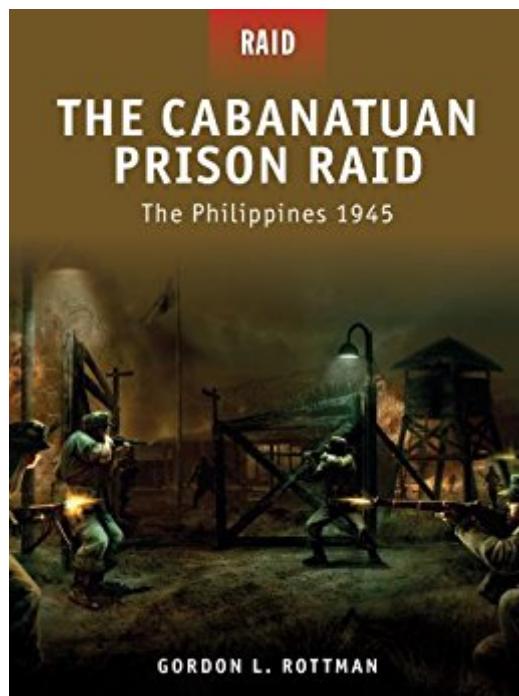


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The Cabanatuan Prison Raid: The Philippines 1945



Synopsis

On 27 January 1945 the 6th Ranger Battalion and the 6th Army Special Reconnaissance Unit (the Alamo Scouts) began the most dangerous and important mission of their careers to rescue 500 American, British and Dutch prisoners-of-war held at a camp near Cabanatuan. This daring plan was fraught with difficulties – the rangers had to struggle with harsh jungle terrain, 30 miles behind enemy lines against a far larger force, knowing that if their secret mission was leaked, the POWs would be massacred by their captors. Yet, with the help of a Filipino guerilla force, they managed to liberate 513 prisoners and kill 225 Japanese in 15 minutes, while only suffering two losses themselves. Relive the dramatic rescue in this action-packed account, complete with bird's eye view and battlescene artwork. Gordon Rottman details the build-up to and execution of the operation, analyzing the difficulties faced and the contribution made by the guerrillas. This is a story not only of extraordinary military success but a compelling tale of courage in the face of overwhelming odds.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gordon L Rottman's The Cabanatuan Prison Raid is the third volume in Osprey's new RAID series and it provides a very thorough and readable account of this famous Ranger operation. Since this volume covers a POW rescue mission in the midst of the U.S. liberation of the Philippines in 1945, it

has more of a military content than some of the other volumes in the RAID series (e.g. Entebbe, Iranian Embassy). Overall, the volume is well written - indeed one of Rottman's best efforts - and completely answers the mail on this topic. Although there are other, longer works available on the famous Cabanatuan Raid, this volume offers excellent maps and graphics, as well as a succinct narrative of the raid itself. The volume begins with a brief introduction about U.S. military personnel taken prisoner in the Philippines in 1942 and how the 6th Army headquarters learned of the location of prisoners at Cabanatuan in January 1945. The next 8 pages cover the genesis of the rescue plan and include a color plate on Ranger and Japanese uniforms, a sidebar on the 6th Ranger commander (LTC Henry Mucci) and another sidebar on Ranger weapons. The plan for the raid is thoroughly covered in the next 9 pages and includes a chart showing the breakdown of the raiding force (sadly lacking in some other volumes in the series), another showing the organization of the raiders and a diagram of the layout of Cabanatuan POW camp. In this section, the author also discusses the enemy forces in/near the objective, terrain and weather factors and details about the camp. These last two sections are competently written and obviously put together by someone familiar with Ranger mission planning.

On 30 January 1945, during the Luzon campaign, an American force made of Rangers and Alamo Scouts who earlier infiltrated behind Japanese lines, attacked a Japanese held POW's camp at Cabanatuan - in the same time a large force of Philippine guerillas prevented the arrival of any rescue of reinforcements by shredding to ribbons a 1000+ strong battalion of Japanese infantry supported by tanks... Guerillas also later assured the transportation of wounded Rangers and especially of rescued POWs, who were almost all in very, very bad shape... This raid was made necessary by the atrocities committed previously by the Japanese against allied POWs - there were indeed reasons to believe, that those prisoners would be all massacred once the front line approached to the camp... Also, the POWs were almost all sick and exhausted from years of malnutrition and mistreatments and they were slowly dying - every day their numbers dwindled... In fact, one of rescued sick POWs died a couple of minutes after the camp was captured, literally in the hands of his saviors who were carrying him to safety... Later, once the Japanese retreated, remains of 3000 POWs (including 176 West Point graduates) who died there from malnutrition, disease and bad treatments since 1942 were found in mass graves. The raid was a huge success as 489 POWs and 33 civilian internees were liberated - two more POWs, both very sick, died before reaching allied lines... Most of Japanese garrison of the camp (200+ regular guards and a small Kempeitai unit which just stopped for the night) was destroyed. Two Rangers, Captain James C.

Fisher and Corporal Roy Sweezy, were also killed - seven more were wounded.

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