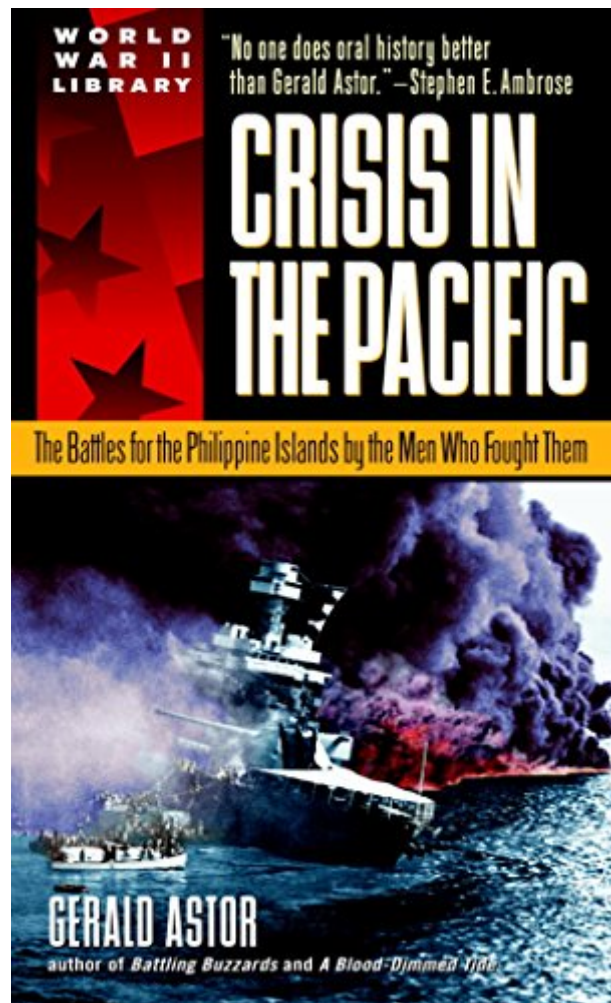




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Crisis In The Pacific: The Battles For The Philippine Islands By The Men Who Fought Them



Synopsis

From the depths of defeat...On December 8, 1941, one day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Air Force struck the Philippines in the first blow of a devastating invasion. With an undersupplied patchwork army at his command, General Douglas MacArthur led a valiant defense of the Philippines. When defeat came, MacArthur swore he would return, while thousands of POWs fell into Japanese hands and faced a living hell that many would not survive. To the dawn of victory...In this gripping oral history, Gerald Astor brings to life the struggle to recapture the Philippines: the men who did the fighting, the battles that set the stage for an Allied invasion, and the acts of astounding courage and desperation that marked the campaign on both sides. From Corregidor to the Battle for Manila, from horrifying jungle warfare to cataclysmic clashes at sea, on beachheads and in the air, *Crisis in the Pacific* draws on the words of the men who were there capturing this crucial heroic struggle for victory against Japan.

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Customer Reviews

The author of this historical WWII tribute is Gerald Astor. He effectively weaves 84 oral histories

together to form a cogent picture of the peaks and valleys of the war in the Pacific, 1941-1945. In addition to these firsthand accounts are a constellation of testimonials given from various admirals, generals and their staffs that played pivotal roles in defeating the Imperial Japanese Army, (IJA). The predominate story line focuses on the confluence of events in the Philippines, and it's struggle to rid the country from its IJA invaders. This includes the fight on Bataan, (and its subsequent death march), Corregidor, Zambales Mountains, the Lingayen Gulf landings, (IJA and later MacArthur and company), Leyte, Hell Ships, and about a half dozen of the more notorious prison camps located on Luzon, Mindanao, and Palawan Islands -- all part of the Republic of the Philippines. Also islands mentioned and glossed over are Panay, Cebu, Negros, and Mindoro. So as you can see there's an awful lot to track in this snapshot in time, perhaps too much, hence my 4 star rating. The hardships endured from mother nature alone included bouts of malaria, dysentery, dengue fever, jungle rot, and other nefarious maladies. Notwithstanding, the Japanese and their cruel, harsh, torturous treatment of their captives illustrate how deprived the human spirit can sink to. The systemic starvation diets alone took its gratuitous toll as well. For example, upon arriving to Camp O'Donnell via the Bataan Death March, there was an estimated 42,000 Filipinos, and 8,675 Americans incarcerated. Within two months 1,500 Americans and 20,000 Filipinos succumbed to death via starvation and its biggest contributors; beriberi, (lack of protein in the diet), and little to no medication to treat the mosquito born diseases listed above. These death rates were ten times higher than experienced at German POW camps. Unconscionable. All in all, with the maniacal banzai raids and poor leadership of the IJA, the Japanese listed over 300,000 of their troops killed in action while defending their ill gotten gains in the Philippines. On the flipside, 131,028 Filipinos, and Americans died. Most of which were civilians in Manila when that city went through the grinder in 1945... Complements of the land-locked Japanese Navy, (sailors without ships). Staggering numbers. The LtCol of the IJA known as the, "Butcher of Manila", would eventually hang for orchestrating these murderous war crimes.

At the start of World War II, the Philippine Islands were lost to the Japanese. This details the battle for this island group and what happened between the loss and reconquest of these islands. Much American treasure and lives were spent in both defending the islands and then regaining them. I think the author did a great job of collecting all the stories of the veterans who participated in the defense and invasion of the islands. It also seemed that the Filipino population was also fed up with the Japanese also. The Japanese treated both the Filipinos and Americans with utter disgust. They mistreated them and virtually starved the American POWs to death. There should have been more

accountability at the end of the war where the guards and wardens were held liable for the death of these men and women. They treated them barbaric and should have faced the ultimate consequence. MacArthur was shown to be a brave but not overly smart commander at the beginning of the war. He ultimately became more combat smart in his reconquest of the islands. A nice read about a little known campaign in World War II.

Gerald Astor is one of those guys who writes oral history of various World War II battles. This is one of his books, a pretty good one, but since the battle is so complicated things get a little lost. The Philippines were the setting for a considerable amount of fighting during World War II. The Japanese began their attack on the islands within hours of Pearl Harbor, and invaded within days. When they conquered the last of the islands in the Spring of 1942, they began consolidating their hold on them. Two years later, American forces returned, invading first one island and then another, reconquering much of the archipelago before the Japanese surrendered. This book chronicles the experiences of American army and army air officers and men during the battle, along with a few sailors. The author provides a brief summary of each action that took place, and then gives you one after another oral account of the fighting that took place, pretty much all of it from the American point of view. There are a very few accounts from civilians (none Filipino) who were present during the fighting. There aren't any accounts from the Japanese side, either. The narratives from the American soldiers and other participants are interesting, but since the overall narrative is so confused, the author has a hard time providing context for what's going on. After a while, the book becomes rather confused, and the whole story bogs down. I generally find oral histories to be interesting, provided the author works hard to give some context to what's occurring. Here, sadly, the author fails in this regard. The book does provide the oral history itself...but nothing else, really.

Well written but slightly tedious

Gerald Astor is an outstanding author of oral history books on World War II, and this is another fine effort of his. Thoroughly informative and thought provoking book, makes me thankful that the pilots, soldiers, and sailors were willing to undergo such tremendous hardships to purchase the freedom we enjoy today. May we never take it for granted!

Well written and a good addition to any student of the war in the Pacific. A very, very good read.

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