

The Angels of Bataan

Amid the horror of war in the Pacific, a group of POW nurses bravely carried on

> Even as bombs began falling on Manila in December 1941, the women who served as part of the U.S. Army Navy and Nurse Corps in the Philippines continued caring for their sick and dying patients.

In the years that followed, these World War II nurses endured the most trying of conditions. At times they had no hospital buildings and no hospital beds, only vine-stuffed mattresses laid out on jungle floors. There were bombs and air raids and gunfire. They suffered from malaria, beriberi, dengue fever, malnutrition, starvation and a host of other conditions that sapped their energy and strength. And even after they were captured by the Japanese and forced to live in internment camps, these nurses continued taking care of the thousands of sick and injured.

Upon their liberation in February 1945, the 78 nurses returned home, heralded as the “Angels of Bataan and

Corregidor,” and awarded Bronze Stars for their service. Yet for decades their story went largely untold.

“They were the largest group of women POWs in the history of [the United States]. But there was so much going on—the events at Pearl Harbor, the war in Europe—that their story has been swallowed up,” said Elizabeth Norman, author of *We Band of Angels: The Untold Story of American Nurses Trapped on Bataan by the Japanese* (Pocket Books, 1999), in a *New Hampshire Sunday News* interview in 1999.

And yet the influence the women had on their colleagues and patients was nothing less than extraordinary, according to U.S. Army surgeon John R. Bumgarner, who served in Bataan with them. “One of the most remarkable things coming out of our experiences in Bataan was the presence and

performance of the Army nurses,” Bumgarner wrote in his 2004 memoir, *Parade of the Dead*. “In retrospect I believe that they were the greatest morale boost in that unhappy little area of jungle called Bataan. I was continually amazed that anyone living and working in such primitive conditions could remain as calm, pleasant, efficient and impeccably neat as those remarkable nurses.”

Perhaps the greatest irony of their story is that many of these nurses were initially drawn to the Philippines by the promise of living and working in an exotic island paradise. Surrounded by palm groves and white gardenias, with weekends spent sunning at the beach club and dancing under the stars, the Americans stationed in the Philippines had a great life.

All that changed when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and began their attack on the Philippines. The Army

Freed after three years of imprisonment as POWs, a group of U.S. Army nurses climb into trucks on Feb. 12, 1945, as they leave Manila to head home to the United States. They sport new uniforms, given to them to replace their worn-out clothing.





The angels of Bataan and Corregidor arrive at Hickam Field in Hawaii on February 20, 1945.

and Navy nurses had never trained for combat, and yet they were now in the middle of a war zone.

The nurses jumped into action, caring for the wounded amid chaos. After Clark Field in the Philippines was

bombed on December 8, U.S. Army nurse Ruth Marie Straub volunteered to help care for the casualties brought to Stotsenberg Hospital. She wrote in her diary, "The hospital was bedlam—amputations, dressings, intravenouses,



Army nurses in Santo Tomas Internment Camp in 1943. From left to right: Bertha Dworsky, Sallie P. Durrett, Earlene Black, Jean Kennedy, Louise Anchieks and Millei Dalton.

blood transfusions, shock, death ... Worked all night, hopped over banisters and slid under the hospital during raids. It was remarkable to see the medical staff at work."

The nurses were evacuated from Manila and moved to field hospital sites on the jungle peninsula of Bataan and

VEP Series

Hydraulic Quick Disconnect Couplings

For anywhere there's a need for a tough, reliable hydraulic connection!

Applications:

- High Impulse Hydraulic Applications
- Oil Field Equipment
- Construction Equipment
- Excavator Attachments
- Crane Systems

Features:

- Fully Interchangeable with Stucchi VEP/VEP-HD Series, DNP FSI/PST4 Series, Holmbury HFT-Series, Voswinkel FT Series, and Parker FET-Series
- Available with NPTF, BSPP and ORB
- Improved Connect and Disconnect Performance Up To 5,500 PSI
- Patented Valve Mechanism Optimizes Flow and Pressure Performance
- Improved Corrosion Resistance Using ROHS Compliant Trivalent Chrome Plating
- Temperature Range: -22°F to +212°F (-30°C to +100°C)



 Proudly made in the USA

Dixon Quick Coupling

2925 Chief Court, Dallas, NC 28034 • ph 877.963.4966 • fx 800.839.9022

dixonvalve.com • customer service: 877.963.4966



The Right Connection™



On February 20, 1945, these U.S. Army nurses were awarded Bronze Stars, along with promotions, by Brig. Gen. Guy B. Denit, chief surgeon.

Malinta Tunnel on Corregidor Island, caring for hundreds of patients each day in difficult conditions over the next several months. The situation worsened when the U.S. troops on Bataan surrendered to the Japanese on April 9, 1942. Some 72,000 soldiers (both U.S. and Filipino) were captured

and sent on a horrific 63-mile march up the east coast of Bataan—the Bataan Death March that left some 10,000 dead at the hands of the Japanese soldiers.

While a handful of nurses were evacuated after the surrender, most were held as prisoners of war at two

internment centers: Santo Tomas and Los Baños. The camps held civilians—thousands of Americans, British and people from other countries—who had been living and working in the Philippines when Pearl Harbor was bombed.

The nurses were held captive for almost three years—years in which they wore their uniforms and stayed busy. As Japan’s prospects in the war worsened, conditions in the camp deteriorated, with many people becoming sick owing

to lack of food and poor sanitation.

“We were scared and tired, but we kept working,” Mildred Dalton Manning, a U.S. Army nurse and prisoner of war, told the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* in 2001. “We were under terrific strain, but we just did our job even when we were weak from not eating.”

Liberated on February 3, 1945, the women returned home and were honored with medals and presidential citations, and lauded by the press as “one of the beautiful legends of the Pacific War.”

Manning, the last known surviving “Angel of Bataan,” died in March 2013 at 98. She was more practical than romantic when she considered how she survived amid such adversity.

“I had a job to do,” she told the *Trenton Times*. “I was a nurse.”

Dixon Eagle Bellows Seal Valves

Features:

- reduce fugitive emissions of toxic or regulated fluids
- minimize maintenance
- reduce life cycle costs in process plants including steam, cryogenic, heat transfer oil and vacuum systems
- available styles:
 - forged steel globe valves, welded and bolted bonnet
 - forged steel gate valves, welded and bolted bonnets
 - forged steel globe valves welded bonnet Y-pattern
 - cast steel globe valves
 - cast steel gate valves

To learn more call 800.314.9426 or e-mail eaglesales@dixonvalve.com.

Dixon Eagle

33 Plan Way - Building 5, Warwick, RI 02886 • ph 800.314.9426 • fx 401.732.2201

dixonvalve.com • customer service: 800.314.9426



The Right Connection™