



AMERICAN DEFENDERS OF BATAAN & CORREGIDOR, INC.

Including any unit of force of the Asiatic Fleet, Philippine Archipelago, Wake Island, Marianna Islands, Midway Island and Dutch East Indies

A DISSERTATION ON AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN HEROES THE AMERICAN DEFENDERS OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS DECEMBER 8, 1941—MAY 10, 1942

At least as early as October 8, 1940, President Roosevelt believed that affairs had reached such a state that the United States would become involved in a war with Japan. On that day, Admiral Richardson asked the President "if we were going to enter the war." According to the Admiral's account the President replied—"that if the Japanese attacked Thailand, or the Kra Peninsula, or the Dutch East Indies, we would not enter the war, that if they even attacked the Philippines he doubted whether we would enter the war, but that they (the Japanese) could not always avoid making mistakes and that as the war continued and the area of operations expanded sooner or later they would make a mistake and we would enter the war." (Report of the Joint Committee of Congress, Op Cit., p. 506—Minority Report)

In April 1941, the U.S. Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan Orange, limited defense to Manila Bay and crucial adjacent areas. If attacked, the U.S. Army garrison was expected to withdraw to the Bataan Peninsula, a tongue of land on Luzon forming the northwestern boundary of Manila Bay, and to the island of Corregidor. The plan did not envision reinforcement or relief of the Philippine garrison. With a small army committed to continental defense and a general agreement that in the event America went to war with Japan it would adopt a defeat-Germany first strategy, the U.S. military had reluctantly concluded that the Philippines must be sacrificed if the Japanese attacked which is an excerpt taken from a historical document prepared by the U.S. Army Center of Military History by Jennifer Bailey, under the direction of M.P.W. Stone, Secretary of the Army.

December 7, 2008, will mark the 67th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the defense forces in the Philippine Islands. The courageous defenders of the Philippines during the period December 8, 1941 to May 10, 1942 and many in the public sector, believe that it is a tragedy that neglect, abandonment, and humiliation of these former defenders of the Philippine Islands has continued for over 66 years.

Historians reviewing those fateful days realize that the defense of the Philippines, although totally unprepared for war against the overwhelming power of the Imperial Japanese Army, bought for our nation added time to mobilize our defense forces and return for our final victory. Without that time, the outcome of the war in the Pacific might have been disastrously different, and the course of modern events would have taken a turn from which our nation would have suffered for a long period of time. The bravery and heroic efforts of the American forces who were knowingly sacrificed by our government, helped America triumph in World War II and preserve the way of life that we hold so dear.

Today, many historians believe that these distinguished defenders of the Philippine Islands saved Australia from being invaded by the Japanese military and shortened World War II by a period of at least six months, thereby preventing thousands of casualties and saving countless dollars

needed for our defense purposes.

Subsequently, these courageous defenders became prisoners of war of the Japanese military and were subjected to conditions which were atrocious and unbelievable. These heroic veterans were forced to work as slave laborers at industrial sites which produced armaments that were utilized against Allied forces defending our nation.

Many had been on the notorious "Death March" under conditions so horrible that it was beyond description. Then there were the prisoner of war camps in the Philippines such as O'Donnell, Cabanatuan, and Bilibid Civilian Prison; where hunger, diseases and death were rampant among the interned prisoners of war. Then there were the "Hell Ships". Helpless, but not hopeless, they were squeezed into the filthy allotted space in the holds of the ships and locked in for safe keeping. Maybe there was still some physical strength for work, or perhaps, they would be needed as barter should the Rising Sun need them for such. Devoid of any comforts, without food and water, and not even the courtesy to mark the ships as carrying prisoners of war, they sailed through the battle infested waters to Japan. Three unmarked prisoner of war transports were sunk by American naval forces and resulted in the deaths of over 3,000 Americans during the treacherous journey to Japan. The mistreatment of these prisoners of war was a gross violation of the Laws of War, the Hague Convention of 1907, and Geneva Convention of 1929, which treaties the government of Japan had agreed to respect and abide by.

After days, months; yes, years of constant struggle just to stay alive while being utilized as slave laborers, with nothing but hope, faith, and courage unmatched; and a deep conviction that before the end, help would come. They suffered through endless days of slave labor, hunger, and sickness. And then came the B-29 raids. To have it end like that, to have the last hope of life so cruelly and dramatically withdrawn, heaped even more insult to their humiliation.

Records of the United States government show that the Japanese military had approximately 27,465 American prisoners of war at various locations during World War II. Only 16,350 American prisoners of war were alive at the end of World War II. Approximately 40% of the Americans who were prisoners of war of the Japanese military during World War II died in the dreadful internment camps provided by the Japanese military, where as, the deaths of American prisoners of war in German internment facilities amounted to approximately 1.1% during World War II.

These prisoners of war came home from Japan in October 1945, given hurried medical examinations and then permitted to go home to their families. For most of those who returned to their families found it difficult to adjust to the new world of freedom. As these veterans grew older, the residual effects of malnutrition and brutality at the hands of their captors began to affect them both mentally and physically, which disabilities extend to the present day.

As their life continued, there was not even an apology from the government that so horribly mistreated them and utilized their bodies as slave laborers in furthering its war efforts. Then a peace treaty between the United States and Japan was consummated in the year 1951. A clause was inserted into the peace treaty (14b) which waived all reparation claims against the Japanese nation. This included the corporations that utilized American POWs as slave laborers. Instead the United States agreed to compensate their own, which as of this date, they have failed to do. At the time, Henry Cabot Lodge stated, 'AMERICA WILL CARE FOR ITS OWN'.

It was plain to see that with the "Cold War" under way and a hot war waging on the Korean Peninsula, United States foreign policy sought to mold Japan as a bulwark against communist

encroachment in Asia. In a ““Quid Pro Quo” deal, it is apparent that Japan agreed to ally with the United States in exchange for a soft treaty. Since that time, Washington has sided with Japan whenever they have been named defendants in reparation lawsuits. Thus American prisoners of war became sacrificial lambs of our nation by being eliminated from seeking reparations from Japan for violation of their human rights during World War II.

Meanwhile, the legislative bodies of Canada, Great Britain, Isle of Man, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand and Australia compensated their former Japanese prisoners of war during World War II by awarding them substantial sums of monies for the “unusual circumstances” of their internment by Japan. Great Britain used the terminology “A MATTER OF HONOR”. The United States is the only nation, to date, that has not legislated likewise.

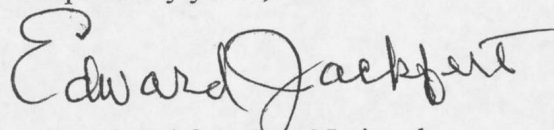
On various occasions, the membership of the American Defenders Of Bataan & Corregidor have sought justice through the legislative process in Washington, D.C. with no success, We also have requested assistance from both the executive and judicial branches of our government, however, we are disappointed in saying that we have been thwarted in our efforts by both branches of our government. In a law suit against a group of Japanese industries that utilized us as slave laborers, our state department testified against our endeavor in the Federal Courts.

Currently, in the current session (110th) of Congress Senators, Jeff Bingaman and Orrin Hatch have co-sponsored S 3107 “to require payment of compensation to members of the Armed Forces and civilian employees of the United States who were forced to perform slave labor by the Imperial Government of Japan or by corporations of Japan during World War II, or surviving spouses of such member, and for other purposes”; to rectify the long standing miscarriage of justice on behalf of these veterans.

Several state legislatures (West Virginia and Rhode Island among several others) have attempted to assist our cause by introducing legislation requesting the nation that mistreated us during World War II and utilized us as slave laborers to apologize and take up the matter of compensating these former prisoners of war. Subsequently, we have discovered that there was intense lobbying on these legislative bodies which caused their defeat.

Because these patriots of the past believed enough in a free United States of America to safeguard, with their lives when necessary, its spirit of freedom, we today enjoy that legacy. Our liberties, as guaranteed by the Constitution, will continue to survive only if we and each succeeding generation, elect to serve our nation with courage, loyalty, and wisdom; and to preserve forever—the spirit of freedom. And therefore, those who like the American Defenders of Bataan & Corregidor who have been sacrificed by their government and have borne the burden of battle, should be recognized and compensated for the “unusual circumstances” service to our nation. Our nation should follow the thoughts of Great Britain, “IT IS A MATTER OF HONOR”.

Respectfully yours,



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