PEARL OF THE ORIENT

BETWEEN JULY 1941 and March 1942, the Japanese overran and occupied the great cities of Southeast Asia–Saigon, Hong Kong, Singapore, Batavia (Djakarta), Rangoon, and Manila. In most places the occupation lasted for less than four years. When the British Fourteenth Army advanced on Rangoon in May 1945, the Japanese evacuated the city; four months later they surrendered Singapore, Batavia, Hong Kong, and Saigon to British forces. But Manila was different. The Japanese defended Manila against the advance of the American Sixth and Eighth Armies. During the month-long battle, which followed between February 3 and March 3, 1945, the city was completely destroyed: all that remained by the end were heaps of smoldering rubble. The charred bodies half-buried in the ruins bore terrible witness to a massacre beyond the nightmare of any Manileño. An estimated 100,000 Manileños had been killed. The Battle for Manila occupies a unique place in the history of the Pacific War. It was the only occasion on which American and Japanese forces fought each other in a city, and it was the largest battle of its kind yet fought by either the American or the Japanese armies. The destruction of Manila was on the same scale as the destruction of Warsaw (August 1-October 2, 1944), and smaller only than the battles of Berlin (April 20-May 2, 1945) and Stalingrad (September 13, 1942-February 2, 1943).

The Manila that lay in ruins that spring of 1945 was a unique blend of three different cultures which had shaped its recent and past history: the

indigenous Tagalog Filipino culture of Luzon, overlaid by 330 years of Spanish spiritual and intellectual colonization, and 40 years of American control and influence. This eclectic mixture contained yet further ingredients: Chinese and Japanese settlers had lent an East Asian flavor, and the Scots and the Germans, those great nineteenth-century traders of Southeast Asia, had brought with them their own cultural and economic legacy. Other great cities—Shanghai, Singapore, and Istanbul—have married elements from two continents. But Manila, quite singularly, embraced not only Southeast and East Asia, Europe, and North America, but, thanks to Spanish influence, significant elements of Latin America. It was a city that (as a Manileño of 1940 might have said) felt equally at home with the tango, the flamenco, the waltz, the jive, and eastern dancing. Spiritual fascists in late-1930s Tokyo viewed Manila's cultural heterogeneity with mistrust: a multi-colored blot on a pure Asia. To most others, including the Manileños themselves, this very diversity was a source of celebration, like some rich tapestry or mosaic.

Manila was uniquely beautiful: she was universally known as the Pearl of the Orient, a jewel beyond price. Many cities were destroyed between 1942 and 1945—a long list in which the names of Stalingrad, Hamburg, Warsaw, Dresden, Berlin and Hiroshima stand out prominently. Lives were shattered, and the cultural damage to their mother nations in each case was irreplaceable. Yet in the case of Manila, something rare, and something irreplaceable, was destroyed. The Philippines had lost its capital, but the world had lost a city whose very evolution, drawing upon the cultures and histories of four different continents, had made it part of the international heritage. The tragedy of the destruction of Manila lies deeply engraved on the hearts of all Filipinos, and in the memories of the inevitably diminishing band of United States Pacific War veterans. Yet the tragedy goes on, for to most people in the world outside, the story in its entirety has never been fully told.[1]

What was life like in Manila in its heyday? One of the few Americans who did not love the city and its people was Major Dwight D. Eisenhower, who arrived in Manila as chief of staff to General Douglas MacArthur, the newly appointed head of the American Military Mission to the Philippines, in October 1935. Apart from a tour in the Canal Zone and a year working for the United States Battlefield Monuments Commission in France (1928-29), the 45-year-old Eisenhower had never lived outside the United States. There is a photograph of the two men taken on their very first day in Manila: the pair are standing in front of the Manila Hotel just to the south of their point of disembarkation at Pier 7 in the South Port district. Both wear the custom-

ary white drill suits and white panama hats. MacArthur's face also wears a jaunty smile, as if to acknowledge the greetings of the Manileños pressing forward against the barriers. Eisenhower's expression is totally different. He seems in pain—perhaps it is the heat, for which he had a low tolerance—yet also strangely apprehensive: the look of a man who is beginning to realize he may have made a serious mistake.[2] Eisenhower, who embodied the sober virtues of the Pennsylvania Dutch (the family originally came from the Rhineland and spelled their name "Eisenhauer") found the rhythms of Manilan life infuriating. To his diary he confided: "we have learned to expect from the Filipinos with whom we deal a minimum of performance from a maximum of promise. Among individuals there is no lack of intelligence, but to us they seem...unaccustomed to the requirements of administrative and executive procedure."[3] The methodical, prosaic, Protestant clerk ground against the Latin-Asian culture of the Manileños.

Eisenhower initially worked in an office near MacArthur's, inside the air-conditioned splendor of the Manila Hotel, the most modern in the city. Then President Quezon offered him an office next to his own in Malacañan Palace, about a mile and a half northeast across Manila's Pasig River, in order to improve liaison between the Military Mission and his government. Thereafter Eisenhower split his day between working alongside MacArthur in the Manila Hotel and working alongside Quezon in Malacañan Palace. His diary and private correspondence from this period recite a litany of complaints. Things that should have been done were left undone, and there was no judgment in the Filipinos. Progress was always too slow. Revealingly, he shows no interest in the sights or events he must have witnessed on his daily journey to and from work.[4]

Eisenhower's drive from the Manila Hotel to Malacañan Palace would have taken him east and then north along Padre Burgos Street. This tree-lined boulevard skirted around the walls of the old Spanish city of Intramuros, whose 400 acres of narrow, cobbled streets, churches, and fortresses had been built on the site of the old Muslim stockade. This was the heart of Manila, seized by the Spanish in the sixteenth century, attacked by the Chinese in the seventeenth century, besieged and briefly occupied by the British in the eighteenth century, and taken by the Americans at the end of the nineteenth century.

On the right-hand side of Padre Burgos toward the intersection with Taft Avenue, Eisenhower could witness a sight more appealing to his own utilitarian tastes: modern construction work. His stay in Manila coincided with the

gradual implementation of an American architect's plans for a new administrative center. This monumental project, conceived as early as 1904, owed more to necessity than to modernist aesthetics. Manila was in a notorious earthquake zone–the city had suffered dozens of major earthquakes–and any new public buildings would have to be guaranteed quakeproof. The designs called for extremely deep foundations and the widespread use of reinforced concrete with a tolerance far greater than that demanded of similar buildings in most parts of the United States. One block south of Padre Burgos, the Agricultural Building was already finished; to the right, just before the intersection with Taft Avenue, stood the new Finance Building.[5] Just beyond the intersection with Taft the vast outlines of City Hall were beginning to emerge: a monolithic building which offended the aesthetic sensibilities of many Manileños. The Manilan journalist Nick Joaquín was to refer to it as something which "vaguely looked like a prison."[6]

The most interesting route to Malacañan Palace involved driving on for another 500 yards or so up Padre Burgos to where the grandiose General Post Office now dominated the southern bank of the Pasig. To the left lay Jones Bridge, which led into the district of Binondo, the historical China Town. Straight ahead lay Santa Cruz Bridge, from which Rizal Avenue ran due north through the district of Santa Cruz toward Grace Park on the northern outskirts of Manila. To the right was the Quezon Bridge. At the bridge's foot stood the Plaza Miranda, dominated by the newly completed neo-Renaissance Quiapo Church, the most recent in a series of churches on this site dating back to 1592. Quiapo was downtown Manila, its main shopping and entertainment area. Due north from the Quezon Bridge, construction was in progress of a new highway, Quezon Boulevard, which ran due north more or less parallel to Rizal Avenue. This project was causing a great deal of discontent in the mid-1930s as it involved the demolition of parts of Quiapo, an area second only to Intramuros in historic interest.[7] Eisenhower's journey took him right at the Plaza Miranda and then east following the line of the Pasig along Aviles Street, through an area graced by the elegant mansions of the mestizo aristocracy, to the district of San Miguel. Here, in a spacious 40-acre garden by the banks of the Pasig, stood Malacañan Palace, the elegant late-eighteenth-century country house which had been home to both Spanish and American governors, and was now the center of government of the President of the Commonwealth.

Few majors in the American army of the 1930s could boast better working conditions: Malacañan Palace was rather grander than Abilene or Fort

Leavenworth. But Eisenhower still managed to complain. He misunderstood the nature of Filipino hospitality and made no concessions whatsoever to Filipino feeling. When Quezon wanted to make Eisenhower a general in the Philippine Army, and MacArthur a field marshal, Eisenhower protested vigorously to his chief: "General, you have been a four-star general. This is a *proud* thing. There have only been a few who had it. Why in the *hell* do you want a *banana* country giving you field-marshalship?" Eisenhower recalled that at this point MacArthur exploded in rage.[8]

Eisenhower might have found his years in Manila more tolerable had his wife Mamie, who joined him in 1936 with their son John, been happier. But Mamie found the climate oppressive and disliked the food. She was unwell for most of her three and a half years there, spending nearly all her time at home in the company of a small circle of American officers and their wives. One of the few Manileños with whom the Eisenhowers socialized was Captain Joseph McMicking, then a reserve pilot of the infant Philippine Air Force, who taught Eisenhower to fly. McMicking, with his tall, dark good looks, moustache, and ready smile, resembled a casting director's version of a war hero. He came from a prominent Scots-Filipino trading family, headed by his father José McMicking. The lifestyles and values of the Scots Manileños made them acceptable to the Eisenhowers. Their son John, who now attended the exclusive Bishop Brent School in Baguio, was far more enthusiastic about Manila and the Philippines. His parents' re-creation of a little America within a foreign environment was not unlike their earlier experience of Paris. During their 15-month spell in that cosmopolitan city, the couple had similarly excluded themselves from exposure to foreign people, experiences, and culture.[9]

An American who did not like Paris life was unlikely to enjoy Manila. But the Eisenhowers were exceptions: most Americans who ended up in Manila took to it quickly. Major Richard Sutherland, his wife Josephine, and his daughter Natalie, who arrived there in July 1938, were in this respect characteristic. Josephine loved Manila and rapidly became good friends both with Douglas MacArthur's wife Jean (both women were from Tennessee) and also with Aurora Quezon, wife of the Philippines' president. Sutherland's background (his father had been a senator for West Virginia) contrasted sharply with Eisenhower's stolid Pennsylvania Dutch upbringing. Unlike most American officers, Sutherland had studied history at Yale rather than engineering at West Point. The Sutherlands moved into a house on Dewey Boulevard in the southern part of the district of Malate overlooking Manila Bay,

one of the city's most desirable up-and-coming residential areas. Life in Malate was good. Nearby were the exclusive Manila Polo Club and the Manila Yacht Club. But Sutherland was more interested in golf than he was in polo or sailing. He would drive a mile further east of Nielsen Field to Fort McKinley and one of the finest golf courses in Southeast Asia.

Sutherland struck up a particular friendship with Alaistair "Shorty" Hall, a six-foot-four Scottish stockbroker, with whom he played golf at least once a week. The Sutherlands often visited Shorty Hall and his wife Consuelo. Their eldest son, Roderick, remembered one especially joyous occasion in 1939 when his father and Sutherland celebrated the American's promotion to the rank of full colonel. It was through families like the Halls that the Sutherlands steadily expanded their social contacts. Consuelo Hall's maiden name was McMicking, and she soon introduced the Sutherlands to her family, including her brother, Joe McMicking.[10] The Sutherlands also made friends among Manila's Spanish population, both *Peninsulares* (Spanish-born) and *Insulares* (Philippine-born) like the Olbeses. Many of the Insulares shared Sutherland's passion for golf; it was unsurprising that after the war their families took the lead in developing Spain's magnificent golf courses.[11]

For a time Sutherland worked in tandem with Eisenhower, but when Eisenhower returned to the United States in November 1939, Sutherland took over as MacArthur's chief of staff. Sutherland's daily journey to his office in the Manila Hotel was so exotic it could scarcely count as commuting: it was the ideal route for any tourist who wished to see the main sights of Manila. His drive took him north along the coconut-palm-lined Dewey Boulevard, skirted on the left by the sea wall and with Manila Bay stretching out beyond, its waters crowded with ships of all sizes, from great ocean liners to inter-island schooners. Beyond, to the northwest and west, rose the outline of the mountains of the Bataan Peninsula and the fortress island of Corregidor, an outline dramatically defined by the Manila sunset of pale yellow light rapidly deepening into dark crimson. Lining the right side of the boulevard, with spectacular views across the bay, stood the imposing mansions of the wealthy and powerful, the embassies and consulates of foreign governments, a few expensive high-rise apartment houses, and Manila's more exclusive nightclubs, like the Silver Slipper.

After about a mile, Malate gave way to the district of Ermita. Dewey Boulevard continued north but the coast curved to the west. Here on the left was the residence of the United States High Commissioner to the Philippines, Francis B. Sayre, an office which was frequently in conflict with

both the military mission and the President of the Commonwealth, while on the right stood the Bay View Hotel, one of the most modern and expensive in Manila. Two hundred yards further on the right was the intersection with San Luis Street, and immediately on the left, by the shore of Manila Bay, stood the most visible symbols of the United States' presence: the Elks and the Army and Navy Clubs, both of which were exclusively for Americans. The Elks, of course, was even more exclusive, banning women of any nationality or race.

The last part of Sutherland's journey took him north through the green stretch of the Luneta, Manila's version of Hyde Park, Central Park, or the Tuileries. The Luneta occupied an area of little more than a half square mile, and since the American occupation it had been subdivided into four roughly equal parks, running west to east: New Luneta, Burnham Green, Old Luneta, and Wallace Field. It was here that the Manileños held their fiestas and some religious festivals. Padre Burgos marked the northern boundary of the Luneta; to the northeast loomed the walls of Intramuros; to the west stood the Manila Hotel. The drive usually took Sutherland about ten minutes but sometimes longer. The picturesque horse-drawn *calesas* were steadily giving way to the *auto-calesa*, the predecessor of the "jeepney," and the majority of Manila's 20,000 or so privately owned cars were owned by the residents of Ermita, Malate, and Pasay. By the late 1930s, traffic jams were becoming increasingly common.[12]

American officers like Sutherland enjoyed life in Manila to the full. So did most American enlisted men. After a long voyage from San Francisco in unpleasant conditions aboard the United States Army transport *Tasker H. Bliss*, 20-year-old Private Paul P. Rogers arrived in Manila on October 24, 1941. Rogers, a touch-typist, was assigned to MacArthur's headquarters. These were currently being expanded, and had recently been moved from the Manila Hotel to the headquarters of the Philippine Department, the name given to the United States garrison of the islands. This HQ was housed in Fort Santiago, the old Spanish citadel which occupied a triangle where the wall of Intramuros ran down to where the Pasig River emptied into Manila Bay. The barred cells and dungeons of Fort Santiago bore mute testimony to generations of suffering, but in 1941 these were only historical curiosities. Rogers remembered the details of his first meal at Fort Santiago:

> Next morning I sat down for my first breakfast at a table set with linen, good china, and flatware. Filipino mess boys served breakfast: platters of

> papayas, bananas, and oranges; biscuits, rolls, and toast; eggs, fried and scrambled; ham, sausage, and bacon, and milk, coffee, and juice. As they ate, the soldiers complained of the poor quality and poor service...So it was at lunch and dinner: relative elegance, great abundance, and constant complaints.[13]

The young Rogers suddenly found himself enjoying a standard of living wildly beyond that then possible in the United States. He ordered five new uniforms from Sung Lee, a Chinese tailor in Intramuros, walked down through the Luneta and across Isaac Peral into the Ermita district and the University of the Philippines, founded by the Americans in 1908. Here he enrolled in a Spanish-language course, and spent his spare time in cultural tourism. There was much to interest Rogers in Intramuros, the oldest city he had ever seen. The Spaniards had bequeathed scores of churches to Manila, but they had also given the city the San Juan de Dios Hospital, originally founded in 1577 by the Franciscans, but taken over in 1656 by the Order of the Hospitallers of St. John of God. In 1941, San Juan de Dios was still ministering to the sick: it was the city's second largest hospital after the modern Philippine General Hospital. A short distance away through the narrow, cobbled streets overlooking the Pasig was the Church of Santo Domingo, the fourth to be constructed on the site since Dominican friars had consecrated a small wooden chapel in 1588. In the early seventeenth century, a Chinese convert sculpted an image of the Virgin Mary for Santo Domingo. Over the next century, this image, in her role as Nuestra Señora del Rosario de la Naval de Manila, became the most popular of all of Manila's Madonnas, and the centre of Marian devotion in the city. Rogers' cultural tourism would also have taken him to Quiapo, along much the same route that Eisenhower had driven. Here in Quiapo Church on the Plaza Miranda was the most famous of Manila's objects of devotion: the Black Nazarene, a statue of a Meso-American Christ falling under his cross which had been carved by a Mexican artist in the seventeenth century. Every Friday huge crowds jammed the church and the surrounding plaza, while the festival of Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno on January 9th each year brought downtown Manila to a standstill. Rogers recalled that he visited such places cautiously, "as befitted a young Protestant who was uncertain whether they might not house the devil."[14] Rogers, a serious-minded young man (by his own admission something of a prig) avoided the more obvious delights of Manila. On November 10th, his sergeant took him "out on the town" to Manila's nightspots. The once infamous Gardenia district up in Sampaloc, north of the Pasig, was by

now just a shadow of its former self, but new nightspots had developed. (Under the Japanese occupation, the most popular were only a short walk south from Intramuros, in the university district in Ermita. Here bars and nightclubs had grown up along M.H. del Pilar and F.B. Harrison Streets, developments which had spilled westward toward Dewey Boulevard and the Bay View Hotel). Rogers' sergeant set to work on the young man, but without much success. Rogers remembered that he "turned down liquor, cigarettes, and a woman in that order." The sergeant promised his buddies "We'll get some whiskey in that son of a bitch if we have to put it in with a syringe," but they didn't. In any event, they had a good time making the attempts.[15]

The affection in which most Americans held Manila had deepened into love: this, at least, was the view firmly held by the Field Marshal of the Army of the Philippines (and, after July 1941, Commander in Chief of United States Army Forces Far East), Douglas MacArthur. Manila was where his father, Arthur MacArthur, had reached the pinnacle of his career as military governor in 1900; it was where he himself, as a second lieutenant, had first come under fire in 1903, and it was where he had developed his friendship with Manuel Quezon when he returned to command the Philippine Department in 1922. Quezon saved his friend MacArthur from an embittered retirement when, in 1935, as President of the new Commonwealth, he asked him to head a Military Mission to the Philippines, the object of which was the creation of the island's armed forces.

So in the late 1930s, instead of retiring to Milwaukee with his aged and doting mother, MacArthur became Field Marshal of the Army of the Philippines, holding court in his penthouse apartment in the Manila Hotel. It was here that he forged links with the business community and made investments which ensured that he would not be poor once he ceased to be head of the Military Mission. These links were strengthened by his growing prominence in the Masonic lodge that met on Taft Avenue. It was in Manila that MacArthur at last achieved a degree of personal happiness with Jean Faircloth and their newborn son Arthur. Unlike the Sutherlands, the MacArthurs did not socialize a great deal. They attended state functions and the occasional semiofficial dinner at the Manila Polo Club or the Army and Navy Club, but they preferred going together to the cinema in Quiapo, rather like any ordinary couple in the late 1930s. MacArthur would sit through any movie, but he preferred westerns and war movies. It was in Quiapo that they saw John Ford's *Stagecoach*, Cecil B. DeMille's *The Buccaneer*, and Raoul Walsh's

They Died with Their Boots On—all of which may well have influenced the style of command MacArthur chose to adopt at the end of 1941.[16]

Manila gave MacArthur a power and a status he could not have enjoyed in the United States: for this he was suitably grateful. He believed it to be his mission to create a viable defense for the entire Philippine archipelago. His ideas differed radically from those held by the United States War Department and Navy, who, since the start of the century, had viewed America's possession of the Philippines not as an asset but as a strategic liability: a liability made more onerous by Japan's acquisition in 1919 of German islands in the North Pacific which dominated communications between Hawaii and the Philippines. The series of Orange (Japan) War Plans (WPO) developed by Washington steadily reduced the role of the United States garrison, the "Philippine Department," from an active to a defensive one. In the event of war the garrison would merely "hold" the Bataan Peninsula and the forts dominating the entrance to Manila Bay while the United States Navy battled across the Pacific to the rescue. MacArthur's plans were far more ambitious. His national Philippine Army—some 200,000 men, annually trained and backed by a small air force and a small force of torpedo boats—would be able to defend all the islands of the group. He continued to urge Washington to abandon the WPO concept, but he got nowhere. All updated war plans were based on the assumption that the Philippines neither could nor should be defended.

On July 2, 1941 the situation changed dramatically. Japanese forces landed in southern Indo-China: this was to have far-reaching implications. The Japanese occupation of that region threatened not only the British and Dutch Asian empires but also the United States' supplies of rubber, tin, and bauxite. On July 27th, President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced a sudden hardening of American policy toward Japan. All Japanese assets in the United States were to be frozen—a move that essentially cut off Japan's supplies of oil. On the same day, the United States Army's chief of staff, General George Marshall, recalled MacArthur to the United States Army and appointed him Lieutenant General commanding a combined Philippine Army-Philippine Department command, the United States Army Forces Far East (USAFFE). On August 1st, Marshall told MacArthur of the official change in the United States' Pacific policy—the Philippines was now to be defended—and promised him substantial help. From then on, until well after the Japanese attack on December 8th, Marshall continued to reassure MacArthur that help was on the way.

MacArthur went to his grave believing that he had prompted Washington's change of policy—an opinion which, given the debacle which was to overwhelm USAFFE in the early months of 1942, Marshall was quite willing to foster. But the real agent for change was the United States Army Air Force's new Air War Plans Department, whose chief, Colonel Harold L. George, had served as an observer with Britain's Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain in 1940. George's department produced a blueprint for a defense of the Philippines by aircraft operating without the assistance of land or naval forces. What he called a "strategical defensive" could be established by the deployment of 340 heavy bombers and 130 fighters to Luzon. The commander of the Air Force, General "Hap" Arnold, and Secretary for War Henry Stimson took up the plan enthusiastically and on July 25th secured Roosevelt's approval for the dispatch of large numbers of heavy bombers and fighters to the Philippines.[17]

Between August and early December 1941, an eight-million-dollar airfield improvement and construction program gave the Philippines some 40 completed and semi-completed airfields, and the largest concentration of warplanes outside the United States. The first B-17s flew over Manila on their way to Clark Field on August 25th—three tight "V" formations, each of three aircraft, their enormous silver wings glinting in the sun. The effect of this and subsequent flights on many Manileños was dramatic: "Keep 'em flying!" became the catchphrase of the teenagers who gathered along Dewey Boulevard in the evenings, a phrase which had much the same meaning as the "Stay cool, man" of their children's generation. MacArthur was equally delighted when Brigadier General Lewis Brereton, commander of the new Far Eastern Air Force, landed on November 3rd. MacArthur greeted him warmly with the words: "Lewis, you are just as welcome as the flowers in May."[18]

Land reinforcements began arriving too, and MacArthur made the most of them. On October 19th, the M-3A1 Stuart tanks of the newly disembarked 194th Tank Battalion paraded through the streets of Manila to reassure the population that American help was on its way. Forming a long column in the port district, the tanks followed Padre Burgos around Intramuros, past the monolithic Manila City Hall, where MacArthur stood on a specially erected podium, taking the salute. The column then passed over the Pasig at Jones Bridge and proceeded north up Rosario Street through Binondo until it met Azcarraga Street, the major east-west thoroughfare in northern Manila. Turning west, the column sighted packed rows of small timber-frame houses not unlike those found in the "colored" areas of New Orleans or Charleston.

These marked the southern outskirts of the Tondo district, the most heavily populated area of the city. The route through the city had been lined with spectators but as the tanks neared Tondo it seemed that the entire population had turned out, forsaking for the moment their cockfights and their bands. Azcarraga was packed 20 deep with people gaping in amazement and cheering; they had never seen anything like it and it was wonderful free entertainment. Then the tanks neared their final destination, the Tondo classification yard and the flat railroad cars that would carry them north, initially to Fort Stotsenburg.[19]

By this time the citizens of Manila were becoming quite used to seeing soldiers in the streets. MacArthur had ordered the initial mobilization of one regiment from each of the Philippine Reserve Divisions on September 1st, with additional regiments being mobilized in early November. At the same time, members of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at the universities were called out. Visitors remember watching the young men in ill-fitting uniforms and coconut coir helmets drilling with ancient rifles on the grass verges at the foot of the walls of Intramuros.[20] It was clear that they still had a long way to go, but MacArthur did not believe that a Japanese attack was imminent. At a Thanksgiving dinner at the Manila Polo Club on November 20th, MacArthur assured guests that although the conflict was inevitable, "the time and place will be our choosing."[21] Intelligence in both Washington and Manila indicated that April 1, 1942 would be the earliest date possible for a Japanese attack. This should allow enough time for the vast amounts of equipment MacArthur had ordered–125,000 steel helmets, 84,000 Garand M-1 rifles, and several thousand machine guns–to arrive from the United States so that the training of the Philippine Army could be completed.[22] Even if the Japanese did attack before April 1st, MacArthur thought that his Philippine Divisions, albeit ill-equipped and under-trained, would acquit themselves well against the Japanese. All that he had heard about Japanese soldiers pointed to their weakness and inefficiency: they had been unable to defeat the peasant militias of China after more than three years of war, and had been humiliated by the Soviet Army in the border clashes of 1938 and 1939, the same Soviet Army which had, in turn, been humiliated by the militia of Finland in November 1939. In November 1941, the odds facing the Filipinos seemed far more even than they did later.[23]

Manileños and their American allies spent the night of Sunday, December 7, 1941 in an unusually festive mood: the feast of the Immaculate Conception, due to take place the next day, was one of the most important holy

days in the Philippine calendar. Some inhabited the "groovy world of the boogie and the conga," in the words of Nick Joaquín, who wrote a graphic account of middle-class youth enjoying the last hours. "From the Luneta to Casa Mañana on the Vito Cruz corner [the boulevard formerly ended on Vito Cruz, at the corner where stood Casa Mañana, a nightclub where the sounds were mostly Latin] Dewey Boulevard nightly offered a vast jam session of youngsters stomping in frenzy right on the sea wall to the music of portable phonographs."[24] Another Manila journalist, Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, remembered that she had been at the big dance at the University of the Philippines. The rest of Manila was doing the same–cocktail parties in Malate and backyard dances accompanied by guitars and bongos up in Tondo.[25]

The Americans, too, (with the exception of Private Rogers, who had gone to bed early with an improving book) were having a ball. The biggest party of all–perhaps the biggest in the history of Manila–was being held in the Manila Hotel by 1,200 men of the 27th Bombardment Group to celebrate the birthday of Brigadier General Brereton. Because it was such an important occasion, the airmen had delayed implementing an order from MacArthur to fly B-17s stationed at Clark Field down to Mindanao, where they would be out of range of Formosa-based Japanese bombers. The party began to break up at about 3 a.m., with many of the Americans, including the hard-drinking Brereton, a little the worse for wear. Sutherland had been at the party but had left about an hour earlier.[26] The phone rang shortly after 3 a.m. with the news of Pearl Harbor. By 5 a.m. the USAFFE were swinging into action; aircrew were racing back to Clark and their B-17s, while other airmen were manning their P-40s at Nichols Field, to the southwest of Manila. In the city, the Philippine Constabulary were coming into barracks, receiving briefings on rounding up enemy aliens–for the moment Japanese, but the list would soon be extended to include Germans and Italians–and discussing preliminary plans for the commandeering of trucks and buses for military purposes.[27] Everything was moving with surprising efficiency.

Sunrise came shortly before 7 a.m. and the morning was a cool 70°F; it would soon become hot and then unseasonably oppressive. Cooler weather was due in the next few weeks. Most people heard the news of Pearl Harbor while listening to Manila's commercial radio station, KZRH. Down in Ermita and Malate many of Manila's Spanish elite, both Peninsulares and Insulares, were getting ready to go to what promised to be the biggest society wedding of 1941 at the exclusive Apostolic Delegation chapel on Dewey Boulevard. One of the guests, José Olbes, a 27-year-old Insulare insurance broker re-

garded by many of the society girls as a major catch, heard the news while shaving. If his razor did not slip, it was only because the Japanese attack was not entirely unexpected—only the time and place were unknown. The wedding was one of the casualties of Pearl Harbor. Although it still went ahead, only a handful of guests, mainly those living within walking distance along Dewey Boulevard, managed to attend the ceremony. Still fewer attended the subsequent reception at the Manila Polo Club. There was simply too much to do.[28]

At their rambling mansion on the southern outskirts of Manila, Constance Prising, wife of the American tobacco millionaire Frederick Prising, had not heard the news. She set off with her adopted eight-year-old son Robin in her chauffeur-driven car to attend mass at Our Lady of Lourdes in Intramuros. The drive up Dewey Boulevard became etched on young Robin's memory: the street was strangely deserted. When the Prisings reached the church, mass was already underway and it was not until the congregation began to disperse that young Robin picked up snatches of conversation—"hit ... Roosevelt ... this morning ... battleships ... two waves ... radio." Running over to a group of Filipino boys, Robin was told: "*Los* Japanese—they bomb—make bombs at Pearl Harbor. All ship—American ship—burn, burn, burn—no more ship."[29]

Although there was an almost universal confidence that, despite Pearl Harbor the United States would quickly defeat Japan, Manileños had seen newsreels of Warsaw, Rotterdam, London, and Coventry and fully expected their city to be bombed. Precautions had to be taken. Robin Prising remembers a British consular attaché outside Our Lady of Lourdes advising a Filipino friend: "Stock up with tins, old boy, before the blitz."[30] Alaistair Hall's nine-year-old son Roderick had gone as usual that morning to Pasay's American School. He was surprised to see the family chauffeur arriving at the school to pick him up, his father's seven-seater Chrysler filled to window level with canned goods.[31]

Such precautions were prudent. The other precaution, enjoined by the example of many Chinese and European cities, was the evacuation of as many of the non-essential civilian population as possible. A Civilian Emergency Administration had been set up at the beginning of the year and had attempted trial evacuations but had received little cooperation.[32] Consequently, the evacuation of Manila, which now got under way was partial and chaotic. Expensive private cars loaded with personal belongings drove down Dewey Boulevard and Taft Avenue, heading for the relative security of hotels in the

area of Tagaytay. These were the fortunate few. In the Manila that few Americans ever visited–the predominantly blue-collar and lower-middle-class suburbs south of the Pasig and east of Ermita and Malate, districts like Pandacan, Paco, and Singalong–the railroad stations were crowded with women and children cramming themselves onto trains to Lipa, Batangas, and points south. By the middle of December an estimated 200,000 people had left Manila.

The activities of one small group of Manila's citizens were being closely monitored. On the morning of December 8th, the Philippine Constabulary rounded up 300 of the city's Japanese community–gardeners, storekeepers, and businessmen, many of whom later proved to be Japanese intelligence agents–and incarcerated them in the National Penitentiary at Muntinglupa, outside Manila. Four days later they were joined by members of Manila's German and Italian communities. The Germans found they had little in common with their new allies. Having arrived first, the Japanese had set up a kitchen and invited the Germans to share their meals. One German inmate described Japanese fare as "just plain lousy – half-cooked rice, some vegetables and water to drink." The Germans complained to American and Filipino guards, who took pity on them and allowed some of them to work in the kitchens. Things soon got better. A German internee recalled, "In the morning we had ham and eggs, like the American guards. For lunch and dinner we had canned potatoes, canned meat, and canned vegetables." The stay of the Axis internees in prison was going to be short but already an obvious moral had emerged: it was better to be fed by the Americans than by the Japanese.[33]

Some of the first Japanese bombing raids were directed not at Manila, but at Clark and Iba airfields. Japanese air strikes hit both bases just before midday on December 8th, destroying much of USAFFE airpower. Rumors of the disaster were soon circulating around Manila.[34] The blackout came into force on the night of December 8th, but it did not deter the Japanese. The shoreline of Manila Bay and the Pasig served as navigational beacons. Bombers hit Nichols Field to the southeast of Manila in the early hours of December 9th, some bombs landing in Pasay and Malate. The following day, Japanese bombers devastated Cavite naval base and Cavite township on the southern shore of Manila Bay. Cavite burned for days, the fires clearly visible from Dewey Boulevard. More than 1,500 were killed and many hundreds more were injured. The wounded were evacuated in boats across the bay and disembarked near the yacht harbor on Dewey Boulevard, where they

were placed in rows amid the coconut palms along the sea wall while awaiting transport to the Philippine General Hospital. The bombers returned on December 13th, their target this time Manila's port districts. These areas were raided again on December 15th, 20th, 21st and 24th, and badly damaged.[35]

Despite the damage and the evacuation, morale generally remained high during the middle two weeks of December. Since the 8th; Manileños had watched thousands of troops moving north. Fourteen-year-old Enrique Zobel, grandson of the senior partner of Manila's Ayala y Cia, remembered standing outside the family home on Dewey Boulevard and watching the long columns of the 26th Cavalry, the last horse unit in the American army, ride north along the boulevard from Fort McKinley. More than 50 years later he still thought it one of the most moving sights he had ever beheld. Robert Allen, an American engineer, witnessed the same sight, and was moved almost to tears. For a generation brought up on Hollywood movies, this was the way to go to war.[36]

Most of the newly mobilized reserve divisions made the journey north in far less romantic style. In the three days after Pearl Harbor, the Philippine Constabulary, assisted by American and Filipino military police, commandeered virtually all the trucks and buses in the city, and drove north via the Quezon Bridge and Quezon Avenue through the district of Sampaloc to España Street and the University of Santo Tomás. This was the most famous educational institution in the islands, the alma mater of the Philippine leadership from Rizal to Quezon. Though the present campus dated from only the 1920s, Santo Tomás had been founded in 1611, making it the second oldest university outside Europe. The grounds now became an enormous motor pool where vehicles were repaired, serviced, and then fueled before taking the young troops north. Seemingly endless columns of buses and trucks moved up Calle Andalucía and Rizal Avenue, their ultimate destination the shores of Lingayen Gulf.[37]

In the two weeks after December 8th, stations like KZRH and papers like Carlos P. Romulo's violently anti-Japanese *Philippines Herald* (until it ceased publication after the newspaper's presses were bombed by the Japanese) poured forth optimistic predictions and supplied accounts of great (and imaginary) victories. The Philippine divisions deployed around the head of Lingayen Gulf—the best possible landing point on the Luzon coast with the exception of heavily defended Manila Bay—and waited. None of the Filipino soldiers had had more than four months' training, some as little as ten days'.

They were to fight well in the favorable terrain of Bataan, and later still many would make fine guerrillas, but in the flat, relatively open land at the head of Lingayen their inexperience placed them at a considerable disadvantage.

The convoy carrying Lieutenant General Masaharu Homma's 43,000 veterans entered Lingayen Gulf on the night of December 22nd, opposed only by sporadic and ineffectual American submarine attacks. The Japanese started landing before first light. The high winds and pounding surf capsized a large number of craft, and many of the invaders were forced to swim ashore without arms or equipment. The initial advantage was with the defenders: had they been given a few more weeks' training and a few thousand of the rifles and machine guns still on their way from the United States, the landing at Lingayen Gulf would have been a great Filipino victory. As it was, the Japanese soon gained the upper hand. By dawn Filipinos were streaming southeast around the head of the Gulf. MacArthur's commander at Lingayen, Lieutenant General Jonathan Wainwright, attempted a counterattack, throwing the 26th Cavalry, elements of a provisional tank battalion, and Brigadier General Clyde Selleck's 71st Division of the Philippine Army against the Japanese. Never having trained together, the tanks and cavalry were unable to coordinate their activities. The Japanese drove the units back and, by early afternoon of December 23rd, their patrol probes had produced widespread panic and chaos in Selleck's division.[38]

In his *Reminiscences*, MacArthur claimed that his decision to reactivate WPO 3, the withdrawal to Bataan, was made when he received news of a second Japanese landing at Lamon Bay on the east coast of Luzon, only 40 miles southeast of Manila. He apparently suddenly realized that Homma intended "to swing shut the jaws of a great military pincer, one prong being the main force that had landed at Lingayen, the other the units that had landed at Atimonan."[39] In fact the country between Lamon Bay and Manila was so rugged that the Japanese, advancing from Lamon Bay, took about a week to reach the outskirts of Manila, where they waited for the northern forces to arrive before entering the city. The southeastern jaw of the "great military pincer" swung shut so slowly that it did not present a significant military threat.

MacArthur was familiar with the Philippine terrain, and certainly no fool. This rather disingenuous account in his *Reminiscences* suggests that, even 23 years later, he still found it hard to face the collapse of his Philippine Divisions at Lingayen and the consequent decision to abandon Manila. It

was an admission that his Military Mission had failed in its primary task. He was deserting the city he loved and the home in which he had found happiness in accordance with the demands of a policy against which he had protested since 1935.

On December 26th, radio and newspapers declared Manila an "open city." Manileños remember the sense of profound shock they felt at the sudden realization that the Americans had abandoned the city to the Japanese. Placards appeared in the streets proclaiming the city's new status, streets which were soon crammed with USAFFE forces retreating from southern Luzon towards Bataan. There were touching parting scenes. Carmen Guerrero Nakpil had many friends in the USAFFE: the boys she had grown up with, cousins, beaux, and friends of her brothers. As they retreated towards Bataan, "the boys telephoned from every stop, from McKinley and from Caloocan. From San Miguel de Mayumo, they said, 'We're blowing up the bridge and going in. You won't hear from us for some time.'"[40] On Dewey Boulevard, Enrique Zobel was sitting down to a Christmas Eve lunch with his mother when a staff car drove up. It was his father, Colonel Jacobo Zobel, whose division had been stationed in the south. There was time for a few hurried farewells and then Colonel Zobel sped off up Dewey, to join the columns withdrawing towards Bataan.[41] It was about this time that Captain Joe McMicking also said goodbye to his family. He had been mobilized during the summer, flown some daring reconnaissance missions in an increasingly hostile air environment, and been seconded to MacArthur's headquarters staff as an assistant to Colonel Charles A. Willoughby, MacArthur's intelligence chief. He was now on his way to Corregidor.[42]

Manila may have been declared an open city, but this did not stop the Japanese from bombing it. The editor of the *Philippines Herald*, Carlos P. Romulo, now a colonel on MacArthur's staff, had been detained to remain with the rear-echelon headquarters in Manila, after the bulk of the HQ withdrew to Corregidor. On December 27th, the Japanese bombed Intramuros. Romulo, watching from a window in Fort Santiago, described the scene: "They were streaming over the city from every direction. The thudding jar of explosions came in from the riverfront district. Great billows of smoke began rising up from the old Walled City." After the raid, Romulo went to inspect the damage. The Church of Santo Domingo, the adjoining convent, Santa Rosa College, and Santa Catalina College, all of which formed the spiritual heart of Manila, were burning furiously. Romulo walked into the shopping area along the Escolta, which had also been hit. Here some of the

stores were festooned with Christmas decorations, their front windows piled high with gifts. There were also two Santa Clauses standing on the Escolta, "complete with long white whiskers and red cotton-trimmed suits. One was walking up and down in front of a toy store, as though dazed. The other was more practical. He was helping pile sandbags in front of the entrance of his shop."[43]

On December 28th, American engineers began blowing up the oil-storage depots in the Pandacan district to the east of the city. Columns of black, oily smoke rose thousands of feet into the sky, blocking out the morning sun, and creating an apocalyptic backdrop for the last hours of American Manila. On the same day, the American administration threw open the food stores in the warehouses in the South Port district to all comers.[44] They did not want to see these vast stocks fall into the hands of the Japanese, and envisaged a relatively orderly removal of food intp Filipino hands. But law and order soon broke down after the withdrawal of the troops. The Philippine Constabulary, armed only with bamboo staves, proved no match for looters, whose activities soon spread to areas well away from the Port district. They ransacked the cold-storage depot at the foot of Quezon Bridge, a mile to the east of the Port district. For a short time the Paco market overflowed with commodities being sold very cheaply. Enrique Zobel recalled that his mother "stocked up with toilet paper, Lucky Strikes in tins for father, and a sack of cracked wheat from which we later had to pick out the bugs."[45] José Olbes heard of one group delighted with their "liberation" from the cold-storage depot of what looked like a containerful of something valuable–a large, heavy crate bound with steel straps. They dragged it two miles northwest to Tondo, managed to break it open, and discovered–a coffin. It contained the body of an elderly American being shipped back to the United States for burial.[46] By New Year's Eve, gangs were marauding Manila's wealthier suburbs. Alaistair Hall wrote in his diary for Thursday, January 1st: "Looting spread from Piers to Grocery Stores and Sari Sari (corner shop). One near [by] house forcibly broken into and everything taken including Frigidaire."[47]

The work of the rear-echelon headquarters was almost done. On New Year's Eve, Carlos P. Romulo drove along Dewey Boulevard to his home on Vermont Street in Malate to say goodbye to his wife Virginia. The boulevard was deserted: "the Yacht Club, the night clubs, and hotels...all looked like funeral parlors. Their windows were blanketed in blackout curtains." To the right curved the sweep of Manila Bay, from which "the funnels of sunken ships stood up like tombstones." In the early hours of January 1st, Romulo

drove back up Dewey toward the landing on the Pasig near Fort Santiago, the embarkation point for Corregidor.

Mobs of looters were roaming the streets, the ill-armed Constabulary having abandoned the attempt to maintain order. To the northeast, the oil depots of Pandacan continued to spew spectacular fireballs into the night sky, while directly north the port area was in flames. The Manila Hotel lay on Romulo's route and he stopped off in the hope that he would be able to pick up some extra supplies from the hotel's kitchens. The surreal scene described by Romulo might have come straight out of a Buñuel movie. In the lobby, a band was playing while elegantly dressed couples, largely Americans and British, clung to each other in a last slow dance. It was the final night of American Manila.[48]

NOTES

1 Eighteen years after the battle, the United States Army Center of Military History produced a history of the Philippines Campaign, January-August 1945: Robert Ross Smith, *United States Army in World War II. The War in the Pacific: Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, DC, 1963). This is an excellent campaign history, but the destruction of Manila is treated as an almost incidental by-product of other operations. In biographies of MacArthur, Manila is treated as a tragic incident for which MacArthur was in no way culpable: William Manchester, *American Caesar* (New York, 1978), pp. 413-420; D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur*, 1941-1945, Vol. II (Boston, Mass., 1975), pp. 631-648. In more recent histories, the destruction of Manila receives less than a page: Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*: *The American War with Japan* (New York, 1985), p. 524; Lieutenant-General E. M. Flanagan, *Corregidor* (Novato, CA, 1988), pp. 101-102. The Philippines has now produced a detailed account of the destruction of Manila, written from the victims' perspective: Alfonso J. Aluit, *By Sword and Fire: The Destruction of Manila in World War II*, 3 *February-3 March 1945* (Manila, 1994). Aluit's compilation, published by the Philippine Commission for Culture and the Arts, provides invaluable source material for a new generation of historians hitherto confined to American sources.

2 D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur, 1941-1945*, Vol. I (Boston, Mass., 1970), p. 362ff.

3 Robert Ferrell (ed.), *The Eisenhower Papers* (New York, 1981), pp. 19-20; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower the Soldier* (New York, 1983), p. 105.

4 Ibid., pp. 106-107.

5 Aluit, *By Sword and Fire*, p. 85.

6 Nick Joaquín, *Manila my Manila* (Manila, 1990), p. 173.

7 Ibid.

8 Ambrose, *Eisenhower the Soldier*, p. 107.

9 Ibid., p. 108.

10 Paul P. Rogers, *The Good Years: MacArthur and Sutherland* (New York, 1990), pp. 52-55; author's interview with Roderick Hall, London, June 28, 1994.

11 Author's interview with Sr. Enrique Zobel, Sotogrande, Spain, June 21, 1994; author's interview with Sr. J. Olbes, Sotogrande, June 22, 1994.

12 Aluit, *By Sword and Fire*, p. 123.

13 Rogers, *The Good Years*, p. 9.

14 Ibid., p. 12.

15 Ibid., p. 13.

16 James, *The Years of MacArthur*, Vol. I, p. 559.

17 General H. H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (London, 1951), p. 159; *W. F. Craven and J. L. Cate: The Army Air Forces in World War II*, Vol. I (Chicago, 1948), pp. 139-145; Mark S. Watson, Chief of Staff; *Pre-War Plans and Preparations* (Washington, DC, 1950), pp. 438-440.

18 Eric Morris, *Corregidor: The Nightmare in the Philippines* (London, 1982), p. 29; Joaquín, *Manila my Manila*, p. 174; Lewis Moreton, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Washington, DC, 1952), p. 67.

19 Morris, *Corregidor*, p. 35.

20 James, *The Years of MacArthur*, Vol. I, p. 616.

21 Morris, *Corregidor*, p. 43.

22 James, *The Years of MacArthur*, Vol. I, p. 613.

23 Duncan Anderson, "Douglas MacArthur and the Philippines," in Brian Bond (ed.), *Fallen Stars* (London, 1991), p. 174.

24 Joaquín, *Manila my Manila*, p. 176.

25 Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, *A Question of Identity, Selected Essays* (Manila, 1973), p. 197.

26 Morris, *Corregidor*, p. 70; Rogers, *The Good Years*, p. 93.

27 Edgar Krohn and Walter Kühne, *The German Club 1906-1986: A History of the German Community in the Philippines* (Manila, 1986), p. 51.

28 Olbes interview, June 22, 1994; Zobel interview, June 21, 1994; Renato Constantino, *Under Japanese Rule* (Manila, 1993), p. 69.

29 Robin Prising, *Manila, Goodbye* (Boston, Mass., 1975), p. 50.

30 Ibid., p. 51.

31 Hall interview, June 28, 1994.

32 James, *The Years of MacArthur*, Vol. I, p. 617.

33 Krohn and Kühne, *The German Club*, p. 53.

34 Lewis H. Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries: The War in the Air in the Pacific, Middle East and Europe, 3 October 1941-8 May 1945* (New York, 1946) pp. 34-44.

35 James, *The Years of MacArthur*, Vol. I, pp. 16-20.

36 Zobel interview, June 21, 1994; Robert Coleman Allen, *Philippine War Diary: A Prison Camp Saga* (Washington, DC, 1991), p. 4.

37 Constantino, *Under Japanese Rule*, p. 135.

38 Anderson, "MacArthur and the Philippines," p. 175.

39 General Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York, 1964), p. 124.

40 Guerrero Nakpil, *A Question of Identity*, p. 197.

41 Zobel interview, June 21, 1994.

42 Hall interview, June 28, 1994.

43 Carlos P. Romulo, *I Saw the Fall of the Philippines* (London, 1943), p. 77.

44 Victor Buencamino, *Memoirs of Victor Buencamino* (Manila, 1977), pp. 264-265.

45 Constantino, *Under Japanese Rule*, p. 75.

46 Olbes interview, June 22, 1994.

47 Unpublished diary of Alaistair "Shorty" Hall, entry for January 1, 1942.

48 Romulo, *I Saw the Fall of the Philippines*, p. 88.