

Ben Steele POW Exhibit



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Fighting on Bataan. Ben Steele was with the U.S. Army Air Corps in the Philippines, but once all planes were destroyed he became an infantryman.

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MacArthur Memorial Education Program

The Ben Steele P.O.W. Exhibit is made possible by:

The Ben Steele Family

The MacArthur Memorial

The General Douglas MacArthur Foundation

Receiving the Exhibit

Thank you for your interest in the Ben Steele P.O.W. Exhibit.

A MacArthur Memorial staff member will arrive at your school at the predetermined time to set up the exhibit.

Media centers are typically the ideal setting for the exhibit, but the exhibit can also be set up in classrooms.

Please go through this Teacher Manual for exhibit guidelines, fact sheets about each poster, student activities, and suggestions for use.

Contact Amanda Williams at amanda.williams@norfolk.gov or 757.441.2965 if you have any questions!

Guidelines

- The staff of the MacArthur Memorial will set up and break down the exhibit on the agreed upon dates.
- If you must move the exhibit prior to the pick up date, please stack the posters on a flat surface.
- Please do not allow students to move the posters or visit the exhibit without supervision.
- When photography is permitted:
 - You are welcome to photograph/record the exhibit set up or your students interacting with the exhibit.
 - Students are welcome to photograph/record the exhibit set up or their own reactions to the exhibit.
 - These images/videos can be shared across social media platforms. If you would like to share these images with the MacArthur Memorial and the Steele family, please tag them as #BenSteelePOWExhibit
- When photography is not permitted:
 - Please refrain from copying or photographing individual posters and sharing them across social media platforms.
 - Please refrain from copying or photographing individual posters for publication or for other professional use.
 - **Ben Steele's family retains the copyright to each drawing.**

SUGGESTED USE

When historians come into contact with a primary source, the first thing they do is identify what the item is, who made it, why it was made, and what it was used for. Once they determine the answers to as many of these questions as possible, they use this information to make inferences about the people, times, and places related to the source.

Recommended Procedure

1. Provide the students with background information on World War II, the Bataan Death March, and war crimes during World War II.
2. Discuss art as a primary source.
3. View the short film *The Ben Steele Story* and have students complete the viewing guide (page 24). (DVD included in this packet. Film is also available via YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDx7KD7tt9k>)
4. Invite the students to view the exhibit. There are a few suggested ways to facilitate this, but please feel free to be creative!
 - a. Divide students into small groups and assign each group to investigate a poster. Give them the background information about the poster and have them answer the critical thinking questions (or questions you provide). When completed, have each group share their findings and interpret the drawing for the class.
 - b. Have individual students walk through the exhibit and answer the critical thinking questions (or questions you provide).
 - c. Feel free to be creative!!! Each space and group of students will be different. Please share your ideas with us!
5. Additional activities related to geography and war crimes are also included in this packet – if time permits.

POSTER CHECKLIST

- Fighting on Bataan
- Surrender on Bataan
- Bataan Death March
- Train to Camp O'Donnell
- Camp O'Donnell
- Brutality
- Cabanatuan
- Hell Ship
- Coal Mine in Japan

EXHIBIT PICK UP

Pick up for the Ben Steele POW Exhibit was scheduled at the time of reservation and reconfirmed upon delivery. The MacArthur Memorial staff will arrive at this predetermined time to pack up the exhibit.

Contact Amanda Williams at 757.441.2965 or amanda.williams@norfolk.gov with any questions or concerns.

Checklist

- Fill out the Poster Checklist form and place it in the front pocket of the Teacher Manual.
- Confirm that MacArthur Memorial staff will have access to the exhibit room to pack up the exhibit.
- Leave teacher binder with exhibit

Art as a Primary Source

Primary sources are materials that provide first-hand accounts of a particular event or time. In general, these are documents that were created by witnesses to the event and can include photographs, letters, reports, newspaper articles, oral histories, memoirs, etc.

Primary sources can also include jewelry, literature, music, clothing, and works of art.

Primary sources are not automatically objective (unbiased). The person who created the primary source was a human being with his/her own personal opinions. This does not mean that the source can't reveal important information. On the contrary, the more you examine and question a primary source, the more you can unlock another window into a particular time period or event.

In dealing with primary sources, a good historian will constantly ask questions like: "Who created it?", "Why did they create it?", and "How close were they to the event when it occurred?" These questions can provide interesting answers and perspective.

Why Art?

Art can be a powerful tool for historical inquiry. Examining art can often increase student engagement as well as provide a unique opportunity to explore and evaluate perspective.

Examining art encourages students to:

1. identify and interpret primary source materials to increase understanding of events and times
2. make connections between past and present
3. combine cultural history with military, economic, political, history, etc.
4. consider perspective and “whose” history is represented
5. identify the costs and benefits of specific choices made, and how people and nations respond to positive and negative incentives
6. develop a personal connection with history

SOL Fulfillment:

- USII.1a, b, c, d, e, f, i; USII.7a
- WHII.1a, b, d; WHII.10, WHII.12a, b
- VUS.1a, b, c, d, e, f, h, i; VUS.11a, d

Who was Ben Steele?



Ben Steele worked as a ranch hand in Montana prior to joining the U.S. Army in 1940. In 1941 he was stationed in the Philippines. At the time, the Philippines was a Commonwealth of the United States. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Nine hours later, they attacked U.S. forces in the Philippines. Weeks later, the Japanese invaded the Philippines.

Steele spent the first months of the war fighting on the Bataan Peninsula. When American forces on Bataan were surrendered, Steele was one of tens of thousands of American and Filipino troops forced to go on the Bataan Death March. He spent the next three and a half years as a POW. During his captivity, he suffered from beriberi, dysentery, pneumonia, blood poisoning, and malaria. He survived the infamous "death ships" and ultimately ended the war working in a Japanese coal mine about 80 miles from Hiroshima.

Like many survivors, after liberation Steele struggled with memories of his captivity. Always interested in art, when he returned to the United States he obtained a degree in art. Over the next decades, Steele became a critically acclaimed artist of the American West, but the Bataan Death March and the labor camps were never far from his mind. In 1960, serving as an art professor, he was shocked when he walked into his classroom on the first day of the semester and saw a Japanese-American student. Steele later recalled that his "heart hardened and filled with hate." He was devastated to feel this way and tried to tell himself that the war was over and that he had to treat the student like every other American.

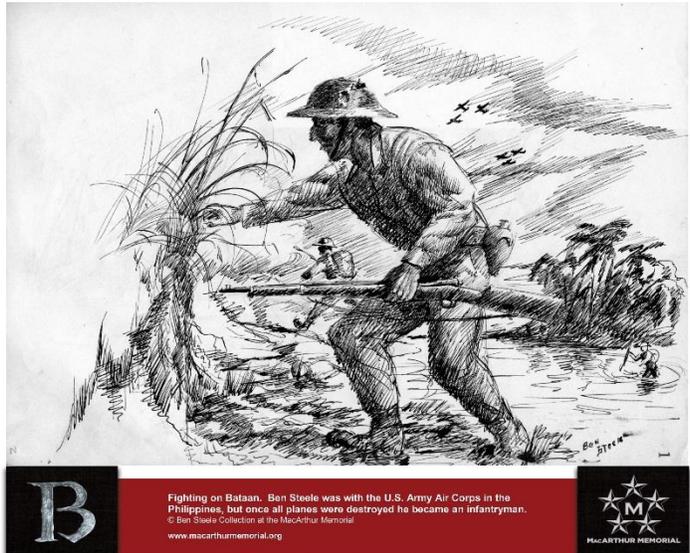
As he got to know the student, Harry Koyama, he learned that he, too, had suffered during World War II. Koyama's family had been imprisoned at a Japanese internment camp in Arizona during the war. Bonding over their shared passion for art, Steele and Koyama became lifelong friends.

As Steele came to terms with what he had experienced as a POW, he began to draw from memory. He filled notebooks with drawings of these memories. Steele passed away at the age of 98 on September 25, 2016. His drawings of his POW experience in World War II were donated to the MacArthur Memorial where they are preserved in perpetuity.

Ben Steele

POW Exhibit

TITLE: *Fighting on Bataan*



DESCRIPTION:

Following the Spanish American War in 1898, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States. In 1935, the Philippines became a Commonwealth of the United States, with the promise of full independence in the future. In the years leading up to World War II, the United States developed a number of important military bases in the Philippines.

Nine hours after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Philippines was also attacked. This initial attack devastated the American air force that was based in the Philippines.

In the weeks that followed, the Japanese invaded the Philippines. General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the U.S. and Filipino forces in the Philippines, attempted to stop the invasion but was quickly forced to withdraw his troops to the Bataan Peninsula and the island fortress of Corregidor.

The need for defense was so desperate that most military units became infantry units. Without planes to fly, the men of the U.S. Army Air Corps were handed rifles and sent to help defend part of the Bataan Peninsula. Ben Steele was one of these men.

The conditions on Bataan were difficult for both the U.S./Filipino troops and the Japanese. In the jungles, temperatures were often over 100 degrees, with humidity rarely dropping below 75%.

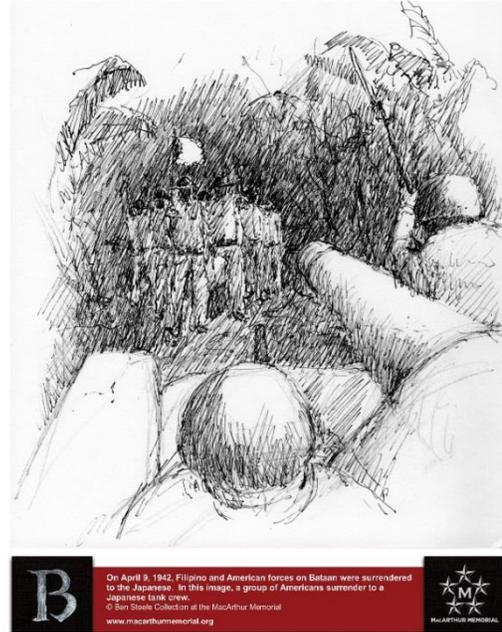
THINKING FURTHER:

- Why do you think the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor AND the Philippines?
- By 1941, the Japanese Army was considered one of the most experienced and well trained militaries in the world. In contrast, the U.S. military was ranked 19th in the world in terms of size. Its budget had also been significantly cut in response to the Great Depression. This resulted in less equipment and training for U.S. troops and its allies. What role do you think these factors played in the battle for the Philippines?
- How would you caption Ben Steele's drawing *Fighting on Bataan*?

Ben Steele

POW Exhibit

TITLE: *Surrender on Bataan*



DESCRIPTION:

In early 1942, U.S. and Filipino forces fought desperately to defend the Bataan Peninsula and the island of Corregidor from the Japanese. In their withdrawal to these defensive positions however, many supplies had been left behind. Soon the defenders ran low on food, ammunition, and medical supplies.

The U.S. Government believed that the Philippines was doomed. In March 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the U.S. and Filipino forces, to escape from the Philippines and go to Australia. MacArthur obeyed these orders. On arrival in Australia he pledged "I Shall Return."

Approximately 90,000 U.S. and Filipino troops remained in the Philippines. With no army waiting in Australia, General MacArthur was not able to immediately return and rescue these troops. They continued their defense of Bataan and Corregidor but doctors reported that the men on Bataan were literally starving to death. Many lacked the energy to even lift a rifle. On April 9, 1941, General Edward King made the decision to surrender the forces on Bataan.

Ben Steele and a group of soldiers surrendered to a Japanese tank. He expected to be executed but instead, he and his fellow soldiers were forced to carry the packs of the Japanese soldiers and then marched to an assembly point at the tip of the peninsula.

THINKING FURTHER:

- Imagine you are a defender on Bataan and you hear word that General MacArthur has left the Philippines. How would this make you feel?
- Do you agree with President Roosevelt's orders to General MacArthur? Do you agree with General MacArthur's decision to obey those orders? What decision would you have made? Why?
- Corregidor held out about a month longer, but on May 6, 1942, General Jonathan Wainwright surrendered his troops to the Japanese. Bataan and Corregidor marked the worst defeats in U.S. military history. Do you think Americans in May 1942 thought World War II in the Pacific would result in an Allied victory?

Ben Steele

POW Exhibit

TITLE: *Bataan Death March*



DESCRIPTION:

By late afternoon on April 9, 1942, most of the surrendered American and Filipino troops were gathered at assembly points on the Bataan Peninsula. On April 10th, the prisoners began a 65-mile march to the town of San Fernando.

The heat was intense and the prisoners had virtually no food or water. There were water sources along the route, but the prisoners were not allowed to stop. The Japanese guards were under strict orders to hurry their prisoners to San Fernando. Any guard who allowed the men to stop was beaten by Japanese officers who patrolled the road.

Approximately 75,000 men participated in the march. They walked 10 or 20 miles a day – sometimes more. Those who were ill, wounded, or too exhausted to keep up were executed by the Japanese guards.

Word of the march quickly passed through the Filipino communities along the route. Filipino men and women risked their lives to toss little parcels of food and water to the men. Even little children darted into the road to pass small handfuls of food to the prisoners.

Ben Steele suffered through this march. He kept telling himself to not think about the terrible things he had seen and to keep walking. He told himself: “If there’s going to be anybody left alive from this, I’m going to be one of them.”

Historians disagree about the number of men killed on the Bataan Death March, but an estimated 10,000 perished. There is also evidence that Filipino troops were singled out for execution at a higher rate than their American allies.

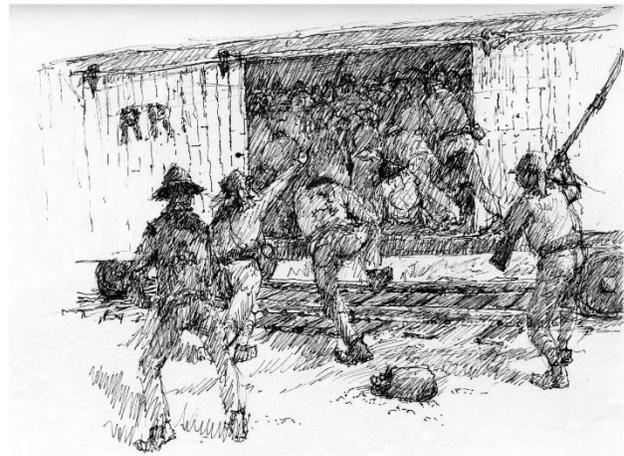
THINKING FURTHER:

- Ben Steele told himself to not think about the horrible things he saw on the Bataan Death March, but it was clearly something he never forgot. Looking at his drawing of the march, what do you think he wanted the viewer to understand about this event?
- Brutality was common in the Japanese Army. Japanese soldiers were often beaten by their superiors. This created an environment of fear, but also encouraged the soldiers to abuse those they deemed “inferior” to themselves. Do you think this culture of violence had an impact on the treatment of enemy POWs or even enemy civilians? Why or why not?

Ben Steele

POW Exhibit

TITLE: *Train to Camp O'Donnell*



DESCRIPTION:

The Bataan Death March ended at the major railroad hub in San Fernando. The prisoners were initially collected in holding pens and then herded to the train station. Old French “Forty and Eights” boxcars were waiting for them. These boxcars got their nickname from the fact that they could hold 40 men or 8 horses. Instead of the standard 40 men per boxcar however, the Japanese crammed 100 prisoners into a boxcar. The men were packed so tight that no one could move or sit down.

Their destination was Capas in North Central Luzon. It was only a three-hour trip by train, but it took hours to load all of the prisoners. As a result, the men remained locked in these boxcars from early morning to late afternoon.

The temperature that day was a sweltering 110°F. Some of the men died because of the heat or suffocated due to lack of ventilation. Ben Steele was fortunate. He was one of the last men packed into a boxcar and found himself standing in a spot where he could breathe through a crack in the wood slats of the boxcar.

The trains were driven by Filipino engineers. Just as in the case of the Bataan Death March, word had gone ahead through the Filipino community that the prisoners would be taken by train to Capas. The Filipino engineers slowed the trains as they passed certain areas to allow people in the nearby villages to throw food and water to the prisoners.

When the train finally reached Capas, the men were let out of the boxcars. They then began a 9 mile march to Camp O'Donnell. Camp O'Donnell was originally the home of the Philippine Army's 71st Division. The Japanese Army converted it into a prisoner-of-war camp.

THINKING FURTHER:

- There are five traditional methods of perception, or senses. These are taste, hearing, smell, touch, and sight. Can you imagine the conditions of the POW boxcars using the five senses?
- Why do you think the Filipino citizens tried to help the POWs?
- Using a map, can you trace Ben Steele's route from Bataan to San Fernando? And then his route from San Fernando to Capas?

Ben Steele

POW Exhibit

TITLE: *Camp O'Donnell*



At Camp O'Donnell, a notorious P.O.W. camp, men die at a rate of 400 a day.
Ben Steele and many other prisoners served on the burial details.
© Ben Steele Collection at the MacArthur Memorial
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DESCRIPTION:

The American and Filipino troops arrived at Camp O'Donnell in poor health. All were suffering from malnutrition and many had contracted diseases like malaria and dysentery. The health of the prisoners did not improve at Camp O'Donnell.

The Japanese immediately separated the Filipino and American prisoners into two camps. The prisoners lived in bamboo huts and slept on wooden shelves that lined the interior. One single pump supplied water for both camps. Each day, thousands of men stood in line from dawn to dusk just to fill a canteen with water. Often, the line was nearly a mile long.

For food, the men were given rice and occasionally a tiny bit of water buffalo meat. The rice usually had beetles in it. The men were so hungry that they ate the insects. Some even resorted to eating grass.

Medicine was also in short supply. Within weeks of arrival, Camp O'Donnell's hospital soon had a ward named "Zero Ward." The sickest prisoners were taken there to die. Other prisoners then formed burial details to bury the dead. Some dug graves, others carried the dead to the burial ground. Camp O'Donnell was only used as a POW Camp for several months, but in that time, 20,000 Filipinos and 1,500 Americans died there. So many men died each day that the burial details buried the men in mass graves.

Ben Steele served on a burial detail for a couple of weeks. During that time he buried a good friend who had died in Zero Ward.

THINKING FURTHER:

- Prisoners in Camp O'Donnell survived on a diet of 1,500 calories. How many calories is an adult male supposed to have?
- Camp O'Donnell has been referred to as a "concentration camp." Why do you think it has been called this? Create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the POW camps with the Nazi concentration camps in Europe.
- In 1929, the Geneva Convention laid out the proper way to treat prisoners of war. This included ensuring they had adequate food, shelter, and access to medical care. Was Japan bound by this treaty?

Ben Steele

POW Exhibit

TITLE: *Brutality*



DESCRIPTION:

In the POW camps, beatings were generally an everyday occurrence, and most POWs tried to avoid drawing attention to themselves so they would not be targeted. Sometimes a beating occurred because a rule had been broken – other times the beating could be the result of a random encounter. Executions were also common. Like his fellow POWs, Ben Steele witnessed a number of these incidents.

The Japanese soldiers looked down on the American and Filipino prisoners because they had surrendered. Prior to World War II, Japanese General Sadao Araki explained to an American professor:

“To become captive of the enemy by surrendering after doing their best is regarded by foreign soldiers as acceptable conduct. But according to our traditional...[beliefs], retreat and surrender constitute the greatest disgrace and are actions unbecoming to a Japanese soldier.”¹

Surrender was regarded as an incredibly shameful act by the Japanese. To the Japanese troops, any soldier who surrendered shamed not only himself, but betrayed his family and his country. Because of this perspective, many Japanese soldiers did not believe it was wrong to mistreat the prisoners.

THINKING FURTHER:

- Some Japanese soldiers assisted the POWs by secretly providing a bit of food or medicine. Why do you think more Japanese soldiers did not try to help the POWs?
- Racism was also behind much of the violence towards the POWs. Japanese soldiers were trained to see themselves as the superior master race. They regarded people who were White or Black, or non-Japanese Asian as inferior and less than human. In what other ways did racism or “racial science” impact events in World War II?

¹ Michael and Elizabeth Norman, *Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March*, 101.

Ben Steele

POW Exhibit

TITLE: *Cabanatuan*



DESCRIPTION:

After several months at Camp O'Donnell, most of the American POWs were sent to camps at Cabanatuan in Central Luzon. The conditions of these camps were very similar to Camp O'Donnell. The Japanese put Lieutenant Colonel Curtis Beecher, a Marine, in charge of the camp. Lieutenant Colonel Beecher made sanitation his priority in order to prevent further disease. He also lobbied the Japanese guards for more medicine and food for the POWs. His efforts paid off. The prisoner death rate dropped from several hundred men a month to dozens of men a month. Conditions were still harsh however.

By the time they reached Cabanatuan, the POWs were severely malnourished and had only rags to wear. The POWs were forced to work for the Japanese every day. They repaired automobiles, dug sewage trenches, and even grew vegetables to feed the Japanese Army.

Ben Steele did not go directly to Cabanatuan. Suffering from malaria and beriberi, he spent time at a hospital in Bilibid Prison. While at Bilibid, Ben Steele began drawing pictures. Soon, a group of fellow POWs approached him. They believed the Japanese were committing war crimes in their treatment of the POWs. They wanted him to draw pictures of the atrocities so that they would have proof of the war crimes after the war. It was dangerous work, but he eventually gave the other POWs about 50 drawings.

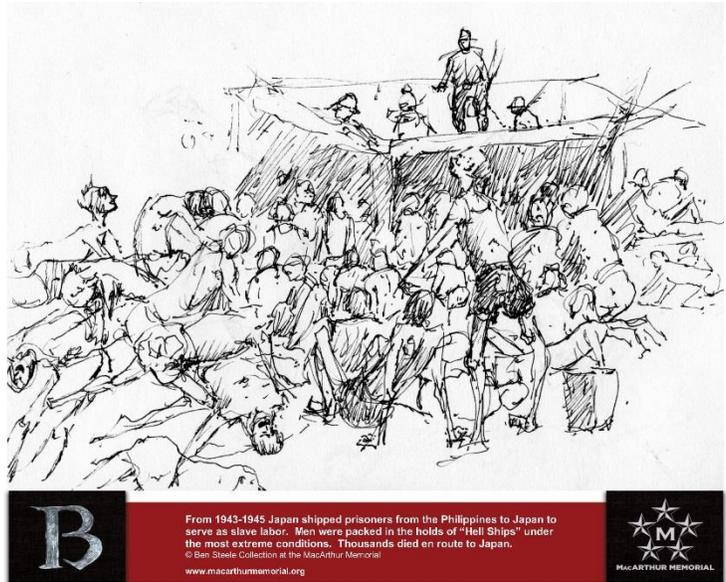
In January 1944 he was deemed well enough to work and was sent to Cabanatuan. There he worked on the farming detail. He was so hungry he thought about eating some of the vegetables he was growing for the Japanese. He changed his mind when he witnessed the fate of another POW who tried to do that.

THINKING FURTHER:

- Describe the POW camp depicted in Ben Steele's drawing, *Cabanatuan*. What are the differences in the way that he depicts Japanese soldiers versus American POWs? Why do you think he chooses to depict them in this manner?
- Many men suffered from malaria and another disease called beriberi. What are the symptoms of each disease? How do you get these diseases?

Ben Steele POW Exhibit

TITLE: *Hell Ship*



DESCRIPTION:

During World War II, the Homefront was vitally important. In many respects, World War II was an industrial war. It was important to have a large military – but a military with no equipment was not very effective. Axis and Allied leaders understood that whoever could produce the most planes, ammunition, tanks, ships, and other military supplies would win the war. However, to produce supplies in great quantities required a large labor force.

By 1942, Japan was clearly losing the industrial side of the war. Japan's small labor force was part of the problem. To remedy this, Japanese leaders decided to use POWs as laborers. Selected prisoners at Cabanatuan and other camps would be rounded up and sent by train to Manila. From Manila they would board old merchant ships for the trip to Japan.

In July 1944 Ben Steele, was selected to go to Japan. He boarded a ship with hundreds of other men. The POWs nicknamed these ships "Hell Ships." The men were stuffed into the dark, airless hold of the ship. Food and water were scarce, and the men had buckets for latrines. These buckets were often tipped over – especially when the seas were rough. On the month long journey, the POWs lived in filth. The death toll climbed as men succumbed to the conditions. When Ben Steele's ship arrived in Japan, the men were sprayed with water and a disinfectant to help remove the human waste and parasites like lice.

Between 1942-1945, the Japanese transported 126,000 Allied POWs to Japan for use as laborers. More than 21,000 died in transit. Fall of 1944 was a particularly dangerous time for the Japanese merchant ships because General Douglas MacArthur was in the process of keeping his promise to return to the Philippines. To support this mission, the U.S. Navy had submarines and planes prowling the waters around the Philippines. The "Hell Ships" were not marked as POW transports (as required by international law), and on occasion U.S. planes or submarines sank the ships without realizing they were carrying the POWs.

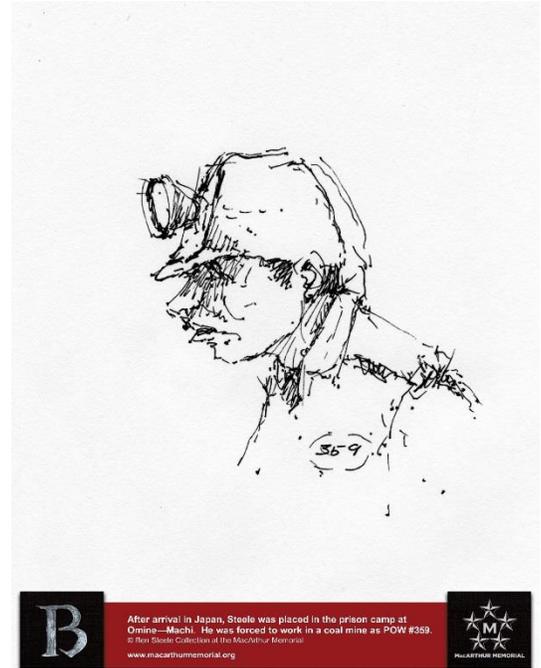
THINKING FURTHER:

- What inferences can you make about the physical and mental health of the POWs based on this drawing?
- Do you think the U.S. planes and submarines would have targeted the hell ships if they knew the ships carried POWs? Why or why not?

Ben Steele

POW Exhibit

TITLE: *Coal Mine in Japan*



DESCRIPTION:

After arrival in Japan, Ben Steele and his fellow POWs were sent to a prison camp at Omine-machi. He was labeled prisoner #359 and was forced to work in a coal mine. He worked 12 hour shifts underground, shoveling, hauling, and picking coal. When he wasn't working in the mine, he sometimes saw American bombers and heard explosions in the distance. He was convinced that the war would be over soon, and was determined to survive.

The POWs were provided with little food. Their captors justified this by explaining that the Japanese people were starving, too. This was true. By 1945, the U.S. Navy controlled the sea lanes to Japan and was able to stop shipments of food and supplies to the island nation.

By spring of 1945, the POWs were convinced Japan would lose the war. They also feared that the Japanese would execute all of the POWs as one final act of revenge, or simply to cover up the war crimes that had been committed.

On August 6, 1945 an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Hiroshima was about 80 miles away from the coal mine where Ben Steele was working. The men heard the explosion and felt a rumble. They later saw a massive black cloud, but had no idea what had happened. On August 16th the Japanese commander of the camp announced that Japan had announced its intention to surrender. It was only later that the POWs learned that a second atomic bomb had been dropped on Nagasaki on August 9th. The war was over.

By September 1945, the POWs were on their way back to the United States.

THINKING FURTHER:

- Do you think the POWs made an easy transition to life back in the United States? Why or why not?
- Ben Steele drew this picture of himself as prisoner #359. What message is he trying to convey about himself? What can you infer about his character based on his experiences in World War II?
- What happened to Ben Steele after World War II?

VOCABULARY

Beriberi [ber-ee-ber-ee]

A disease caused by a Vitamin B deficiency. The POWs typically suffered from Dry Beriberi or Wet Beriberi. Dry Beriberi was characterized by pain that made it nearly impossible to walk. Wet Beriberi led to severe swelling of the body – so much so that swollen legs or other extremities could burst. Ben Steele suffered from Wet Beriberi during captivity.

Bataan Death March [bah-tah-ahn]

After the surrender of 75,000 Filipino and American troops on Bataan, the Japanese Army forced these POWs to march 65 miles from the Bataan Peninsula to San Fernando. More than 10,000 died on the march. Despite the intense heat, the POWs were given no food or water. They were subject to physical abuse and random executions. After the war, the Allies concluded that the Bataan Death March was a Japanese war crime.

Concentration Camp [kon-suh n-trey-shuh n] [kamp]

A concentration camp is a guarded compound used to detain or imprison groups of people - typically members of ethnic minorities, political opponents, prisoners of war (POWs) etc. The prisoners are usually gathered together to provide forced labor or to await mass execution. The term is most strongly identified with camps established in Europe by the Nazis between 1933-1945. The term can also be used to identify a number of POW camps during World War II. Due to the poor conditions in Japanese POW camps throughout Asia, it is estimated that 1 in 4 of all American POWs in Japanese custody died before the end of the war.

Dysentery [dis-uh n-ter-ee]

Dysentery is an infection of the intestines that causes bloody diarrhea, abdominal pain, dehydration, vomiting, and fever. Dysentery can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites. These pathogens typically enter the body via contaminated food or water. If untreated, dysentery can be fatal if a person's immune system is weak.

“Forty and Eights”

“Forty and Eights” was a nickname for French boxcars designed to hold 40 men or eight horses. Introduced in the 1870s, these boxcars were used to transport men and horses by train. Loading the “Forty and Eights” with more than the recommended 40 men or 8 horses led to extremely cramped conditions and bad sanitation.

Geneva Convention [juh-nee-vuh] [kuh n-ven-shuh n]

Between 1864 and 1929, there were four separate Geneva Conventions. Representatives from countries around the world met at these conventions to craft international rules about warfare. The convention participants developed rules that apply only in times of war that seek to protect the sick and wounded of armed forces on the field, wounded, sick, and shipwrecked members of armed forces at sea, prisoners of war (POWs), and civilians. Many countries participated in the pre-World War II Geneva Conventions, but participation did not necessarily mean adoption or agreement with the rules that had been proposed. Japan was a participant in some of the conventions but did not sign some of the agreements relating to the treatment of POWs. A fifth Geneva Convention was held in 1949. It further addressed many of the abuses that had occurred during World War II.

Homefront

During wartime, the civilian sector of a nation is called the Homefront. During World War II, as U.S. troops fought in Europe and Asia, the continental United States was referred to as the Homefront. The Homefront was an important source of supplies and support to the troops. Both Axis and Allied leaders believed that a strong Homefront was vital to victory.

Hell Ship

During World War II, the Japanese transported many POWs to Japan via merchant ships. Allied POWs nicknamed these ships “Hell Ships.” The term was chosen because POWs faced a severe lack of food and water aboard the ships. They also lacked proper ventilation, sanitation systems, and lived in constant danger of attack by allied aircraft and submarines. Ships transporting wounded or POWs were typically marked as such – so that other ships or planes would not target them. The Hell Ships were not marked as POW transports, so dozens of them were sunk by Allied forces who were unaware they carried a cargo of POWs.

Malaria [*muh-lair-ee-uh*]

Malaria is a life-threatening blood disease that is transmitted to humans via mosquito. When an infected mosquito bites a person, it transfers parasites into the blood stream. These parasites multiply in the person's liver and begin destroying red blood cells. Symptoms include chills, fever, and sweating. The disease can be life threatening if untreated.

POW (Prisoner of War)

A POW (Prisoner of War) is a fighter who has been captured by the enemy, during an armed conflict. In past centuries, POWs had no rights. Between 1864-1929, four separate Geneva Conventions established international laws for dealing with POWs. Some of these rights included:

- The right to be treated with respect.
- The right to inform their families they are a POW
- The right to adequate food, clothing, housing, and medical attention.
- The right to NOT do forced labor, military work, or work that is dangerous, unhealthy, or degrading

War Crime

A war crime is an action carried out during a war that violates accepted international rules of war. In addition to conventional "War Crimes," there are two other main categories of war crimes – including "Crimes against the Peace," and "Crimes against Humanity." Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Intentionally killing civilians or POWS
- Torture or inhumane treatment
- Destroying civilian property,
- Rape and sexual slavery
- Using child soldiers
- Killing a surrendered combatant

Zero Ward

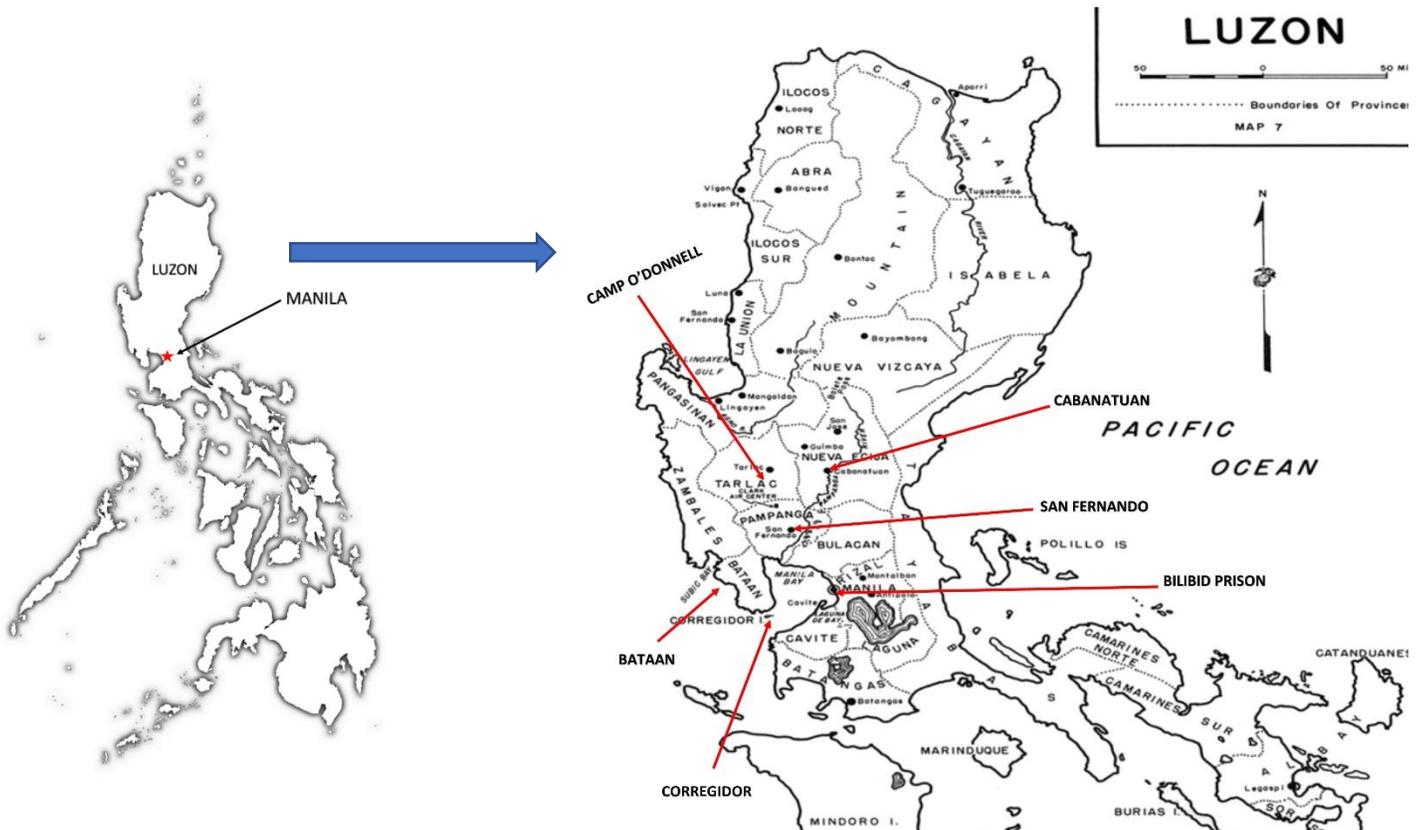
At Camp O'Donnell, one of the buildings was named "Zero Ward" by the POWs. It was called "Zero Ward" because the most seriously ill POWs were placed there and the other POWs believed these men had "zero" chance of leaving the ward alive.

GEOGRAPHY

Ben Steele's service in the U.S. Army took him from Montana to the Philippines. During his time as a POW, he was moved to prison camps throughout the Philippines. When the war ended, he was in Japan.



In the Philippines, he spent most of his captivity in Northern Luzon.





MacArthur Memorial Education Programs

The Ben Steele Story Viewing Guide

Directions: Complete the statements and questions below as you view the Ben Steele film.

1. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched attacks against the United States at Pearl Harbor and the _____.
2. One of the United States soldiers stationed in the Philippines during the Japanese invasion is Ben Steele, a young man from the state of _____.
3. The American forces on the Bataan Peninsula surrendered on
 - a. December 7, 1941
 - b. December 8, 1941
 - c. April 9, 1942
 - d. April 1, 1945
4. Steele, along with 75,000 American and Filipino troops are forced to walk 65 miles to San Fernando. This event became known as
 - a. The Battle of Okinawa
 - b. The Battle of Wake Island
 - c. The Doolittle Raid
 - d. The Bataan Death March
5. During the march, soldiers who are too ill, wounded, or who fall behind are _____ by Japanese guards.
6. Steele and other prisoners who survived the march are sent to Camp O'Donnell, where there is little food, water, and medicine. Prisoners who are sickest are taken to _____.
7. Many POWs, including Steele, suffered from _____ such as beriberi, dysentery, pneumonia, blood poisoning, and malaria.
8. In July 1944, Steele is sent to work as a laborer in Japan. Transportation to Japan was by ship. Due to the filthy conditions, these transports were nicknamed "_____."
9. Steele is working on a Japanese coal mine on August 6, 1945, when an atomic bomb is dropped on
 - a. Hiroshima
 - b. Nagasaki
 - c. Tokyo
 - d. Osaka
10. Decades after his POW experience, how did Steele view the Japanese?