



## Captured: The Forgotten Men of Guam

By Roger Mansell

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### **Captured: The Forgotten Men of Guam** By Roger Mansell

In the years before the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, Guam was a paradise for the Navy, Marine and civilian employees of Pan American Airways, who found themselves stationed on the island. However their apprehension about the fate of the island increased as they anticipated a Japanese attack in the fall of 1941. Shortly after attack on Pearl Harbor, Guam was bombed and the Japanese invasion soon followed. Since Guam was not heavily fortified it soon fell to the invading Japanese.

In the takeover of the island, the Japanese practiced a swift brutality against the captive Americans as well as native population, and then immediately removed the American military and civilian personnel to Japan. Only a lucky few escaped, including five Navy nurses and dependent Ruby Hellmers and her baby Charlene, who were transported back to America aboard the Swedish ship *Gripsholm* in mid-1942.

In *Captured*, Mansell tells the story of the captives from Guam, whose story until now has largely been forgotten. Drawing upon interviews with survivors, diaries and archival records, Mansell documents the movements of American military and civilian men as they went from one Japanese POW camp to another, slowly starving as they performed slave labor for Japanese companies. Meanwhile, he describes the brutal horrors suffered by Guamanian natives during Japan's occupation of the island, especially as the Japanese prepared for American forces to re-take this U.S. possession in 1945.

Moving stories of liberation, transportation home, and the aftermath of these horrific experiences are narrated as the book draws to a close. Mansell concludes that America's lack of military preparation, disbelief in Japan's ambitions in the Pacific, and focus on Europe all contributed to the captivity of more than three years of suffering for the forgotten Americans from Guam as the Pacific War raged around them.

*Captured* was completed by historian Linda Goetz Holmes after the death of Roger Mansell.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“The strength of the work is that the author interviewed many ex-POWs and recorded their stories first-hand. For every particular event of interest, for every unit involved, military or civilian, he seems to have at least one firsthand account. Often Mansell quotes directly from his interviews or from the diaries the POWs kept while in captivity. This provides a lot of interesting information and detail which make the book a gripping read. But in addition to collecting oral history from the survivors, Mansell has backed this up with thoroughly researched archival material which is well used and documented in the endnotes.” **—Pacific Affairs**

“The contents of this book are difficult to read, but they are worth remembering and serve to fill a curious gap in World War II history. Hopefully this book will receive the audience it deserves and make sure that the struggles of the men of Guam are not forgotten.” **? Naval Historical Foundation**

“After so many years, it’s surprising that World War II still has some untold stories. In fact, a couple of the ‘forgotten men of Guam’ have published memoirs, but those are long out of print. In *Captured*, Roger Mansell brings their stories together with useful background and the results of what was apparently a great deal of personal research. The result is an interesting account of some of the first prisoners of the Pacific war and their tribulations...a valuable collection of reminiscences... *Captured* conveys the atmosphere of the camps and the men’s perceptions clearly enough to make it very enjoyable and rewarding reading.” **? The Asian Review of Books**

“In the days of shock and horror that followed Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor, another monumental event, occurring almost simultaneously, was largely overlooked: Japan’s bloody seizure of the strategically critical island of Guam. For the American troops, civilians and native people captured in the invasion, so began an epic ordeal. The Americans were shipped off to be slaves for the Japanese, while the natives remained behind to endure four years of brutalities under their captors. Roger Mansell, the pre-eminent historian of Pacific POWs, devoted the last years of his life to unearthing and telling this forgotten story, and after his death, the work was completed by his colleague, the esteemed POW author Linda Goetz Holmes. Chronicling a lost chapter of World War II, *Captured* promises to be an authoritative, fastidiously researched and compelling read.” **? Laura Hillenbrand, author of *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption* and *Seabiscuit: An American Legend***

“Roger Mansell worked tirelessly to research and document the stories of American POWs in the Pacific during World War II. His efforts give us a better understanding of the great service and sacrifice of these heroes. The stories he tells are a tribute to the warriors who defend us.” **? Oliver North**

“Roger Mansell’s *Captured* is a beautifully written, richly researched account of the fall of Guam and a searing reminder of the horrific ordeal suffered by American prisoners of war at the hands of the Japanese.”

**?John A. Glusman, author of *Conduct Under Fire: Four American Doctors and their Fight for Life as Prisoners of the Japanese, 1941-1945***

From the Inside Flap

Prior to the outbreak of the Pacific War, Guam was a paradise for U.S. military and civilian employees stationed on the island. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, however, the Japanese invaded the tiny island, captured the Americans, and shipped them to Japan. Drawing on interviews with survivors, diaries, and archival records, Roger Mansell documents the mostly unknown story of these American POWs. The men endured horrific hardships, many of which are chronicled in this book for the first time. Also included are moving stories of their liberation, transportation home, and the aftermath of their ordeal.

#### About the Author

Roger Mansell was born in 1935 in Brooklyn, New York. After graduating from Mepham Highschool in Wantagh, NY, he attended Brown University. Commissioned in the U.S. Army Artillery, he was stationed in Korea then at Fort Bliss, Texas. Having completed his military service, in 1962, he moved to California and a successful business career. It was to be the deep impression made upon him by an employee who, as a child, had been a prisoner under the Japanese during WWII, that set him on a course to discover more about the war.. When he met a veteran who had been taken prisoner by the Japanese on Guam, Mansell realized that many of the ex POWs, now elderly, had never told anyone about their experiences in what was a crucially important part of the history of the war in the Pacific.

After he retired from a career in business in the 1990s, he began researching the allied POWs of the Japanese, a gruesome story that had been largely buried in inaccessible archives. Over more than twenty years, he made multiple and extended visits to the National Archives Modern Military Records in College Park, MD, and to the Hoover Institution Library and Archives, as well as military historical centers, scanning and photographing thousands of documents that had never before been centralized or complied.

Since the beginning of Mansell's project, his chief goal was to compile a database of more than 100,000 records to document what happened to every Allied soldier who was captured by Japanese forces during the war. Approximately 90 percent completed at the time of his death in 2010, this vast database contains information on when soldiers were captured, where they were interned, and whether they died or were repatriated at the end of the war, as well as the conditions of their captivity.

He founded the Center for Research Allied POWs Under the Japanese which posted the research on its website, [www.mansell.com](http://www.mansell.com). That website has been turned over his colleague, Wes Injerd.

He turned his retirement into a full-time job not only undertaking research and elaborating the website, but assisting the hundreds of people who came to his website looking for information about what had happened to friends, fathers, grandfathers, and others. As one result of his research, Mansell has helped several families locate the remains of soldiers who were missing in action during the war; he has also frequently been consulted by researchers around the world seeking information about individual soldiers or the camps in which they were interned.

Linda Goetz Holmes, completed Captured by editing Roger Mansell's work, She was the first Pacific War historian appointed to advise the government's Interagency Working Group declassifying documents on World War II crimes. The author of *Guests of the Emperor: The Secret History of Japan's Mukden POW Camp, Unjust Enrichment: How Japan's Companies Built Postwar Fortunes Using American POWs and 4000 Bowls of Rice: A Prisoner of War Comes Home*, she lives in Shelter Island, NY.

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**Lilian Anderson:**

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The book Captured: The Forgotten Men of Guam has a lot details on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was compiled by the very famous author. The writer makes some research ahead of write this book. This specific book very easy to read you can obtain the point easily after looking over this book.

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