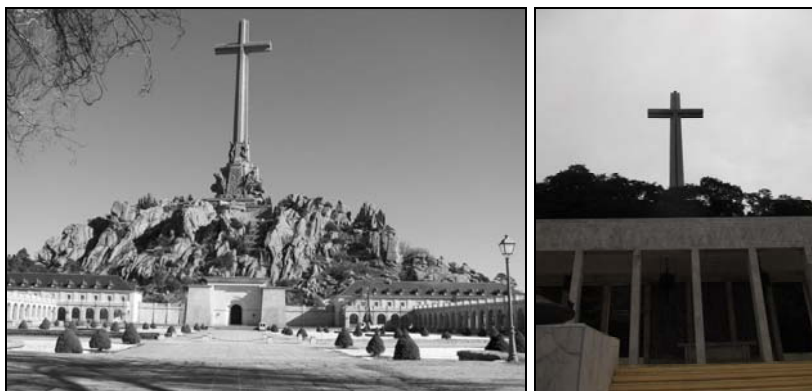
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<sup>261</sup> Eduardo Romualdez, “The Shrine Stands,” *Sunday Times Magazine*, October 30, 1971, 21.

<sup>262</sup> Ambeth Ocampo – Interview, July 29, 2011.

<sup>263</sup> Romualdez, “The Shrine Stands,” 21.

Marcos issued Proclamation No. 25, to assign Mount Samat for the Dambana ng Kagitingan.



Figures 33 and 34: Valle de los Caídos (left) and the Dambana ng Kagitingan (right) (July 2011).

Funding for the Dambana ng Kagitingan project came from a combination of private and public sources. On September 10, 1966, Marcos (through Proclamation No. 103) declared the months of September through December in 1966 as the “fund campaign period” to raise money to build the Dambana. On January 16, 1967, after prolonged meetings with eight potential contractors, D. M. Consunji, Inc. was awarded the contract to construct the Dambana ng Kagitingan. Architect and builder David H. Consunji later wrote about his involvement in the project. He described it as “a monumental cross built to honor the Filipino fighters of World War II.”<sup>264</sup> Although the Colonnade part of the Dambana was not yet finished, the Dambana ng Kagitingan was inaugurated on April 9, 1967, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fall of Bataan. From June to December of 1967, work on the Dambana was inconsistent owing to inclement weather and a shortage of funds. A bond drive was held to augment the limited collections made by the Fund Campaign Committee to ensure that Phase II, the construction of the Memorial Cross,

<sup>264</sup> David M. Consunji, *A Passion to Build: A Memoir of David M. Consunji* (Diliman: Center for Leadership, Citizen and Democracy of the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance, 2004), 181–183.

would proceed. The Bataan provincial Bureau of Public Highways helped by constructing local roads and improving the grounds. Two years later, on April 9, 1969, the completed Dambana ng Kagitingan was opened at the 27<sup>th</sup> Bataan Day Commemoration ceremony. The two main features of the Dambana are the Colonnade and the Memorial Cross. The Colonnade is a marble-capped building including an altar, walkway, and museum.



Figures 35 and 36: The Colonnade at the Dambana ng Kagitingan (July 2011).

A bronze urn outside the building symbolizes the Eternal Flame (Figure 37 below). The altar's backdrop is a stained glass mural designed by national artist Cenon Rivera and made by Vetrare D'arte Giuliani (Figure 38 below). There are also nineteen marble reliefs and parapets engraved with scripture, eighteen bronze insignias of USAFFE divisions, and seven markers commemorating the Battle of Bataan.



Figures 37 and 38: The bronze urn (left) and stained glass mural (right) at the Dambana (July 2011).



The Memorial Cross is a steel and concrete structure towering 1,821 feet above sea level. The cross is 180 feet tall; it rises 302 feet from the base.<sup>265</sup> The arms of the cross span 98 feet and are 243 feet above the ground. An elevator takes visitors to a viewing gallery (18 feet wide by 90 feet long with a 7-foot clearance) inside the arms of the cross. Like the cross at the Valle de los Caídos, the base of the Memorial Cross is covered with sculptural slabs and bas-reliefs portraying selected historical events and battles. This section is titled “Nabiag nga Bato” (Broken Stone) (Figure 39 below).



Figures 39 and 40: Cross with bas-relief (left) and signage (right) at the Dambana (July 2011).

Marcos personalized the site by adding signs with his own words on them. The sign in Figure 40 above describes Marcos’s connection to Bataan. In another sign, Marcos observes of the Dambana: “On these slopes were fought the last actions of the battle of Bataan...The 21<sup>st</sup> made a last stand here. As you see it’s not easy for me to forget what they did here, and neither do I intend to forget.”<sup>266</sup> In this statement, Marcos reifies his connection to the past and to the Filipinos and Americans who fought at Bataan. The Dambana is without a doubt a Ferdinand Marcos site. It has been the center of Bataan commemoration since its inception. By shifting the attention to Marcos’s heroism, the shrine elides the POWs. For the form of recognition that a memorial site

<sup>265</sup> The cross at the Valle de los Caídos is 500 feet high from the base.

<sup>266</sup> Romualdez, “The Shrine Stands,” 21.

provides, the POWs would have to wait for the construction of the Capas National Shrine.

Post-Marcos presidents, in particular Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos, have kept with tradition and visited the Dambana for Araw ng Kagitingan almost every year. However, both shifted the focus away from the Dambana and on to the Capas National Shrine. Aquino, along with Ramos, developed Capas. Primarily aimed at developing Tarlac, this shift to Capas by Aquino and Ramos was also a result of lobbying efforts by Filipino veterans to remember their fallen companions at Camp O'Donnell.

The Dambana ng Kagitingan is also symbolically connected to Isla ng Corregidor. A footpath starts at the Colonnade and continues along the mountain slope, finishing at the bottom of the Memorial Cross. The path is paved with bloodstone mined from Corregidor Island (Figures 41 and 42 below). Thus, Marcos's Dambana ng Kagitingan is linked to Isla ng Corregidor, a major American military base during WWII.<sup>267</sup>



Figures 41 and 42: The footpath (left) at the Dambana ng Kagitingan, paved with bloodstone (right) from Corregidor Island (July 2011).

### **Isla ng Corregidor (Corregidor Island)**

Loss in a war cannot be easily put aside, so a country's citizenry must somehow find a way to make the sacrifice meaningful. State governments therefore are compelled

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<sup>267</sup> Military Shrines Services of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, "Mount Samat Shrine," (PowerPoint Provided. Camp Aguinaldo. Quezon City, July 5, 2011).

to turn a negative into a positive by making defeat victorious. One way to facilitate this is to honor specific individuals. In the case of the Libingan ng mga Bayani, individuals are honored by being buried at this sacred site. That many Filipinos died and are buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, or that they were sacrificed at the altar of freedom at the Dambana ng Kagitingan and are now remembered for their last stand at the Isla ng Corregidor, is a testament that people are investing in some form of redemption for those who sacrificed their lives for their country. The Libingan extends this discussion by internally paying homage to the men and women who served in Korea and Vietnam. In the Isla ng Corregidor, POWs are not interested in homage to a specific soldier. Rather, they are seeking a sense of redemption through the recognition of their efforts in this lost cause. This third site, the Isla ng Corregidor, is the ultimate symbol of resilience against the odds. Corregidor stands as a testament to this reversal and turns defeat into symbolic victory.



Figures 43 and 44: Topside ruins (left) and Battery Crockett (right) at Corregidor (July 2011).

Corregidor played a vital role during WWII. Today, the ruins of this military outpost have become a memorial to the Filipino, American, and Japanese soldiers who fought there (Figures 43 and 44). Corregidor Island is situated at the entrance of Manila Bay, southwest of Luzon Island (Figure 45). Corregidor was one of the principal islands

equipped by the Americans during their occupation of the Philippines; it was then known as Fort Mills. Forts were also established on Carabao Island (Fort Frank), Caballo Island (Fort Hughes), and El Fraile Island (Fort Drum). Because of its strategic position, Corregidor was equipped with coastal weaponry to guard Manila Bay and the city of Manila from enemy incursion. Manila, located thirty miles inland and the city that Corregidor protects, has historically been the most vital seaport in the Philippines. Manila has been the metropolitan center from the colonial era under Spanish rule, through the United States imperial era, under Japanese occupation, and after the independent Republic of the Philippines was established in 1946.



Figure 45: Map of the Corregidor Islands posted in the Pacific War Memorial Museum on Isla ng Corregidor (July 2011).

After WWII ended, visitors – mostly veterans – began visiting Corregidor Island for its historic significance; nowadays, Corregidor is primarily a tourist destination, though only one travel company (Sun Cruises Philippines) offers a day tour to the island. Corregidor is the only one of the four Bataan memorial sites discussed in this chapter that serves simultaneously as a historic and touristic site; these sometimes conflicting uses have also made Corregidor a site of active contestation. Although Corregidor was ostensibly privatized to “enhance its appeal and accessibility to attract ordinary folks,”

many of the destroyed buildings have yet to be repaired or even rendered safe for visitors.<sup>268</sup> The Corregidor complex now includes the Pacific War Memorial, Malinta Tunnel, Filipino Heroes Memorial, Japanese Garden of Peace, and Corregidor Lighthouse. While most stakeholders recognize that tourism may be the only way to restore, save, and make historic sites available and accessible, how much of its historic significance can these sites afford to lose? In the larger effort to ensure that the fullest version of the story is told, this “touristic turn” could effectively also hide by what it shows. In the Corregidor story that this touristic memorial tells, what happened to the combatants after the joint American and Filipino surrender is absent.



Figures 46 and 47: The Pacific War Memorial at Isla ng Corregidor including a round altar and the *Eternal Flame of Freedom* sculpture (July 2011).

The Pacific War Memorial is the most significant memorial on Corregidor Island. Like the ABMC’s Manila American Cemetery, the Pacific War Memorial was constructed with U.S. government funds. The United States government constructed the memorial to pay their respects to those who served in WWII. This memorial was finished in 1968 at an estimated cost of three million U.S. dollars. It includes the Corregidor Island Museum, a rotunda with a round altar beneath a dome, and the *Eternal Flame of Freedom* sculpture (Figures 46 and 47 above).

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<sup>268</sup> Rafael E. Evangelista – Interview, July 13, 2011.

The Malinta Tunnel, however, has received the most attention from historians and visitors to Corregidor Island (Figures 48 and 49 below). Today, Malinta Tunnel is the setting of an audio-visual extravaganza designed by national artist Lamberto V. Avellana, which narrates key events that occurred on Corregidor during WWII. The show includes the evacuation of President Quezon and General MacArthur by PT 41 Squadron 3 from Corregidor Island to Cagayan Point in Mindanao, from whence they were later flown to Australia. Quezon ran a government in exile in the U.S. during the war.



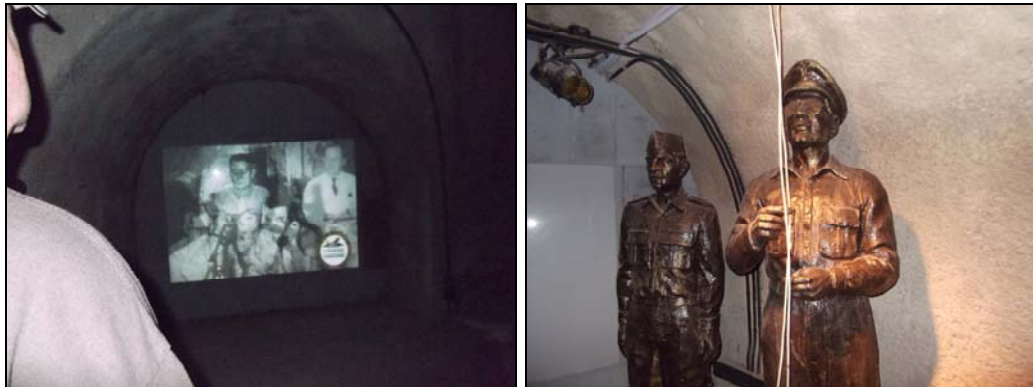
Figures 48 and 49: One of two entrances to the Malinta Tunnel on Isla ng Corregidor (left); visitors inside the tunnel (right) (July 2011).

The Malinta Tunnel's origins were less dramatic than the uses it was subsequently put to. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built the tunnel to enable quick travel from one side of the island to the other. The main tunnel is 831 feet long, 24 feet wide and 18 feet high (Figure 49). The tunnel was later converted into a bomb-proof storage and personnel bunker during WWII. Twenty-four tangential tunnels (thirteen to the north and eleven to the south) were added to house an infirmary accommodating up to a thousand patients (Figures 50 and 51). Each side tunnel is roughly 160 feet long and 15 feet wide.



Figures 50 and 51: Entrance to one of the peripheral tunnels on the north side (left); map of the Malinta Tunnel complex (right), Isla ng Corregidor (July 2011).

A plethora of MacArthur statues are scattered around Corregidor Island, including inside and outside the Malinta Tunnel and at the boat launch where he and President Quezon were famously evacuated (Figures 53, 54, and 55 below).



Figures 52 and 53: Audio-visual show (left) and statues of General MacArthur and President Quezon (right) inside the Malinta Tunnel on Isla ng Corregidor (July 2011).

Inside the tunnel, an audio-visual production, also by Avellana, covers the evacuation and other dramatic events from WWII (Figure 52). The statue of MacArthur inside the Malinta Tunnel is life size. The statue at the Lorcha Dock is larger than life (Figures 54 and 55). Statues, like the ones of MacArthur at Lorcha Dock and inside the Malinta Tunnel “symbolize a specific famous person while in a sense also *being* the body of that

person.”<sup>269</sup> On many levels, both statues of MacArthur also function as chronotopes. MacArthur statues, much like other statues in this network of commemorative sites, work to delay not just the person’s physical deterioration but also to rework the temporality linked to that person. MacArthur is now an icon. And although books last a long time, they don’t have the same visual impact that statues do. And while movies seek to evoke the same “shock and awe,” they are not as accessible or as permanent as statues, monuments, and memorials.



Figures 54 and 55: Two views of a statue in Gen. Douglas MacArthur Park near the ruins of Lorcha Dock on Isla ng Corregidor. MacArthur’s famous line, “I Shall Return,” is inscribed in the concrete base (July 2011).

The legacies of MacArthur both here and at the Libingan ng mga Bayani focus the discussion on the connection of the Philippines with the U.S. and the ever present legacy of American paternalism. The focus on MacArthur directs our attention to his heroic actions, which again inadvertently elides notions of loss and defeat. That MacArthur did not surrender is crucial to the triumphalist narrative – he declared he would return to save the day and in the Filipino imaginary he returned to save the day. The MacArthur statues all over Corregidor not only transform his legacy but also give him a sense of timelessness. In rock and steel, MacArthur is transformed into the sacred.

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<sup>269</sup> Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 5.



Launched by President Fidel V. Ramos on August 28, 1992, the Filipino Heroes Memorial is one of the newer additions to Corregidor. This eighteen thousand square foot arcade contains fourteen sculpted murals illustrating skirmishes Filipinos have been engaged in from the fifteenth century to present times (Figures 56 and 57 below).



Figures 56 and 57: The “Battle of Mactan” (the first of fourteen murals) (left) and the “EDSA Revolution” (the last of the fourteen) (right) in the Filipino Heroes Memorial on Corregidor (July 2011).

Recollections of defeat at Bataan produce diverse emotions. Consequently, monuments to the event pose important questions. What was forgotten, and what was remembered? How did the Filipinos maintain a sense of dignity within the milieu of defeat? The Bataan Death March is commemorated differently in each of the sites described, in light of the historical context of its commemoration.

### **Paggunita sa Capas (Capas National Shrine)**

The Capas National Shrine, also known as the Paggunita sa Capas, is notable because it is the only site of its kind dedicated solely to the Bataan Death March. And, it was born out of a sense of loyalty to their fellow Filipino POWs, but it was also created to serve various political and commercial interests. Although there are problems regarding its original design, everything on the site was originally intended to mark the Bataan Death March. While the Libingan ng mga Bayani is the final resting place of the

disinterred from Capas, that site hosts several other monuments along with the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Pylon (or Memorial). The Dambana ng Kagitingan is the site of final defeat at Bataan and plays host to the Araw ng Kagitingan – but does not commemorate the Death March and those who died on it. Corregidor, paying homage to MacArthur and American resilience, leaves the Death March – much like the texts that handle only “military operations” – completely ignored. The Paggunita sa Capas therefore has sole custody: of the Bataan Death March commemoration. The site is important because it is a shared site. The sharing of the site lends itself to competition over visibility and a tenuous coexistence.

As early as January 9, 1989, the National Historical Institute, under the Corazon Aquino administration,<sup>270</sup> declared Barangay O’Donnell a National Memorial Shrine to be known thereafter as the “Capas Prisoners of War National Shrine.”<sup>271</sup> The intentions of the founders were outlined: “The Capas Prisoners of War Concentration Camp stands as a living witness to the suffering and sacrifice of these gallant soldiers who gave their lives for freedom and liberty and has therefore been sanctified by time as a revered and hallowed place of heroes worthy of noble recognition by a grateful nation.”<sup>272</sup> On December 7, 1991, President Corazon Aquino declared her intention to designate<sup>273</sup> five hundred thousand square meters (amounting to one hundred twenty-three acres) aside

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<sup>270</sup> President Corazon Aquino was armed with Presidential Decree No. 260 enacted in 1973 (and through an amendment of Presidential Decree No. 1505 enacted in 1978).

<sup>271</sup> *Resolution No. 1, s. 1989. Declaring the World War II Capas Prisoners of War Memorial Site in Barangay O’Donnell, Capas, Tarlac, as a National Shrine*, copy provided by the Military Shrines Services (MSS) Office of the Philippine Veterans Administration Office (PVAO) of the Department of National Defense (DND).

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> As noted earlier in Resolution No. 1 of Presidential Proclamation No. 842.

from Zone “B” of the Clark Air Base Military Reservation to form this park for Bataan Death March commemoration.<sup>274</sup>

On October 9, 1996, the Philippine Congress supported President Fidel Ramos’s vision for the redevelopment of the shrine by passing Republic Act No. 8221. The Act echoed the stipulations of previous documents, and added that a tree should be planted for every one of the estimated twenty-five thousand Filipino and six thousand Americans who died at the camp. Nothing in the Act speaks of the Shrine’s other intended uses.<sup>275</sup>

On one level, this was a move by the Filipinos to redistribute what was seen about Bataan: to reconfigure the site in order to render visible the POWs who died there. In 1997, the Department of National Defense submitted a proposed master plan outlining a broad vision for the Shrine. The plan refers to Republic Act No. 8221, mentioned above, retaining its original vision of a “fitting memorial to Filipino and American soldiers, a linking of the past to the present, and sending out a message of friendship, peace, and progress.” The document adds that the shrine is to “provide interactive exhibit and information media, and creative experience that will enable visitors to enjoy while they learn, [...] undertake a project that will also serve as a catalyst for community development for the town of Capas, and socio-economic progress for the province of Tarlac,” and “make the Shrine an integral part of the tourist destination of Region III.”<sup>276</sup>

As of 1997, then, there was a shift to commercial and environmental interests. Three

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<sup>274</sup> *Presidential Proclamation No 842. Reserving for National Shrine Purposes to Be Known as “Capas National Shrine” a Certain Portion of Clark Air Base Military Reservation Located in the Municipality of Capas, Province of Tarlac, Island of Luzon*, copy provided by the MSS Office of the PVAO of the DND.

<sup>275</sup> *Republic Act No. 8221. An Act to Develop the Capas National Shrine, Appropriating Funds There for, and for Other Purposes*, copy provided by the MSS Office of the PVAO of the DND.

<sup>276</sup> *Proposed Master Plan, Capas National Shrine, Capas, Tarlac, Department of National Defense, 1997*, copy provided by the MSS Office of the PVAO of the DND.

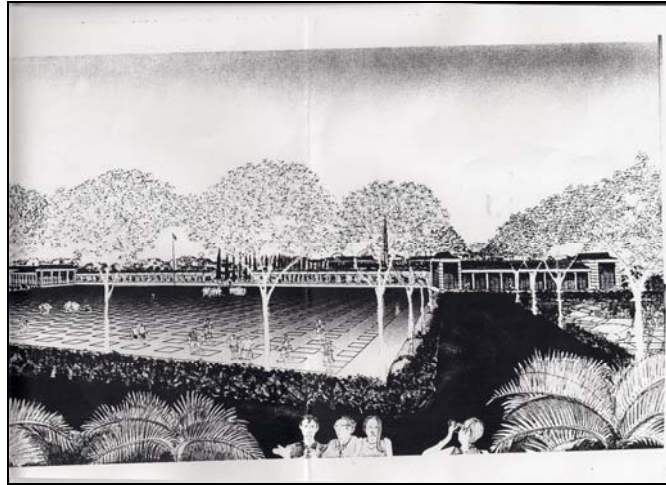
elements of this master plan point to a Filipino style of commemoration: the Quirino Grandstand at Rizal Park, the proposed Concentration Camp replica similar to the Nayong Pilipino, and the Memorial Complex that would resemble St. Peters in Rome, complete with encircling esplanade. The move is clearly a local one. With this design, the park is relying on a few tested standards, the Quirino Grandstand, the Nayong Pilipino, and St. Peter's promenade.



Figure 58: Original caption: “THE MEMORIAL COMPLEX: Formal, monumental, solemn and classical – words that describe this site in the shrine. Like the St. Peter’s in old Rome. Here our feelings are touched. We remember the soldiers of the Death March. We learn the lessons of war. We understand the meaning of sacrifice, perseverance, peace and unity.” Source: “Proposed Master Plan, Capas National Shrine, Capas, Tarlac” (Department of National Defense, 1997), 19–20. Permission to reproduce obtained from the Military Shrines Services of the PVAO.

References to Quirino Grandstand, the Nayong Pilipino Complex, and St. Peters draw on what I observe as Filipino modes of commemoration. In contrast to the more celebratory and centralized American model, what we see here is a local space designed to relax and comfort visitors. In the end, the more ambitious St. Peters project was replaced with marble walls enclosing the Heroes Monument. The details of the transition can be seen in the March of Heroes Project proposals presented below. Earlier in this chapter, in the discussion of the Magat incident, I identified a distinct type of commemoration. Despite the turns in public history or popular history, a historic site in

the U.S. would rarely, if ever, be taken this lightly. Later in this chapter, when discussing Cabanatuan, this sense that historic sites are spaces of leisure (more than sites of reverence) will become more apparent.



Figures 59: Original caption: “THE CEREMONIAL PLAZA: A wide open congregation area for parades, commemorative events, cultural concerts, town and provincial celebrations, the ceremonial plaza can hold a large number of people. A flagpole shall be planted at the central end of the plaza just before the approach to the esplanade. The plaza is comparable in size to the fore area of the Quirino Grandstand at Rizal Park.” Source: “Proposed Master Plan, Capas National Shrine, Capas, Tarlac” (Department of National Defense, 1997), 15–16. Permission to reproduce obtained from the Military Shrines Services of the PVAO.

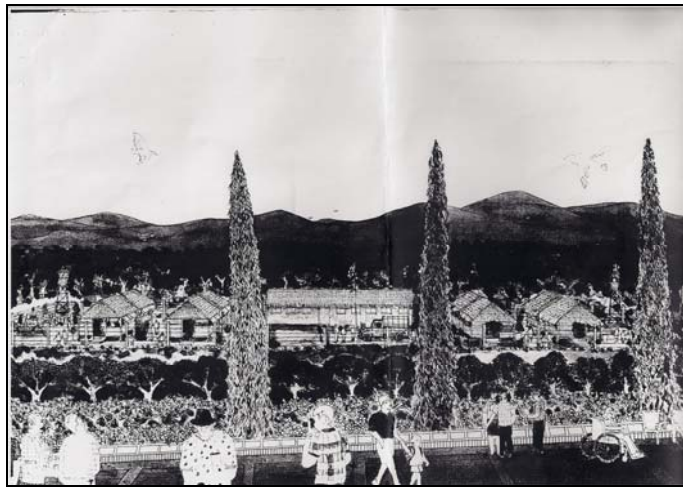


Figure 60: Original caption: “THE MINI FOREST AND CONCENTRATION CAMP REPLICA – AN OPEN AIR MUSEUM: One of the main features of the Shrine development is the reforestation of the area. This project shall highlight the Filipino concern for his beautiful natural surroundings. The replica concentration camp within the forested landscape will provide visitors the trivial experiences and the relaxing mood in the woods ala Nayong Pilipino.” Source: “Proposed Master Plan, Capas National Shrine, Capas, Tarlac” (Department of National Defense, 1997), 17–18. Permission to reproduce obtained from the Military Shrines Services of the PVAO.

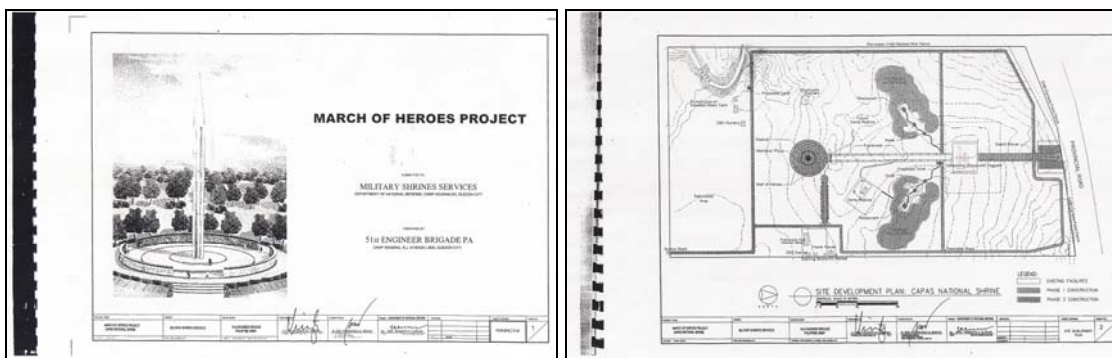


Figure 61 (left): March of Heroes Project; and Figure 62 (right): Site development plans for the Capas National Shrine. Source: “March of Heroes Project” (1999), 1–2. Provided with permission to reproduce by the Military Shrines Services of the PVAO.

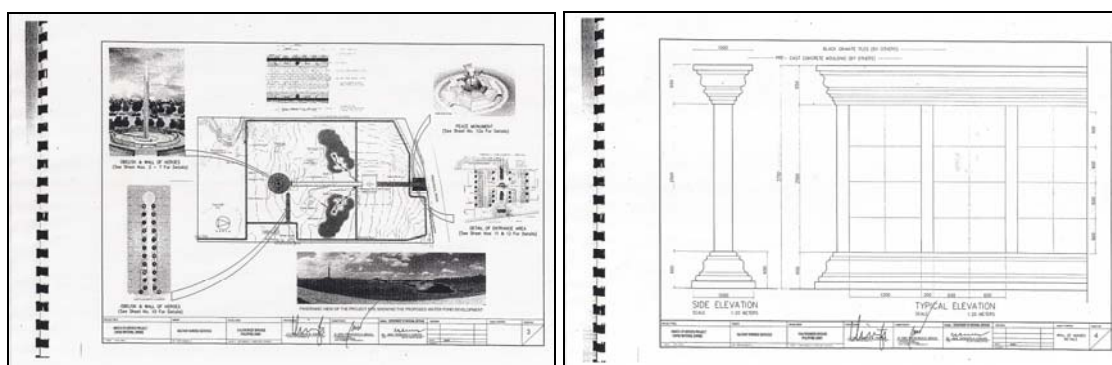


Figure 63 (left): Proposed layout of the Capas National Shrine; and Figure 64 (right): Design and cross section for the Wall of Heroes in the Capas National Shrine. Source: Source: “March of Heroes Project” (1999), 3–4. Provided with permission to reproduce by the Military Shrines Services of the PVAO.

A memorial walk passes through a “cemetery” in which there are no human remains; the metaphorical cemetery consists of eighty-six acres of trees, each tree symbolizing a fallen soldier (Figures 65 and 66). Much like the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl in Honolulu, this site serves to normalize the presence of the military in the area. Tourists often ask about it and what purpose it serves. In this case, a military cemetery makes the presence of the military “normal.” After a while no one questions either the cemetery or the military presence. The same can be said of the Capas National Shrine. Locals usually take a tricycle vehicle to the site. Therefore, the park has a turnaround for the local tricycles to mark and serves as a mid-point along the national highway. Locals cannot imagine life without it.



Figures 65 and 66: Memorial arcade (left) and trees (right) in the Paggunita sa Capas (July 2011).

On April 9, 2003, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo unveiled the Wall of Heroes and opened it to the public as part of that year's Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor) celebration. Access to the 230-foot tall obelisk is a 60-foot wide, 1,300-foot long esplanade (see Figure 65 and 66 above). Three black marble walls, imprinted with the names of Filipinos who perished at the camp, enclose the obelisk (Figures 67 and 68 below).<sup>277</sup>



Figures 67 and 68: One of three walls enclosing the obelisk in the Paggunita sa Capas (July 2011).

The obelisk serves no function other than a symbolic one. This spartan monument has a spare, clear, and classical form. Like many such obelisks, it is simple but not simplistic. Having abandoned its original conception of a St. Peter-like esplanade, the

<sup>277</sup> Military Shrines Services of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, "Capas National Shrine" (PowerPoint Provided. Camp Aguinaldo. Quezon City, July 05, 2011).

monument maintains its original religious overtones as it aims to touch the heavens with this obelisk. Arguably lacking in subtlety and beauty, it is nonetheless, like Nazi monuments during WWII, “generous in its construction, [and] built for the ages.”<sup>278</sup> Yet, as evidenced in Figure 70 below, this monument is also very approachable.



Figures 69 (left) and 70 (right): Obelisk and its base at the Paggunita sa Capas (July 2011).

From a distance, however, it can also overwhelm people, evoking a sense of admiration and awe. This monument is both personal and impersonal “because it is not the work of an individual but the symbol of a community bound together by a common ideal.”<sup>279</sup> The obelisk achieves these ideals by being purely symbolic. With no other function, it transcends everyday utilitarian considerations. What makes this obelisk unique is that its three sections, uniting at the top, symbolize America, Japan, and the Philippines – not Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. The shrine also metaphorically binds all together with its three walls inscribed with the names of the prisoners and those who died at the camp, along with poems asking for peace (Figures 67 and 68 above).

The Philippine government uses the Paggunita ng Capas for events to push a particular administrative agenda. As an example, at the Araw ng Kagitingan in April 2003, President Arroyo spoke about the indebtedness of the Filipino people to “the

<sup>278</sup> Berthold Hinz, *Art in the Third Reich* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), 236.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*



soldiers who fought in WWII, most of whom are no longer around...pillars of courage and heroism.”<sup>280</sup> The Paggunita sa Capas memorial is “a tribute to them. Nothing is ever enough however to show our gratitude for their sacrifice.”<sup>281</sup> She specifically lauded the “wall we unveil today...inscribed [with] the names of 32,285 gallant men who took part in the Bataan-Corregidor campaign and the Death March from Bataan to Capas. [...] Each of those men, the 32,285 men whose names are inscribed in this wall, is a hero.”<sup>282</sup> Evidence that the past remains in people’s minds through such memorials, Arroyo concluded that those who fought at Bataan are “an example for us in today’s difficult times, [as] faced with a mortal crisis, they embraced a collective destiny and gave their all for the flag.”<sup>283</sup>

Controversies regarding its design, the naming of its main building, and its use for Balikatan<sup>284</sup> celebrations have surrounded the Paggunita sa Capas. After its construction, several discussions regarding its design occurred. The Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor voiced objections about the naming of the Guillermo B. Francisco Hall. The Paggunita sa Capas reminds both the U.S. and the Philippines of the Visiting Bases Agreement (VBS), as Balikatan is celebrated in this site (Figures 75, 76, 77 and 78).

Not everyone was in agreement with the original plans for the Capas National Shrine. The central monument was originally going to be three pillars topped by a giant

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<sup>280</sup> All the quotes in the paragraph, unless otherwise indicated, are from President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo’s 2003 Araw ng Kagitingan speech. “PGMA’s Speech during the Celebration of ‘Araw ng Kagitingan’ and Veterans Week,” <http://www.ops.gov.ph/speeches2003/speech-2003apr09c.htm> (accessed March 17, 2004) and Miguel Llorá, *Conclusion*, [http://mllora.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_4.htm](http://mllora.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_4.htm) (accessed June 13, 2012).

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> The Balikatan exercises are intended to foster military planning, combat readiness, and inter-operability between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States.

USAFFE helmet, which Evangelista said would have been preferable to the obelisk. Figures 58 through 60 above illustrate the original plans for the shrine and Figures 61 through 64 shows the plans for the March of Heroes project in the shrine. The original layout included an obelisk, wall of heroes, and peace monument in addition to water ponds and a forested area (Figure 66).



Figures 71 and 72: Proposed Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor National Museum (July 2011).

As can be seen from Figures 71 and 72 above, the Guillermo B. Francisco Hall was all that survived of the proposed Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor National Museum. Currently, the building houses administration offices, a small museum, and reception areas for meetings (Figures 73 and 74 below).



Figures 73 and 74: Guillermo B. Francisco Hall at the Paggunita sa Capas (July 2011).

Other controversies have attended the annual Balikatan (Back-to-Back) ceremonies held at the shrine (Figures 75, 76, 77 and 78). The Balikatan exercises are

intended to foster military planning, combat readiness, and inter-operability between the Republic of the Philippines (RP) and the United States. They solidify security relations and demonstrate the resolve of the United States to support the Philippines against external aggression.<sup>285</sup> They also link the two countries in the continued international war on terror. The Philippine government cancelled Balikatan in 1995 because of a dispute with the United States over the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). The VFA gives the United States jurisdiction over crimes committed by military personnel while on duty in the Philippines.<sup>286</sup> Despite protests from anti-U.S. factions in the Philippines, Balikatan was re-established in May 1999 to increase military cooperation (Figures 75, 76, 77 and 78). So far, this chapter has discussed the Filipino side of this commemoration equation. Now the discussion will shift to look at the American side. We begin the examination of the American Bataan commemoration with the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument.



Figures 75 and 76: 2010 U.S.–RP Balikatan ceremony at the Paggunita sa Capas. Source: “Capas National Shrine” (Military Shrines Services, July 5, 2011), 12–13.

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<sup>285</sup> The Philippine constitution does not allow military bases to be established in the Philippines by any external nation other than the United States. The Balikatan exercises, first held in 1991, meet RP–US commitments under the Mutual Defense Treaty.

<sup>286</sup> Llorca, *Conclusion*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_4.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_4.htm) (accessed June 13, 2012).



Figure 77 and 78: 2010 U.S.-RP Balikatan ceremony at the Paggunita sa Capas. Source: “Capas National Shrine” (Military Shrines Services, July 5, 2011), 14–15.

### **Memorializing War in the Philippines: Americans Seeking a Space of Their Own**

Despite the ritual reminders of fallen soldiers during the Balikatan ceremonies, WWII veterans and their descendants have been dissatisfied about commemoration at the Capas National Shrine. In the Philippines, most expatriates attend Veterans Day at the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument instead of at the much ballyhooed Dambana ng Kagitingan. American veterans in the Philippines and other expatriates are generally dissatisfied with the memorializing in the U.S. and feel they are better respected in the Philippines. In the Philippines, every year on April 9, the Philippine president goes to the Dambana ng Kagitingan at Mount Samat to give a memorial speech to Filipino veterans and foreign dignitaries. With the exception of a small commemorative event in Las Cruces, New Mexico, there is no parallel recognition of U.S. veterans of Bataan held in the United States.<sup>287</sup> According to Hubert Caloud of the ABMC and Fred Baldassarre of the BBB, Camp O’Donnell is seen by the ABMC as a Filipino site. American veterans of

<sup>287</sup> Las Cruces, New Mexico is the site of both a memorial and an annual Death March hike. The memorial narrative centers on the personal triumphs of John Joe Baldonado Martinez and Senator Pete Domenici in overcoming the odds against their survival. See Chapter 4 for discussion of the memorial and other international and transnational memorializing events.

the Bataan Death March attend small commemorations at Camp O'Donnell. This section also explores other American sites of commemoration in the Philippines.

The Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument grew out of the perception that the American story was not adequately commemorated at Capas. Richard Gordon noted that the Philippine government built the Paggunita sa Capas in memory of the Filipinos who died in Camp O'Donnell. He presaged the creation of the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument by commenting, "Philippine officials would welcome a similar monument to the Americans who died across the road."<sup>288</sup> He did not think it would ever be built, however, because "the Philippines look to the United States for funding such a monument."<sup>289</sup> Government funding for an American memorial at Camp O'Donnell was impossible to secure.<sup>290</sup>

The question of what to do with Filipino WWII veterans continues to haunt American and Filipino veterans alike.<sup>291</sup> The U.S. government has been reluctant to officially acknowledge their joint efforts in the war because it might lead to immigration status changes or financial recompense for Filipino veterans. Any more memorializing of this event would also bring up, as it already does, the nagging problem of veteran benefits. Commemorating their service has thus been left either to the Philippine government (at the Capas National Shrine) or private funders such as the BBB, who opened the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument on April 7, 2000. These adjacent structures in Capas acknowledge Filipino and American POWs who were at Camp

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<sup>288</sup> Gordon, *Horyo*, 106.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> This history is being revised in a manuscript commissioned by the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor; the book is being written by University of the Philippines historian Ricardo Jose.

<sup>291</sup> Llorca, *Remembering and Forgetting the Bataan Death March in Memorials*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_3.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_3.htm) (accessed June 6, 2012).

O'Donnell. The BBB built a monument in Capas because they felt that American sacrifices in the Philippines were going unnoticed. To their surprise, when they reached Camp O'Donnell they found no commemoration to the American dead. Baldassarre and the others "felt it would be a complete disgrace if this location, made sacred by the human sacrifice of so many young men, would slowly be reduced to anonymity as the older generation passes on."<sup>292</sup> The group "felt a very important piece of history would disappear."<sup>293</sup> They set out to build a monument honoring the Americans who died at Camp O'Donnell.

Despite the lack of support from the American government, the resolve to preserve the legacy of sacrifice outweighed government reluctance to fund the memorial. The ABMC turned down Gordon and James Litton's request for financial assistance to build their monument. As a federal agency, the ABMC walks a tightrope, functioning within budgetary and political constraints while working to assuage constituent needs for commemoration.<sup>294</sup> It only spends money on projects that are "fanned by the current political winds."<sup>295</sup> Baldassarre intimated that "individuals whom I have met who work for the ABMC are great stewards and they do care a great deal about Bataan, but they are not the ones in DC making the decisions on how to spend their money."<sup>296</sup> Obtaining funding was not the only challenge faced by the BBB. They also had to acquire land and

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Federico "Fred" Baldassarre – Interview, June 21–22, 2008.

<sup>294</sup> Federico "Fred" Baldassarre – Interview, June 26, 2008; and Llorca, *Remembering and Forgetting the Bataan Death March in Memorials*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_3.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_3.htm) (accessed June 13, 2012).

<sup>295</sup> Federico "Fred" Baldassarre – Interview, June 25–27, 2010; and Llorca, *Remembering and Forgetting the Bataan Death March in Memorials*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_3.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_3.htm) (accessed June 13, 2012).

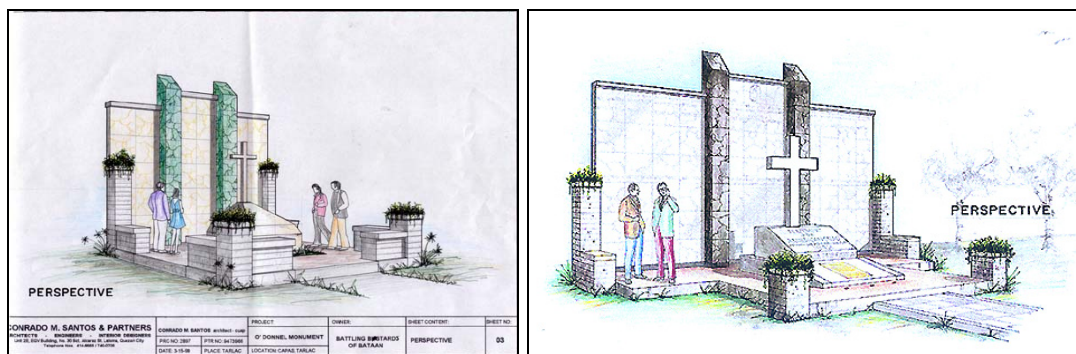
<sup>296</sup> Federico "Fred" Baldassarre – Interview, February 23, 2012; and Llorca, *Remembering and Forgetting the Bataan Death March in Memorials*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_3.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_3.htm) (accessed June 6, 2012).

choose a design. Teresita Cuevas, the Head of the Military Shrines Services of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, initially neither provided assistance regarding a location nor cared much for their original design. To solve the first problem the BBB approached Colonel Rafael R. Estrada Sr., the National Commander of the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, for help. On behalf of the BBB, Estrada secured permission from Cuevas to build a monument within the Capas National Shrine perimeter. Cuevas balked at the design of the monument because it included a cross (Figures 79, 80, and 81).

Baldassarre recalled being told that, in the Philippines, crosses on monuments are illegal. The BBB got around this stipulation by arguing that the cross was a historic and not a religious symbol. The last few Americans left behind were given cement by their captors to build the original cross. In June 1942, the Japanese shut down the American side of Camp O'Donnell and moved most of the POWs to Cabanatuan. The captors left approximately five hundred POWs behind to clean up the camp. The POWs, supplied by the Japanese, built a seven-foot tall cross out of cement. On the original cross they engraved: "In Memory of the American Dead, O'Donnell War Personnel Enclosure 1942, Omnia Pro Patria" (Figure 83). In 1992, upon dissolution of the bases agreement, the original cross was shipped from Manila to San Francisco; it is now permanently kept in the National Prisoner of War Museum in Andersonville, Georgia.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Gordon, *Horyo*, 104–105. Retired Colonel John Olson arranged to have the cross moved to the United States. Olson is the author of *O'Donnell: The American Andersonville of the Pacific Extermination Camp of American Hostages in the Philippines* (1985) one of a series of books which Gordon uses to correct myths about the Bataan Death March and the incarcerations at O'Donnell and Cabanatuan, such as those reproduced in William Manchester's *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur 1880–1964* (1978).



Figures 79 and 80: Perspective drawings of the first design (left) and the revised design with the larger cross (right) for the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument. Source: Permission to reproduce obtained from Federico "Fred" Baldassarre of the Battling Bastards of Bataan.

The Battling Bastards built the monument after Cuevas accepted the argument that a replica of the cross had historic validity. Figures 79 and 80 show the monument they eventually constructed with the original words below the cross. The monument design, a replica of the original cross, is anachronistic. The cross stands was constructed in 1942 and makes a simulated appearance today. However, its power to affect new visibilities has no equal – short of the original cross. The cross not only marks this tragedy but also allows the viewer to inquire into the meaning of the place. Analogous to Manzanar, where a memorial marker known as the Soul Consoling Tower echoes past struggles, even in simulacra, the Sack of Cement Cross is a haunting specter of the past, a resounding echo in the present, and harbinger of things to come. Finally, the cross is a bearer of new visibilities for the POWs who died there.

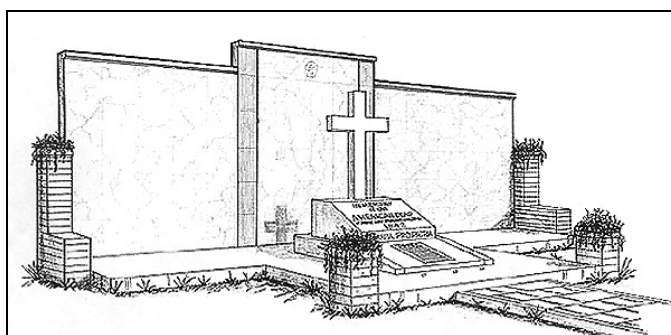


Figure 81: Design for the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument featuring large cross. Source: Permission to reproduce obtained from Federico "Fred" Baldassarre of the Battling Bastards of Bataan.



The Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument is one of the two American sites that compete for visibility against a Filipino site. The Cabanatuan American Memorial, which shares the same fence line with Pangatian Concentration Camp, is the second juxtaposed site under examination here.



Figures 82 and 83: The Battling Bastards of Bataan's Camp O'Donnell Monument (July 2011).

### **Camp Cabanatuan and the Pangatian Concentration Camp**

The Cabanatuan-Palayan road in Barangay Pangatian plays host to the most curious juxtaposition of the Bataan-related sites. Curious because, unlike at Capas, both sites were state funded. On one side of the fence and maintained by the ABMC is the manicured, gated, and heavily guarded Cabanatuan American Memorial. This site illustrates how the state ascribes importance to a site. This reverence, of course, is contingent on the site being redemptive and moving forward a triumphalist agenda. On the other side of the fence is the Pangatian Concentration Camp, a memorial park funded by the Provincial Government of Nueva Ecija (Figures 88 and 89 below). These grounds pay tribute to the Filipino guerillas who fought in the Great Raid.

Filipino and American notions of remembering follow very different patterns. We see contrasting forms of commemoration by juxtaposing the two memorials in Capas with the pair of monuments at Cabanatuan. Prior to the outbreak of WWII, the Americans

used Camp Cabanatuan primarily as a military training camp. During the occupation era, the Japanese transformed Camp Cabanatuan (or Camp Pangatian, as it is known to the locals) into the infamous concentration camp. Most of the Americans who survived the Bataan Death March and O'Donnell were eventually transferred to Cabanatuan. Americans who surrendered in Corregidor followed one month later. The Camp Pangatian Shrine, a Filipino monument, places more weight on the local guerillas led by former Governor Eduardo L. Josen. Josen, along with Captain Juan Pajota, led Squadron 213, assisting the Philippine Scouts and the U.S. Army Rangers as they carried out the "Great Raid." Are the Filipinos mimicking the Americans in order to be seen and heard, in moves similar to those made at Aventine, or do they have an agenda all their own? In any case, both these sites have been present for at least two generations. This longevity has normalized the presence of the military in the region.<sup>298</sup>

In 1980, a group of twenty-one American veterans and family members of those incarcerated at Cabanatuan visited the Philippines to attend the annual *Araw ng Kagitingan* festivities. As had happened earlier at Capas, this American group also noticed that nothing had been done, by either the Philippine or American governments, to commemorate what had happened at this historic site. The original \$250,000 required to build the site between 1981 and 1985 came from private sources – both American and Filipino. To assist the Cabanatuan Memorial Committee, headed by West Point alumnus

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<sup>298</sup> Cabanatuan and Pangatian share the same militarized space, and we rarely stop to ask why there are two names instead of one. This is similar to the way that, as Ferguson and Turnbull show, the military is "thoroughly normalized within Hawai'i, sedimenting itself through... everyday ways of life." For example, freeway signs identify exits to Pearl Harbor rather than using the traditional Hawaiian name of Pu'u'uloa, but people in modern-day Hawai'i have become so accustomed to the military presence that they do not think to question why that is. Kathy Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull, *Oh, Say, Can You See? The Semiotics of the Military in Hawaii* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), xiv.

Chester Johnson, the Philippine Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor arranged for donations totaling \$100,000. The remaining \$150,000 came from private sources through the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor. The committee agreed that a trust fund of about \$250,000 be collected to maintain the grounds. The committee concurrently lobbied G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery, then Chairman of the Committee on Veteran Affairs, for support, and in 1987, the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor requested that the ABMC enroll the site and maintain it eliminating the need for the extended trust fund. Meanwhile, the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument continues to be maintained by the BBB and protected by the Philippine Army's Military Shrines Services.

The Cabanatuan American Memorial demonstrates that resources are available to memorialize even the most traumatic events that took place in the Philippines during WWII. In May of 1985, U.S. Ambassador Stephen Bosworth remarked during the site's dedication that "war memorials of any kind serve two highly noble and edifying purposes: first, to honor for all time, so that none may ever forget, the sacrifices of those who fought and died for their country; and second, to serve as a sober and humbling reminder of the horrors of war which will keep us forever vigilant in the pursuit of peace."<sup>299</sup> The first of Bosworth's "noble purposes" exemplifies the sense of permanence that monuments provide. Concurrently, the second reminds us that monuments are subject to the particularities of time and place. The Cabanatuan American Memorial "was originally constructed by survivors of the Bataan Death March and the prisoner of war camp at Cabanatuan in the Philippines."<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> *The Dedication of the West Point Memorial and the Completion of the Cabanatuan POW Memorial May 4, 1985*, 2–3.

<sup>300</sup> "Cabanatuan American Memorial: American Battle Monuments," <http://www.abmc.gov/memorials/memorials/cb.php> (accessed June 13, 2012).



Figures 84 and 85: Gated entrance and path to the Cabanatuan American Memorial (July 2011).

Located at the site of the Cabanatuan POW camp, this memorial honors Americans (and some Filipinos – mostly West Point graduates) who died during internment. According to Gordon, “it is truly a reminder to the visitors of what happened there in 1942–1945. Ninety percent of those who died there were men of Bataan and most deaths occurred within the first ninety days of the camp’s existence.”<sup>301</sup> A steel fence surrounds the memorial to protect the site from vandalism (Figures 84 and 85 above). Inside the grounds is an altar-like monument under flags of the United States and the Philippines (Figure 86 below). The Cabanatuan American Memorial also contains several other monuments.



Figures 86 (left) and 87 (right): The Cabanatuan monument and the West Point Memorial inside the Cabanatuan American Memorial (July 2011).

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<sup>301</sup> Gordon, *Horyo*, 106–107.

West Pointers obtained a congressional appropriation to build the West Point Memorial for the fallen graduates of West Point (Figure 87 above).<sup>302</sup> The 1937 graduating class of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, led by Major General Chester Johnson, constructed a memorial to honor the three thousand who died in the camp. Similar in structure to the larger Manila American Cemetery, the Cabanatuan American Memorial and all the other markers enclosed within the fencing remains a place of contemplation for WWII veterans and their families.

Adjacent to the American site is the Pangatian Concentration Camp – a Filipino site – which celebrates something entirely different. The Pangatian Concentration Camp memorializes Filipino soldiers, particularly Captain Eduardo Joson and Captain Juan Pajota. Captain Eduardo Joson was a guerrilla soldier during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. After the war he served as Governor of Nueva Ecija Province from 1959 to 1992. He is distinguished as having one of the longest periods of active public service in the Philippines. Joson and Captain Juan Pajota led guerillas in the famous raid in Cabanatuan. They blocked the Cabu Bridge after Japanese reinforcements had crossed the river, and then removed 516 allied prisoners from the Cabanatuan POW camp. As previously discussed in Chapter 1 and more extensively in Chapter 2, this “Great Raid” is considered one of the most successful rescue missions in the annals of U.S. military history. It has been written about, movies have been made about it, and now monuments are erected in its honor.

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<sup>302</sup> For more detail see *The Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Memorial: An Historic DAV Legacy for Posterity December 19, 1986* and *The Dedication of the West Point Memorial and the Completion of the Cabanatuan POW Memorial May 4, 1985*. Both reproduced from the American Battle Monuments Commission Archive.



Figures 88 and 89: Entrance to and markers inside the Pangatian Concentration Camp (July 2011).

The Pangatian Concentration Camp tells the Filipino version of the Cabanatuan story and is an attempt to preserve a legacy that can very easily be forgotten. The park contains monuments and permanent displays depicting the Raid on Cabanatuan from a Filipino rather than an American perspective. The focus is on Pajota and Joson and not on the 6th Ranger Battalion under Lt. Col. Mucci. Nonetheless, the roof deck of the Park's main building has a memorial wall with a bas-relief sculpture of Filipino and American soldiers carrying each other in battle (Figure 90 below). In a different form of commemoration, the park also includes a military-themed recreational area (Figure 91 below). Both memorial sites function to redistribute what is seen about freeing the POWs at Cabanatuan. With all the attention directed to this area, it is no wonder that the BBB felt a double abandonment.



Figures 90 and 91: Memorial wall (left) and park benches (right) at Pangatian (July 2011).

Commemorative spaces do the work of subject formation. These sites in juxtaposition reflect the struggle for visibility and recognition, and they move to preserve the past. Filipinos struggle to restructure what is visible internationally, nationally, and locally through the maintenance of their local agendas. Building this and other commemorative sites both opens up new discussion and serves to create closure.

### **Connecting the Capas and San Fernando Train Stations**

After marching for four to seven days, Filipino and American POWs reached the train station in San Fernando. There, they were packed into boxcars so tightly that they could not lie down. Once the doors were shut, the temperature inside the boxcars rose to uncomfortable, even lethal levels. According to Richard Gordon, men gasped for air and some died where they stood.<sup>303</sup> Those who survived the four-hour ride from San Fernando to Capas still had to walk another eight miles from the Capas train station to Camp O'Donnell. This story is lost in the stories of gallantry that are all over the texts and monuments that mention Bataan.



Figures 92 and 93: Two views of a boxcar used to move POWs to Capas, located between Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument (left) and the Capas National Shrine (right) (July 2011).

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<sup>303</sup> Gordon, *Horyo*, 98.

After their combat encounters, approximately three thousand Americans returned from Bataan suffering from combat fatigue. Most opted to hide the symptoms that resulted from their traumatic experiences, “fearing they would be labeled as kooks or interned in an asylum.”<sup>304</sup> Today, however, veterans want to commemorate what happened to them at Capas. The boxcars, railroad tracks, and train stations are sites of a new history war that involves global considerations and forms new possibilities for changing the Bataan spatial landscape. Between the obelisk at the Capas National Shrine and the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument is an old 8x6x6 foot boxcar reputed to have transported POWs from the San Fernando train station to the Capas train station (Figures 92 and 93 above). The boxcar enriches the story about the incarceration and brings to life the horrors experienced by the POWs. Among the moves that have brought the POW experience at Capas to life, the inclusion of the experience of the boxcars ranks among the most visible achievements. The boxcars are part of a larger struggle for visibility that includes two train stations.

The first point of interest is the disembarkation station at Capas. Of the two stations, this one is better preserved (Figures 94 and 95). A museum was added inside the Capas train station (Figures 96 and 97) but is rarely visited. Markers were also erected outside, signifying that Capas was the final destination for the POWs in the Bataan Death March (Figures 98 and 99). The potential of these sites for pedagogy, however, is limitless. Suggestions for their possible use are discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation.

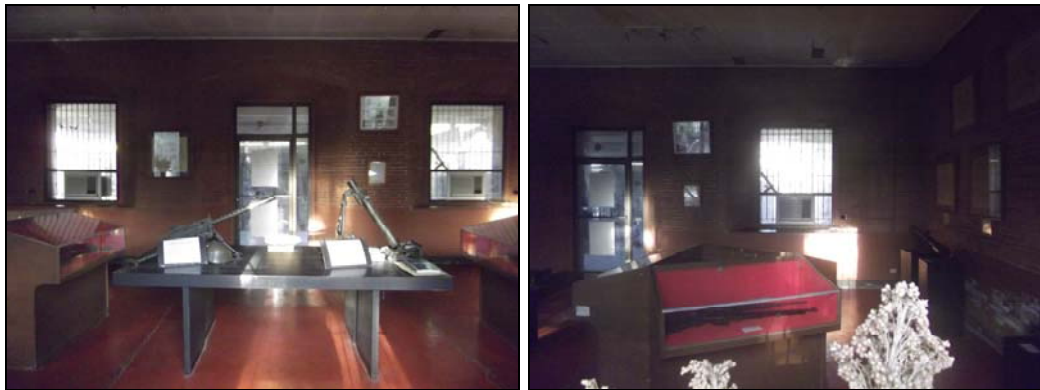
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<sup>304</sup> Federico “Fred” Baldassarre – Interview, June 26, 2008.





Figures 94 and 95: Exterior views of the Capas train station (July 2011).



Figures 96 and 97: One-room museum inside the Capas Train Station (July 2011).



Figures 98 and 99: Death March markers at the Capas Train Station (July 2011).

The careful preservation of the train station in Capas contrasts strongly with the lack of attention given to the second point of interest, the embarkation station in San Fernando in Pampanga. Although the San Fernando train station is of equal historical significance, almost no one in San Fernando pays attention to it (Figures 100 and 101 below). Although it has been suggested that the train station would be more dramatic as

ruins, its rate of continuing deterioration is a cause for concern. In the struggle for new visibilities, both stations could be included in the already extensive network of Bataan-related sites.



Figures 100 and 101: Exterior views of the San Fernando train station (July 2011).

The San Fernando train station could become the intersection point between the Bataan-related sites and the Freedom Trail. The station made a lasting impression on national hero Jose P. Rizal. A memorial plaque exists on the wall of the station in Rizal's honor (Figure 103) and a 102-kilometer marker of the Bataan Death March stands outside the station (Figures 100 above and 102 below).



Figures 102 and 103: 102 km Death March marker (left) and the Rizal plaque (right) at the San Fernando train station (July 2011). The Rizal marker at San Fernando links this network of sites to the more popular Centennial Freedom Trail, which includes Laguna, Manila, Cavite, Batangas, and Bulacan.

Baldassarre intimated that it would be a waste if such an important building is allowed to continue to decay or eventually get torn down. After having done a preliminary site survey, he is confident that the structure is sound and could easily be converted into a museum similar to the one in Capas.<sup>305</sup> This may be because, despite the Rizal marker, the station is largely unknown to a general audience. Capas claims to be the final point of the Bataan Death March; the public does not understand that the march actually terminated in San Fernando and then began again in Capas after POWs were sent there by rail. Baldassarre added that the Municipality of San Fernando is interested in the history of the train station but has been reluctant to take action out of fear of offending the Japanese who were, at the time of Baldassarre's investigation, increasing business investments in the area. The train station in San Fernando remains a site of international, national, and local contention surrounding commemoration of the Bataan Death March. Despite its historical significance, the municipality of San Fernando has not made any moves to preserve the train station. The station remains in a state of disrepair following a fire and continues to deteriorate rapidly (Figures 104 and 105).



Figure 104 and 105: Interior (left) and exterior (right) damage to the San Fernando Train Station.

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<sup>305</sup> Federico “Fred” Baldassarre – Interview, June 26, 2008.

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Americans play up the raid and rescue at Cabanatuan, reflecting their need to turn defeat into victory. On the one hand, Camp O'Donnell is technically a Bataan site. Combatants who surrendered at Bataan on April 9 were marched to Capas. On the other hand, Camp Cabanatuan is a Corregidor site. Prisoners who surrendered a month later were transferred to the Old Bilibid prison and then trucked to Cabanatuan. The O'Donnell POWs were waiting for the Corregidor internees at Cabanatuan. All the administrative mistakes such as the poor delivery of water and hygiene had been occurred in Capas. All the suffering experienced because of these ineptitudes occurred at O'Donnell. Camp O'Donnell also played host to both Filipinos and Americans who surrendered after the fall of Bataan. The Japanese dismantled O'Donnell after a month, released the Filipinos, and transferred the Americans to Cabanatuan. When Corregidor fell, the POWs from "The Rock" went directly to Cabanatuan, never having seen but only hearing about O'Donnell and the Bataan Death March. This is the imperiled memory that Gordon and those who worked with him were eager to preserve. Cabanatuan is a complete reversal of O'Donnell, embodying a sense of resilience – perhaps in part because the group on Corregidor held out longer and did not surrender, against orders. Defeat at Bataan, surrender, and suffering at O'Donnell does not reflect triumphalism and, along with all the broken bodies, is best kept buried. As a corollary, O'Donnell is marked by the state as a site of defeat. The events at Corregidor and Cabanatuan are much more triumphant, and so they are better preserved and commemorated.

Commemoration assembles the most unlikely bedfellows. In the introduction I argued that American veterans – in particular the Battling Bastards of Bataan – did not

feel they were being commemorated sufficiently. In the first section of this chapter, I articulated how Filipino veterans are overlooked but have moved to make their voices heard as well. I also described many elaborate commemorative sites and ceremonies that include both Filipinos and Americans. In the second section, I discussed how the Americans who comprise the BBB were at odds with the U.S. state apparatus as well as an entire discourse of Filipino commemoration that was seeking recognition of its own. The U.S. state propaganda machinery preferred to memorialize triumph over defeat. Somehow, in this whole complex network of assemblages and agendas, the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor assisted the BBB, since they fought together and both should be recognized. Vowing not to let a second abandonment stand in their way, people moved to preserve memories that would otherwise have been buried in text and cinema and now, thanks to this monument, will continue to be preserved in events.

## CHAPTER 4

### GLOBAL BATAAN: INTERNATIONAL ARAW NG KAGITINGAN

People memorialize significant events from their collective past. In the Philippines, for instance, several commemorations mark the April 9, 1942 surrender of the combined Filipino and American forces under General Edward P. King to the Japanese Imperial Army at Bataan. The end of hostilities one month later is also remembered each year on May 7, the day General Jonathan Wainwright capitulated in Corregidor. The seventieth anniversary of the fall of Bataan and Corregidor and the Death March was extensively celebrated in early 2012 in several venues. These commemorations recall tragic events and open up new visibilities for marginalized POWs and veterans; these rituals of remembering also reify notions of valor and sacrifice. As they have been for close to four decades, the commemoration ceremonies were held at old and new war monuments and at places where soldiers and civilians were incarcerated, killed, or buried. In these same sites, a new generation of reenactors, dressed in period costume, also commemorates by-gone military campaigns at several locations. Concurrently, Filipino, American, and Japanese men in their eighties gather together at locations in the Philippines and the U.S. where they had once been combatants in their early twenties. These players participated in rituals designed for members of a younger generation who are meant to see, hear, and remember them.

Public memorial events such as the Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor) held at the Dambana ng Kagitingan (Shrine of Valor) are orchestrated by federal or provincial governments, local city boards, or citizen groups. Involvement of the public is encouraged at such grand events. In addition, private groups such as the Battling Bastards

of Bataan (BBB) hold smaller, private remembrances. In these cases, individuals visit the burial sites of deceased relatives or comrades or pause alone for a moment of silent remembrance. Most survivors and everyday civilians are physically unable to make it to the grand spectacles or sites of private homage; many watch historical documentaries or broadcasts of the public ceremonies on television or YouTube videos to recall the past.

Bataan Death March commemorations are no exception to these forms of remembrance. Although they change in emphasis at the various *Araw ng Kagitingan*<sup>306</sup> celebrations, the web of events that commemorate the Bataan Death March construct and mobilize various meanings as a reusable palimpsest – *reusable* meaning that different significance is ascribed to a specific space by both the U.S. and the Philippine governments depending on the social and political context. In the seventy years since the actual event, books have been written, movies have been made, and monuments have been constructed in its remembrance. This ongoing interest in the historical facts of Bataan is subject to the ideological swings of the times, however. The network of independent yet loosely interrelated yearly commemorations concurrently rescues some memories while eliding others. This chapter first investigates why the *Araw ng Kagitingan*, or Bataan Day, remains a vehicle for worldwide commemoration of valor although the events at Bataan are also remembered as a time of surrender, defeat, and abandonment.

As the apex of Veterans Week, this day of surrender is commemorated by the incumbent Philippine president making a speech to both Filipino veterans and foreign dignitaries at the *Dambana ng Kagitingan* or *Paggunita sa Capas* on April 9. Ironically,

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<sup>306</sup> Formerly referred to as Bataan Day in the Philippines, a designation that is still used in many places in the United States.

the Araw ng Kagitingan memorializes the fall of Bataan rather than a victory. This modality of tragic heroism, as discussed in Chapter 3, is emblematic of a Filipino perspective on war commemoration. The Philippines has fewer victories to celebrate than the more powerful United States. Therefore, Filipinos seek a sense of martyrdom in their commemorations by primarily focusing on sacrifice; Americans prefer to see victory in defeat if they see defeat at all. Triumphalism implies that defeat is a platform for the ultimate triumph of good over evil. Commemorating defeat becomes a powerful force to reclaim local, regional, and national identities for both the Americans and the Filipinos.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how American and Filipino groups view the Bataan Death March differently. I do this by navigating through various discourses about the Death March; discourses with local, regional, national, and international implications for Bataan commemoration to understand public history moves to preserve legacies. On the one hand, Americans (the more diverse but smaller of the two groups) see the fall of Bataan primarily as the culmination of a series of moves to put Europe ahead in the war, that is, as a small part of a larger strategy whose focus is on Europe. This cynical view suggests a negative and rather bitter view of the Bataan surrender. However, there concurrently exists a textual narrative and memorializing where the U.S. also galvanized around the tragedy of Bataan and never gave up. This counter narrative is important to study because it reverses the notion that Bataan is nothing but a grim spectacle and turns a negative into something positive. On the other hand, Filipinos (the larger but less diverse group) see the fall primarily as a sacrifice. Filipinos also see themselves as brothers-in-arms to the Americans through the USAFFE and the Philippine Scouts.



Filipinos see the fall of Bataan as part of a continuing struggle against imperial powers and martial sacrifice on the altar of nationhood.

Second, this chapter demonstrates that Bataan commemoration is yet another means of redistributing what is visible for both the American POWs and Filipino combatants. These moves recall Rancière's examination of the "distribution of the sensible," which centered on his reading of an uprising at Aventine, in which the lower classes had to act in a specific way in order to make themselves seen and thus understood.<sup>307</sup> Along these same lines, I also see these remembrances as changing palimpsests altering as people not just struggle to be seen and heard but also to stay connected to the past. Andreas Huyssen uses the concept of a "palimpsest" to describe how the layers of meaning in various modern (and some not so modern) monuments and sites are read by the public. He argues that "we have come to read cities and buildings as palimpsests of space, monuments as transformable and transitory, and sculptures as subject to the vicissitudes of time."<sup>308</sup> I extend his argument by reading events along these transformable and transitory lines. Reading events as a palimpsest allows us to effect new readings of commemorative events as concurrently static (as a link to the past) and changing (in the presence of the past).

At their inception, Bataan tributes functioned simply to link community and country to the past. As long as veterans were running the celebrations, the emphasis was on remembering the event with a "lest we forget" theme and nostalgically reconnected veterans with fallen comrades. As time passed, a new generation of commemorators

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<sup>307</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 24.

<sup>308</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 7.

arose that had no experiential connection to the events being commemorated. The new generation tends to approach these events from a different perspective and effect different agendas. Nora helps explain the generational gap when he describes the function of memorializing:

Our interest in *lieux de mémoire* where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with a sense that memory has been torn – but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, [or] real environments of memory.<sup>309</sup>

With the passing of older generations, both American and Philippine citizens find this fissure with the past, the place, as Nora describes it, where “memory has been torn,” continuing to widen. Therefore, as the direct connection to the actual Bataan Death March declines, the need to prevent such slippage in memory grows.

The attempt to stay connected to the past changes further as modernity intrudes on the commemorative process. Distance, new media, and various other new developments in memorializing resituate the Bataan Death March in various imaginaries. The designation of a Day of Valor in the Philippines has a fairly recent history. The key presidential decisions were a 1980 letter of instruction from President Ferdinand Marcos followed by a 1987 Executive Order from President Corazon Aquino.<sup>310</sup> I discuss what

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<sup>309</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” in “Memory and Counter-Memory,” special issue, *Representations*, 26 (Spring 1989): 7.

<sup>310</sup> “Araw ng Kagitingan,” *Manila Bulletin Publishing Corporation*, mb.com.ph, <http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/251685/araw-ng-kagitingan>, April 8, 2010 (accessed May 9, 2012); Cris G. Ordonio and Rommel C. Lontayao, “President Commemorates 69<sup>th</sup> Araw ng Kagitingan,” *Manila Times*, April 9, 2011.

happened in the Philippines that led to these presidential commitments to commemorating Bataan and how changing war memory discourses in the U.S. and the Philippines are mobilized in Araw ng Kagitingan festivities. For example, presidential speeches given on this day sometimes only commemorate fallen Filipinos but other times honor both fallen Filipinos and Americans. The speeches also reflect local and national issues within the framework of nations and nationalisms. This chapter therefore also examines what various Philippine presidents from Ferdinand Marcos to Benigno Aquino III have done with the Araw ng Kagitingan and how meaning has been imbued in the repetition of the Araw ng Kagitingan in the Filipino, American, and even the Japanese imaginaries.

This chapter also compares the meanings of the Araw ng Kagitingan celebration in the Philippines to a transnational celebration of the Bataan Death March in the United States. Celebrating Araw ng Kagitingan has moved from being a purely national event to an international and now transnational phenomenon. In the Philippines, the Filipinos set aside the fifth through eleventh of April to celebrate Philippine Veterans Week. The highlight of Philippine Veterans Week is a presidential address to the diplomatic corps and other celebrants at the Dambana ng Kagitingan on April 9, the Araw ng Kagitingan.<sup>311</sup> American expatriates prefer to celebrate Bataan Day by visiting the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument instead of attending the commemoration at the Dambana.

In the U.S., Bataan Day celebration is now located in multiple sites, has taken on many different forms of expression, and embodies a variety of meanings. One example is

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<sup>311</sup> April 9 was originally designated the Araw ng Kagitingan in the Philippines, but the commemorative date has shifted depending on presidential whim.

the Bataan Memorial Death March marathon undertaken annually at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. In 2012, more than six thousand marchers from across America and abroad ran or walked the 26.2-mile route through high desert terrain. This ritual is performed in honor of the members of the 200<sup>th</sup> and 515<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery–New Mexico National Guard who fought, surrendered, and were then subjected to the 1942 Death March. Meanwhile, the Philippine Consulate General in Hawai‘i and members of the Hawai‘i Filipino-American community hold a small but well-attended Araw ng Kagitingan celebration every April 9 at the National Cemetery of the Pacific (the Punchbowl Cemetery) in Honolulu with a delegation of Filipino dignitaries present.

### **Kagitingan and the Araw at the Dambana: The Palimpsests of Time**

The complexity of U.S.–Philippine relations is exhibited in the annual celebrations of Araw ng Kagitingan at Mt. Samat. The celebrations usually begin with reminders of joint heroism. The Philippine government reminds the U.S. of their special relationship and its role as protector of the Philippines. The celebrations are also intended to remind the U.S. that it should not treat the Philippines as poorly as it has been treating both U.S. and Filipino veterans. The Araw ng Kagitingan testifies to the flexible mobilization of Bataan in the changing geopolitics of the Philippines and the Western imperial project in a post-9/11 world. In this section, I will outline how the Araw ng Kagitingan celebration was mobilized by particular presidential administrations through making particularly pointed statements that oftentimes elide their true intent by focusing the people’s attention on issues such as nation building and anti-corruption.

Philippine presidents from Ferdinand Marcos to Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III have made statements during the Araw ng Kagitingan that were supposed to be

exemplars of their foreign policy agenda. Intertwined in this agenda was the need for redress and recognition of the veterans. In these statements, almost every president from Marcos onward used proceedings through the veterans (dead, alive, POW, or combatant) to foster their own agenda. It is doubtful that Marcos intended this ritual to be the forum for presidents to lecture the diplomatic corps, but that has become its stated purpose. The process has become so visible to this and the previous generation that it seems almost natural for this ritual to occur, the space seemingly so logical for a giant cross, and the yearly celebration of Veterans Week so normal that Filipinos could not imagine a year without them. The Araw ng Kagitingan (and the Dambana where it is located) is, however, a new invention. The Araw ng Kagitingan (Bataan Day) did not have a permanent site until 1969. In 1964, President Diosdado Macapagal celebrated Bataan Day at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Pilar in Bataan. Echoing Cold War sentiments, Macapagal assured the U.S. that democracy is safe and that “Filipinos will fight again side by side with Americans in defense of freedom.”<sup>312</sup>

By the end of 1969, the Philippines had been ruled by President Ferdinand Marcos for three years. This was the first year that the Araw ng Kagitingan was held at the Dambana ng Kagitingan. In the presence of the international diplomatic corps (the first time they attended the Araw ng Kagitingan), President Marcos invoked a warrior and nationalistic spirit.<sup>313</sup> He called for the building of a new nation, saying, “More than the material gains which the country had made from the ruins of war, we have given the Filipino a new spirit, a new heart.”<sup>314</sup> To cover a wide demographic, Marcos quickly left

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<sup>312</sup> “Bataan Heroes Honored in Rites,” *Manila Times*, April 10, 1964.

<sup>313</sup> “Bataan Remembered... FM to Lead Samat Rites,” *Philippine Herald*, April 8, 1969.

<sup>314</sup> “FM Hails Bataan Defenders at Mt. Samat, Manila Rites,” *Philippine Herald*, April 10, 1969.

Mt. Samat to attend a memorial service at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum, where he spoke about a “warrior spirit” to a crowd of fifty thousand youths.<sup>315</sup>

Starting out a new decade of Araw ng Kagitingan celebrations in 1970, Marcos inaugurated the Dambana ng Kagitingan by shifting from focusing on the “warrior spirit” of the Philippines to working with the United States against Communism. In 1970, he spoke out against

the enemies of development [...] those who would hand us over to an alien master, would narrow down our options and deflect us from our purpose [...] They cannot disintegrate or change even against the onslaughts of alien ideologies [...] under a system which makes the state supreme over humanity.<sup>316</sup>

Marcos rewrote the palimpsest from one of nation building to a message of “partnership with democracy.”

In the transition year between U.S. President Ronald Reagan’s first and second terms, the ailing President Marcos started to see American support for his administration dwindle. By 1985 he had lost the public support of his U.S. sponsors. With the Philippines still under martial law, he decided to challenge the issue of interdependency by foisting on the public an agenda of Filipino self-reliance. That year, he started his speech by saying, “Today, our country is faced with an inescapable problem – the problem of self-reliance. Events and the promise of greater change summon us to confront head-on this problem.” He went on to distance his administration from the U.S. government by saying:

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<sup>315</sup> “FM Leads Bataan Day Rites Today,” *Manila Times*, April 9, 1969.

<sup>316</sup> Amante Paredes, “FM Hits Foes of Development,” *Manila Chronicle*, April 10, 1970, 1.

No longer must we depend on the old certainty of powerful friends coming to our aid in time of peril. It is not that we do not trust these friends. It is just that the world is changing so that they may not be able to come to our aid.

Finally, in desperation, he dug deep: “No longer can we trust our destiny to the magnanimity of our allies, nor to the concerted action of a family of nations aligned on our side.”<sup>317</sup> Two years after the assassination of Benigno Aquino, Jr. and prior to his own downfall, Marcos still waxed optimistic. The stage was set for change.

In February 1986, Corazon Aquino became the eleventh president of the Philippines and a new set of meanings was written on the palimpsest of the *Araw ng Kagitingan*. Picking up the pieces after more than twenty years under corrupt Marcos’s rule, President Aquino also used the *Araw ng Kagitingan* to forward her own version of national rebuilding. 1989 was a pivotal year for Bataan remembrance. President Aquino passed Proclamation No. 466 on September 14, declaring an annual Philippine Veterans Week every April 5–11.<sup>318</sup> In 1989, President Aquino wrote, “As we continue to march forward in pursuit of peace and progress, ‘Kagitingan, Kapayapaan, Kaunlaran’<sup>319</sup> shall be our watchword, in our ardent task of nation-building.”<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> President Ferdinand Marcos’s *Araw Ng Kagitingan* Message. *Former President Ferdinand E. Marcos*. “Ang Kagitingan at Kabataan: Sandigan ng Inang-Bayan” [Heroism and the Youth: Pillars of the Motherland]. Brochure and Presidential Message of the *Araw ng Kagitingan*, May 6, 1985.

<sup>318</sup> *2011 Observance of Araw ng Kagitingan, Philippine Veterans Week and the 50th Anniversary of World War II “Calendar of Activities.”* A brochure.

<sup>319</sup> Valor, Peacefulness, Prosperity

<sup>320</sup> President Corazon Aquino’s *Araw Ng Kagitingan* Message in the 1989 program. *Former President Corazon C. Aquino*. Brochure and Presidential Message of the *Araw ng Kagitingan* April 9, 1989.

President Aquino elevated the nation-building message at the 1990 rededication ceremony. Waxing more religious than political, she wrote, “We rededicate ourselves to continue their search and undertake their sacrifice. We cherish the memory of those whose sacrifice cost them their lives, and acknowledge with gratitude their supreme offering on the altar of country and democracy.”<sup>321</sup> Linking the sacrifice made by WWII veterans to the 1983 sacrificial assassination of her late husband, opposition leader Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., President Aquino used this venue to promote a theme of reconstruction (and their son Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III repeated the theme in a requiem at the 2011 Araw ng Kagitingan program). In 1991, after the 1990 Luzon earthquake and almost five years in office, her message of nationhood endured:

As our democracy continues to mature and readies itself for a more profound expression in our life as a nation, we must remember to pay homage to the many men and women who suffered and gave up their lives so that we may live in freedom and give substance to our democracy.<sup>322</sup>

Changing the focus from the Dambana to the Paggunita sa Capas (Capas National Shrine), the Corazon Aquino administration distanced itself from Marcos era sites and events while continuing to respect the legacy of the veterans. A shift in emphasis to the POW camp at Capas, Tarlac and support for the veterans is evident in various moves made during Aquino’s administration and afterwards, during Fidel V. Ramos’s administration. Capas was designated as the site for the shrine, and money was set aside

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<sup>321</sup> President Corazon Cojuangco Aquino’s Araw ng Kagitingan Message in the 1990 program. *Former President Corazon C. Aquino. Brochure and Presidential Message of the Araw ng Kagitingan Ika-9 Abril 1990 Souvenir Programme.*

<sup>322</sup> President Corazon Cojuangco Aquino’s Araw ng Kagitingan Message in the 1991 program. *Former President Corazon C. Aquino. Brochure and Presidential Message of the Araw ng Kagitingan Ika-9 Abril 1991 Souvenir Programme.*



for it. Aquino and Ramos expanded Veterans Day remembrances to include Capas, while continuing to hold the Araw ng Kagitingan commemoration at the Dambana ng Kagitingan, where it had traditionally been celebrated. These shifts made other WWII veterans more visible while increasing tourism to Aquino's home province of Tarlac.

According to twentieth-century war reenactor Pedro Antonio Valdez Javier, the Ramos administration wondered why the Philippines had not succeeded as a nation even after gaining its freedom from the Marcos dictatorship. While other Asian nations were succeeding economically, the Philippines experienced a steady decline. Governmental and non-governmental groups joined in research efforts to find the causes of this state of affairs. Javier said that research showed that corruption, insurgency, poverty, and lack of education were the effects, not the causes, of the economic downturn. The root cause was, according to Javier, is a lack of nationalism.<sup>323</sup> Reenactors such as Javier use unofficial means to remedy this perceived shortfall in nationalistic pride (see section below on reenactments). The government uses official means, such as making speeches at the Araw ng Kagitingan at the Dambana and building the Wall of Heroes Shrine at the Paggunita sa Capas.

In addition to the big picture issue of nation building, there also exists the narrower but ever-present dilemma of veteran redress. In a March 2001 speech, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo reminded her audience of the significance of the Araw ng Kagitingan, focusing on living up to the courage and sacrifice of “our fellow Filipinos”<sup>324</sup>:

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<sup>323</sup> Pedro Antonio Valdez Javier – Interview, May 14, 2012. Also see Fidel Ramos, *A Call to Duty: Citizenship and Civic Responsibility in a Third World Democracy* (Manila: Friends of Steady Eddie, 1993).

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

On April 9th each year, we bring back their heroism and martyrdom at Bataan and Corregidor and relate this to our own lives, for unless we find meaning in the heroism of those who died on our behalf and apply that meaning in our own time, we cannot ever hope to understand the value of their sacrifice nor aspire to measure up to their greatness.<sup>325</sup>

To her credit, President Arroyo actively sought redress for Filipino war veterans. She simultaneously affirmed Philippine solidarity with the world in combating global terrorism. The war on terror became an opportunity for the U.S. government to strengthen alliances against terrorists and the Philippine government to access benefits for surviving veterans.

In 2003, the *Araw ng Kagitingan* celebrations were assisted by the release of the Hollywood feature film, *The Great Raid* (see Chapter 2). Appropriating the episode for a Filipino audience, Defense Secretary Edgardo Batenga spoke of the film celebrating “one of the most daring and successful rescue missions in the Philippine military history.”<sup>326</sup> To inaugurate the Wall of Heroes Shrine at Capas, President Arroyo addressed a different audience than she had in the 2001. Arroyo told foreign and Filipino dignitaries,

The soldiers who fought in World War II, most of whom are no longer around, are pillars of courage and heroism; we will forever be indebted to them. This memorial that we unveil today is a tribute to them. Nothing is ever enough, however, to show our gratitude for their sacrifice.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> “PGMA’s Message on the *Araw ng Kagitingan* 2001 Anniversary,” *Office of the Press Secretary*, <http://www.ops.gov.ph/speech-2001mar26.htm> (accessed March 17, 2004).

<sup>326</sup> “Movie on Daring WWII Rescue Highlights Heroes Day Rites,” *Daily Tribune*, April 4, 2003.

<sup>327</sup> “PGMA’s Speech during the Celebration of ‘Araw ng Kagitingan’ and Veterans Week,” April 9, 2003, *Office of the Press Secretary*, <http://www.news.ops.gov.ph/archives2003/>

The wall itself reinforced her utterance:

On the wall we unveil today are inscribed the names of 32,285 gallant men who took part in the Bataan-Corregidor campaign and the Death March from Bataan to Capas [...] Each of those men, the 32,285 men whose names are inscribed in this wall, is a hero.<sup>328</sup>

She suggested their sacrifice was part of a collective effort relevant to the nation both then and now.



Figure 106: President Arroyo greeting well-wishers at the 2009 Araw ng Kagitingan celebration at the Dambana ng Kagitingan. Permission to reproduce obtained from the photographer, Corregidor resident Steve Kwiecinski.

In 2009, President Arroyo broke precedent by celebrating the Araw ng Kagitingan at the Dambana on April 7 instead of April 9. It was celebrated two days earlier because the April 9 surrender date fell on Holy Thursday that year.<sup>329</sup> Malcolm Amos was the only American Death March survivor present at the celebration in 2009. Amos was given a special seat on the stage. Ambassador Kinney gave a short non-political speech, while Ambassador Makoto Katsura offered a personal apology, similar to a previous speech in 2008, for atrocities committed by Japan against Filipinos and Americans in WWII.

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apr09.htm (accessed March 17, 2004). Quoted in Miguel Llorá, *Conclusion*, [http://mllora.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_4.htm](http://mllora.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_4.htm) (accessed June 13, 2012).

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> Steve Kwiecinski - E-mail February 4, 2012.

Through this act, the Japanese join in the contemporary discussion of Bataan. Their motivations and the act's outcomes have yet to be ascertained. However, what is clear is that the Japanese are reaching out and making an attempt at reconciliation.

While the Dambana ng Kagitingan and the ritual of Araw ng Kagitingan have been consistently used as a forum for nation building and to bring up the need to redress veteran claims, the presidential speeches have not been limited to these two topics. They also include topics such as corruption and poverty. The duality of corruption linked with poverty and these topics' appearance at Araw ng Kagitingan is a paradoxical aspect of the event. It is difficult to reconcile the contradiction of all the poverty in the country and the cost of performing these spectacles.

The Araw ng Kagitingan is full of ironies. It is a forum for presidents to speak out on a topic that is important and it is also a forum to deflect attention from themselves. The topic of choice: corruption. Some of the most corrupt administrations find it important to use this forum to foist an agenda of anti-corruption. Just prior to imposing martial law in the Philippines, President Marcos manipulated the Araw ng Kagitingan to align with his interests. In a message to the nation on the eve of Bataan Day, Marcos mentioned that he had noticed that the country was losing interest in the annual event. He infused the Araw ng Kagitingan with new meaning, stating that the nation should remember the bravery of the Bataan defenders who had fought valiantly against the better-fed and better-armed Japanese forces. He argued that Filipinos in 1970 needed the same fortitude and boldness as soldiers exhibited in 1942 to save the country from economic and political disaster.<sup>330</sup> Pointing an accusatory finger at both his political enemies, the Communist Party of the Philippines, and the Moro National Liberation

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<sup>330</sup> "A Second Fall of Bataan?" *Manila Chronicle*, April 10, 1971.

Front, he failed to acknowledge the scourge of corruption coming from within his own administration because he was an integral part of it. Despite his rallying cry, the decade that followed this speech was a dark age of Philippine politics. But Gloria Arroyo, the only holder of more than one term in office in the post-Marcos era (having taken over from an impeached Joseph Estrada), would prove to be even worse for the Philippines.



Figure 107 (left): Arrival of the Philippine vice president, armed forces chief of staff, and secretary of defense with the U.S. chargé d'affaires and Japanese ambassador, Araw ng Kagitingan, April 9, 2010. Figure 108 (right): Wreath-laying ceremony conducted at the Dambana ng Kagitingan by the Philippine vice president, U.S. chargé d'affaires, and Japanese ambassador to the Philippines, Araw ng Kagitingan, April 9, 2010. Permission to reproduce obtained from the photographer, Hubert Caloud.

Running for her full term as president in 2004, incumbent President Arroyo similarly tried to rally Filipinos around a “War on Poverty” while campaigning at the Dambana on the eve of Bataan Day. She said she would “wage war against poverty and lack of jobs.”<sup>331</sup> However, she carried on a legacy of corruption by pointing one finger at her enemies and four in her own direction, saying, “our enemies are not strangers but our own fellow Filipinos who pursue their self-interests, and not national welfare, who seek personal prosperity, and not the general welfare of all.”<sup>332</sup> The ex-President Arroyo, as of

<sup>331</sup> Benjie Villa, “GMA Declares War vs. Poverty in Araw ng Kagitingan Rites,” *The Nation*, April 7, 2004, A-18.

<sup>332</sup> Marichu Villanueva, “Our Enemy Is Ourselves – Arroyo,” *The Philippine Star*, April 8, 2004, 4.

this writing, has been arrested in a new corruption case having been served a third indictment on graft charges.

Attending the wreath-laying ceremony at the Dambana ng Kagitingan in 2010 were Philippine Vice President Noli de Castro (standing in for President Gloria Arroyo), U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Leslie Bassett (standing in for the incoming U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Harry Thomas), and Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Makoto Katsura (Figures 107 and 108 above).<sup>333</sup> The Japanese ambassador, once again, made an extended apology and expressed regrets for Japan’s actions in the war and specifically for the Bataan Death March.<sup>334</sup>

Much as had his mother, President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III positioned his administration on an anti-corruption platform. While former President Corazon Aquino located herself as an avenging angel against the corrupt Ferdinand Marcos and his army of cronies, the younger Aquino combated the lingering power of the Arroyo administration. In 2012, the seventieth anniversary of the Fall of Corregidor, the younger Aquino observed in his first speech at the Araw ng Kagitingan:

We would do well to emulate the spirit of service that they [the veterans] exhibited, especially now that we are facing new foes: corruption and poverty. [...] Our triumph in this new battle is hinged on whether or not we can display the same bravery our heroes displayed back then.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> The new ambassador to the Philippines, Harry Thomas, arrived in Manila a day after the Araw ng Kagitingan celebration in 2010. Ambassador Kenney had left in January.

<sup>334</sup> Hubert Caloud, Email, January 23, 2012.

<sup>335</sup> J.C. Bello Ruiz, “Aquino Pays Tribute to ‘Nameless’ Heroes,” *Manila Bulletin*, April 10, 2011, 17; The entire speech is also available online at <http://www.gov.ph/2011/04/09/speech-of-president-aquino-in-commemoration-of-araw-ng-kagitingan-2011-translation/>

Furthermore, with another Cold War brewing in the Pacific in 2011 as China threatened to take over the Spratly and Paracel Islands, the new President Aquino looked to old friends by proclaiming “our country has no greater friends than the U.S. and Japan.”<sup>336</sup> The implications are enormous. On the one hand, the Philippines is on the verge of engaging a heavily militarized China over the Spratly Islands and needs all the friends it can find. On the other hand, it is crises such as this one that allow Americans to strengthen their ties with the Filipinos.

In this section, I explored how the Araw ng Kagitingan transforms over time by looking at a small sample of presidential policy and agenda statements. In the next section, I will explore how new meanings are being written and rewritten through public history. The next section allows us to get a different perspective, a view from below.



Figure 109: Veterans and reenactors wearing 1942 period uniforms. Araw ng Kagitingan, April 9, 2010. Permission to reproduce obtained from the photographer, Hubert Caloud.

The 2010 Araw ng Kagitingan continued a tradition begun in 2008. Wearing 1942 period uniforms, members of the Fort McKinley Chapter of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society (PSHS) arrived in period jeeps and weapons carriers to treat the crowd to a small “living history” reenactment in the uniforms worn during the Battle of Bataan.

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

While the major Bataan reenactment took place at the old Fort Stotsenburg in Pampanga, the group has shown up at the Dambana ng Kagitingan every year since 2008 to be photographed in costume (Figure 109 above).

Living history (the act of using period costume or tools to give the viewer a sense of “living” in the past) is one way of giving veterans a new voice and visibility. Applying living history as well as reenactments to the Bataan Death March is not a new phenomenon. In 1970, two veterans (Pelagio Anobe and Guillermo Mendoza) hiked from Fort Santiago to the Dambana ng Kagitingan to attend the Fall of Bataan celebration on April 8.<sup>337</sup> In 2012, people participated in a 160-kilometer run from Mariveles, Bataan to San Fernando to mark the Death March.<sup>338</sup> Moreover, Filipinos abroad generally approve of the reenactments, whether or not they participate in them. Cito Maramba, a physician and amateur historian in the United Kingdom, told me:

I’m not a reenactor, but I view it quite positively. I feel it brings history closer to a wider audience. Here in the U.K., history is quite palpable and there is widespread awareness of the historical events of centuries ago. Even the wearing of poppies and the two-minute silence on Remembrance Day are traditions that keep history alive. We don’t even have a two-minute silence to remember our fallen warriors in the Philippines and yet our country suffered greatly during World War II. Our country has a rich history, yet most Filipinos choose to ignore it.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Nestor Cervantes, “Journalists Meet Here April 11–13,” *Sunday Times*, April 5, 1970, 9.

<sup>338</sup> The length and physical difficulty of this marathon run echoed the privation some people undergo during Holy Week celebrations of the Passion of the Christ. “160k Run Marks Death March,” *Manila Bulletin*, Mb.com.ph, <http://mb.com.ph/node/353880/160k-run-mark> (accessed May 13, 2012).

<sup>339</sup> Cito Maramba – Interview, March 31, 2012.



The PSHS and Buhay Na Kasaysayan Historical Society (BNK) both do reenactments. The PSHS and BNK reenactment ensembles are comprised mostly of amateur history buffs, some with lofty ideals and others with more quotidian aspirations. The PSHS was formed during the 1980s in the United States to honor and recognize the sacrifices of the Philippine Scouts in the war. PSHS members get actively involved in Araw ng Kagitingan events in the Philippines even if they have to travel all the way from the United States. It is therefore a transnational commemoration troupe. The BNK was also formed in the United States; many BNK members are affiliated with the PSHS. This transnational engagement is changing the landscape of Philippine historical commemoration in the United States, the Philippines, and Europe. Reenactors confirmed the potential for the growth of this undertaking.<sup>340</sup>



Figure 110 and 111: April 9, 2011. After the wreath laying ceremony at the Dambana ng Kagitingan, President Benigno Aquino III passing reenactors wearing Philippine Scouts uniforms (left). Visitors from New Mexico representing the New Mexico National Guard's 200<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery (right), making the Araw ng Kagitingan a truly international event. Permission to reproduce these figures was obtained from the photographer, Albert Labrador of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society, Fort McKinley Chapter and Buhay Na Kasaysayan Historical Society.

According to PSHS's official photographer, Albert Labrador, reenactments using airsoft guns began about three years ago, which is when reenactments started at the

<sup>340</sup> The Philippine Scouts were America's most highly trained military unit at the outbreak of WWII in the Pacific. They were awarded the first three Medals of Honor in WWII in the Pacific, one of which went to a Filipino, Mess Sergeant Joe Calugas. Gene Camposano, "Bataan Hero Remembered," *Philippine Herald*, April 10, 1971, 4.

Dambana, the Capas National Shrine, and Bataan.<sup>341</sup> Labrador told me that all kinds of war reenactments grew out of the popular airsoft hobby.<sup>342</sup> He explained:

Airsoft is like paintball but the guns are replicas of real guns. Most airsoft players choose modern military uniforms, but our group uses World War II uniforms. Some of us are children of scouts, some just like collecting military gear, others are hardcore airsoft players, but most have a deep appreciation of military history.

How do these amateur historians obtain replica guns and jeeps? Labrador said candidly:

We are self-funded. Most of this stuff comes from eBay or local tailors we have trained to produce the stuff. Some [of the members] are quite wealthy but others have skipped meals regularly just to get the gear. The other group, Buhay Na Kasaysayan, has just recently done professional reenacting funded by local governments and interested private individuals.<sup>343</sup>

To Dondi Limjenco, a newcomer to the PSHS, it is about camaraderie. The implications, however, for education and political posturing are enormous. Limjenco intimated that:

Our group has no formal affiliations, endorsements, or recognition from any government or educational institute. In fact, we're not even supposed to be a part of any of the Bataan commemoration activities. We just show

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<sup>341</sup> Albert Labrador – Interview, March 31, 2012. BNK sources have a different perspective regarding the origins of reenactments.

<sup>342</sup> The reenactment scene is experiencing an explosion in membership and popularity worldwide because of the abundance and affordability of WWII airsoft replica guns and other equipment. Many other companies in the United States, Europe, and China are producing WWII uniforms and gear worn by the main combatants in WWII.

<sup>343</sup> Labrador – Interview, March 31, 2012.

up in our duds, and everyone there assumes we're part of the official program. No one checks our ID or even asks who we are.<sup>344</sup>

Limjenco remarked: "As a group, we have no political objectives or social aims. We're just in it for the fun and the camaraderie. And the outfits." Limjenco claimed that Filipino reenactors are more focused on the game than on commemorating war: "[We] basically congratulate each other on successful games and praise each other's authenticity. We haven't actually gotten together with them [airsoft enthusiasts] for any kind of international event."<sup>345</sup>



Figures 112 and 113: Action shots from the Abucay battle reenactment at the 2012 PSHS reunion. This reunion was the first held in the Philippines (left). This set features an Imperial Japanese Army reenactment group wielding a Bren gun and replica infantry "knee" mortar (right). Permission to reproduce these photos was obtained from the photographer, Albert Labrador of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society, Fort McKinley Chapter and Buhay ng Kasaysayan Historical Society.

Despite their lack of official affiliation, Limjenco and his group are redistributing what is seen, heard, and in this case, even felt about Bataan. And, although Limjenco argues that his group is not officially connected to any government or educational institute or even any Bataan commemoration activity, he notes that "the first real historic reenactment we did was the Battle of Abucay at last year's Bataan commemoration," one of the key engagements in Bataan history. Moreover, his group is connected to at least

<sup>344</sup> Dondi Limjenco – Interview, May 12, 2012.

<sup>345</sup> Limjenco - Interview, May 12, 2012. This attitude seems similar to that of some Southern Confederate Civil War reenactors. See Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 16, 139, 143–144, 383, 387.

two commercial entities, the international WWII Asia Airsoft Association and “MD Juan, a company that specializes in manufacturing replica WWII jeeps.”<sup>346</sup> The 2012 Abucay battle reenactment was sponsored by MD Juan (Figures 112 and 113 above).

Several of the reenactors have been engaged in this activity from an early age and are likely, although in a very markedly different way, to pass on this play with history to a new generation. Limjenco has been a WWII buff since he was in grade school. Like Labrador, he started participating in reenactments only after becoming interested in airsoft replicas. Although he played airsoft for over twenty years, he said that it was only two years ago that airsoft manufacturers started making replica WWII weapons. He acquired an airsoft gun, then a uniform and other gear that matched the weapon. Limjenco said, “We pay for our own gear and equipment; part of the fun is in the collecting.”<sup>347</sup> Limjenco thought most other reenactors had gotten into reenactment the same way.<sup>348</sup> Limjenco speculated that “the future of historical reenactment in the Philippines will grow, but not rapidly or dramatically. Most of our group is aged late thirty-something to late fifty-something. A handful is under thirty. New members tend to be in their forties.”<sup>349</sup> This demographic is likely to continue being motivated to join WWII reenactments in the Philippines by the opportunity to play airsoft. As Labrador commented, “it’s amazing how this has been passed on to the next generation.”<sup>350</sup>

Other reenactors purposefully combine pedagogy with nationalism by joining reenactments. Sumaquel P. Hosalla was inspired to get involved in reenactment because it provided a forum for both learning and teaching about the war. Hosalla said:

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<sup>346</sup> For more details on Airsoft Asia see <http://ww2airsoft-asia.proboards.com/>

<sup>347</sup> Limjenco – Interview, May 12, 2012.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Labrador - Interview, March 31, 2012.

I am a public school teacher. I am teaching history class in one of the public schools here in Quezon City. The primary reason why I was attracted to join the group [BNK] is not because of reenactment, but because of the superb research that they have [done] about the Philippine Republican army uniform details: the button, pattern, and cloth that it uses is *napaka-accurate* [very accurate].<sup>351</sup>

Inspired at cerebral as well as emotional levels, Hosalla signed up:

“Wow,” *sabi ko*, “*ang ganda!*” [Wow, I said, how beautiful!] I wanted to own one [of the uniforms], *kaya sumali ako sa grupo nila* [so I joined their group]. *Ang ikalawang* reason *ay dahil sa mission, vision ng organization kung saan* it promote nationalism. [The second reason is because of the mission; the vision of the organization is that wherever we are it promotes nationalism.] *Na so sad kasi wala na sa puso at kaisipan ng mga Filipino.* [It’s so sad because it (nationalism) is lost in the hearts and minds of the Filipino.]<sup>352</sup>

While Hosalla seemed almost apologetic about his enthusiasm, fellow reenactor Pedro Antonio Valdez Javier, one of the founding members of BNK, considered reenactments almost a sacred duty. He said, “The main reason why and how reenactment started in the Philippines is because of its noble purpose.”<sup>353</sup> Javier argues for reenactments loftier aspirations, “Its vision and objectives are to promote nationalism, patriotism, heroism, and the preservation of heritage, culture, and education.”<sup>354</sup> The

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<sup>351</sup> Sumaquel P. Hosalla - Interview May 12, 2012.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Pedro Antonio Valdez Javier – Interview, May 14, 2012.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid,

BNK traces the history of reenactment in the Philippines to 2005. The Ortega brothers, sons of General Antonio Ortega, a WWII veteran, began conducting reenactments with their father at an early age. After immigrating to the United States, they joined others in reenacting events in Philippine military history and eventually formed the BNK. *Buhay na kasaysayan* means “living history.” I see the BNK’s reenactments as a mode of redistribution. Each time a battle is reenacted, the sensible is redistributed in the sense that both reenactors and viewers experience a past event. Javier claimed that

reenactors feel proud wearing the uniforms of our heroes. Subconsciously we tell people who see us to do the same as our past heroes have done for our country. Maybe not as soldiers, but being a hero in their own special way: as a good farmer, teacher, sales agent, engineer, a good father, husband or citizen, whoever you may be.<sup>355</sup>

For Javier and many like-minded reenactors and living history advocates, “reenactment is a new medium of teaching history we promote to teachers and school administrators. It’s because education will be more appreciated by students if it’s in a form of ‘edutainment,’ educational-entertainment.”<sup>356</sup> People tend to focus only on the good things that happened in history and overlook the terrible events that are also part of their past. According to Javier, he and the BNK are trying to correct this tendency. There are also many people who are fascinated with history and revel in all aspects of it. Whole communities or generations sometimes become obsessed with their impressions of what seems like a more appealing time period, so they try to recreate it in the modern world. Javier observed that “when [people] saw reenactors in uniform, they began to ask

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

questions, listen to our sharing. In short, they became open for education because they [were] entertained.”<sup>357</sup> For those engaged in this form of redistribution, traditional teaching limits history teaching to reading and memorizing books. Following a tradition initially began by the Children’s Television Workshop using shows such as Sesame Street, Javier and his group feels that taking the show out of the classroom creates new spaces for learning.<sup>358</sup>

Teaching history through edutainment is a complex issue. In *The New History in an Old Museum*, researchers Richard Handler and Eric Gable present a fascinating but disconcerting picture of places such as Colonial Williamsburg that have conflicting pedagogical missions. Although Colonial Williamsburg has made great strides since the advent of New Social (or New Left) history in the 1970s, Handler and Gable claim that the messages of social history have not been integrated into the museum’s daily practices.<sup>359</sup> The problem, they argue, is inherent within the “unexamined assumptions and entrenched cultural patterns that govern history making at Colonial Williamsburg.”<sup>360</sup> The likelihood that this same form of unreflective history rewriting is occurring in the Philippines is high.

However entertaining, one of the problems with reenactment is that it fetishizes material culture while ignoring the political implications and tragic experiences of warfare. Historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen point out that the heightened attention to detail at Colonial Williamsburg provides a sensual interaction with the past,

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 220.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 221.

but the real problem with mimesis is that it gives only an illusion of authenticity.<sup>361</sup> Echoing Civil War reenactors who fetishize buckles and patches on their uniforms, Filipino reenactors want their history to feel like history more than they want to tell a critical and compelling story. This form of history amateurism runs the risk of occluding harsher realities and keeping significant players such as POWs out of view. Acting out critical battle scenes brings attention to one aspect of Bataan, the battles, but threatens to occlude the suffering experienced by those who experienced the Death March and the subsequent incarceration.

It should come as no surprise that Hollywood has also influenced reenactments of war history. As discussed previously, war movies have had a significant effect on popular culture, particularly in renewing interest in the military, among gamers, amateur historians, and now reenactors. Limjenco said that Hollywood helped popularize airsoft and increased the awareness of war reenactment:

Our generation – this means you, too [a direct reference to me, the interviewer] – grew up on World War II movies and TV shows: *Combat*, *Battle of the Bulge*, *Patton*, etc. The eighties and nineties were about Vietnam. Today’s kids are more familiar with the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. But when *Band of Brothers* and *Saving Private Ryan* were screened, there was a distinct uptake in the sales and prices of WWII artifacts on and off eBay.<sup>362</sup>

This statement suggests that particular generations are interested in particular wars. The current generation seems most interested in the look and feel of the war in Iraq and

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<sup>361</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

<sup>362</sup> Limjenco – Interview, May 13, 2012.



Afghanistan, which explains the popularity of video games such as *Call of Duty: Black Ops*, *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3*, and *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2*.<sup>363</sup> However, when blockbuster movies about WWII are produced, the younger generation becomes interested in playing the part of earlier soldiers. Limjenco told me,

Most of the younger reenactors in our group chose to “become” U.S. paratroopers as a result, while another airsofter adopted the U.S. Rangers getup from *Saving Private Ryan*. After *The Pacific*<sup>364</sup> was aired here, a couple of guys went U.S. Marines. So if another WWII-themed movie becomes a hit, it’s bound to influence airsofters, here and around the world.<sup>365</sup>

After a brief hiatus with anti-war movies such as *Platoon*, *Apocalypse Now*, and *The Deer Hunter*, Hollywood has once again become a vehicle for recruiting young people for reenactments, airsoft, and the military.

War reenactments have become the most systematic form of commemoration for a generation that has never experienced actual warfare. Nothing like these international and transnational reenactments have occurred in the Philippines until very recently. Nothing matches these reenactments in terms of scale and commitment. Reenactments of wartime events and hiking long distances to honor those who were in the Bataan Death March appear to tap an emotional wellspring. This practice also awakens criticism and even outrage since most of the reenactors were not yet born when the events they are

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<sup>363</sup> “Most Popular War Video Games,” Internet Movie Data Base (IMDb), [http://www.imdb.com/search/title?genres=war&sort=metascore,asc&title\\_type=game](http://www.imdb.com/search/title?genres=war&sort=metascore,asc&title_type=game) (accessed May 13, 2012).

<sup>364</sup> *The Pacific*, directed by Jeremy Podeswa, et al., Los Angeles, California, 2010, DVD.

<sup>365</sup> Limjenco – Interview, May 13, 2012.

reenacting actually took place.<sup>366</sup> Seen in some quarters as sanitizing, or worse caricaturing, these reenactments are mostly seen as benign and in some cases assisting with education.

One thing that makes the reenactments of war in the Philippines unique, however, is that some of the individuals who were in Bataan and the Death March are still alive. This is quite different from reenactments of the Civil War in the U.S., where the reenactors are removed by several generations from the Civil War itself.<sup>367</sup> Living veterans in the Filipino diaspora and in the Philippines heavily influence living history and battle reenactments. The difference in how different generations participate in these annual events marks the distinction between memory and commemoration. War veterans choose to remember the war, while reenactors who have no such memories but share in their experience through their acts of commemoration. The reenactors, having been initiated into the memory of war by the people who were at the real events, keep the historical legacy of their elders visible and will pass it on to the next generation. Living veterans, such as those involved with the PSHS, engage in reenactment to challenge an increasingly apathetic world or to maintain their legacy. While reenactment includes airsoft enthusiasts and the BNK, who come to it as a hobby, the lion's share of the genesis of war edutainment still comes from a strong connection with the military.

The combination of veterans and their children in the Bataan reenactments thus forms a new nexus of commemoration. The monuments and memorials where these reenactments are taking place become sacred spaces. The modern rituals and

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<sup>366</sup> Jenny Thompson, *War Games: Inside the World of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century War Reenactors* (Washington, Smithsonian Books, 2004), xv.

<sup>367</sup> Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 110, 114, 333.

reenactments there provide the *milieux de mémoire* that people long for. Furthermore, despite having a touristic bent, the advent of well-funded and well-equipped reenactments supported by local government officials and private individuals may enable Filipinos to restructure how and what is visible regarding the Bataan Death March. In the next section, we will be looking at the ever changing configurations of Americans and Filipinos as they share and protect their respective commemoration territories.



Figure 114 (left): “Banzai” Imperial Japanese Army ensemble reenacting the Abucay battle during the 2012 reunion at Fort Stotsenburg, Pampanga. Fort Stotsenburg is the home of the 26<sup>th</sup> Cavalry of the Philippine Scouts. This reenactment was sponsored by MD Juan, the vintage-style jeep manufacturer; Figure 115 (right): April 9, 2011 – “Living History”: photograph of an assembly of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society, Fort McKinley Chapter and the Buhay ng Kasaysayan re-enactment ensemble as the presidential security guard looks on. Permission to reproduce Figures 114 and 115 was obtained from the photographer, Albert Labrador of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society, Fort McKinley Chapter and Buhay Na Kasaysayan Historical Society.

### **Expatriate Commemoration: New Visibilities and Rituals in Sacred Sites**

American state-sanctioned commemoration in the Philippines was historically relegated to sites such as the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial as well as the Cabanatuan American Memorial. Richard Gordon, James Litton, and the BBB began redistributing what was visible and keeping the legacy of those Americans who died at Capas alive by building the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument and seeing to its dedication (see Chapter 3). It has since become a site of annual commemoration for American expatriates. Americans who survived internment at Camp O’Donnell, relatives

of those who died there, and foreign expatriates who live near the former Clark Air Base in Angeles City and the now defunct Subic Naval Base close to Olongapo City all celebrate the Day of Valor at the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument in Capas. The Corregidor saga is fairly similar.

Compared to the spectacular commemorations on the Araw ng Kagitingan at the Dambana ng Kagitingan and the growing attendance at Camp O'Donnell, few ceremonies are held in memory of May 6, the day Corregidor fell. Those that do occur are nondescript and sparsely attended. Former Corregidor resident Steve Kwiecinski (whose father served on Corregidor Island in WWII) organized the first Corregidor commemoration ceremony in 2002, the sixtieth anniversary of the fall of Bataan and Corregidor. He intimated that only seven survivors attended the ceremony. The ritual of commemoration at Corregidor is proof that it is still important in Bataan-themed commemoration. When I spoke to him during my visit to Corregidor in 2011, Kwiecinski was planning to organize the ceremony on the seventieth anniversary in 2012. He did not expect any living veterans of Bataan and Corregidor to show up, however. The Camp O'Donnell Monument remains the gold standard. Most, if not all the discussion regarding American commemoration discussed in this section will reference Cabanatuan but will always return full circle to Capas and the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument.

The Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument dedication ceremony was held April 7, 2000. According to the event coordinator, Fred Baldassarre, "At around 9:45 a.m., guests began arriving to the Capas National Shrine for the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Dedication. There were seven American Bataan veterans present, along with several next

of kin.”<sup>368</sup> Although this event was organized exclusively by and for Americans, interestingly, “Filipino Bataan veterans were very well represented, arriving in large numbers. Also attending were members of VFW Post 2485, from Angeles City, Pampanga” (Figure 116 below).<sup>369</sup> Filipino veterans attended this American commemoration, hinting that veterans see O’Donnell as both an American and Filipino.



Figures 116 and 117: Filipino veterans attending dedication of the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument, Capas, April 7, 2000 (left). Major Richard M. Gordon delivering a speech at the dedication in Capas, April 7, 2000 (right). Permission to reproduce obtained from the photographer, Federico “Fred” Baldassarre.<sup>370</sup>

The dedication started with a reveille and singing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “Lupang Hinirang (Chosen Land).” The proceedings continued with several speeches (Figure 117 above).<sup>371</sup> The cross and the memorial wall were unveiled between speeches (see Chapter 3). Major Richard M. Gordon and Sergeant Phil Coon uncovered the cross (Figure 118 below).<sup>372</sup> Master Sergeant Tillman Rutledge, Staff Sergeant Oliver Allen, Master Sergeant Leroy Becraft, and Sergeant Humphrey O’Leary uncovered the wall listing the names of those who died at Camp O’Donnell (Figure 119 below).<sup>373</sup>

<sup>368</sup> Fred Baldassarre – Interview, June 21–22, 2008.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

U.S. Ambassador Thomas C. Hubbard placed a wreath on the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument and Mrs. Beth Day Romulo placed a wreath on the Capas National Shrine. The ceremony culminated with singing "God Bless America," playing "Taps," and a twenty-one gun salute.<sup>374</sup> According to Baldassarre, "After the ceremony, the attendees crowded around the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument. Those in attendance looked for names of men that they knew on the wall, examined the cross, and posed for photographers."<sup>375</sup> Symbols of national identity, such as raising flags and singing national anthems, are present in both Filipino and American war commemorations. "Taps" is played wherever members of the U.S. military are present; the twenty-one gun salute is fired when either Filipino or American military personnel are in attendance. This site is significant because it became the site where American expatriates prefer to commemorate Bataan Day. Preferring to avoid the tourists and Filipino audience at the Araw ng Kagitingan, the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument is now the center of veteran assembly. The cutting edge, however, is the island of Corregidor. Originally designed to guard the entrance to Manila Bay, this former garrison is now a tourist and historical site. It is, however, also a site of renewed connection between the Philippines, U.S., and Japan. This warming of relations between the three countries have broader implications in the contemporary. Threats by the Chinese over the Paracels and Spratley Islands have moved all three countries to reassess their relationship with each other.

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<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.



Figures 118 and 119: Major Richard Gordon and Sergeant Phil Coon salute the cross at the Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument, Capas, April 7, 2000 (left). Master Sergeant Tillman Rutledge, Staff Sergeant Oliver Allen, and Fred Baldassarre, Capas, April 7, 2000 (right). Permission to reproduce obtained from the photographer, Federico "Fred" Baldassarre.<sup>376</sup>

The declaration by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to invoke the "9-dash line" has put most of maritime Southeast Asia on the edge of war.<sup>377</sup> The "nine-dotted line," "U-shaped line," or "9-dash line" refers to the delineation line used by the PRC government on maps of the South China Sea to defend its territorial claims. The area in question includes the Paracel Islands, which are currently garrisoned by China but contested by Vietnam and Taiwan, and the Spratly Islands, contested by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The major point of contention is the alleged rich reserves of mineral resources and oil in the area. The PRC says that the territorial 9-dash line was established in February 1948. Previously, it was an eleven-dotted U-shaped line on a map that was privately published in Taiwan.

Ever since these developments, everything changed, not just for the configuration and speechmaking at both the Dambana ng Kagitingan and the Capas National Shrine but for Corregidor as well. President Benigno Aquino III decided to make his first visit to

<sup>376</sup> Ibid. In the interview, Baldassarre instructed me, as a form of documentation, to use the narrative and photos found in "The Camp O'Donnell Memorial Dedication Ceremony April 7, 2000," <http://www.battlingbastardsbataan.com/capas3.htm> (accessed June 21, 2008).

<sup>377</sup> Matthew Pennington, "U.S., Philippine Leaders Hail Growing Alliance," *MyrtleBeachOnline*, <http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2012/06/09/2876192/us-philippine-leaders-hail-growing.html> (accessed June 9, 2012).

Corregidor for the seventieth anniversary of the fall of Bataan and Corregidor – a significant shift from previous administrations. Vice President Jejomar Binay, Deputy U.S. Ambassador Leslie Ann Basset, veterans, and commanders from the Armed Forces of the Philippines Service also attended. Steve Kwiecinski (who had long been connected to Corregidor), William Sanchez (a survivor), and descendents of those who had died at Corregidor were given VIP treatment at the May 6 ceremony.<sup>378</sup> Both Sanchez and Kwiecinski were seated up front next to the speaker's dais. According to Kwiecinski, four brief speeches were made; the first by Executive Director Artemio Matibag of the Corregidor Foundation. Matibag promised to preserve the WWII history on the island. Echoing the concerns of Corregidor defender Rafael Evangelista, referred to in Chapter 2, Matibag mentioned that

Corregidor at present is again in danger from natural and man-made risks. And that is why we at the Corregidor Foundation, under the auspices of the Department of Tourism, and FAME, under the auspices of AMCHAM Philippines, are in the forefront defending to save this island's WW2 ruins/guns and relics from deterioration and desecration.<sup>379</sup>

Matibag continued somewhat sentimentally: “Our future generations deserve to see Corregidor on as is-where-is condition right now and be proud that we Filipinos take care of our historical legacy.” Matibag concluded: “We believe Corregidor is the only surviving WW2 memorial shrine in the world today that showcases original buildings,

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<sup>378</sup> William “Bill” Sanchez of Monterey Park, California, is a Corregidor and POW survivor. At 93 years old, he was the oldest surviving Veteran to return to visit Corregidor in 2012.

<sup>379</sup> Steve Kwiecinski, Email, May 9, 2012. In an email exchange, Kwiecinski instructed me to reference the source of the speech text found at <http://steveandmarciaontherock.blogspot.com/> Note to reference: capitalization for emphasis in original (accessed June 21, 2008).



facilities and gun emplacements after 1945 liberation.”<sup>380</sup> The second speech was by Filipino-American Memorial Endowment Vice President Leslie Murray, who recounted her time in the Santo Tomas internment camp. Deputy Chief of Station Leslie Bassett gave the third speech. President Aquino gave the last speech. Both Deputy Chief Bassett and President Aquino spoke about the importance of remembering the shared history of the Philippines and the United States and continuing friendship between the two nations.<sup>381</sup> For both the Filipinos and the Americans, Corregidor is still predominantly a political spot. For the same two stakeholders, the Libingan and Manila American Cemetery are places of closure.

For those seeking to mourn at the gravesites of their relatives, the first stop in their sentimental journey is the Manila American Cemetery or the POW camp at Cabanatuan. The ABMC helps next of kin find the gravesites. The staff at the Manila American Cemetery provides Americans with information on grave location and the history of those who are buried there. Visiting the cemetery helps the relatives of the deceased find some sort of closure; it thus fulfills a similar function as visiting the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand.<sup>382</sup> The sites in Capas and Bataan are marshaled for a larger agenda. Filipinos and Americans re-walk parts of the route of the Bataan

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

<sup>382</sup> Rod Beattie and other researchers at the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery are interested in working with the Manila American Cemetery staff to reconcile their war dead database. The Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, also known as the Don-Rak War Cemetery, is a POW cemetery located in the town of Kanchanaburi, Thailand. The cemetery is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, but the associated museum and research center are constructed and maintained privately. See: Rod Beattie, *The Death Railway: A Brief History of the Thailand-Burma Railway* (Kanchanaburi: T.B.R.C., 2009); Robert S. La Forte and Ronald E. Marcello, *Building the Death Railway: The Ordeal of American POWs in Burma, 1942–1945* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1993); Lynette Ramsay Silver, *Sandakan: A Conspiracy of Silence* (Kuala Lumpur: Synergy Books International, 2001), and Don Wall, *Sandakan: The Last March* (Smithfield: Alken Press, 1992).

Death March as a means of remembering the tragic event.<sup>383</sup> Aware that Filipino war veterans had not been given ample recognition for their sacrifice in WWII, the Department of National Defense came up with a plan to honor the Filipinos who had fought in Bataan and Corregidor.<sup>384</sup> One of the more malleable but resilient functions of Araw ng Kagitingan celebrations is to foster a sense of national unity. Commemorative activities on the Day of Valor in the Philippines at Mt. Samat re-inscribe imagined national communities; the same is true in the United States at the commemorative events that take place in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

### **Fighting on in New Mexico: Camaraderie, Monuments, and Marathons**

Participating in the Bataan Memorial Death March in White Sands in the United States recalls the heroism and unity of one regiment that has been adopted by a whole nation. Benedict Anderson explains that the nation

is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.<sup>385</sup>

Commemorating Bataan in New Mexico is a special case because reminiscence about the incident is not always grim and it has become the tie that binds a nation. This alternative

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<sup>383</sup> Donovan Webster, "In Their Footsteps," *Smithsonian Magazine*, <http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/smithsonian/issues04/mar04/pdf/bataan.pdf> (accessed March 17, 2004).

<sup>384</sup> Jeremy Malcampo, "A Tribute to Filipino Heroism," *Manila Times*. <http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2003/apr/08/life/20030408lif1.html> (accessed March 18, 2004).

<sup>385</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 7.

form of new visibility for the POWs and veterans focuses on a specific group of people united by the hardship they underwent in WWII. Some people remember Bataan, Corregidor, and even the Death March as containing moments in which they shone.<sup>386</sup> Soldiers experience strong emotions when facing adversity and coming close to death.<sup>387</sup> Incarceration and even ordinary starvation tests the limits of self.<sup>388</sup> Loyalty toward their brothers-in-arms also pushes people to go beyond their normal limits.<sup>389</sup> Shared hardship therefore results in lifelong bonds of comradeship.<sup>390</sup> Commonly known as the “Regiment,” the group was made up of members of the 200<sup>th</sup> and 515<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery of the New Mexico National Guard. The Regiment was comprised of approximately 1,800 men from many different ethnic and class backgrounds who fought in Bataan. This group of resilient fighters is commemorated in the Bataan Death March Memorial in Las Cruces and celebrated during the annual Bataan Memorial Death March held annually at the White Sands Missile Range.

The story of the memorial at Veterans Park is worth articulating separately because it provides insight into how public history is made and how commemoration sites are designed and built. The Bataan Death March Memorial Monument was intended to honor New Mexicans who had served in Bataan. It is the only federally funded American monument in the United States dedicated to victims of the Bataan Death March. It is located in Veterans Park along the Roadrunner Parkway in New Mexico.

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<sup>386</sup> Dorothy Cave, *Beyond Courage: One Regiment Against Japan, 1941–1945* (Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press, 2006), 83, 104, 117, 131.

<sup>387</sup> Lester I. Tenney, *My Hitch in Hell: The Bataan Death March* (Washington: Brassey’s, 1995), 42–64.

<sup>388</sup> Andrew D. Carson, *My Time in Hell: Memoir of an American Soldier Imprisoned by the Japanese in World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 1997), 36–51.

<sup>389</sup> James Bradley, *Flags of Our Fathers* (New York: Bantam Books, 2000), 64, 161.

<sup>390</sup> E. Bartlett Kerr, *Surrender and Survival: The Experience of American POWs in the Pacific, 1941–1945* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1985), 298–299.

Sculpted by Las Cruces artist Kelli Hester, it was inaugurated by John Joe Martinez and Senator Pete Domenici in April 2001.

The story of the memorial in Las Cruces is foremost a story of the personal triumph of two men. Senator Domenici had the political will and financial means to make a project like this happen. He approached Martinez, chairman of the Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Board in Las Cruces, about commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> and 515<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery. Martinez responded enthusiastically because he felt a void in not having served in the military himself. When he signed up to serve during WWII, he was classified IIIA, the designation for a married man with a child; he was also the sole support of his mother and younger sister.<sup>391</sup> He was also classified IIIA because his family had already contributed two men to military service, his maternal uncles from Tularosa, New Mexico, Sergeant Juan T. Baldonado, Jr. and Private Jose M. (Pepe) Baldonado. When Martinez explained this to Domenici, the legislator lamented that “there were no monuments of any consequence to those gallant men who suffered and died as the first line of defense against the Japanese.”<sup>392</sup> Senator Domenici stated that the veterans definitely needed a monument that portrayed men from the New Mexico contingent. Martinez and Domenici wanted to use the monument to teach the public about the sacrifice of New Mexicans at Bataan.

The genesis of the design for the monument came from Martinez’s memories of his uncles’ stories about fighting the Japanese in the Philippines. With the United States

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<sup>391</sup> Llorca, *Remembering and Forgetting the Bataan Death March in Memorials*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_3.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_3.htm) (accessed June 6, 2012).

<sup>392</sup> John Joe Martinez, Email, June 21–22, 2008. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations in this section are from this communication; and, this quote was also referenced in Llorca, *Remembering and Forgetting the Bataan Death March in Memorials*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_3.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_3.htm) (accessed June 6, 2012).

increasingly involved in the war in Europe, there was negligible assistance available for a National Guard Unit from New Mexico. They had First World War equipment and uniforms and very limited food and medical provisions. The unit combined with Philippine guerrilla forces, tried to make every shot count, and rationed their food.

Martinez explained:

History records that Clark Field [where the Baldonado brothers were stationed] in the Philippines was bombed by the Japanese on December 8, 1941. However, due to the International Date Line, it was actually just a few hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The scene was much the same at Clark Field.<sup>393</sup>

The story becomes more personal, as he shared that his

Uncle Juan never said very much to me of those events but Uncle Pepe and I were very close...their story is simple. They were happy young New Mexico boys [like others in the 200<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery] that had never left the state for very long except [to visit] neighboring El Paso [Texas]. To have the honor of a tour in the Philippines was incredible.<sup>394</sup>

Then,

much like Pearl Harbor, to wake up to the sound of Japanese Zeros strafing the airfield and destroying their aircraft was mind boggling. They grabbed anything that could shoot and began firing at the Zeros trying to protect whatever aircraft that was left, but to no avail. After the attack ended, they deployed into the jungle to regroup and figure out what to do

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

and how to do it...Uncle Juan was sick from the beginning, suffering from malaria, and dysentery. Uncle Pepe vowed to take care of his brother.<sup>395</sup>

Martinez initially wanted to represent an event reported in the book *Beyond Courage* by Dorothy Cave, when “Pepe Baldonado, carrying his sick brother on his back, ‘walked barefoot with blisters on that hot pavement, till finally the blisters broke and [he] was walking on blood.’”<sup>396</sup> Then Martinez “envisioned three men walking and stumbling along that horrendous highway of death. Two American soldiers and one courageous Philippine soldier was our thought.”<sup>397</sup>

Senator Domenici then asked him, in his capacity as financier of this exercise in making the 200<sup>th</sup> and 515<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery of the New Mexico National Guard visible to New Mexicans, “If we were to put together a plan to federally fund a monument for these men, where should it go?”<sup>398</sup> Martinez replied that it should be in Las Cruces since so many of the American soldiers captured at Bataan were from southern New Mexico. Senator Domenici then said, “You put the project together and I’ll try to get it federally funded.”<sup>399</sup> Martinez agreed on condition that “the two faces of the American soldiers [would be] the faces of my uncles.”<sup>400</sup> Martinez was delighted to do something for his uncles and their comrades who believed they had been let down by their country. Martinez also insisted on including a Filipino soldier in the statue.

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> Martinez quoted from Cave, *Beyond Courage*, 179.

<sup>397</sup> Martinez, Email, June 21–22, 2008; and Llorca, *Remembering and Forgetting the Bataan Death March in Memorials*, [http://mllorca.com/bataan\\_virtual\\_tour/bataan\\_3.htm](http://mllorca.com/bataan_virtual_tour/bataan_3.htm) (accessed June 6, 2012).

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid.

Martinez began working on the design. It needed to be both personal and universal. He needed to bring a new visibility to both his uncles and all the marchers. When he and his wife Arlene were touring Washington, D.C. in 1998, he suddenly envisioned how the “Bataan” soldiers should be standing (Figure 15):

With three soldiers: the one on the left [with the face of Uncle Pepe] with the WWI helmet, with eyes of steel is looking down the road watching for guards and any impending danger; the one in the middle [with the face of Uncle Juan] being carried is downtrodden and just grateful to be alive and at times almost wishing he wasn't; the one on the right is the Filipino soldier [with the face of Command Sergeant Major Gilbert Canuela] and he's looking over his shoulder to see if any danger is approaching from the rear.<sup>401</sup>

Martinez approached local sculptor, Kelli Hestir, to make the statue. According to Hestir's notes, the three men “look back to what has passed, down to what is present, and ahead to what might be.”<sup>402</sup> The final monument included footprints leading to and from the statue (Figures 120 and 121 below). Hestir said, “The footprints are symbolic of the many soldiers who began the march and the few who finished. The impressions were made from the feet of those who survived.”<sup>403</sup>

Largely, the 200<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery combatants had been left out of the larger Bataan Death March commemoration and story. Senator Domenici, wishing to remedy this elision, contacted Martinez. Martinez in turn asked that his uncles, the Baldonado

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> “Bataan Death March Memorial,” United States Army, <http://www.army.mil/media/115126> (accessed May 24, 2012).

brothers, become the focus of the monument. The New Mexico players reinvented themselves as “speaking beings sharing the same properties as those who would deny them these.”<sup>404</sup> Here was an opportunity for the Baldonado-Martinez family to cement its legacy, much as the BBB did by building a memorial at Camp O’Donnell. The story of the creation of the memorial site in New Mexico is an example of the resilience of popular remembrance over state-sanctioned commemoration.

In August 2001, Martinez assembled a Bataan Memorial Committee, including representatives from the White Sands Missile Range, Holloman Air Force Base, retired military personnel, television and radio personalities, journalists from the Las Cruces and El Paso press, community leaders, and city and county officials. The assemblage decided that the best time to unveil the monument would be on the sixtieth anniversary of the Bataan surrender, April 9, 2002. The unveiling coincided with the annual Bataan Memorial Death March at the White Sands Missile Range and the dedication of Highway 70 East to Alamogordo, which Senator had designated the Bataan Memorial Highway.



Figure 120 (left): Original caption: “For riders on the SR the Bataan Death March Memorial will bring back memories. Heavy fog covered the park leaving the men alone.”<sup>405</sup> Figure 121 (right): Photo Credit: Ms. Linda Douglass (IMCOM). The Bataan Death March Memorial.<sup>406</sup>

<sup>404</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 24.

<sup>405</sup> “Veterans Memorial Park Las Cruces, New Mexico,” *Run for the Wall*, [http://rftw.org/forum/forum\\_posts.asp?TID=2372&title=veterans-memorial-park-las-cruces-nm](http://rftw.org/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=2372&title=veterans-memorial-park-las-cruces-nm) (accessed, May 24, 2012).



Martinez said, “The events of that incredible day are sometimes hard to remember.” At the beginning of the ceremony, Monsignor John Anderson of the Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces gave a blessing. Martinez said,

The crowd was quiet and listened intently as speaker after speaker spoke of the gallant men and their ordeals enduring those years as prisoners of war. [Then the entire crowd] walked to the monument while a color guard lowered the storm flag to half staff. Kelli, Senator Domenici, and I methodically unveiled the statue to joyous applause.

John Schutz played “Taps” as the flag was lowered. Four F117-A Stealth fighters screamed over the crowd flying north to south. As they flew over the park, one of the Stealth fighters left formation and flew straight up in “missing man” formation, designating remembrance of the dead. Martinez closed by saying, “The color guard folded the flag and presented it to me and I in turn presented it to the City where it is now on display at City Hall.” The ceremony culminated an hour later with all the dignitaries and survivors of Bataan meeting at the corner of U.S. Highway 70 and Travis to formally dedicate the Bataan Memorial Highway. Commemoration of Bataan has taken place every year since at the Bataan Death March Memorial, including a re-dedication ceremony on its tenth anniversary in 2012. These commemorative activities coincide with the annual Bataan Death Memorial March at White Sands Missile Range.

The White Sands Missile Range annually hosts a memorial march, which is also to remember the contingent of 1,800 New Mexicans who fought and died in the Battle of Bataan or suffered the arduous Bataan Death March. This mode of commemoration,

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<sup>406</sup> “Bataan Death March Memorial,” <http://usarmy.vo.llnwd.net/e2/-images/2010/03/25/67920/> (accessed, May 24, 2012).

which brings its own brand of new visibilities to the POWs and veterans, began in 1989 at Las Cruces. The Army ROTC Department at New Mexico State University began organizing a march as homage to the 200<sup>th</sup> and 515<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery.<sup>407</sup> Because it had so deeply impacted families in New Mexico, the ROTC candidates decided to commemorate the event. In 1992, White Sands Missile Range and the New Mexico National Guard expanded the march into an annual marathon which is run at the missile range.

The Bataan Memorial Death March focuses on the 200<sup>th</sup> and 515<sup>th</sup> Coast Artilleries defense of the Bataan Peninsula and the island of Corregidor. Along with the other combatants at Bataan, New Mexicans fought in a malaria-infested region and survived on half- or quarter-rations with minimal medical help. They were armed with outdated weapons and had minimal air support. On April 9, 1942, approximately 75,000 combatants surrendered in Bataan. Among those were members of the New Mexico National Guard. Memorial marchers either follow a 15.2-mile course or 26.2-mile course, both of which provide a physical challenge. The challenge is intended to emulate the hardship faced by those in the original Death March of 1942.

The twenty-third annual Bataan Memorial Death March in 2012 coincided with the seventieth anniversary of the fall of Bataan. The city of Las Cruces also rededicated the Bataan Death March Memorial that year. One might think that commemorating a commemoration would lead to the monument instead of the historical event being remembered by the public. But this is not the case at Las Cruces. The fighting spirit of the New Mexican Regiment lives on at the Bataan Death March Memorial and in the Bataan Memorial Death March.

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<sup>407</sup> “The Bataan Memorial Death March, March 30, 2008,” <http://buyrumballs.com/bataan.htm>, (accessed June 14, 2012).



Figure 122 (left) and Figure 123 (right): Survivors of the Bataan Death March in attendance at the 2011 Bataan Memorial Death March. Permission to reproduce obtained from Lisa Blevins of the White Sands Missile Range.

Approximately 7,000 people attended the 2011 and 2012 memorial march at White Sands (Figures 122 and 123 above, as well as 124, 125, and 126 below).

According to Lisa Blevins of the White Sands Missile Range, sixty-one percent of registrants were civilians and thirty-nine percent were military. They came from all over the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The top five states were New Mexico (31%), Texas (26%), Arizona (7%), Colorado (6%), and California (4%). Fifty-nine people were either from or stationed in countries other than the United States: Canada (42), Honduras (5), Korea (5), Mexico (4), and Germany (3).<sup>408</sup>



Figure 124 (left): *Las Cruces Sun-News*, March 25, 2012, photographer Shari V. Hill. Original caption: “A large group of marchers make it through mile eight of the Bataan Death March on Sunday as a total of 6,786 participants brave the heat of the New Mexico desert at White Sands Missile Range and endure the 23rd annual event commemorating the trek to prison camps in 1942.”<sup>409</sup> Figure 125 (right): *Las Cruces Sun-News*, March 25, 2012, photographer Shari V. Hill. Original caption: “Service men and women and civilian marchers move in packs at a fast pace Sunday as they walk and jog through mile nine of the 26.2-mile marathon at the 23rd annual Bataan Memorial Death March.”<sup>410</sup>

<sup>408</sup> Lisa Blevins, Email, May 2, 2012.

<sup>409</sup> “23rd Annual Bataan Death March,” *Las Cruces Sun-News Media Center* (website), March 25, 2012. Available at: <http://photos.lcsun-news.com/2012/03/25/23rd-annual-bataan-death-march/#name%20here> (accessed May 24, 2012).

<sup>410</sup> “23rd Annual Bataan Death March,” *Las Cruces Sun-News Media Center* (website), March 25, 2012. Available at: <http://photos.lcsun-news.com/2012/03/25/23rd-annual-bataan-death-march/#3> (accessed May 24, 2012).



Figure 126: *Las Cruces Sun-News*, March 25, 2012, photographer Robin Zielinski. Original caption: “Survivor Ben Skardon, 93, of Clemson, S.C., takes the final steps of his eight-mile trek during the Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands Missile Range on Sunday. ‘I’m weary,’ Skardon said when asked how he felt at the end it. Walking to the right of Skardon is Spc. Ryan Bradley, a medic at WSMR.”<sup>411</sup> Permission to reproduce Figures 124, 125, 126, and 129 (below) obtained from the *Las Cruces Sun-News*.

Questions come to mind while contemplating these monuments and memorial activities.

Why do people commemorate tragedy? Do they want to recall the anguish and terror of the past or explain the present? People such as Martinez who design and construct monuments say that they want future generations to learn from the past. As Martinez stated, “We’re doing this to help educate the children and the new residents who have come to live here [in] the past ten years who may not know the history of Bataan.”<sup>412</sup>

The public rededication ceremony was among numerous activities commemorating the anniversary of the Bataan Death March in 2012. Many of the events were free to the public, including two history seminars sponsored by the New Mexico State University’s Army ROTC unit, a chance to meet seventeen survivors of Bataan, and a screening of the movie *Forgotten Soldiers*.<sup>413</sup>

Both the Bataan Death March Memorial and the Bataan Memorial Death March honor an elite fighting group that stuck together under extreme duress. Their *esprit de*

<sup>411</sup> “23rd Annual Bataan Death March,” *Las Cruces Sun-News Media Center* (website), March 25, 2012. Available at: <http://photos.lcsun-news.com/2012/03/25/23rd-annual-bataan-death-march/#18> (accessed May 24, 2012).

<sup>412</sup> “Preps Begin for Bataan Memorial March,” *kasa.com*, [http://www.kasa.com/dpps/news/military/preps-begin-for-bataan-memorial-march\\_4106602](http://www.kasa.com/dpps/news/military/preps-begin-for-bataan-memorial-march_4106602) (accessed June 9, 2012).

<sup>413</sup> For more information please refer to <http://www.wv2scouts.com/>

*corps* is something ordinary people can relate to. A sense of unity is engendered through commemorations such as a rededication ceremony for a monument and annual marathons. According to the Bataan Memorial Death March website,

Marchers come to this memorial event for many reasons – personal challenge, the spirit of competition or to foster *esprit de corps* in their unit. Some march in honor of a family member or a particular veteran who was in the Bataan Death March or was taken a prisoner of war by the Japanese in the Philippines.<sup>414</sup>

Lorraine Ontiveros of Las Cruces said,

It's a great time, a special time. Being out there with so many people, and learning about the significance of Bataan, it can really get to you. I know, because it got to me when I walked in [the march] two years ago.<sup>415</sup>

No matter what their individual motivation for joining commemorative activities, participants honor the New Mexican Regiment that served in the Philippines. These activities connect the monument site to the site of the memorial march and link both places to a wider network of Bataan Death March commemorative sites worldwide.

### **International Bataan: Mabuhay from Corregidor, Aloha from Hawai‘i**

The Araw ng Kagitingan celebration in Honolulu is unique because of its truly international inter-connectivity. Closely tied to the Philippine government, the annual celebration is run by the local Filipino consulate, renewing the connection between the

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<sup>414</sup> VFW Veterans of Foreign Wars, “White Sands Missile Range 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bataan Memorial Death March, 25 March 2012,” MWR White Sands Missile Range (website). Available at: <http://www.bataanmarch.com/r09/history.htm> (accessed May 24, 2012).

<sup>415</sup> Quoted by Steve Ramirez in “Preparations Begin for Bataan Memorial Death March,” *Albuquerque Journal*, Available at: <http://www.abqjournal.com/main/2012/03/16/abqnewsseeker/preparations-begin-for-bataan-memorial-death-march.html> (accessed May 22, 2012).

Philippines to the U.S. through Hawai‘i every year. In terms of its impact as a site of new and continuing visibilities for the veterans, the annual celebrations in Honolulu most impact the Filipino veterans in Hawai‘i. Its effect, from a geopolitical standpoint, is national, international and transnational.

Whether in the United States or the Philippines, annual commemorations of the fall of Bataan and the subsequent Death March emphasize the courage of the soldiers who fought at Bataan. During the *Araw ng Kagitingan* celebrations in Honolulu, the tragic event is thus formally remembered as “The Sacrifice of the Fall of Bataan and Corregidor.” It is commemorated at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl.<sup>416</sup> The event is not widely publicized, but it is attended by the elites from the local Filipino, American, and local communities, Filipino American veterans, American Armed Forces, and Filipino representatives from the Philippines. The commemoration is a solemn event with an emphasis on the past but its effects are felt in the present.

Those attending the commemoration gather around a rock acquired from the Malinta Tunnel in Corregidor. The rock was inaugurated in 2006 during a visit from President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of Philippine-American Friendship. The rock recalls the sacrifices and valor of American and Filipino soldiers who fought side-by-side in WWII (Figures 127 and 128 below).<sup>417</sup>

In a similar fashion to the *Araw ng Kagitingan* celebrations in the Philippines, this “glocalized”<sup>418</sup> annual event is attended by various dignitaries. They may include

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<sup>416</sup> “Araw ng Kagitingan,” *Manila Bulletin*, April 9, 2009.

<sup>417</sup> The rock literally cements the event as a transnational phenomenon despite the irony of commemorating the Bataan surrender with a symbol from Corregidor.

<sup>418</sup> “Glocal” combines the words “global” and “local.” It refers to entities that think in global terms but work within a local framework or setting. Jeffrey Brooks and Anthony Normore,

representatives of the Philippine government and Consular Corps of Hawai‘i, the governor of Hawai‘i, mayor of Honolulu, chief of staff and other officers of the U.S. Pacific Command (U.S. PACOM), veterans, and Filipino community leaders. The annual celebration is organized by the Philippine Celebrations Coordinating Committee of Hawai‘i along with the WW II Fil-Am veterans and Ladies Auxiliary, Hawai‘i Chapter, the Philippine Scout Veterans Organization of Hawai‘i, the First Filipino Infantry, U.S. Army, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The U.S. PACOM provides all the military accoutrements for the ceremony. The commemoration provides a forum for political elites to reify their connections to the local community. Speaking to a narrow but influential sector of the Filipino-American population in Honolulu (Filipinos are now the second largest ethnic group in the state), short speeches by politicians and the diplomatic corps are almost mandatory.<sup>419</sup> After the speeches, the dignitaries lay wreaths at the marker.



Figures 127 and 128: The Philippine Memorial Marker from the Malinta Tunnel at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, April 9, 2012 (left); Inscription thanking Philippine Consul General Ariel Y. Abadilla, April 9, 2012 (right).

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“Educational Leadership and Globalization: Literacy for a Glocal Perspective,” *Educational Policy* 24 (1) (2010): 52–82.

<sup>419</sup> Ben Gutierrez, “Filipinos Now Second-Largest Racial Group in Hawaii,” *Hawaii News Now*, <http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/14926806/filipinos-now-second-largest-population-group-in-hawaii> (accessed May 16, 2012).

The 2011 Araw ng Kagitingan commemoration in Honolulu was attended by Hawaiian state senators and representatives, giving much needed gravitas to the celebrations where, now, attendance by the diplomatic corps, similar to the commemoration in the Philippines, seems almost mandatory. Remarks in the 2011 Araw ng Kagitingan commemoration in Honolulu, which also included local consulate staff, that remind the audience of valor in defeat – bringing Filipino commemoration troupes back to its mandatory glorious sacrifice – while renewing ties with the U.S. Deputy Consul General Paul Raymund Cortes opened with the following remarks:

Today we celebrate and commemorate the heroism of thousands of Filipino and American soldiers who undertook a 100 km march from Bataan to Capas, Tarlac in the Philippines 69 years ago. Sixty-nine years for a historian is a short memory, but for many of our youth and even among some of us, it is generations away from their perspective, a remote blur in their consciousness, a nebulous gas of seemingly inconsequential events in the past. [...] But remembering the events that transpired 69 years ago serves to remind us all, especially those who will inherit the geopolitical realities of today, that the lessons of history (hackneyed as it is) are never meant to be forgotten, rather meant to inculcate an urgent sense of learning...and for those for whom we entrust our successes of today so that we may put to heart that which serves to enlighten us with the heroism of others and how their valor can shape us to be better souls for our country and for the world.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Deputy Consul General Paul Raymund Cortes's opening speech at the 69<sup>th</sup> Araw ng Kagitingan ceremony. Text was provided via an E-mail he sent me on April 17, 2012.



Bringing the past into the present and the global into the local, Cortes echoes the boldness of Philippine presidents in their speeches at Araw ng Kagitingan events. Commemoration results from both individual and collective needs to situate oneself and one's community in the largest possible milieu. The Araw ng Kagitingan celebration at Punchbowl every year brings the Bataan story around full circle. It brings all the players together in one venue whose meaning changes with the palimpsests that, in their layers, are the event. Assimilating oneself to the past and making it one's own allows one to unite with a larger community of celebrants both locally and globally.



Figure 129: *Las Cruces Sun-News*, March 25, 2012, photographer Norm Detlaff. Original caption: “Dust floats through the air at White Sands Missile Range from the feet of thousands of people as they forge ahead during the 2009 Bataan Memorial Death March.”<sup>421</sup>

<sup>421</sup> “Special Edition 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Death March,” *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Sunday, March 25, 2012, 1A, 2A. Available at: <http://www.pageturnpro.com/Texas-New-Mexico-Newspaper-partnership/30222-Bataan-2012/index.html#1> (accessed May 24, 2012).

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The various public celebrations of a shared history enable people to reenact and experience past events even where there are fewer and fewer living who retain a memory of those events. By bringing people together in commemoration and enabling them to share the emotions experienced by soldiers in the past, the Araw ng Kagitingan ceremonies, reenactments of battles, and commemorative rituals at various sites strengthen ties.

Araw ng Kagitingan participants perform a shared tradition on the stage of the Dambana ng Kagitingan. Their social interactions are ideologically produced in such a venue. Concurrently honoring fallen Americans and Filipinos at the smaller Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument (near the much larger Paggunita ng Capas) affirms a shared history while Americans struggle for a space of their own in the Philippines. Publicly valuing the sacrifice of those now dead, these celebrations further bind the living together in an international imagined community (Figure 129 above).

## CONCLUSION

Wars on the textual history of Bataan are still ongoing. In an interview, Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor National Commander, Attorney Rafael E. Evangelista, told me about a five-year project that University of the Philippines historian Ricardo Trota Jose began in 2010 to record memories of Bataan. By allowing Jose to interview the veterans, the Defender's goal, said Evangelista, is to "weave into the grand narrative the perspective of the Filipinos and Filipino soldiers."<sup>422</sup> According to Evangelista, Jose has already audiorecorded over 300 interviews and completed over 500 written oral histories."<sup>423</sup> This project's goal is to revise the Bataan story from a Filipino perspective. Countering the desertion narrative so prevalent in works like Whitman's *Bataan: Our Last Ditch*, these interviews and oral histories explain that Filipinos did indeed help delay the Japanese movement through the Pacific. In this sense, there is no longer a Filipino versus an American point of view, but a history including Filipino contributions.

The hegemonic textual narrative about Bataan and the Death March was exclusively American. Even the Filipino contributions from Carlos P. Romulo were patently American-centered. The chronological American textual narrative – challenged early on by the Dyess report – had no room for the POW experience. The hegemonic narrative was also problematized through POW memoirs and autobiographies. One way to challenge textual narratives, and in the process save perilous memories, is to enshrine a legacy in stone. The spatial contestation of the textual narrative is what occurred in the Camp O'Donnell site. Places such as Capas, Tarlac reflect a struggle for visibility and

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<sup>422</sup> Rafael Evangelista – Interview, July 13, 2011.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

voice in a spatial realm. This discursive challenge is a political one.<sup>424</sup> While the Filipinos built the Capas National Shrine to save their legacy, the BBB built Camp O'Donnell Memorial Monument to save the memory of their sacrifices from being lost forever. The current political and economic climate in Asia is allowing the smaller countries to assert themselves, giving new impetus to a collective vision of the past. To take advantage of these geopolitical developments, I suggest that a possible next step be an edited version similar to *Perilous Memories*. This will only be the start of a Bataan Death March history wars. This can be accomplished by mimicking the work done by Takashi Fujitani et al., in *Perilous Memories*,<sup>425</sup> the Filipino, American, and Japanese scholars, I suggest, should get together and rescue Bataan memories in a similar fashion to the 1995 fifty-year anniversary of WWII conference. Another space of contention (or possibility for new visibilities) is cinematic.

Cinema influences how people decide to take part in a war effort. *Back to Bataan* persuaded its audiences to agree with the Office of War Information (OWI). The same criteria that were previously demanded of *Back to Bataan* also operated on *The Great Raid* even though the OWI no longer exists. In Chapter 2 I discussed how cinematic depictions, fictive narratives in both *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* engender a sense of objective reality. Concurrently, the internal contradictions of *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* were subjected to decoding,<sup>426</sup> which revealed a thwarted fable.<sup>427</sup> The

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<sup>424</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (London: Continuum International, 2004), 85.

<sup>425</sup> Takashi Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, eds., *Perilous Memories: The Asia Pacific War(s)* (Duke University Press, 2001).

<sup>426</sup> Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (New York: Routledge, 2003), 507-517.

<sup>427</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables*, trans. Emiliano Batista (New York: Berg, 2001), 11.

emancipated spectator can make up his or her own mind, making the theaters yet another battleground for new history wars.

Films are effective to the degree that people become emotionally attached to their depictions. But only by leaving out important information can films evoke a preferred emotional reaction. *Back to Bataan* excludes real Filipinos as well as American POWs to display an American perspective and sustain victory. Emotions work the same way with elisions as they do with visibilities.

According to Robert Rosenstone,

Among the many issues to face in learning how to judge the historical film, none is more important than the issue of invention...If we can find a way to accept and judge the inventions involved in any dramatic film, the omissions, the conflation – that make history on film so different from written history.<sup>428</sup>

Then, films power can be harnessed, rather than a tool of the hegemony, but for new visibilities for alternative challenges. Rosenstone's suggestion to address this dilemma is experimental films.<sup>429</sup> Although I fully accept Rosenstone's critique of Hollywood's codes of "realism,"<sup>430</sup> my research has led me to accept another genre that is also inherently limited but shows great promise: the documentary. The solution to the hegemonic reification by mainstream films such as *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid* is to make more personal films, movies similar to two currently making the rounds in

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<sup>428</sup> Robert A. Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 67.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*

theaters, consulates, archives, libraries, and institutions of higher learning both in the Philippines and the U.S.: *Forgotten Soldier* and *An Untold Triumph*.

*An Untold Triumph: The Story of the 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments, U.S. Army* is the narrative of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiments who fought to reclaim the Philippines in WWII.<sup>431</sup> In search of the American Dream, over 150,000 Filipinos immigrated to the U.S. between 1906 and 1935. Troubled by discrimination and the Great Depression all along the west coast of the U.S., thousands of Filipinos settled in low paying jobs in agriculture and in the service industry. December 7, 1941, changed all that. The war provided the opportunity for Filipinos to reclaim the Philippines while concurrently proving their loyalty to America. The Army created a regiment known as “California’s Own.” Narrated by Lou Diamond Phillips, *Untold Triumph* is the story of four men from Northern California. It provides a more accurate and comprehensive narrative than those provided by *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid*. This documentary serves the same function that Rosenstone argues an experimental film does. This documentary “does not make the same claim on us as the realist film. Rather than opening a window directly onto the past, it opens a window onto a different way of thinking about the past.”<sup>432</sup> Documentary offerings like *Untold Triumph* and *Forgotten Soldiers* challenge mainstream realism in a way never before anticipated by those helping the veterans to save their legacy.

Donald Plata, the producer and director of *Forgotten Soldiers*, maintains that the objective of the film is to make visible the absent or “forgotten” stories of the Filipino

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<sup>431</sup> *An Untold Triumph: America’s Filipino Soldiers* won the Best Documentary (Blockbuster Audience Award) at the 2002 Hawaii International Film Festival. “Untold Triumph Tells the Tale of Filipino Soldiers,” *Starbulletin.com*, <http://archives.starbulletin.com/2002/11/08/features/index8.html> (accessed June 14, 2012).

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

soldiers who served as the United States Army's Philippine Scouts. The motivation for creating this film, however, is to tell a story that is uniquely Filipino. Plata argues that "historically, everyone knows about the experiences of minorities in the U.S.

Military."<sup>433</sup> As Plata explains,

There are many materials about the Tuskegee Airmen, Navajo Code Talkers and even the Buffalo Soldiers, but when it came to the Philippine Scouts, there was practically nothing! So I decided, while the veterans are still with us, to do the research and make my own.<sup>434</sup>

*Forgotten Soldiers* recalls the Philippine Scouts' involvement in the Battle of Bataan and the subsequent Death March. The documentary begins with the order of Roosevelt to MacArthur to abandon the Philippines for Australia to plan his counter-attack. The result of this exit, of course, was the abandonment of close to seventy thousand Filipino and American militia to the Japanese Imperial Army. The documentary, also narrated by Lou Diamond Phillips, includes ten oral histories of survivors who share their experiences at the Battle of Bataan, the siege on Corregidor, and the subsequent Bataan Death March.

The movie is so new that no DVD has been released, nor are there opportunities for private showings. The only way to view *Forgotten Soldiers* is to attend one of the scheduled public showings. According to the movie's writer Chris Schaefer, "The diplomatic corps in Manila came out to see Platinum Multimedia's new documentary film *Forgotten Soldiers* at Manila's Teatrino Greenhills Theater on April 10." After several stops in the United States, including a showing at the Philippine Consulate here in

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<sup>433</sup> Mikhail Lecaros, "Movie Review: 'Forgotten Soldiers' Documentary Sheds Light on the Philippine Scouts," *GMA News Online*, April 21, 2012. <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/255756/lifestyle/reviews/movie-review-forgotten-soldiers-docu-sheds-light-on-the-philippine-scouts> (accessed June 6, 2012).

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*

Honolulu, the Philippines premiere of *Forgotten Soldiers* “was sponsored by the Ortigas Library Foundation and the Lopez Memorial Museum and Library.” Much like the Araw ng Kagitingan, the Manila showing included members of the diplomatic corps, making it something of an elitist gathering.<sup>435</sup> However, a week after the premiere, to make the movie accessible to a wider audience, the Ortigas Library Foundation hosted an additional showing, giving viewers who failed to gain entrance to the sold-out premiere a second chance.<sup>436</sup>

*Forgotten Soldier* is yet another opportunity for the reenactors to provide their “living history.”<sup>437</sup> Aside from the Teatrino Greenhills showings, a private showing of *Forgotten Soldiers* was held by producer Donald Plata at Clark Field as part of the annual reunion of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society (PSHS). As discussed in Chapter 4, the PSHS, along with the Buhay Na Kasaysayan Historical Society (BNK), is at the forefront of Filipino war reenactment.<sup>438</sup> The reunion and the showing are noteworthy because it was the first time the Philippine Scouts have formally gathered in the Philippines since WWII.<sup>439</sup> Museums have also been involved with *Forgotten Soldier* showings and

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<sup>435</sup> Chris Schaefer, “Diplomatic Corps Attends Forgotten Soldiers Philippines Premiere,” news release, *Platinum Multimedia*, personal communication, June 5, 2012.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid.

<sup>437</sup> Lecaros, “Movie Review: ‘Forgotten Soldiers,’” <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/255756/lifestyle/reviews/movie-review-forgotten-soldiers-docu-sheds-light-on-the-philippine-scouts> (accessed June 6, 2012).

<sup>438</sup> Tonette Orejas, “Kin of Pinoy Hero Seek Return of US War Medal,” *Inquirer News*, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/174065/kin-of-pinoy-hero-seek-return-of-us-war-medal> (accessed June 15, 2012).

<sup>439</sup> Tonette Orejas, “Doing Justice to ‘Forgotten Soldiers’: Manila-born US Navy Vet Worked Six Years on Documentary Film of Philippine Scouts, Heroes of WWII,” *Inquirer Central Luzon*, April 17, 2012, <http://entertainment.inquirer.net/36951/doing-justice-to-%E2%80%98forgotten-soldiers%E2%80%99> (accessed June 6, 2012).



displays. The Ortigas and Lopez libraries made available collections of WWII artifacts and memorabilia to display in the Teatrino lobby.<sup>440</sup>

Such artifacts, I argue, should either return to the Ortigas museum or be situated at the envisioned San Fernando museum. The cutting edge of Bataan spatial resistance is to perform historic preservation and reclaim the San Fernando train station. Two taxi-tricycle rides – the first one to the existing but closed museum at the disembarkation point that is the Capas train station, and the second one to the non-existent museum-to-be at the embarkation area at the San Fernando train station – forever altered my perspective on Bataan. The tricycle drivers are keepers of the kind of pedestrian knowledge that only truly local people know, and even they found it difficult to locate the completed Capas site. Conversely, despite its travails and seeming relegation to the dustbin of history, the drivers were extremely knowledgeable about the ruins of the San Fernando station. What this tells me is that San Fernando is alive and well in the psyche of the locals of San Fernando. It would be a shame to see this site, although it is dramatic as a ruin, slide into the dustbin of history without giving it the honor it deserves. At the very least, the locals in San Fernando deserve better.

In terms of spatial analysis, this study has shown that the most logical course of action is to preserve the historic site at San Fernando and turn it into a museum. Nevertheless, and despite my seemingly bullish attitude about this endeavor, I am cautious about it, and because I see Bataan-based museums as a new contact zone, a heterotopia. In *The Museum as a Way of Seeing*, Svetlana Alpers argues that if you take a piece – usually a cultural artifact – and display it in a museum, the process alters the way

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<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

the item is viewed.<sup>441</sup> To Alpers, an item placed in a museum is “dead”<sup>442</sup> to its original cultural context and it becomes merely an “object of visual interest.”<sup>443</sup> Marianna Torgovnick makes a similar argument in *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives*<sup>444</sup>: “At the turn of the century, museums displaying primitive objects resembled department stores during a clearance sale.”<sup>445</sup> The arguments of both Alpers and Torgovnick center around the displacement of objects in a way that redefines their meaning.<sup>446</sup> In the case of the emplacement of war relics in this train station, I both agree and disagree with Alpers and Torgovnick. On the one hand, there is a real need to keep the legacy alive; many of the artifacts relating to Bataan are disappearing, so they need to be preserved. On the other hand, there is the risk that “displacing” these objects will allow them to be used to reify the mentality that spawned the military reservations. However, if they are actively mobilized, these artifacts have the potential to fundamentally alter the Bataan commemorative landscape by serving as new objects of visibility. The relics need to be preserved so they can be discussed. It was uncertain what kind of attention the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument was going to create. Today, the monument is a space for expatriate Americans to commemorate the Bataan dead. Moreover, the Paggunita sa Capas now has a special visiting day set aside during

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<sup>441</sup> This section appeared previously in Miguel Llorca, “Citizenship, Memory, Public History, and Cinematic Geopolitics,” <http://www.mllorca.com/AmSt319FA11.htm> (accessed June 15, 2012). Note: This and several other passages used in this dissertation previously appeared in “AMST 319 America, Hawai‘i, and World War II,” a webpage designed and used for a Fall 2011 class of the same name at UH Mānoa.

<sup>442</sup> Svetlana Alpers, “The Museum as a Way of Seeing” in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven Levine (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 25.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> Llorca, <http://www.mllorca.com/AmSt319FA11.htm> (accessed June 15, 2012).

<sup>445</sup> Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 75.

<sup>446</sup> Llorca, <http://www.mllorca.com/AmSt319FA11.htm> (accessed June 15, 2012).

Veterans Week, in effect sharing the spotlight with the Dambana ng Kagitingan. It is this type of attention that veterans, citizens, and even reenactors can expect out of the San Fernando train station reclamation.

Effectively, as Alpers claims, the discourse and meaning making capacity of an object alters the moment its function in culture changes to an object of art.<sup>447</sup> Of course, the museum at the Dambana ng Kagitingan does not host art objects as such. However, as Alpers further suggests “museums are perhaps not the best means of offering general education about cultures.”<sup>448</sup> Despite Alpers’ contention, in the Philippines, aside from libraries, the museum is still the most trusted place where students of history look for authority.<sup>449</sup> And, although things are changing in the United States with the advent of the more democratic New Left History, in the Philippines a museum’s traditional position in relation to its viewers is still intact. The construction and use by the BBB of the San Fernando site would provide the opportunity for multi-faceted war pedagogy to occur.

But museums are not just spaces of education – they are spaces of ideological promotion.<sup>450</sup> According to Carol Duncan,

The Louvre, once the palace of the kings, was reorganized as a museum for the people, to be open to everyone free of charge. It thus became a

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<sup>447</sup> Stuart Hall, “Encoding, Decoding”; and Michel Foucault, “The Lives of Infamous Men” in *Power (The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol. 3)* (New York: New Press, 2001); Llorca, <http://www.mllorca.com/AmSt319FA11.htm> (accessed June 15, 2012).

<sup>448</sup> Alpers, *The Museums as a Way of Seeing*, 30.

<sup>449</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 21, 22, 91, 169, 183.

<sup>450</sup> Carol Duncan, “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship,” in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven Levine (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 88–90.

powerful symbol of the fall of the *ancien regime* and the creation of a new order.<sup>451</sup>

What is really interesting for anyone interested in public culture and history is opening the discussion to concern the museum as a place or space rather than limiting the discussion to the museum pieces.<sup>452</sup> Similar to the other sites of commemoration discussed in this dissertation, museums are sites where of ritual.<sup>453</sup> Moreover, nowhere is the issue of national narratives more prevalent than in the debate on war and war artifacts. The cases of *The West as America*<sup>454</sup> and *The Crossroads*<sup>455</sup> were problematic and subject to public debate because they challenged cherished national narratives. Situations such as this are fitting opportunities for institutions such as the Former President Fidel Ramos's Peace and Development Foundation to promote its agenda of the need for stronger nationalism and nation building. One suggestion would be to take Bataan-related artifacts out of the attics and personal collections of dying veterans and bringing them to San Fernando. A new museum combined with old artifacts will not only bring new visibilities for the veterans but will also cause a change in "layperson/public" study.<sup>456</sup> However, unless the activities of the museum curators and even the Bataan reenactors are guided by institution of higher learning such as the National Historical Institute, it is

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<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>452</sup> Llorca, <http://www.mllorca.com/AmSt319FA11.htm> (accessed June 15, 2012).

<sup>453</sup> Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," 100.

<sup>454</sup> Steven Dubin, *Displays of Power: Controversy in the American Museum from the Enola Gay to Sensations!* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 159.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>456</sup> Gunther von Hagens, "On Gruesome Corpses, Gestalt Plastinates and Mandatory Interment," in *Body Worlds: The Anatomical Exhibition of Real Human Bodies*, ed. Gunther von Hagens and Angelina Whalley (Heidelberg, Germany: Arts and Sciences Press, 2006), 267–273.

unlikely that a new “museum ethos” will develop.<sup>457</sup> Unless an assemblage comes together in new and dynamic ways, there exists the danger that the conventional attitude towards “knowledge” will remain.<sup>458</sup> Filipinos and Americans need to ride the “tidal wave of (new) museum studies,”<sup>459</sup> that has been developing over the past twenty years. Beth Lord mobilizes Foucault’s “heterotopography”<sup>460</sup> to the museum:

Museums continue to display conceptual orders, and to leave the adequacy of those orders open to contestation. The museum is a space for the visitor to reflect upon the order of things and the problem of the adequacy of representation. [...] The visitor is invited [...] to bring other interpretations to bear [...] Foucault’s museum is not a funereal storehouse of objects [...] but an experience of the gap between things and the conceptual and cultural orders in which they are interpreted.<sup>461</sup>

In the United States, museum scholars indulge in notions of the collecting subject,<sup>462</sup> participatory design,<sup>463</sup> and critical pedagogy.<sup>464</sup> Further, these same practitioners look for a multiplicity of interpretations<sup>465</sup> and interpretive communities.<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> Lawrence Burns, “Gunther von Hagens’ Body Worlds: Selling Beautiful Education,” *American Journal of Bioethics* 7(4) 2007: 12.

<sup>458</sup> Randolph Starn, “A Historian’s Brief Guide to New Museum Studies,” *American Historical Review* 110, no. 1 (2005): 8–9.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>460</sup> Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias,” trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1967/1986).

<sup>461</sup> Beth Lord, “Foucault’s Museum: Difference, Representation, and Genealogy,” *Museum and Society* 4, no. 1 (2006): 6–7.

<sup>462</sup> Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992), 1–8, 167.

<sup>463</sup> Gustav Taxen, “Introducing Participatory Design in Museums,” *Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conference* (Toronto, Ontario: Centre for User Oriented IT Design, 2004).

<sup>464</sup> George Hein, “The Constructivist Museum,” in *The Educational Role of the Museum*, ed. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (London: Routledge, 1999), 73–78.

<sup>465</sup> Sharon MacDonald, *Behind the Scenes at the Science Museum* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2002), 220.

These terms and their usage reflect a museum community influenced by the New Left and public history. Taking in the recent celebration of Rizal's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Rizal Library at the Ateneo de Manila University, I observed that Filipinos are still working on object-oriented displays.<sup>467</sup> However, without the spaces we call museums, there would be no display to critique.

The museums in the Philippines can be much more than spaces of pedagogy. They have the potential to be spaces of contention and identity politics. Museums are “powerful identity-defining machines.”<sup>468</sup> Museums are, I posit, actually a neutral space – they are what we make them – and they are spaces of pedagogy as well as spaces of identification and sites that host objects of visual interest. In a postmodern world, museums (much like monuments and the events performed ritually around them) are palimpsests of meaning. And without museums the landscape does not provide much for the beginnings of politics or discourse.<sup>469</sup> Therefore, I suggest that the Philippine and San Fernando governments, as well as the U.S.-based private interests as represented by the BBB and the State represented by the ABMC, join once again in an unlikely assemblage and combine their resources to save the San Fernando station.

According to Nico Frijda, “commemorations are rituals.”<sup>470</sup> The Araw ng Kagitingan is no exception. The annual commemorations at the various sites during Veterans Week and the week's culmination at the Araw ng Kagitingan “[provide] order,

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<sup>466</sup> Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *The Educational Role of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1999), 13–15; 22; 44–51; 70; 37–145.

<sup>467</sup> Kris Danielle Suarez, “Ateneo Kicks off Celebrations to Commemorate Rizal's 150th,” June 18, 2011, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/lifestyle/06/18/11/ateneo-kicks-celebrations-commemorate-rizals-150th> (accessed May 31, 2012).

<sup>468</sup> Duncan, *Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship*, 101.

<sup>469</sup> Llorca, <http://www.mllorca.com/AmSt319FA11.htm> (accessed June 15, 2012).

<sup>470</sup> James Pennebaker, Dario Paz, and Bernard Rime, eds., *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspective* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997), 110.

coherence, or stability.”<sup>471</sup> However, the Araw ng Kagitingan does not just provide order, coherence, or stability; as a ritual it also provides social significance in a communal environment.<sup>472</sup> Frijda argues that these citadels of continuity “are transition rituals.”<sup>473</sup> In much the same way that I have described the Araw ng Kagitingan as a palimpsest of time, the celebrations’ integrity is both strengthened and coming undone. Since its inception, the event has been a vibrant annual spectacle – like a birthday or anniversary – which suggests that this event may survive the test of time. Each president can place a unique stamp on it by “writing” a different meaning on the palimpsest, which both erases the former meaning and will be erased by the future meaning. President Benigno Aquino III is starting to appear in places like Corregidor (see Chapter 3). Moreover, ever since his mother, former President Corazon Aquino, began work on Capas, the Dambana ng Kagitingan’s role as the premier site of WWII commemoration has ended.

The Americans as well as the Filipinos are reconfiguring the commemoration landscape in the Philippines. The building of the Camp O’Donnell Memorial Monument gave the American veterans and expatriates a place to celebrate Bataan Day. According to Edmund Leach, “Rituals are actions that say things; at the same time they are actions that do things.”<sup>474</sup> What are the Americans saying and doing at Camp O’Donnell? What are the Filipinos doing in Capas and Corregidor? Americans prefer to commemorate in smaller groups and venues like Camp O’Donnell because the site focuses on American veterans. In this way, American veterans and expatriates do not just build their new visibilities, they also perform them. The American veterans have found a space as well as

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<sup>471</sup> Ibid., 111. Note: Frijda quotes from Frits Staal, *Rules without Meaning: Rituals, Mantras and Human Sciences* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid., 114.

a voice of their own. The Filipinos are in Capas and Corregidor, on one level, to escape a haunting Marcos legacy. In Capas, the Aquinos are free to re-invent themselves while spatially and ritually redistributing the visual, the auditory, and the performance. Finally, the problems of historical edutainment have largely gone unexamined by Filipino or Philippine studies scholars. As a suggested future area of study, I recommend a more thorough examination of how entertainment impacts what is visible and how it changes the learning landscape.

What does the future hold for commemoration in the Philippines? Like the unexpected appearance of the reenactors at the Araw ng Kagitingan, the construction of new monuments, the inclusion of new rituals, the showing of new films, and the writing of new books, many factors contend to reshape the future of Bataan commemoration. The possibilities are truly endless.



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