

SYNOPSIS

"This Is Not A Drill!"

In the autumn of 1941, young American 1st Lieutenant William Anderson is with his family at their home near Washington, DC when the Army suddenly assigns him to duty in the Philippines. Once there, he meets British Major Robert Perry at a holiday party in Manila when an announcement states the Imperial Japanese Forces (IJF) have attacked Hawai'i and another wave is headed toward them. At the same time in a sleazy Filipino bar, enlisted soldiers Chasten, Diaz, Paliotto, and Meringolo are gambling with dice are interrupted by air raid sirens. Citizens and soldiers alike are in a blind panic.

All personnel report to their commanders as General Douglas MacArthur reviews the battle plans but knows that American and Filipinos armed forces are out numbered and poorly equipped. The IJF begins attacking military and civilian targets across the island's beaches, cities, air fields, and ports. MacArthur orders General Wainwright to implement War Plan Orange meant to delay the advancing IJF by allowing the Allies to create a series of fall backs as they fight and withdraw. Anderson from the Corps. of Engineers and Perry, a SIS officer are reassigned to assist MacArthur move HQ from Manila to Corregidor Island. Soldiers Chasten, Diaz, and Pailiotto are sent to repel the IJF but quickly begin to apply fall back maneuvers. MacArthur and the Navy Asiatic Fleet are ordered to Australia leaving Wainwright to command a losing battle. Anderson and Perry hide in the tunnels of the Bataan peninsula.

"Surrender or Death"

American and Philippine armed forces led by Wainwright have no option but to formally surrender to the IJF and are sent on the 65-mile infamous Bataan Death March. Along the roads, thousands die from heat exhaustion, crippling wounds, or are murdered by sadistic Japanese soldiers. Diaz is killed by IJ Army soldiers for signaling to Filipino guerillas hiding in the jungle. Anderson and Perry are separated along the march then once at the overcrowded Cabanatuan POW Camp, they and other soldiers must endure disease, starvation, and beatings. Eventually Anderson and Perry are reunited and confide in each other's personal life stories but realize they must prepare themselves to survive for what horrors will come next.

The Japanese ask for skilled tradesman to be moved to another camp so Anderson and Perry volunteer among thousands of POWs are crammed onto converted cargo "Hell Ships" sailing for Japanese-controlled Korea then to unknown destinations and an uncertain future.

