The Battle of Manila

February 3 - March 3, 1945
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Retaking Manila, Gen Douglas MacArthur realized, would symbolically break Japanese hold in the Philippines, and would serve as a great morale builder for Allied Forces in their effort to defeat Japan.

General Tomoyuki Yamashita considered Manila as too vulnerable to American attack and ordered his troops to evacuate to Northern Luzon for a last ditch stand where the mountains stood as natural barriers to any military assault.

Most of his soldiers quickly obeyed his command. But the Japanese naval troops under Rear Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi stayed in Manila; determined to fight to death. While the main American attack force was sweeping aside feeble Japanese defense positions in their push to Manila, Iwabuchi’s forces were laying out an elaborate defense plan around Manila.
Streets were lined with razor-sharp barbed wires, trucks were overturned as barricades and machine guns placed on seemingly empty houses. Naval cannons were brought in from Japanese ships and placed in strategic places; and everywhere, mines awaited unwary soldiers. If Manila would be taken, the streets would be awash with Allied blood.

Bridges were blown off, as well as military installations, power, and water facilities. Manila stood still as a vengeful Japanese force waited for its final battle with the not-so-distant euphoric Allied army.

The Filipino and American guerrillas, sensing victory with the easy disposal of Japanese defenses they had encountered, reached the capital on February 3, 1945. But the Japanese defenders would not give them the city in a silver platter.
The Japanese soldiers fought with the savage ferocity of a wounded beast, displaying a kind of barbarity so alien to the Filipinos and Americans alike. Civilians were mowed down, old men, women and children. The Japanese massacred them, shot them, bayoneted them, burned them and raped them. The Japanese rampage in Manila would be remembered in history as one notorious chapter of man's inhumanity to man.

Manila was destroyed in the ensuing battle. So fierce was the battle that not even the elegant giant stone buildings that distinguished Manila as one of the most beautiful colonial cities in Asia survived the holocaust.

A grim tally of 100,000 people perished. It was a devastated Manila that the Allied forces of the Filipinos and Americans retook that fateful February of 1945.
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This memorial is dedicated to all those innocent victims of war, many of whom went nameless and unknown to a common grave, or never even knew a grave. At all their bodies having been consumed by fire or crushed to dust beneath the rubble of ruins.

Let this monument be the cornerstone for each and every one of the over 100,000 women, children, and infants killed in Manila during its battle of liberation February 21 - March 3, 1945. We have not forgotten them, nor shall we ever forget.

May they rest in peace at part now of the sacred grounds of this city, the Manila of our affection.