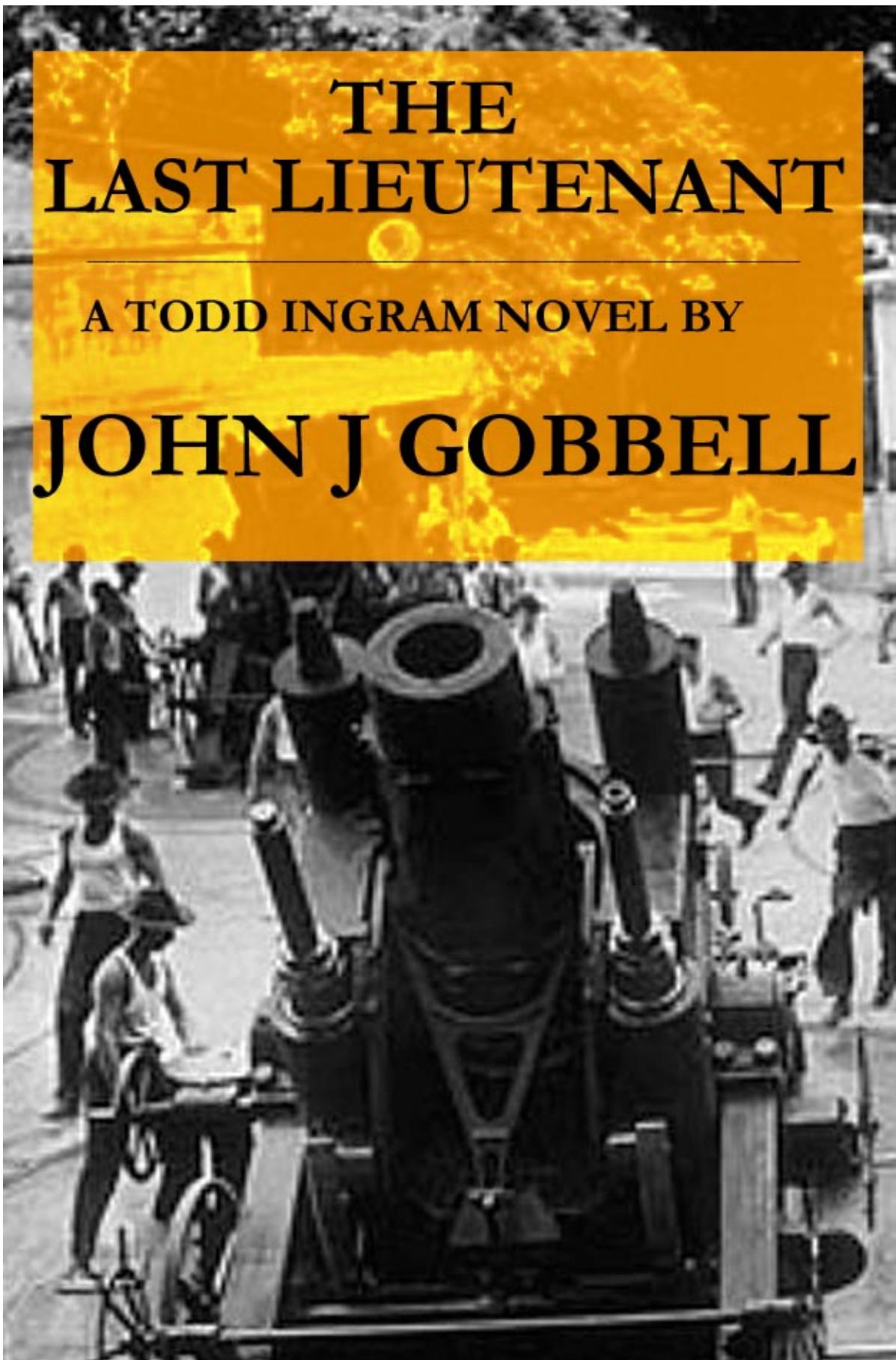


# THE LAST LIEUTENANT

A TODD INGRAM NOVEL BY

# JOHN J GOBBELL



# **THE LAST LIEUTENANT**

**A TODD INGRAM NOVEL**

**BY**

**JOHN J. GOBBELL**

**Also by John J. Gobbell:**

***The Brutus lie***

**\* \* \* \* \***

**The Todd Ingram series:**

***The Last Lieutenant***

***A Code For Tomorrow***

***When Duty Whispers Low***

***The Neptune Strategy***

**\* \* \* \* \***

***A Call To Colors***

**A Novel of the Battle of Leyte Gulf:**

Gordon W. Prange, *Miracle at Midway*, 1982, McGraw-Hill, Inc., Chapter 44, Japanese Order of Battle, used with permission of the publisher.

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John J. Gobbell

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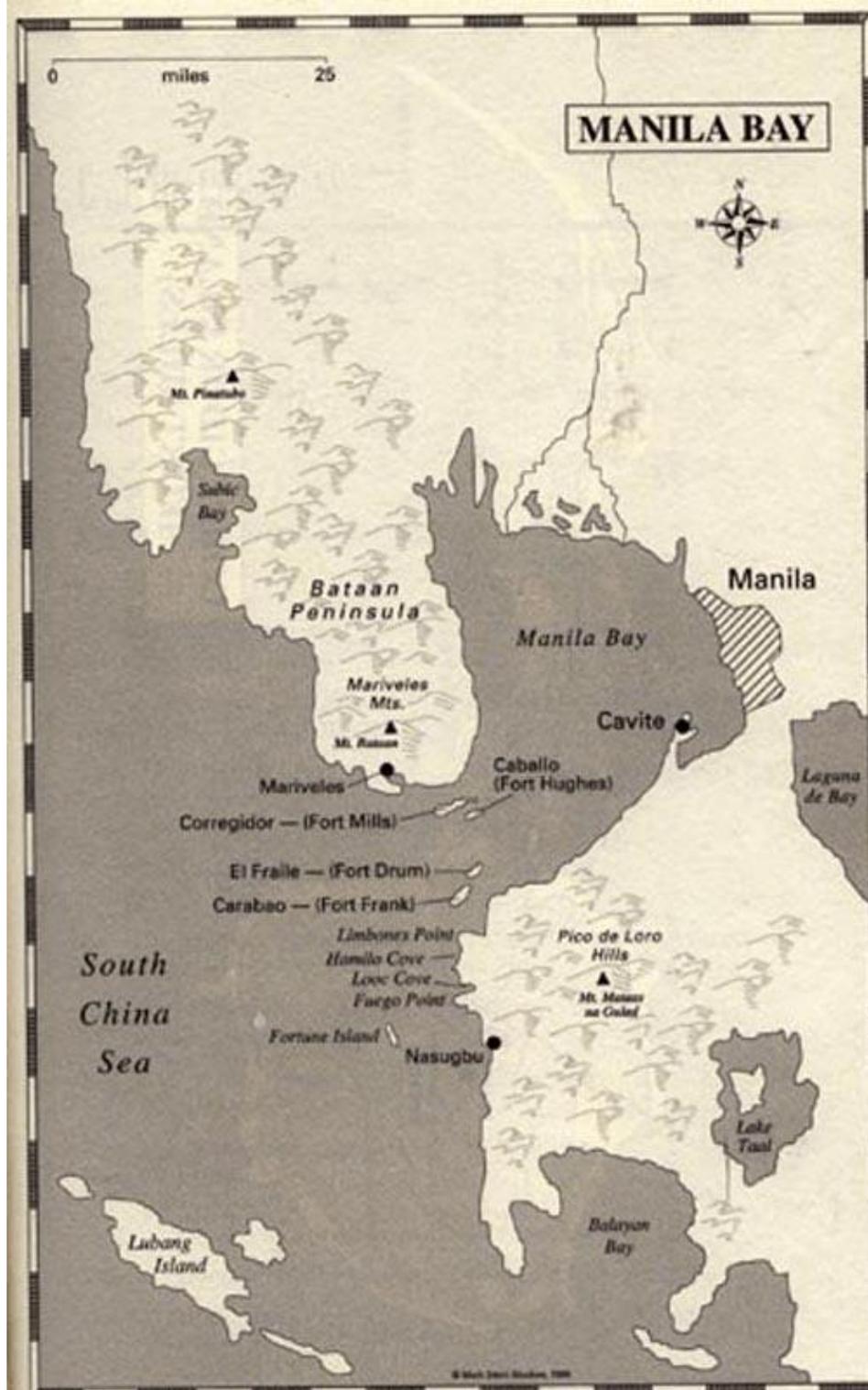
***To the men and women of the Allied Forces of World War II --***

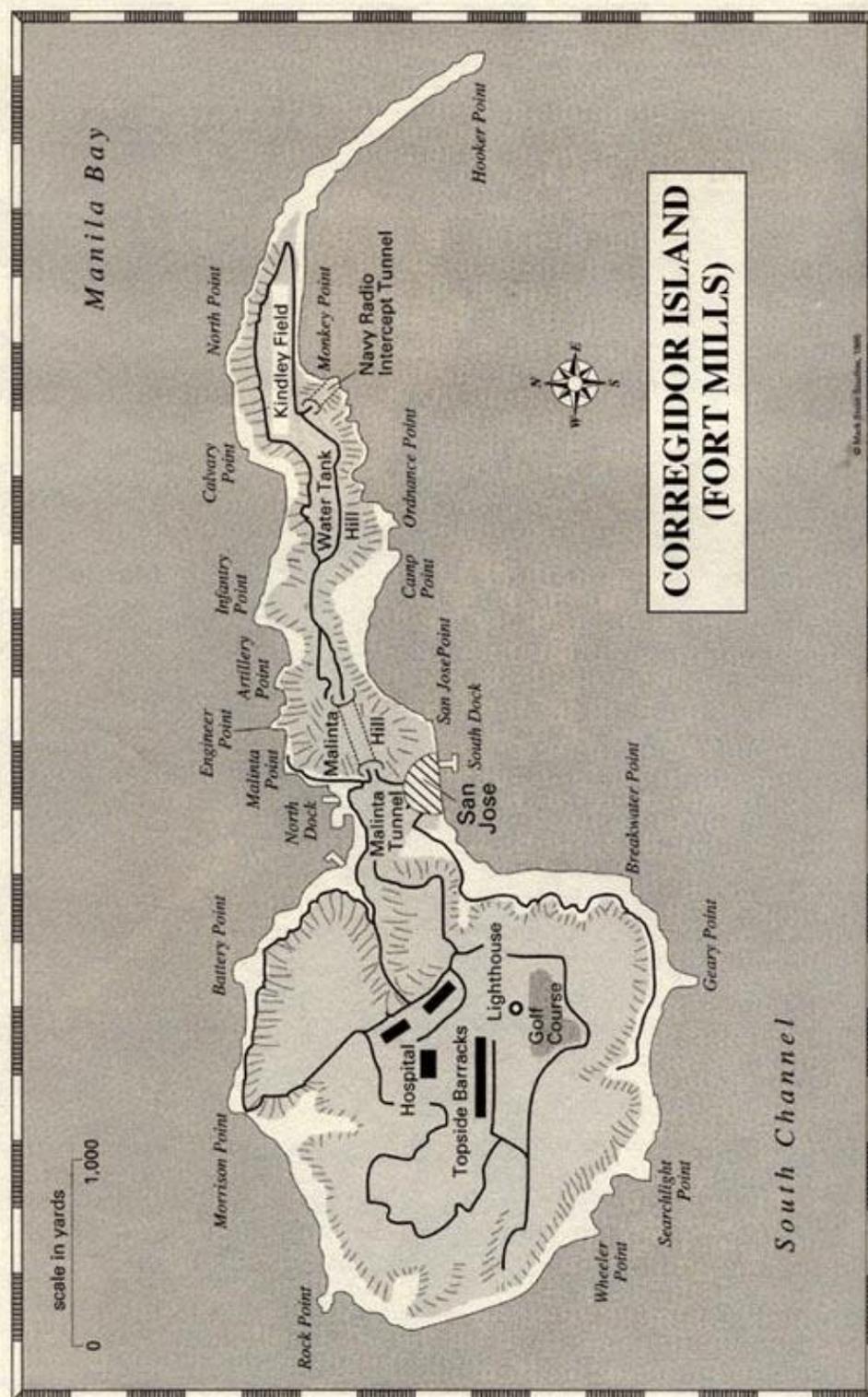
***Those who returned and those who didn't.***

# Western Pacific 1942









## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### AMERICANS -- U.S. NAVY, ABOARD MINESWEEPER USS PELICAN (AM 49), MANILA BAY

Alton C. Ingram, Lieutenant. "Todd"	Commanding Officer
Frederick J. Holloway, Lt. (jg)	Operations Officer.
Oliver P. Toliver, III, Lt. (jg) "Ollie"	Gunnery Officer.
Bartholomew, Leonard (n), Chief Machinists Mate, "Rocky"	Chief Engineer.
Farwell, Luther A., Quartermaster Second Class	Top helmsman.
Hampton, Joshua P., Electronics Technician 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Crew
Whittaker, Peter L., Engineman 3 <sup>rd</sup> Class,	Crew
Forester, Kevin T. Quartermaster 3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	Crew
Forester, Brian I., Quartermaster Striker	Crew
Yardly, Ronald R., Pharmacist's Mate Second Class "Bones"	Crew.
Sunderland, Kermit G. Gunner's Mate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Crew.

### AMERICANS -- CORREGIDOR ISLAND GARRISON (FORT MILLS), MANILA BAY, PHILIPPINES

Helen Z. Durand, First Lieutenant, U.S. Army,	Nurse
Otis (n) DeWitt, Major, USA	Garrison Adjutant
Dwight G. Epperson, LT. USN	Commander, Naval Radio Intercept Tunnel at Monkey Point; Station CAST.
Radtke, Walter, Cryptographer Technician, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class, USN	Monkey Point B Abwehr Military Intelligence see GERMANS.
Leon V. Beardsley, 1 <sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, USAAF	B-17 pilot.
Carl R. Mordkin, Captain, USA	Stockade Commander.
George F. Moore, Major General, USA	Garrison Commander, Corregidor Island (Fort Mills)
Jonathan M. Wainwright, Major General, USA "Skinny"	Commander US Forces, Philippines.

Gordon F. Plummer . Captain, USA

Commander, Battery  
Craighill, Fort Hughes,  
(Caballo Island).

La Follette, Bruno (n), Sergeant, USA

Mortar Fire Controlman,  
Fort Hughes (Caballo  
Island)

### **AMERICANS - U. S. NAVY, HAWAII**

Chester W. Nimitz, Admiral

Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet  
and Pacific Ocean Areas  
(CinCPOA).

Robert H. English, Rear Admiral

Commander Submarine Forces,  
Pacific.

Elphege Alfred M. Gendreau, Captain

Pacific Fleet Surgeon; Nimitz'  
housemate.

Milo F. Draemel. Rear Admiral

Nimitz' Chief of Staff and  
housemate.

Edwin T. Layton, Lieutenant Commander

Nimitz' Fleet Intelligence Officer.

Joseph J. Rochefort, Commander

Commander station HYPO;  
OP-20-G, Naval Intelligence Unit.

### **AMERICANS -- U.S. NAVY, ABOARD SUBMARINE U.S.S. WOLFFISH (SS 204)**

Roland M. Galloway, Lieutenant Commander

Commanding Officer.

Gordon E. Chance, Lieutenant

Executive Officer.

Morton A. Sampson, Lieutenant

Operations Officer.

Raleigh T. Sutcliff, Lieutenant

Engineering Officer.

Wallace Gruber, Ensign

Torpedo Officer.

Hall, Ernest, Radioman Chief

Chief Radioman.

Lorca, Dominic Federico Radioman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class

Top radioman.

### **FILIPINOS**

Don Pablo Amador

Philippine Deputy Finance  
Minister, sawmill owner and  
lumber baron, Nasipit, Mindanao.

Manuel Carillo

Runs Amador's lumber mill.

Rosarita Carillo

Carrillo's wife.

Don Fito Diaz

Fishing Fleet Owner - Northern Marinduque Island.

Doña Valentina Diaz

Wife of Don Fito Diaz.

Don Emilio Aguilar

Marinduque Island plantation owner.

Doña Carmella Aguilar

Aguilar's wife.

Augustine Vega

Aguilar's foreman.

Luis Guzman &

Ex-Filipino scouts working for Amador.

Carlos Ramirez,

### **GERMANS**

Helmut Döttmer, Kapitänleutnant *Kriegsmarine*

*Abwehr*--military intelligence, Posing as Cryptographer, Technician Second Class Walter Radtke, Corregidor Island; code named HECKLE.

Kurt Döttmer

Helmut's Father.

Elsa Döttmer

Helmut's Mother.

Wilhelm Canaris, Admiral

Head of the *Abwehr* military intelligence, code named BESSON.

|

Hans Oster, Colonel

Canaris' Chief Assistant.

Karl Dönitz, Admiral

Germany's Chief Flag Officer of U-boats with the title of *Befehlshaber der U-boote* (BdU).

### **JAPANESE**

Kiyoshi Tuga, Lieutenant

Commander *Kempetai* (Thought Police) garrison, Northern Marinduque, later Nasipit, Mindanao.

Akihiko Watanabe, Lieutenant

Tuga's *Kempetai* second-in-command on Marinduque.

Isoroku Yamamoto, Admiral, "*Rengo Kantai*"

Commander in Chief Imperial Japanese Navy Combined Fleet.

Kawai Chiyoko, Umeryu (Plum-Dragon)

Yamamoto's mistress.

## FOREWORD

Imperial Japan expanded her conquests at a dizzying rate beginning with the Pacific war's outbreak in December, 1941. By mid-1942, she controlled an area equal to one-seventh of planet Earth. To support a voracious war-machine, she desperately needed raw materials to the south, namely the Dutch East Indies and New Guinea (now Indonesia), French –Indo China (Viet Nam, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar), and the Philippines.

But one of these objectives lay beyond her grasp: Manila Bay on Luzon's west coast in the Philippines. Manila Bay is an enormous natural harbor; so large, that it could easily have anchored all ships in the world at that time.

Four US Army fortified islands stood at the entrance to Manila Bay: Corregidor Island – Fort Mills; El Fraile Island – Fort Drum; Caballo Island – Fort Hughes; and Carabao Island – Fort Frank. The Bataan Peninsula forms the northern part of the entrance to Manila Bay. Tragically, it became known for the Bataan Death March after the Fil-American forces surrendered it to the Japanese in April, 1942.

The final hold-out in Luzon became the three mile-long, tad-pole shaped Corregidor Island. This was the largest and most heavily fortified island that guarded the entrance to Manila harbor; a harbor desperately needed by Japan so she could fulfill the strategic objectives of her so-called Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

But Corregidor held out, the 5,000 man garrison swelling to 11,000 after the fall of Bataan. After a sustained round-the-clock artillery barrage, Corregidor fell on May 6, 1942 to a Japanese night time amphibious assault. To stop the hideous slaughter of wounded and civilians, Major General Jonathan M. Wainwright surrendered to General Masaharu Homma, commander of the Imperial Japanese 14<sup>th</sup> Army. But Homma refused to cease fire on Corregidor. He continued his attacks on the surrendered troops demanding that Wainwright give up all forces in the Philippines. With great reluctance, Wainwright did so, resulting in the capitulation of well over 120,000 Fill American forces in the Central and Southern Philippines. Overall, 135,000 allied troops fell to the Japanese in that campaign; the worst defeat in American history.

But some got out including the late John H. Morrill, II rear admiral, USN, -- then a lieutenant commander. With sixteen men off his sunken minesweeper *Quail*, Lieutenant Commander Morrill escaped Corregidor the night it was surrendered to the Japanese. He navigated to Darwin Australia and freedom through 1,900 miles of enemy-controlled waters, much of it under the cover of night -- a heroic voyage by any measure. Morrill wrote about this in his book, *South From Corregidor*, Simon & Schuster, 1943. Thus Todd Ingram's voyage through the Philippine Archipelago loosely approximates that of Lieutenant Commander Morrill.

\* \* \* \* \*

This novel, about the Japanese siege of Corregidor, is the first novel in the Todd Ingram series. All are stand-alone works featuring Ingram. Chronologically, the next work in the series is: *A Code For Tomorrow*: a novel of the naval battles of the Solomon Islands. After that is *When Duty Whispers Low*, a work about the shoot-down of Japanese naval CinC Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto. And finally, the most recent work is *The Neptune Strategy*: Todd Ingram is captured by a Japanese long-range submarine. Another Todd Ingram novel is underway; working title is EDGE OF VALOR.

An embarrassment of riches flowed during my research for *The Last Lieutenant*, particularly in the following categories: Historical and submarine nomenclature; the late Alvin P. Cluster, Vice Admiral Patrick J. Hannifin (retired), Hank Maclean, the late Rear Admiral John H. Morrill, II (retired), Lieutenant John W. Nelson, USN; Medical; Drs. Joseph N. Lambert, M.D., Russell J. Striff, M.D., and Kenneth J. Wegner, M.D; B-17 nomenclature; Robert Armstrong, Richard Berteau and David Tallechet; Radio Procedures; the late Hal Rosenberg and Linde Williams; Music; Drs. Richard Berkmeier and William B. Roberts. Elsewhere, I benefitted from the help of the Los Angeles Consulate of the Republic of the Philippines, and Orange County Fictionaires. And fortunately, we are served by library systems with incredible capabilities. The Doheny Library at the University of Southern California -- thanks go to Tyson Reyes -- and the Newport Beach Main Library are solid examples and were extremely helpful, more than fulfilling my research expectations.

Every attempt has been made to conform to events of the time and all settings are actual except for the Japanese garrison on Marinduque. Any inaccuracies herein are attributed solely to me

Discovered during this process was the full meaning of "What are friends for?" Thus, unending thanks go to Richard M. Geiler, Larry T. Smith, and Dr. Russell J. Striff, M.D., friends for a long, long time who truly fulfill the essence of that phrase.

Last, don't hesitate to visit my website at [www.JohnJGobbell.com](http://www.JohnJGobbell.com) . Simply find your book on the main page and click on it to find book reviews, photos of actual locations, equipment, people, and charts portrayed in each of these works. And please contact me at [John@JohnJGobbell.com](mailto:John@JohnJGobbell.com) with comments and critique.

Most of all, thanks to my wife, Janine; friend, companion, lover and copy editor extraordinaire; the best ever. They really broke the mold...

John J. Gobbell

Newport Beach, California  
September 2011  
[www.JohnJGobbell.com](http://www.JohnJGobbell.com)

## **PROLOGUE**

Among other evils which being unarmed  
brings you, it causes you to be despised.

*THE PRINCE*  
NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

## PROLOGUE

**16 June, 1941**  
**Union Station**  
**El Paso, Texas**

The killer's code name was HECKLE. He looped his garrote around the sailor's neck and yanked. The sailor straightened to his tiptoes, then jounced while grabbing futilely at the cord crushing his windpipe. His hat tumbled into the restroom sink.

In the mirror, the killer watched his victim's eyes bulge in disbelief. He renewed his purchase and pulled the garrote tighter. With what air was left, the sailor gurgled pathetically and sunk to his knees.

*Thirty seconds will do it.*

But, there it was again. From the cantina, a block to the west of the station drifted a haunting trumpet solo. The sailor's writhing grew weaker. The melody was locked in the killer's mind, making it hard to concentrate on the task at hand.

The sailor wrenched to his side, pulling the killer off balance. The garrote loosened and the sailor sucked a prolonged sobbing breath. Avoiding his victim's grappling hands; the killer held on, took one step back and pushed open a toilet-stall door with his right elbow. While jabbing his right knee in the sailor's back, he pulled the garrote tighter.

The sailor fell face-first onto the cold, tile floor while the killer dragged him into the stall. The killer stumbled against the commode then slipped in a urine puddle, once again losing his hold. The sailor's feet jinked and pounded on the tile as he pushed his left hand on the floor, loosening the garrote further. As he drew another gurgling lungful of air, he slumped back onto his stomach.

*This is going badly.*

The killer moved precisely dropping his right knee into the sailor's back, and putting all his weight on the sailor's spine. With clenched teeth, the killer pulled the garrote again and, this time, counted to 120. Slowly.

The tinny music once again drifted into the rest room from the cantina. HECKLE cocked his head as the trumpeter finished his solo. The musician was talented and put his soul into what he played. HECKLE could tell by the trumpeter's breathing. When the

other instruments joined in, HECKLE could still pick out the solo trumpeter. He closed his eyes and tried to visualize what the man looked like.

The body twitched. The killer leaned over, finding the sailor's eyes shut and his face blue. He thumbed an eyelid: The pupil was completely dilated. Checking the carotid artery he found no pulse. This sailor would give no more trouble; he was dead. Surprised he was winded, the killer sat on the toilet and forced himself to take a brief rest.

*A long way to go...take your time.*

He looked out the high, half open transom window seeing brilliant stars tin the moonless Texas night.

*It must be the heat.*

It had been 106 degrees yesterday when he had crossed the border and, even at this hour, it was stifling. He ran the back of his hand over his brow and listened while catching his breath. The little band played another song, but that same melody floated in HECKLE's mind.

What the hell was that song? The melody was victorious yet...at the same time, oppressed. How could that be?

He listened for another moment, then checked his watch: 0317. Two minutes behind schedule.

Only nine minutes before the train pulls out.

The killer gave a quick whistle and his lookout stepped inside the restroom, wearing an Army MP uniform. He was thin and mousey and had a long pointed nose. Giving the corpse a sour look, his large beak wiggled as he sniffed. "Gott!"

The killer took in the odor and realized the sailor had soiled himself during his last throes. With a scowl the lookout quickly changed his clothes. He put on a pair of overalls and stuffed the MP uniform in a paper bag. While wiping sweat from his bald head, he jammed on a straw hat and moved toward the door.

The killer looked up with his brow raised.

The lookout responded, "Car four three six one, seat fourteen A. The duffle is there. Hurry." The door closed and the lookout resumed his vigil outside the men's room, this time as a civilian.

The killer expelled a huge sigh. Without that duffle the operation would have been almost impossible. The sailor's uniforms, orders, and personal gear were all there.

Nice going. How did that little turd find the duffle so quickly? No, forget him. With that nose the man can find anything.

Hurry.

He pulled off his mufti, revealing a dress white uniform identical to his victim's and, taking everything from the sailor's pocket, stuffed it into his own. The wallet seemed unusually thick and he flipped it open, finding singles, fives, tens, and twenties; close to five hundred dollars.

*Strange.*

A quick look at the United States Navy identification card verified he'd killed the right man. A mournful wail drifted through the transom window. HECKLE cocked his head and analyzed the beautifully pitched chord. E-minor? Or was it A-minor? He couldn't tell as the whistle blew again, nearer this time. At first the floor tingled, then shook mightily as, moments later, an eastbound freight thundered past.

The lookout peeked in; they nodded, and together pulled the sailor to his feet with an arm draped around each of their shoulders. Walking past the washbasin, the killer stopped, tightened the faucet, and retrieved the sailor's white hat. He jammed it on the man's head with the edge resting on the bridge of his nose.

An Army sergeant blasted, in unzipping his fly. He looked at them with a bleary-eyed grin and yelled something. But the chuffing of two steam engines pushing the same eastbound train, obliterated conversation.

The sergeant stood weaving and studied them, making the killer feel so self-conscious that he casually tucked his left hand in his back pocket. The sergeant nodded to the dead sailor and mouthed against the roar, "he okay?" He squinted and braced a hand against the wall blocking their path.

They waited while the mighty engines snarled their way eastward dragging the last of the train's rumbling cars.

The sergeant had Fort Bliss Calvary written all over him.

Do Something, the killer thought. "He'll be fine. Puked like a waterfall. Must be that damned Mexican beer." He said in a loud voice. The killer broke out in laughter and his lookout had the good sense to join in.

Finally, the sergeant chuckled with them as the train faded in the distance. The sergeant said, "Better use the side door. MPs are out on the platform."

"Thanks," said the killer.

"Wheooow." The sergeant held his nose as he eased past the threesome and stepped to the urinal.

Hauling their victim outside, it took five precious minutes to drag the dead man to a Ford pickup truck parked on Overland between Durango and Leon streets. Looking both ways, they stuffed the body under empty tomato crates. Their excess gear followed. The lookout climbed in and slammed the door. He turned the key, shoved in the clutch, and jammed his foot on the starter pedal, giving the killer an odd look while the engine cranked. The four banger caught, the lookout jammed it into gear, and the Ford waddled off to Stanton Street, turning right to cross over the Rio Grande into Juárez, Mexico, where the body would be disposed of.

The killer looked at his watch.

Three and a half minutes before the train pulls out.

He ran, making it to the station in two minutes and twenty seconds. A conductor stood outside car four three six one checking his timepiece. The killer stepped aboard, finding the car almost empty: three civilians and two army enlisted. All were asleep. No Navy. He walked past 14A, eased the duffle from 14B, noting the stenciling on the thick, olive-drab canvas:

RADTKE, W. A., BU3, USN, 1187526

Hoisting Bugler Third Class Walter A. Radtke's duffle over his shoulder, he quietly walked forward two cars, found an empty seat, 12A, dumped the duffle in 12B, and sat.

The killer looked out at Union Station thinking about how the sailor had obliged them by jumping off the train just as it pulled in for a twenty-minute layover. Their plan was to have the lookout, in his MP uniform, pull him off the train and lure him to a dark corner. But their target made a beeline for the men's room, the killer followed, and that was that. On reflection, the killer remembered he'd waited forty-five seconds for the sailor to empty his bladder meaning the toilet in car four three six one was stopped up. He was glad he'd moved forward two cars.

HECKLE had entered the United States yesterday via the El Paso bridge and had registered in a cheap hotel near the rail yards wanting a good night's rest. But next door was a Cantina with a glowing red-neon blinking sign: *Preston's*. Sleep was impossible with those insane mariachis, or whatever they called themselves. They played endless music with brass, violin, and guitar haphazardly coordinated. But the more HECKLE listened he realized the music had wonderful character, even though the violin player sometimes did a terrible job. He mused; was it the rhythm or was it what the musicians were trying to say that made some of their material so haunting?

Especially that one trumpet solo. The man played it two or three times during the night. He couldn't get to sleep even after Preston's closed at four. Now HECKLE thought about it as he slumped in his seat and nestled his head next to the open window. It reminded him of another trumpet solo: "Parsifal", slow, deliberate and pure; Wagner's bold arrogance was absent in "Parsifal." And yet, if one listened carefully, the passage offered something new each time one heard it. Messages, imbued with filigreed secrets, drifted from each beautifully crafted phrase.

Something rustled across the aisle and he looked up seeing a corporal unload a duffel in the seat opposite. Pretending to ignore the soldier, he dropped his hat over his eyes and looked at his watch: 0325.

The soldier studied the man in the white uniform for a minute then tipped two fingers to his brow and said, "Where ya'll from, swabbie?" The corporal, another Fort Bliss Cavalryman, had one of those interesting Texas dialects.

"Minneapolis," the killer mumbled, and casually spun his duffel turning the stenciled name and serial number away from the corporal. Then he rested his head against it, keeping his face in shadows and making sure his left hand, with its gnarled ring finger, didn't show.

"What ship ya on?"

He scrunched further. "*North Carolina*." Even as he said it, he knew he'd made a mistake.

"Hot damn! Another guy on the train's off the *North Carolina*. You must know him.

"She's a big ship." the killer feigned a snooze.

The engine gave two short toots and the conductor's voice wafted to them, "...board."

"Ya like poker, swabbie?" the corporal asked gently.

The train jerked backwards then, with couplings clanking, started ahead with the Mountain, MT-4 locomotive's great eighty inch driving wheels spinning on the rails as the engineer fed in too much steam. At last the drivers found traction and the

"4-8-2" type engine rolled smoothly out of Union Station, resuming its journey to Los Angeles. From there HECKLE would transfer to a train for San Diego where, for the next six weeks, he would take his victim's place in the U.S. Navy's cryptography class 41-B-276 at the U.S. Naval Station.

"I said, 'do you like poker?' Your buddy back there cleaned me out. So how 'bout a chance to get even?"

That's where all the money in the sailor's wallet came from, thought the killer. He wondered how well the corporal had become acquainted with the sailor. They passed within fifty feet of the cantina which had denied him so much sleep last night. There it was again. That mournful strain from a solo trumpet.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to wake you," the corporal said.

HECKLE snapped from his reverie. "Poker? Sure. Look, soldier, do you know what they call that music?"

"What?"

"Listen." HECKLE nodded to Preston's. The glow of the cantina's red neon sign flicked across his face as the train labored by. And they heard the lone trumpeter: His notes were full and pure and triumphant. This trumpeter, his instrument and his music were as good as anything he'd heard his father play.

The corporal slumped back. "Shit, man."

"Yes?"

"Damned Mexicans love pissin' off gringos now and then."

"I don't understand."

"That's the '*Deguello*.' Ain't you ever heard the '*Deguello*'?"

"Guess not."

"Shit. Santa Ana played it at the Alamo. Where you from, anyway?"

HECKLE felt a rush of blood to his head. He had no idea about Santa Ana and the Alamo. "Uh, Minnesota."

The corporal folded his arms over his chest and yawned. "Ah'm tired. I'll take a raincheck on the poker. Wake me when we get to Deming."

Deming, New Mexico, was their next stop. Afraid he would lose his chance, HECKLE said, "you getting off there?"

"No," the soldier mumbled. He jabbed a thumb over his shoulder. "Damned toilet's stopped up."

The killer thought that one over then said, "You going all the way to Los Angeles?"

"Yup."

Realizing he had plenty of time, HECKLE relaxed. The wheels clicked on the rails and the coach car wobbled a somnolent rhythm, easing him off to a welcomed sleep; yet, even as he drifted, the "*Deguello*" played again and again in his mind.