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## *Educational Activity*

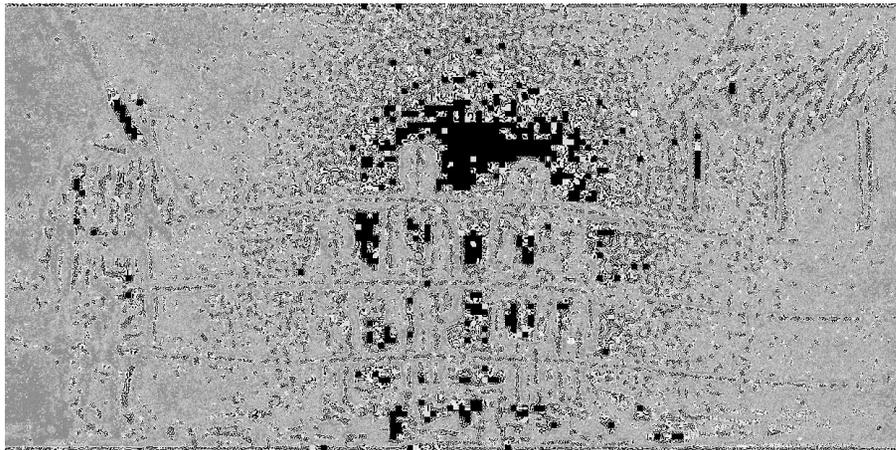
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# Behind **b**arbed **W**ire

## Japanese Internment Camps in the Philippines, 1941-1945

More than 60 years ago, over 5,000 civilian men, women and children were imprisoned in internment camps following Japan's occupation of the Philippines during World War II. A three-year struggle for survival ensued as these internees endured crowded living conditions, disease, limited medical supplies, heavy labor, tension, uncertainty, and near starvation.



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Japanese Internment Camps in the Philippines, 1941-1945

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## The Philippine Islands

The Philippines is an archipelago made up of over 7,000 islands and islets. Located off the Southeastern coast of the Asian mainland, the Philippine islands have long been an active trading center and cultural crossroads for East and West. By the 1930s the capital city, Manila was known as the *Pearl of the Orient*.



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#### Prewar Philippines – May 1898 - July 1941

The United States' victory over Spain during the Spanish-American War gave the United States (U.S.) sovereignty over the Philippine Islands. Over the next few decades businessmen, teachers, missionaries, miners and professionals flocked to the Philippines making it their new home.

*The longer I stay here, and the more I learn of the Islands and the people, the more certain I become that the acquisition of these islands will prove to be a great piece of good fortune for our country.*

- J.R. Howard

#### The Spanish-American War

War with Spain opened in May 1898 with the destruction of the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, Philippines. American ground forces arrived that summer and swiftly defeated the Spanish forces in a staged battle. Spain's surrender resulted in the U.S. annexing the Philippines.



Battle in Manila Bay

*Collier's History of the Spanish-American War*



Insurgents taking oath to the U.S., 1901  
*Howard Collection, MacArthur Memorial Archives*

#### The Philippine Revolution

Philippine nationalists pushed for the independence of the Philippine Republic and took up positions around the City of Manila. On February 4, 1899 a U.S. outpost killed two Filipinos approaching their lines. The fight had begun. In just a little over a year, campaigns destroyed organized resistance, but a long and bloody guerrilla war followed until 1905.

#### American Imperialism and The Tydings-McDuffie Act

The U.S. Government implemented a policy of benevolent assimilation. The influx of American "colonialists" began almost immediately. By the 1930s the U.S. decided to grant the Philippines its independence. The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 set a timetable for Philippine independence in 1946.



Colonialists and U.S. soldiers with family  
*Howard Collection, MacArthur Memorial Archives*



Signing of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, 1934

*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

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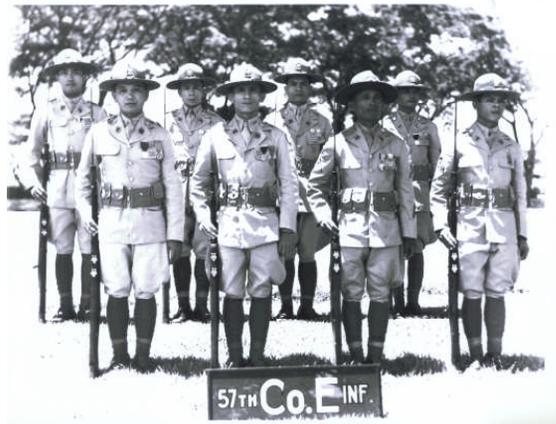
Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the Japanese proceeded to attack the Philippines and quickly moved in to occupy the islands. In less than a month, the Japanese captured most of the Allied civilian population and placed them in internment camps.

*The world was aflame with blazes of war uncontrolled, and we were at the very center of the conflict.*

- Eva Nixon, Quaker Missionary

### Rumors of War

Japan's Expansionist Policy in China and Southeast Asia prompts a U.S. defense build-up in the Philippines. While many in the Philippines are in denial about the prospects of war, others take action and plan for the worse.



57<sup>th</sup> Company Infantry Philippine Scouts  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

Many in U.S. strategic circles doubted the Philippines were capable of defending themselves, however, General MacArthur believed in his Philippine Army and the striking power of the U.S. Army Air Corps' new B-17 bomber.



Japanese in Shanghai  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

Militarist Japan embarked upon a policy of conquest and annexation of Chinese territory in the 1930s.



Elks Club, Manila  
*Earl Short Collection, MacArthur Memorial Archives*  
Many did not want to think about war and

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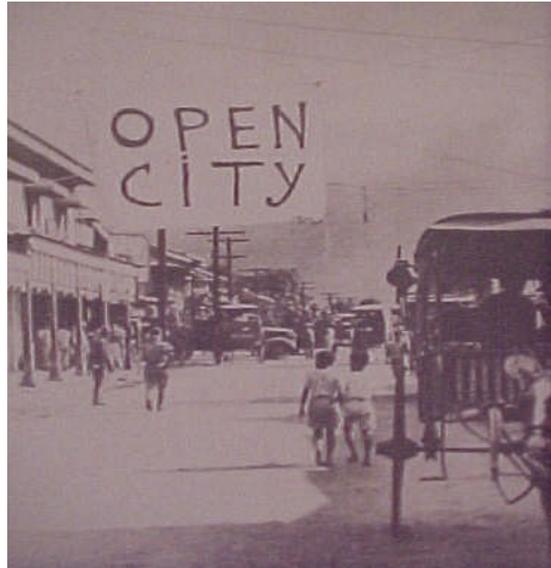
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## Japan Attacks

Japan's devastating bombing attacks on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines isolate the archipelago from American aid.



On December 24, 1941 MacArthur declares Manila an open city.  
*Courtesy of the National Archives*

On December 22, 1941, the Japanese land on Lingayen Gulf. The U.S. and Filipino forces retreat into the peninsula of Bataan and the island fortress of Corregidor leaving the allied civilians at the mercy of the Japanese invaders.



Filipino refugees head for Manila, December 1941  
*Courtesy of the National Archives*

The afternoon of December 8, 1941 the Japanese attack the U.S. air base at Clark Field. Two days later the U.S. Navy facilities at Cavite on Manila Bay were bombed. Over 2,000 casualties were suffered in those first few days.



Island of Corregidor with Bataan in background  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

The withdrawal into the Bataan Peninsula and the island of Corregidor was very successful. The Japanese would now have to overcome a firmly entrenched foe that was set to hold on to the bitter end.

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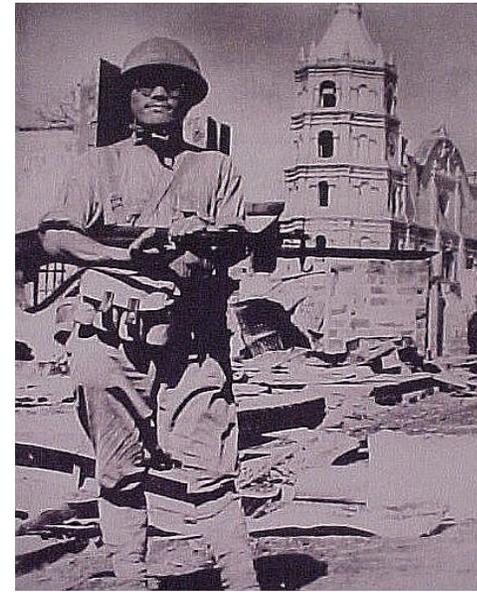
## Falling in Line

The defeat of U.S. and Filipino forces in the Philippines resulted in over 5,000 Allied Nationals being interned.



Allied civilians fall in line, 1942  
*Courtesy of the U.S. Army*

All over the islands Allied civilians were rounded up for internment by their Japanese occupiers. Most complied with the round up. Others tried to hide, but were either captured or found life in hiding too stressful. Many believed they were only to be taken for a short period, but it was the beginning of three years of uncertainty.



Japanese soldier in Manila, ca. 1942  
*Courtesy of the U.S. Army*

Japanese forces quickly established control over Manila on January 2, 1942.



General Wainwright broadcasts surrender in the Philippines, May 1942  
*Courtesy of the U.S. Army*

American and Filipino forces on Bataan and Corregidor fought on against all odds until MGEN Edward King surrendered Bataan for humanitarian reasons on April 9, 1942. LGEN Jonathan Wainwright did the same for Corregidor and the entire Philippine archipelago on May 5, 1942.

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## Japanese Internment Camps in the Philippines, 1941-1945

### Life in Captivity – January 1942 - February 1945

The captured civilians realize they are in a unique situation. Immediate adjustment to the overcrowded conditions, camp organization and Japanese rules are necessary for their survival. As the war drags on the internee's spirits are low and resources become scarce. Each day is an agonizing battle to stay alive.

*... the future ceased to exist, and life became simply a succession of days and nights, moving along as in a procession.*

-Frederic Stevens

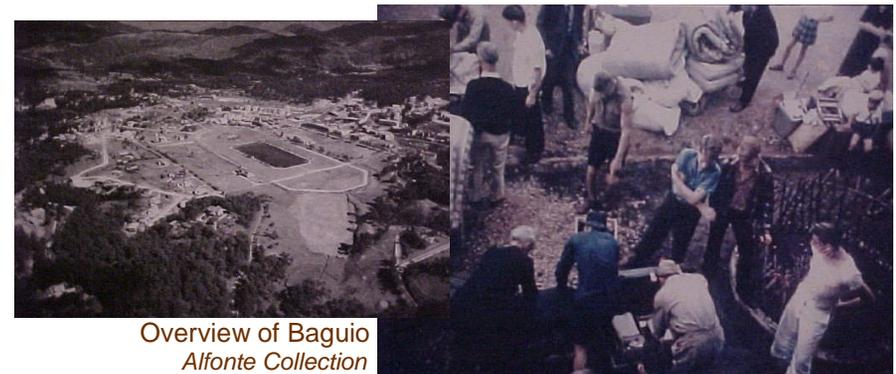
### "We Can Afford to Be Generous" - 1942

Internment Camps were established by the Japanese throughout the Philippines. The largest were the University of Santo Tomas and Camp Holmes in Baguio.



Food kitchen in Santo Tomas  
Courtesy of the National Archives

Founded as a University in Manila in 1611, Santo Tomas was the largest internment camp in the Philippines. Internees were required to feed themselves and were not allowed to leave the grounds without permission. The food problem necessitated the creation of a



Overview of Baguio  
Alfonse Collection  
MacArthur Memorial Archives

Japanese inspect internees' luggage upon arrival in Baguio  
Courtesy of Mrs. Irene Miller Brownin,

Allied residents in Baguio were made to walk the five miles to the U.S. Army post at Camp John Hay. Like Santo Tomas, the internees were responsible for feeding themselves, but unlike Santo Tomas the Baguio internees had no Red Cross to support them. In April 1942, the camp was moved to Camp Holmes, a former Philippine Constabulary post a few miles outside of Baguio.



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## Day after Day - 1943

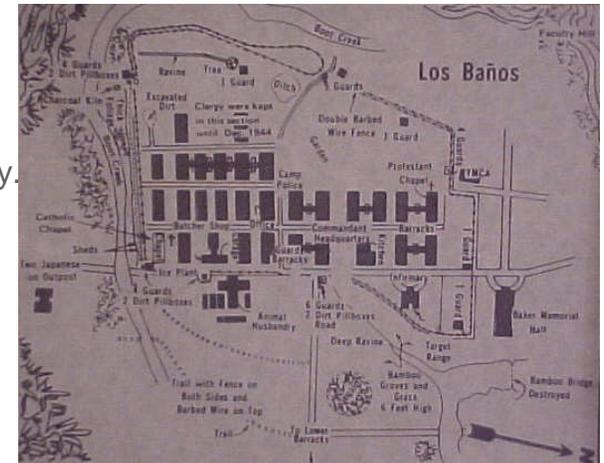
As internees from throughout the islands were concentrated on the island of Luzon a new camp was created at Los Baños to handle the overflow. Life in captivity was a constant pursuit of some type of normalcy.

The influx of people and continued support of the Filipino population for the internees made the Japanese consider moving the entire camp to the countryside in early 1943. Los Baños on Laguna de Bay was chosen. The site was found to be totally inadequate for the needs of nearly 5,000 people, therefore, the Japanese modified their plans. On May 9, 1943, the Japanese “requested” that 800 Santo Tomas internees volunteer for removal to Los Baños to help build facilities to hold future shipments of internees.



Gymnasium, Santo Tomas  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

The Baguio internees at Camp Holmes were forced to live day-to-day unknowing of their fate, but unlike Santo Tomas and Los Baños where camp commanders were indifferent or even harsh, Baguio was run by a sympathetic man named Rokuro Tomibe. Between November 1943 and May 1944 his presence made life much less tense than at the other camps. He allowed Filipinos to bring food in the camp and allowed picnics outside



Plan of Los Baños  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

By 1943 the internees were looking for anything to keep their minds active and off the thought of food. Many talented people were interned. They were responsible for great variety shows and plays that entertained the internees and raised spirits immensely. Shows were held in front of the main building at the campus in what was called the “Little Theater under the Stars.” Radio, plays, quiz games - they were all means to pass the time and try to bring happiness to everyone. Records played over the loudspeaker were often very effective in relaying news or portraying the mood of the camp.



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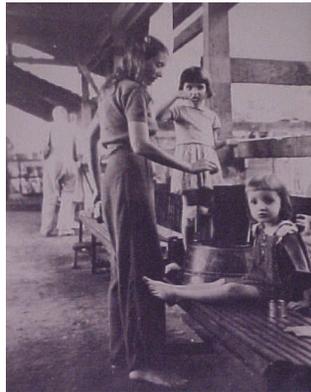
## Educational Activity

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## Race against Starvation

The Japanese military took control of all camps and food distribution in 1944. The fortunes of war had turned against Japan. The care of the internees became a low priority. Malnutrition and starvation were balanced out by the euphoria of American planes in the skies over the islands.



Dinner at Santo Tomas, ca. 1945  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

The package line at Santo Tomas were discontinued when the Japanese Army took over the camp in early 1944. They decided that they would handle the food supply and it failed. By the end of the year people were dying of malnutrition and starvation at both Santo Tomas and Los Banos.



Remains of executed POWs, Palawan Island, 1945  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

By late 1944 the internees in Los Banos and Santo Tomas were becoming fearful not only of starvation, but extermination as well. Their fears were not unfounded. On the island of Palawan in December 1944, Japanese soldiers killed 150 U.S. POWs. At Santo Tomas in December 1944, camp leaders Cornell O'Connell, A. F. Dunscombe, and two others, F. F. Johnson and O. J.



Old Bilibid prison in Manila, Philippines, 1945  
*Courtesy of Mrs. Irene Miller Browning*

As the tide of war turned against the Japanese the decision was made to move the internees from Baguio to Manila. Baguio was too close to where MacArthur was expected to return at Lingayen Gulf and the Japanese were flooding the area for their final defense. The internees were put in trucks a few days after Christmas 1944 and carted off to Old Bilibid Prison in Manila.



US Navy SBD Dive Bombers  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

September 21, 1944 was the day that U.S. Navy dive bombers appeared over the islands. As MacArthur's forces moved closer, land-based B-24's of the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force became a welcome site to internees. The excitement and rumors amidst the camp had a healing quality - "If I can only hold on for a little while longer they will be here."

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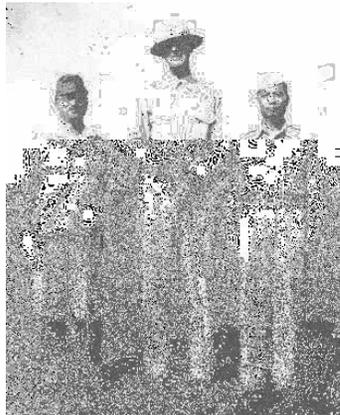
### True or False

### Word Search

## Waiting for the Aid

For three years the only question on the lips of most Filipinos was, "When will the Aid arrive?" MacArthur's organization of guerrilla forces in the islands prepared for his return to the island of Leyte on October 20, 1944.

General Douglas MacArthur's driving force in World War II was the fulfillment of his pledge "I Shall Return." He took great interest in fostering the guerrilla movement in the Philippine Islands. The Philippine Section of his intelligence branch coordinated, organized, and supplied recognized guerrillas in all the islands. Radios, munitions, equipment and food were brought in by submarine along with specially trained spies and saboteurs.



Manuel Roxas in captivity with  
Major General Sharp  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

Upon his escape from the Philippines in March 1942 MacArthur said "I Shall Return," meaning he would lead U.S. forces back to liberate the islands. His New Guinea campaigns served as stepping stones from Australia back to the archipelago. On October 20, 1944 MacArthur and U.S. forces under General Walter Krueger's 6<sup>th</sup> Army Command went ashore on the Philippine Island of Leyte. The camp loudspeaker at Santo Tomas blurted out "Better Leyte than Never," to let the camp know the news.



Major Robert Lapham, guerilla  
leader - Luzon  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

The Japanese Occupation was a time of divided loyalties for the Filipinos. There were those who welcomed the Japanese, but other like the *Makapili* were firmly pro-Japanese and feared by all as informers. Most Filipinos, however, remained pro-American and waited desperately for "the Aid" of MacArthur's return. Manuel Roxas was a popular politician before the war who was captured on Mindanao in May 1942. After a short stay in prison camp he retired to Manila. He did not reject the Japanese but he did not help them. Dr. Emigdio Cruz, physician to Manuel Quezon, was sent to Manila to see if Roxas was a collaborator. Cruz reported he was not. Like Roxas, the Filipino people were in a tough position. Though not collaborators, they often had to straddle the fence to protect their families and themselves.



General MacArthur and staff wade ashore at  
Palo, Leyte, October 20, 1944  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

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### Liberation – February 1945 - April 1945

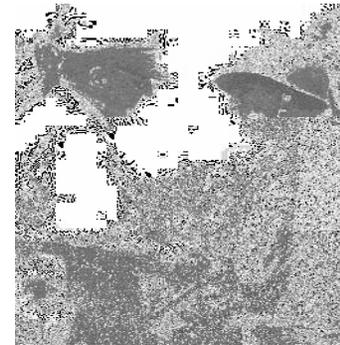
The brave soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and 44<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion of the United States Army as well as the Philippine guerillas successfully freed the internees after three long years of imprisonment.

*Mere words cannot adequately express our deepest feelings, but we assure you that the night of our liberation shall be an undying memory for all of us.*

### Go to Manila

U.S. forces land at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, on January 9, 1945. A month later they enter the city of Manila and free the POWs at Santo Tomas and Bilibid, but liberation places the internees in the middle of a battle zone.

On February 3, 1945 Sherman tanks of the 44<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion busted through the front gates of Santo Tomas. Liberation was finally here, but jubilation was short lived. The Japanese commandant and several guards were holding out in Santo Tomas's education building along with hundreds of internees being held as hostages. After many hours of negotiation the internees were released. While the 1st Cavalry Division made its drive into Manila, the 37th Division's 148th Infantry Regiment was also making its way into Manila on the Cavalry's right flank. During their push into the city on February 5, 1945 they came across the Old Bilibid Prison and liberated a few hundred USAFFE veterans and the internees that had been moved from Camp Holmes, Baguio just a few months



Generals Mudge and MacArthur  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

After American forces land on Luzon, MacArthur's first desire was to liberate all POWs, veterans of his former command and civilian internees incarcerated on the island. MacArthur arrived at the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division staging area at Guimba on January 31, 1945. He told MGEN Verne D. Mudge to "Go to Manila...free the internee: at Santo Tomas."



Joyful internees look out over the grounds of Santo Tomas



Internees and Liberators

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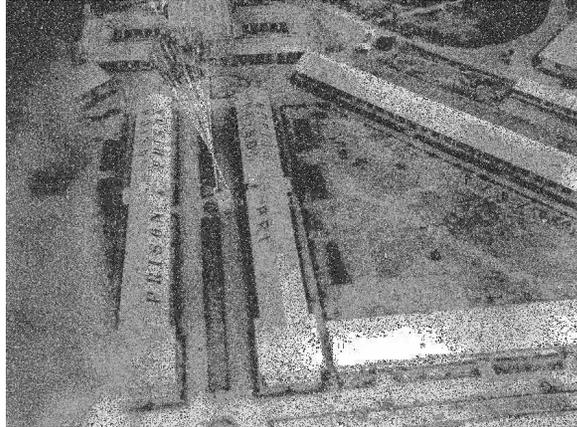
## Educational Activity

### True or False

### Word Search

## Raid on Los Banos

The rescue of internees at Los Banos was a complete success without a single loss of life. Humiliated, Japanese forces sought revenge on the Philippine population of Los Banos.

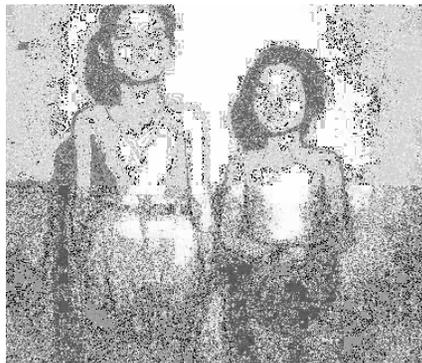


Airdrop of food for freed Los Banos internees  
*Courtesy of the National Archives*



Parachutes land on Los Banos February 23, 1945  
*Courtesy of Paul Shea*

Without a single loss of life the raid on Los Banos was a stunning success. It really was "the perfect plan" and saved the lives of over 2,000 internees. Awaiting the internees on the beach at Mamatid were Red Cross and civil affairs people with food and aid. All were then moved to the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa, south of Manila where they received medical treatment and began the road to recovery. Air drops of supplies and food were made for the internees.



The Ang children  
*MacArthur Memorial Archives*

Japanese forces had been caught completely by surprise. Many guards and even Lt. Konishi left the camp rather than face the American paratroopers and guerrillas. Shortly, they began seeking retribution on the civilian populace around Los Banos because they had given aid and comfort to the guerrillas who helped in the rescue of the camp. One family, the Ang family, would suffer more than any other and become the symbol for the Japanese rampage. They were a large family of 19. All of them were executed except for two. They somehow survived the multiple bayonet and bullet wounds.

Almost immediately after the 11th Airborne Division's amphibious landing south of Manila at Nasugbu on January 31, 1945, they begin planning for the rescue of the civilian internees at Los Banos Internment Camp. The plan was complicated and required perfect timing. On the morning of February 23, 1945, B Company of the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment was dropped on the camp. The various guerilla units who had performed the important tasks of reconnaissance and flank protection began storming the camp and taking out the guard towers. A and C Companies of the 511<sup>th</sup>, who had been ferried across Laguna de Bay in LVT amtracs by the 672nd Amphibious Tractor Battalion, also busted into the camp. "The Perfect Plan" had been achieved. The internees were removed by amtrac over the bay. This was done in shifts until the last internee was removed to safety at Mamatid Beach on Laguna de Bay, within U.S. lines.

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## Going Home

After being liberated most internees came back to the United States while others chose to remain in The Philippines.



Nurses prepare to go home, Leyte  
*Courtesy of the U.S. Army*



Charles M. Lewis Family on the *The Jean Lafitte*  
L to R: Juanita Holmes Lewis, Grace Sharon Lewis  
(Sherry Newkirk), Ann Hamilton Lewis (Ann Lewis  
Conroy) Charles Mason Lewis and Robert Dudley Lewis  
San Francisco, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1945.  
*Courtesy of Ann Lewis Conroy*



11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Cemetery  
*Courtesy of the U.S. Army*

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Japanese Internment Camps in the Philippines, 1941-1945

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### True or False

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### True or False

1. By the 1930's the Philippine Islands were known as *The Pearl of Asia*.

True  False

2. After the Philippines became a colony of the United States, many Americans made the Philippines their new home.

True  False

3. The retreat of U.S. and Philippine forces to Bataan and Corregidor left the Allies at the mercy of the Japanese.

True  False

4. The largest internment camps in the Philippines were the University of Santo Tomas and Camp Holmes in Baguio.

True  False

5. Overcrowding in Santo Tomas led to a new internment camp being formed in Los Banos.

True  False

6. In 1944 the Japanese military took control of all the camps. The internees began to suffer from starvation and malnutrition.

True  False

7. U.S. forces landed at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon on January 9, 1945. A month later they entered the City of Manila and liberated the POWs at Santo Tomas and Bilibid.

True  False

8. The rescue of internees at Los Banos was a complete success, but many people lost their lives.

True  False

9. After their liberation, all of the internees returned home.

True  False

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Japanese Internment Camps in the Philippines, 1941-1945

Word Search



Baguio  
Bataan  
Captured  
Corregidor  
Flying Column  
Freedom

General MacArthur  
guerillas  
internment  
Japan  
Liberation  
Los Banos

Manila  
Package Line  
Pearl Harbor  
Pearl of the Orient  
Philippines  
Santo Tomas