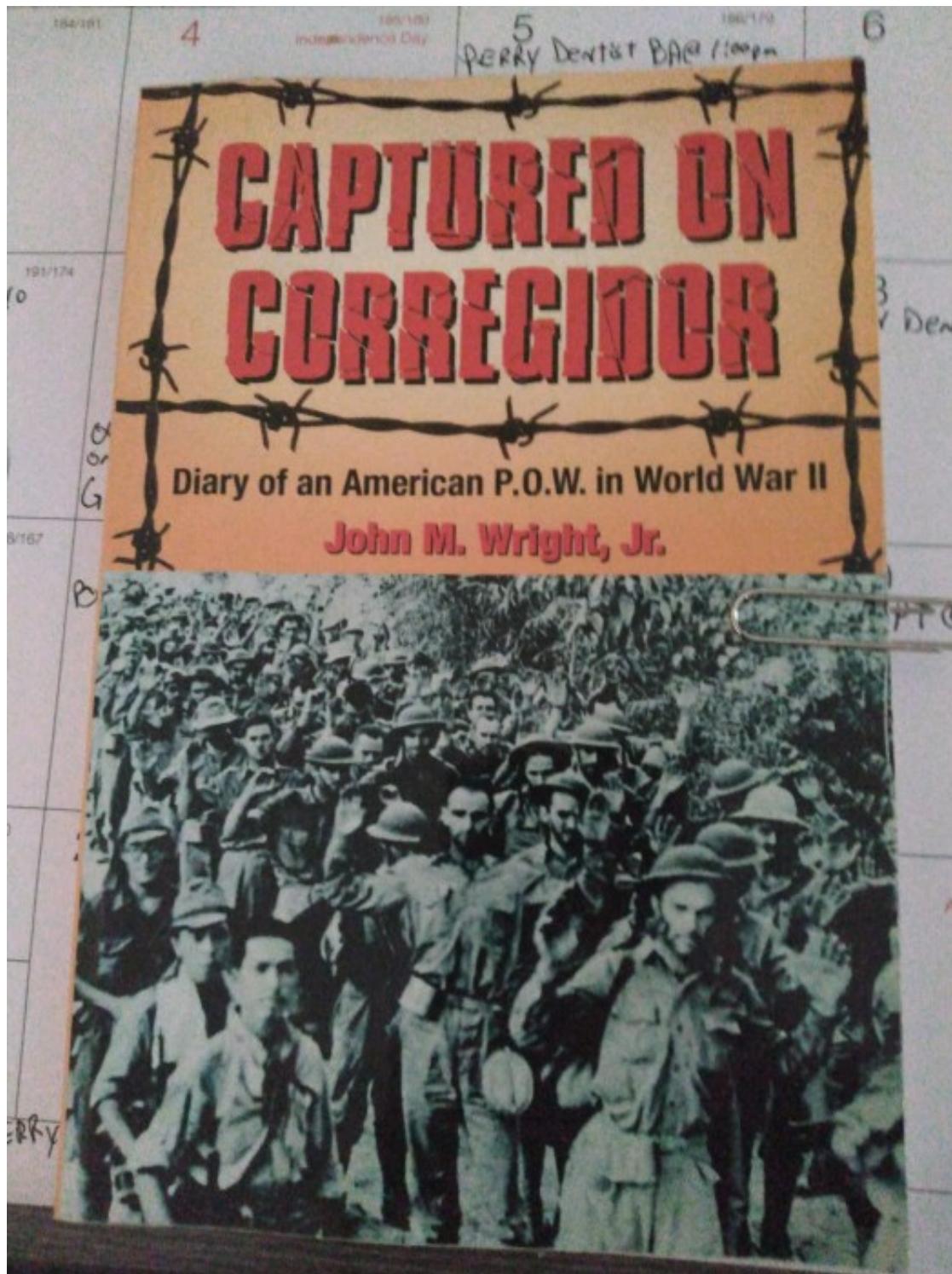


Uncle Johnny - POW

by Rev. Joe Dirt - Tuesday, July 18, 2023

<https://curmudgeon-alley.com/uncle-johnny-pow/>



I am going to pull this story out separately as the 3.141592 early readers of my posting: [YouTube](#)

[Playlists: USS Carr and Paul Henry Carr](#) probably missed the addendum I made after a comment from my cousin Perry.

As related earlier, I was digitizing VCRs that another cousin had that relate to my uncle Paul Henry Carr and his namesake ship, the missile frigate USS Carr, FFG-52.

One of the videos I had not seen before, *Paul Henry Carr Checotah's Own WW II Hero*. As I mentioned it was interesting to me as I heard my aunts talk about their brother, my Uncle Paul, extensively for the first time. Before that I had just heard about him in spurts from various family members. However, what really grabbed my attention was that my Uncle Johnny (my Aunt Tressie's second husband) related the four years of his time as a Japanese POW during WW II. It was the first time I had ever heard the story, and definitely the first time I heard him talk about his experiences during the war.

I did not know my Uncle Johnny very well. They lived way out in the middle of the boondocks, with my Uncle Johnny making a very long drive every workday into Tulsa. For some reason I think he worked at an aircraft manufacturing plant. I remember staying at their house a couple times when they actually lived in Tulsa before they bought the land in Locust Grove. I also spent a little time at their "farm". I remember going squirrel hunting with Johnny's son Rudy. Well, actually what we did was spend a lot of time shooting into trees at what Rudy told me were squirrel nests. We harvested not a single squirrel.

What I did know about my Uncle Johnny was that he had been a POW during WW II, that he would not eat rice, and somehow I had gathered a precaution that you were not supposed to ask him questions about it.

My Uncle Johnny compressed those four years as a POW down to less than two minutes in front of the camera. My cousin, Perry, a while back became, in his words, obsessed with Uncle Johnny's story. He discovered a little, that he had entered the army at the recruiting office in Tahlequah, Oklahoma and had been trained in coastal artillery. Perry also came across a book, more on that later.

Uncle Johnny's brief summary on the video stated that he was in the Philippines on Corregidor when it was lost to the Japanese in May of 1942. He spent a short time in a POW camp in the Pacific (Manila?), then was later transported to Japan in the forward hold of a Japanese ship crammed in there with 2000 other POWs. He spent the next 42 months working as slave labor in a Japanese shipyard in Yokohama.

The book that Perry discovered is by another soldier from the coastal artillery who was on Corregidor and also taken prisoner, John M. Wright, Jr.. The book relates his experiences as a Japanese POW. It can be found on Amazon by following this link: [Captured on Corregidor: Diary of an American P.O.W. in World War II](#). While I have not read the book yet, I imagine it tells a tale very similar to the one my uncle experienced. The Amazon teaser for the book reads:

"On graduating from West Point in 1940, Lieutenant John Wright was assigned to Corregidor, Philippine Islands. Captured there by the Japanese, he endured three and a half years of POW conditions described in subsequent war crimes trials as the worst of World War II. This book is built around a diary he smuggled through countless inspections during his imprisonment. A detailed account of the voyage of the "hellships" carrying prisoners from Manila to Japan; the disease, the hunger, and the different ways prisoners coped—or failed to cope—with their ordeal."

While Uncle Johnny's story is not the David and Goliath story of my Uncle Paul set during the largest naval battle in history, anyone who can survive four years as a Japanese POW and come out the other side reasonably sane qualifies as a hero in my book. I doubt very seriously that I would have lived through the ordeal.

Greed, lust for power, dreams of empire, the need to control, the we are better than them attitude, the disregard of the sanctity of human life... horrible stories that we as a species have just kept repeating since before the dawn of history that continually lead us down dark, dark holes.

And so it goes.

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