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October 20, 2003

Veterans Day Tradition Continues at the Public Library

Freedom Is Not Free:

Surviving Japan's Notorious P.O.W. Camp

Library's 49th Annual Veterans Day Program → Tuesday, November 11, 10:45 a.m.
Main Library Atrium → 800 Vine Street → Information: (513) - 369-6959

Keynote Speaker: World War II Veteran (B-29 Navigator) Ray "Hap" Halloran Author of
Hap's War: The Incredible Survival Story of a P.O.W. Slated for Execution

Shot down 32,000 feet over Tokyo in January 1945, B-29 navigator Ray "Hap" Halloran survived over seven months at Japan's most notorious P.O.W. camp. He will speak about his incredible story at the Public Library's 49th Annual Veterans Day Program on Tuesday, November 11 at 10:45 a.m. The World War II veteran will recount his ultimate victory over the 40-year trial he calls "Hap's War." In Japanese captivity, Mr. Halloran endured brutal beatings, starvation, solitary confinement, torture, and public humiliation being displayed naked in an animal cage at the zoo. For 39 years after liberation, Hap's War continued with weekly and sometimes daily nightmares. Memories of falling through space or being beaten and always hungry kept recurring, causing him to wake up screaming for help. The 81 year-old former Army Air Corpsman will share how he finally triumphed over the crushing adversity of his wartime experiences.

Hap's War Begins

Hap's War began in earnest at about 3:00 p.m. on January 27, 1945. A twin engine Toryu attacked the "Rover Boys Express" B-29 flying at 32,000 feet over Mount Fuji near Tokyo, Japan. When the nose section was shot out, the pressurized cabin temperature plummeted from 70 degrees to minus 58 degrees. With three of the four engines on fire and all the controls out, Captain Smith gave the order for all the crew to bailout. Five of the eleven airmen survived the shoot down. Immediately after hitting the ground, his face and hands frozen from the high altitude, Hap Halloran was surrounded by hundreds of Japanese. He was hit with sticks, **(more)**

punched, kicked, and stoned. Finally he was “rescued” by four uniformed Japanese soldiers who bound his hands and ankles before tossing him into a truck, which drove him to Tokyo’s notorious torture prison, Kempei Tai. For six days he was in a 4’x5’ cell with two Japanese criminals where he was interrogated, threatened with death, beaten, and starved. He was then dragged through the snow to a stable where he was locked in solitary confinement. The interrogations and beatings continued. After 67 days in solitary confinement he was taken to the Ueno Zoo, stripped, and put on display in an animal cage. Around April 1, 1945 he was moved to Omori P.O.W. camp in southwestern Tokyo, where he was incarcerated with other captured B-29 crewmen who had also been forced to sign statements acknowledging they had indiscriminately bombed and killed Japanese civilians. According to Japanese policies, all B-29 flyers were unprotected by the Geneva Convention and would be executed. Imprisoned in deplorable living conditions, the American airmen were physically abused, severely malnourished, and denied any Red Cross packages, soap, baths, medical treatment, and books.

P.O.W.s Freed

On August 29, 1945, two weeks after the fighting stopped and four days before the Armistice was signed, Omori was the first P.O.W. camp to be liberated. Hap Halloran was released, having lost nearly 100 pounds from 212 to 115 pounds. He was boarded on a Navy craft bound for the USS Benevolence Hospital Ship in Tokyo Bay, where his medical treatment began immediately. After stops at a number of hospitals in the United States, he spent many months of recovery at the Ashford General Hospital in Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. In September 1946, Hap Halloran was discharged from the service after having served four years in the U.S. Army Air Force, including combat in the Pacific Theatre.

Upon returning home to his native Cincinnati, Mr. Halloran attended the University of Cincinnati. He worked for several railroads and motor carrier companies. In August 1958, he joined Consolidated Freightways, a major transportation company in Menlo Park, California, where he currently lives. Mr. Halloran held various executive positions in the company, retiring as Senior Vice President—Emeritus. Mr. Halloran is author of *Hap's War*, a book chronicling his life and the lasting impact of experiences during World War II.

Veterans Day Program at the Main Library – Tuesday, November 11 at 10:45 a.m.

In addition to Mr. Halloran’s keynote remarks, the program will include the presentation of commemorative wreaths by a number of area Veterans organizations and the lighting of the Flame of Remembrance. The Western Hills Jr. ROTC Color Guard will also participate in the program along with the Brian Buerkle Brass Quartet. The free program is sponsored by the Friends of the Public Library. All are invited to attend.