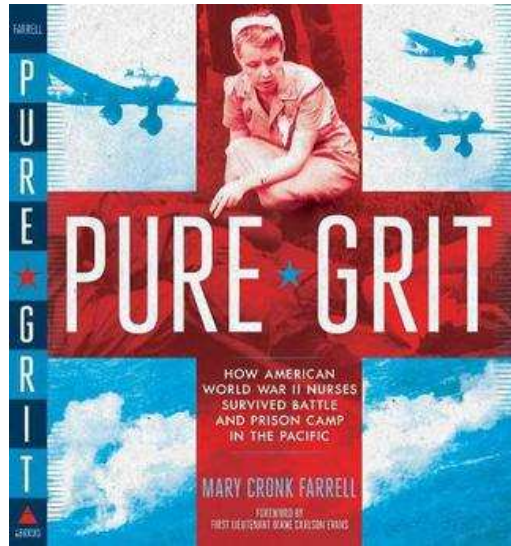


PURE GRIT: How American World War II Nurses Survived Battle and Prison Camp in the Pacific

By **Mary Cronk Farrell**

Grades 5 and up ISBN 978-1-4197-1028-5

Published by Abrams Books for Young Readers



[Book Trailer with War Footage](#)

About the Book: Farrell chronicles the harrowing story of U.S. Army and Navy nurses based in the Philippines during WW II. After working under enemy fire, they became prisoners of war in two Japanese prison camps, where they continued to nurse soldiers and other captives. As time went on, severe malnutrition and lack of medicines left all the prisoners vulnerable to serious diseases. Still, the women bonded, supporting each other during the years before their release in 1945. The nurses' return to civilian life was hampered by an unsupportive military and what we now recognize as post-traumatic stress syndrome. The first official recognition of their service came in 1983, after many had died. Farrell offers a thoroughly researched account encompassing the experiences of 67 American nurses held as POWs in the Philippines. Well-chosen quotes from interviews, personal accounts, and articles bring their voices into the story, while the many period photos offer intriguing glimpses of the war, the camps, and the women's later lives. At times the narrative is nearly overwhelmed by the sheer number of experiences recorded and women profiled. But in the end, the details of many nurses' individual trials combine to form a memorable portrayal of their shared experience, one which will emotionally impact readers.

— *Carolyn Phelan*

About the Author: Mary is an award-winning author of Children's/YA books and former journalist with a passion for stories about people facing great adversity with courage. She says, "Writing such stories has shown me that in our darkest moments we have the opportunity to discover our true identity and follow an inner compass toward the greater good."

Mary's fiction and non-fiction titles feature little-known true stories of history based on thorough research. Most include an author's note, bibliography and further resources, but they are not dry, scholarly tomes! Confronting grief, adversity and failure in her own life, enables Mary to write stories with an authentic emotional core.

About the Guide and Common Core State Standards

This guide was created in alignment with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Vocabulary, questions and activities will develop skills in the areas of Informational texts and Reading Standards as well as Social Studies, Writing and Speaking and Listening.

Vocabulary

This vocabulary is intended for 5th grade and beyond. There are many words to choose from so use your professional judgment about which words will work best for your students.

ELA 5.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area.

RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Vocabulary Words or Phrases and Key Terms

p. 34 "Beset by devils", colorful language, p.35 morphine, nurses station...a crate, p. 36 shrouded p. 37 corpsman p. ----, captors, p. 43 noncombatant (caption), debridement p. 43, p. 45 (journal entry) dogfighting, p. 48 lull, "sweet on" "if only", carabao p. 49, "when the rock melts the meat is tender", p. 50 gnawing, artillery, detonations, banyan tree, p. 51

Overarching Discussion Questions

CCSS-ELA-Literacy-SL.5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS-ELA-Literacy-SL.6.1-8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

The following are questions can be answered over the course of the text.

Is it important to know about history? Why or why not? Are some points of history more significant to know and understand? Which parts and why?

Why is important that we look at history? These women are long gone, does what happened to them matter? Why, why not? What was their contribution to the war effort?

In the 1930's most American women expected to marry and raise children. Being a nurse was not considered "proper" for most girls. Joining the military was highly unusual. Why do you think these women made these choices? What evidence from the text suggests this thinking?

Do you think American attitudes about women have changed since 1945?

How did the women (and the men) feel about participating in a war? Give evidence from the text to support your answer.

As you read the text, either individually, as a group or aloud, find areas where you believe the author has revealed her point of view. How/how not and why/why not has she done this?

Discussion Questions listed by Chapters

Chapter 1

- Re-read pages 14-16. Explain, with text evidence, why Peggy thought she was naïve.

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

- What was Hawaii's status to the United States during the 1940's? Was this significant? Why or why not?

Teacher's Guide

- p. 23 The nurse, Frances Nash, received her cap and pin. Talk with a nurse in your family/neighborhood and find out why this important part of becoming a nurse. Does it have the same significance today?

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

- Look over the map on p. 9. Why did Hattie Brantley watch the entrance to Manila Bay? Why was this a good point to watch? What was she hoping to see? Given that she was a nurse, why was she hoping that their hospital would not be needed?
- Why did the nurses feel they had been abandoned? What evidence did they have that this was true or not true.
- Explore the reasons why the Japanese would have for using bicycles as they enter Manila.

Chapter 6

- On page 36 you can see the Japanese advancing on Manila. Explore the reasons why the Japanese would have for using bicycles.
- At the end of this chapter (p. 37) you see the author made the comment that "It was frightening to be help captive ...to value life so little." Use evidence to support your answer from previous text.

Chapter 7

- p. 48 Many believed "their commander had deserted them. Others argued that the United States couldn't risk the Japanese capturing General MacArthur". Give evidence from the text why there might be diverse views on this issue.
- p. 54 Why did Josie make the decision that she did about leaving?
- Go to www.history.com and listen to the speech about Wainwright's release from captivity. Write a short summary of what you heard from the speech.

Chapter 11

- On p. 70 the author shares about the Japanese come to "look" at the nurses. Why were they interested in looking at them? Would this happen today during wartime? Why or why not?

Chapter 13 and 14

- Compare and contrast the conditions at Santo Tomas Internment Camp and Los Banos.

Teacher's Guide

- On p. 83 a photograph depicts the contents of a Red Cross relief package. What importance would each item hold for a POW? List the items in order of importance for health reasons.
- Re-read the incident of Frances and the Japanese soldier with the bald spot on p. 82. What brought her to do this? Was this a dangerous move? Select evidence from the text to support your position. Take a Pro/Con position and have a debate on this topic.

Chapter 14

- Make a class list of the ingenious ideas that the POWs devised. How did the military nurses manage to survive prison camp? What can you learn from them about encountering hardship/unexpected trouble that disrupts your life?

Chapter 19

Chapter 21

- Since it took forty years for these women to be recognized for their sacrifice and service. Who do you think is currently being ignored or taken for granted, or not given their due by our society?

Activities on following pages

Teacher's Guide

Many times the FORWARD of a book is overlooked. Read the FORWARD of the book. Share your classmates your ideas about why the author, Mary Cronk Farrell, selected this particular person to write the FORWARD for her book. What criteria might an author use for this type of selection?

On p. 34 read Roosevelt's Radio Pledge to the people of the Philippines. How did this "pledge" play out as the war went on? Why do you think he made this promise and what was its effect on the people in the war?

Re-read the incident of Frances and the Japanese soldier with the bald spot on p. 82. What brought her to do this? Was this a dangerous move? Select evidence from the text to support your position. Take a Pro/Con position and have a debate on this topic.

On p. 130 in the caption it tells of a POW – discuss with classmates what would make a person do something like hide a flag until liberation while endangering him or herself? Discuss the meaning of patriotism and what role it plays in a POW. What role does it play in our lives today?

Each classmate selects a person from the book and follows her until liberation. Write a list of characteristics you learned about her from the book. (See the list of nurses on pp. 136-137) How had her civilian life prepared her for duty? Use evidence from the book or your own additional research if desired.

Using some of the following maps, chart the course of the war in the Philippines

[Map 1](#)

[Map 2](#)

[Map 3](#)

[Map 4](#)

[Map 5](#)

[Map 6](#)

Mini-Research Projects

These are designed to be short research projects to be done by individuals or small groups of students to develop background knowledge on the subject. The students can report either verbally (as a presentation) or written text.

Teacher's Guide

RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

W.6.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

W.6.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

1. Using the timeline starting on p. 138, select a point in time and research it and write a summary of what occurred during that time period. From these summaries build a timeline in the classroom.
2. On p. 19 in the text it states that there was a rumor that the coast of California had been bombed. Research any bombings from WWII that took place in the lower 48 states. Was this a rumor?
3. P 21 Research the first use of dog tags and their purpose. Why are they called "dog tags"? Check with family members if they have any dog tags.
4. Chapter 3 what was Hawaii's status to the United States during the 1940's? Was this significant? Why or why not?
5. Page 33 references "The Great War." Gather information about the Great War and write a quick summary using at least three valid resources to present to classmates.
6. Starting on p. 42 are personal letters and journal entries. What is the tone of the letters? Write a letter to a family member as if you were a one of the nurses that has the same tone.
7. On p. 53 it mentions military time. What is it and explain why it is used. Give 3 examples in military time?
8. On p. 67 a white flag is shown to the Japanese. What is solemn about a white flag? Why was that color chosen?
9. In general, what was the Geneva Convention? How does this apply to this point in history? What has happened with the Geneva Convention since the end of WWII? Why is this meaningful to this part of history?
10. What does it mean to be an "OPEN CITY" and why was this significant?
11. What is the Hague Convention of 1907?
12. Research the following diseases and their prevalence today; Beriberi, Malaria, Dysentery, Dengue Fever.
13. What veteran issues do we have today? Research issues veterans face when returning home from war in today's times.

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14. Research the history and service work of the American Red Cross. Look for this organization in your community. How do they serve your community? Have them come speak to your class about their work?
15. Research the habitat, flora and fauna of the Philippines. What about this area would be helpful or not helpful to the POWs?
16. Research some of the lyrics to songs from the time period such as, *You Are My Sunshine*. The world is at war why are songs like this being produced and why are they singing them. (page 41)

Other titles on the same subject of returning veterans:

The Impossible Knife of Memory, which approaches the question many young people encounter when their parents go into active military duty: What happens when they come home? *The Impossible Knife of Memory*, which approaches the question many young people encounter when their parents go into active military duty: What happens when they come home?

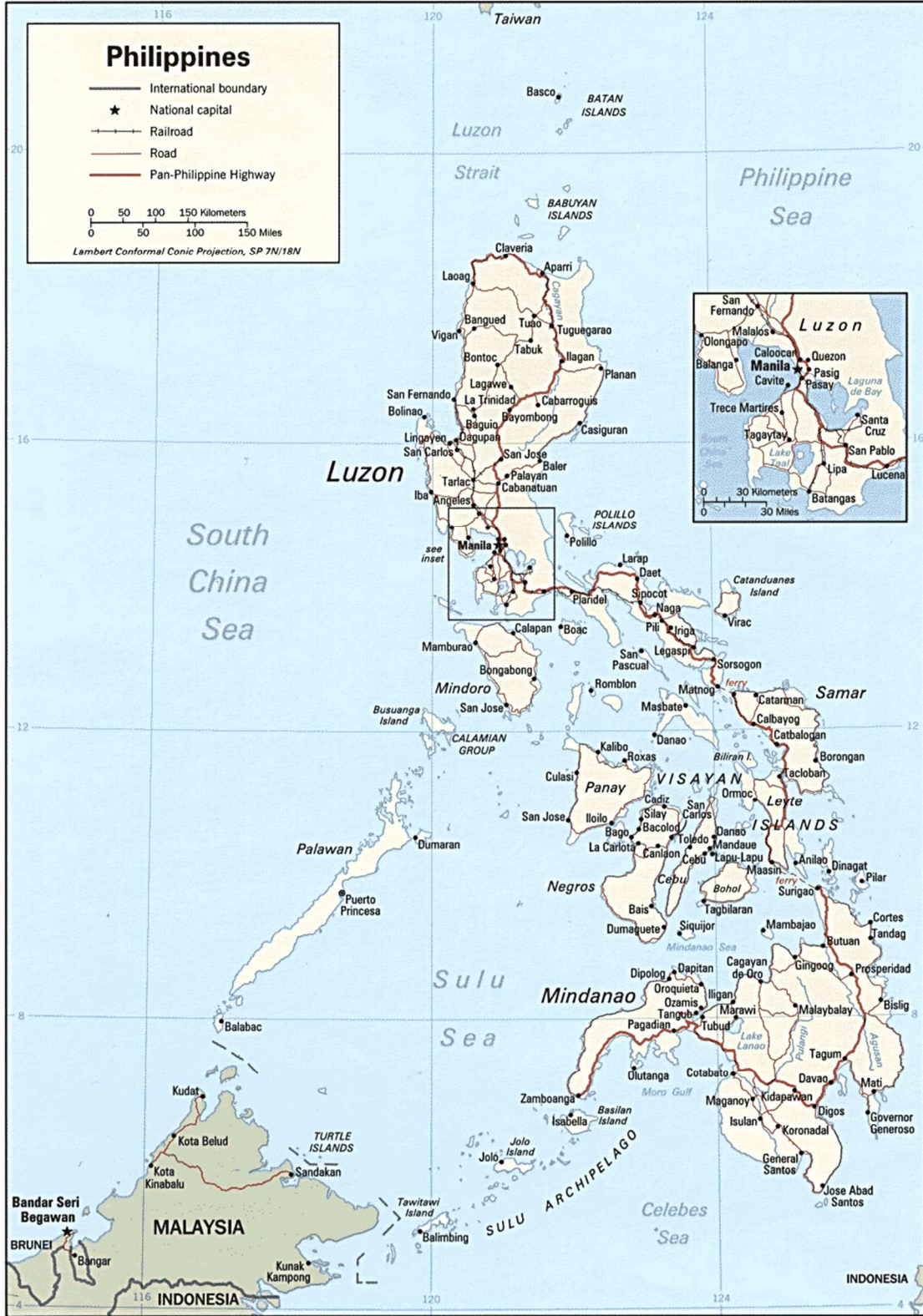
Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam (W.W. Norton, 1985). More than twenty-five years after the official end of the Vietnam War, *Dear America* allows us to witness the war firsthand through the eyes of the men and women who served in Vietnam. In this collection of more than 200 letters, they share their first impressions of the rigors of life in the bush, their longing for home and family, and their emotions over the conduct of the war, and their ache at the loss of a friend in battle. Poignant in their rare honesty, the letters from Vietnam are "riveting...extraordinary by [their] very ordinariness...for the most part, neither deep nor philosophical, only very, very human" (*Los Angeles Times*). Revealing the complex emotions and daily realities of fighting in the war, these close accounts offer a powerful, uniquely personal portrait of the many faces of Vietnam's veterans.

The things a brother knows by Dana Reinhardt. Although they have never gotten along well, seventeen-year-old Levi follows his older brother Boaz, an ex-Marine, on a walking trip from Boston to Washington, D.C. in hopes of learning why Boaz is completely withdrawn.

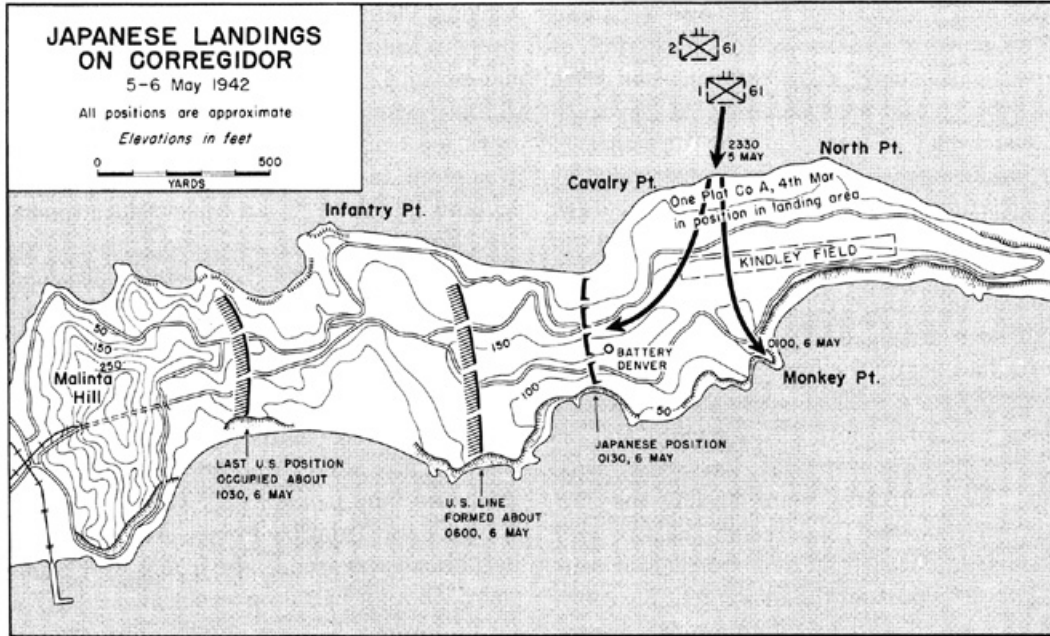
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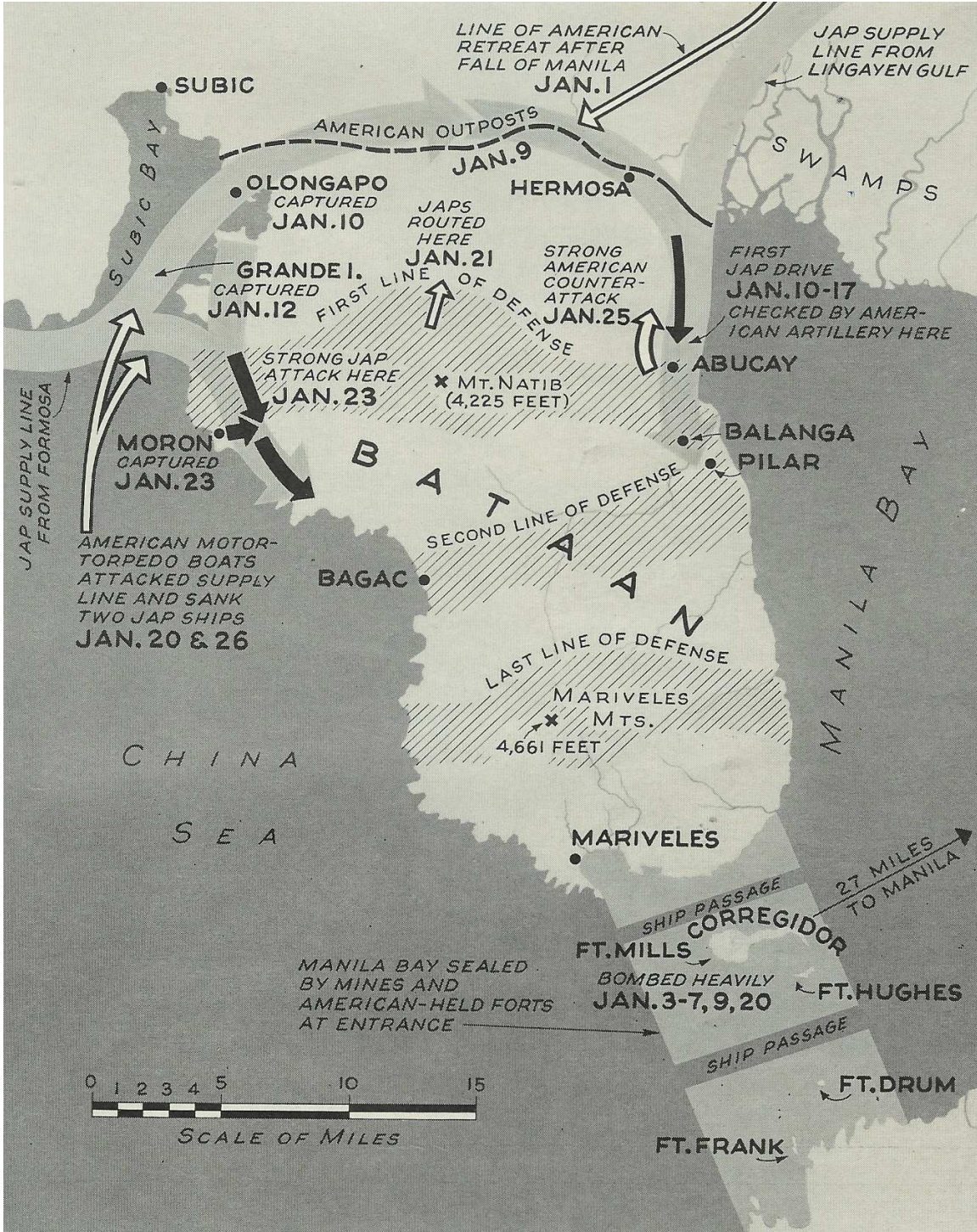
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