

BIOGRAPHY

Bruce Henderson is the author or co-author of more than twenty nonfiction books.

His latest book, *Rescue at Los Baños: The Most Daring Prison Camp Raid of World War II* (Morrow), tells the incredible survival story of more than 2,000 prisoners of war held in the Philippines by the Japanese during World War II — and the elite 11th Airborne Division's heart-pounding mission to rescue these beleaguered men, women and children from deep inside enemy territory in a deadly race against the clock.

Bruce's previous book, *Hero Found: The Greatest POW Escape of the Vietnam War* (Harper), is the story of legendary Navy pilot Dieter Dengler, with whom Bruce served aboard *USS Ranger* (1965-66) during the Vietnam War. *Hero Found* was a national bestseller.

Bruce's other titles include:

The #1 New York Times bestseller *And the Sea Will Tell* (Norton), which was made into a highly rated CBS television miniseries.

Down to the Sea: An Epic Story of Naval Disaster and Heroism in World War II (Smithsonian), an action-packed story of ships and sailors of Halsey's 3rd Fleet in the Pacific.

True North: Cook, Peary and the Race to the Pole (Norton) about the ongoing controversy as to who discovered the North Pole. His award-winning magazine story on the same subject, "Cook v. Peary" appeared in *Smithsonian*.

Trace Evidence: The Hunt for the I-5 Serial Killer, recently made its debut as an eBook and trade paperback a decade after its original print release, as has his award-winning title, *Fatal North: Murder and Survival on the First North Pole Expedition*.

A former newspaper reporter, magazine editor, private investigator and field producer for television news, Bruce has taught reporting and writing courses at Stanford University and USC School of Journalism. He is a member of The Authors Guild and the American Society of Journalists and Authors. He lives in northern California.



Luzon
Manila
COMBAT INFANTRY COMPANY
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BOOK REVIEW

Rescue At Los Baños: The Most Daring Prison Camp Raid of WWII

by Bruce Henderson

Book Review by your VOICE Editor.

It's a challenge to contribute original writing about something already covered rather liberally—be it a person, place, or event; and even more so to make that offering be greater than mere additional footnotes to existing chapters by other authors.

Bruce Henderson has met and surpassed that challenge with flying colors in his new book about the banner episode in the 11th Airborne Division's WWII history. *Rescue At Los Baños* is a triumph of integrating detailed new research and thrill-ride storytelling, worthy of the men who delivered the real event to the pages of history some seventy short years ago.

The fact that so much is already known about the raid and all that was at stake in its planning and execution, has not discouraged Henderson from digging further into hitherto untapped sources, or drilling deeper into the well of material still available in the hearts and minds of the dwindling number of surviving participants.

Like an old-fashioned watchmaker, Henderson assembles all the cogs and springs and jewels into a laudable casing, beneath the face of an inside observer. For example, he was able to extensively interview General Hank Muller, one of the two chief planners of the raid, and Terry Santos, the last surviving member of the Recon Platoon, for details never before brought forward so comprehensively. The role of the Guerrillas, the AmTracs, and the Soule Task Force are explored in more depth, and many familiar details already known are both enhanced and set in even brighter light than ever before.

The place of the rescue raid in the comprehensive history of the 11th Airborne and the greater body of MacArthur's forces is given a treatment with the purpose of setting up the background of the raid and its component units. An appropriate and fresh review of the Angels' progress from Camp Mackall, NC, through its hard-won victories on Leyte is included as part of telling the background of the champions. The 11th's "combined ops" amphibious and airborne invasion of southern Luzon, and its knock-down-drag-out bare-knuckle fight for south Manila is relayed in all its smoke and bloody rubble, setting the stage for the rescue action.

The relationship between the 11th Airborne and the Filipino Guerrillas is also shown in its development and coordination, which contributed greatly to the success of all of the 11th Airborne's Luzon operations, beyond that of the Los Baños mission. The enemy Japanese and their perfidious Makapili—Filipino collaborators—were thick throughout the region, and were particularly concentrated just a few dangerous miles from the Los Baños prison camp, offering a lethal check to any of the 11th's daring and defiant plans.

The pinnacle, of course, is the rescue itself; as such, a good deal of coverage is given to the prisoners and their ruthless captors. From before the fall of Manila in 1941 to post-War life, the biographies of beatings and abuse and rescue and recovery makes all hearts cheer for them when the day of deliverance arrives. Their courage and inside intel on the Camp itself became the vital last puzzle piece in planning.

Henderson's experienced, professional approach to history does not sterilize in any way the drama, the tension, the grit and blood of first-hand combat narrative or eyewitness testimony. He's the closest we will ever get to viewing through a hand-held video cam, tagging along in every phase of the operation; Henderson's craftsmanship earns him the right to emcee the re-telling of this heroic and phenomenal event to any audience wise enough to buy a ticket—that is, his book.

What makes Henderson's book equal to or surpassing previous books on Los Baños? What makes it indispensable to any WWII scholar's library—heck, any AMERICAN's library? What makes it imperative that every 11th Airborne trooper

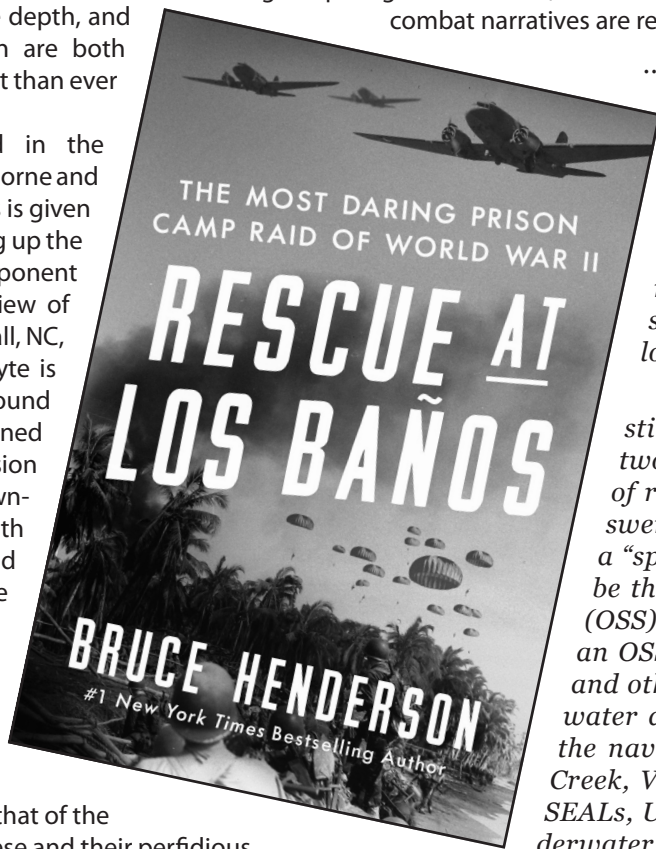
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buy a copy of *Rescue At Los Baños*? Because the past thirty years have seen more details come to light that call for a fresh recounting of "The Most Daring Prison Camp Raid of World War II." (Shoot, if Patton had the 11th Airborne, I've no doubt his Hammelburg Raid would've been a success!) In addition to that, Henderson's style is eminently readable, somewhere between the not-too-dramaticized matter-of-fact old-time news journalist, and the Oscar winning screenwriter.

Henderson delivers, make no mistake, and it gives your *Voice of the Angels* Editor great pleasure to place a big official 11th Airborne Division Association IMPRIMATUR on Bruce Henderson's latest and greatest book, *Rescue At Los Baños*.

**Rev. Matt Underwood
Editor, Voice of the Angels
11th Airborne Division Assoc.**

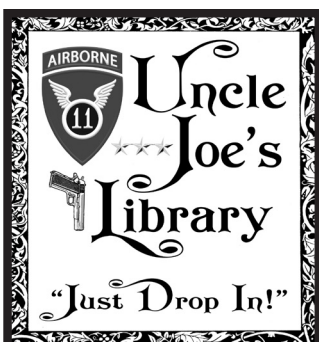
As a sample of just one segment of material, I offer one of the background scenes, which combines personal details of one of the key players in the rescue raid, with a Theater-wide political problem which may have effected MacArthur's choice to use the 11th Airborne for the Los Baños operation. Big scope—great detail. (The actual combat narratives are really loaded for bear.)



.... The doctor agreed to pass him if Santos promised to gain some weight. He was sent to Camp Toccoa, where he spent his days running Mount Currahee—three miles up and three miles down—on his own. (Instead of gaining weight, he lost five pounds.)

The airborne divisions were still being activated, and after two weeks Santos grew tired of running and waiting. He answered a call for volunteers for a "special unit" that turned out to be the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). He was accepted, and joined an OSS contingent for jump school and other courses, including underwater demolition (UDT) training at the naval amphibious base as Little Creek, Virginia. A forerunner to the SEALs, UDT learned how to plant underwater explosives. All the training was in preparation for paramilitary operations the OSS planned to conduct in the Pacific.

Santos shipped out with five other OSS-trained operators on an old World War I destroyer that seemed to rise and fall with every wave. The ship was met in New Guinea by an officer from MacArthur's staff, who told them that no OSS activities would be conducted in the Southwest Pacific. Distrustful of OSS director William Donovan and his close ties to Washington brass, MacArthur had decreed that he would retain control over all intelligence gathering in his area. The OSS personnel were released to other units, and that's how Santos, already wearing Jump Wings as a qualified paratrooper, was assigned to the 11th Airborne shortly after its arrival at Oro Bay. Santos, still inclined to volunteer for anything that "sounded exciting," quickly found his way to the recon platoon. Only four members of the 11th Airborne were accepted for Alamo Scouts training, all of them from recon. The twenty-three-year-old Santos, who was officially a corporal but was serving as an acting sergeant in the recon platoon, was one of them.



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