

# WWII vet promises a titillating book about his POW days

By SUZIE ROLLINS

Don Rutter spent nearly four years in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in the Philippines during World War II, and he says he's writing a book about his experiences.

"It's a love affair," he says of his novel in the works. "It has war, intrigue, espionage, treason, heroism, miracles, desperation, tears and joy." It's the story of three men, one of them me, taken into a Japanese prison camp. I'm going to take you (the reader) into the camp and make you taste POW life as much as I can.

"It's not the typical war story with the good guys versus the bad guys. This has intrigue. For every Jap that tried to take a life, there were 10 that tried to save one," said the Troy resident.

At 61, Rutter is a burly sort of fellow full of war stories. He recalls his stay in Manila from December 1941 to 1945 as if it were yesterday. Every event that he remembers triggers thoughts of another and each is laced with recollections of the "women at every port."

Rutter pounds his typewriter every night from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. and for 16 hours every weekend in his Somerset apartment, rapidly trying to finish the book's first five chapters by July.

"By the end of July, I have to turn the chapters into my agent in New York. I'll sign the contract by August and it will probably come out in the Christmas book sales in 1981," he says confidently.

"My agent said it's highly professional. It's a timeless story and World War II is in vogue because there is a whole generation that knows nothing about war."

**SURROUNDED BY** memorabilia of his war days, Rutter says he's sure his book will sell and he has visions of making it to the big screen.

Like a true storyteller, he says it all started in 1955 when he appeared on

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— author Don Rutter

the television show "This Is Your Life" and became friends with his writer, on Malinberg.

"I was always telling Don war stories and he hooked me up with an agent, Ivan Green, who sent a test outline (for a movie) to the Japanese Council in L.A.," Rutter recalled. "They told me, 'I don't know if it will sell in America, but it will sell sure in Japan,' so I was ready to go."

Rutter's movie mogul plans were put on the back burner for a while when his wife's father became ill and they moved from California back to Detroit. Along with abandoning his scriptwriting dreams, he left his public relations job in Los Angeles.

In 1981, the former Navy man formed a lake restoration business called the Muck Suckers and tried to pick up some public relations accounts on the side.

"I dredged Long Lake and got to be very well known as a lake restorer," he said. But his desire to write his story nagged away inside. "I was a con man with a story to tell so I kept plugging."

Rutter became friends with an editor of a Lansing-based paper who agreed to research and write his tales. When finished, Rutter forwarded it to his New York agent/editor pal, who said the book needed life. Determined to share his POW days with the world, Rutter asked for a chance to write his story himself.

"I started two years ago and you have to tear me away from it now," he said. "I have an editorial assistant, Sally Fay, a quasi-retired newspaper editor and member of the Pulitzer Prize selection committee board."

**RUTTER'S BOOK** begins just before he turned himself in to the Japanese on or about Dec. 1, 1941. He was with Naval Intelligence then, and sang in nightclubs for fun at night. From a hideout, he watched Manila burn and

his time spent mining coal.

"On Aug. 29, 1945, the war was over. I took a train out of there and stopped to see the woman I loved — but I found her city devastated. I searched and found her alive, but she wouldn't marry me. So I came home and married the woman who threw me out seven years before — on Christmas Day."

Rutter promises that his readers will have to wrest themselves away from his tearjerker novel. But they'll have to wait for more than a year to get a chance to buy it off the newstands.



At home with his photographs, Don Rutter said his book must contain as many pictures of his war days as possible, because "pictures make a story believable."



**DON RUTTER** was a prisoner of war in a Japanese camp during the early 1940s. He says his experiences were so unique he is compelled to write about them, and hopes moviegoers will one day see a rendition of his life as a POW on the big screen. (Staff photos by John Stano)



## INSIDE ANGLES

**HERE'S YOUR** chance to earn that postponed high school diploma. GED Preparation classes will begin June 23 at Livonia's Whitman Center, 32235 West Chicago between Merriman and Farmington Road. The six-week intensive course will be offered at both day and evening hours for a \$50 fee. The fee also covers the cost of the GED test which will be administered Aug. 4 and 5. Registration for fall classes are being taken, too. There isn't a charge to non-high school grads for the 15-week session which begins Sept. 15. For further information, call the center at 428-1200, extensions 395, 396 or 397 or visit between 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 9-4 p.m. on Friday.

**FRIDAY THE 13TH** turns out to be an unlucky day for the Friendly restaurant on Orchard Lake Road near 10 Mile in Farmington Hills. That's the last day the restaurant will be open. Officials of the Friendly Ice Cream Corporation, Wilbraham, Mass. say the long-term outlook on sales at the site wasn't encouraging. (It warns you that corner will be un-Friendly.)

**SPEAKING OF ORCHARD LAKE ROAD:** Oakland County Road Commission officials want to remind drivers that from early August through early December, traffic will be routed from Orchard Lake Road between 12 Mile and Maple onto a temporary route to either side of existing lanes. During that time, the existing road will be torn up.

Plans are geared to opening the new five-lane road in December. Construction shuts down for the winter until mid-April 1981 when crews are scheduled to complete street approaches, driveways, landscape and clean-up. This phase should be finished by mid-July 1981.

**WHILE MOTORISTS ARE** scouting around the construction on Orchard Lake Road, they can contemplate the latest bit of information from the Automobile Club of Michigan. The group estimates that Michigan residents dish out 21.8 cents per mile to operate their cars. That's 12 percent more than the 19.4 cents a mile it cost to run a car in 1979. That means if you drove about 15,000 miles a year in 1979, you paid about \$2,910 in operating expenses. This year, the same number of miles will cost drivers about \$3,206 according to the Automobile Club. The 21.8-cent figure was computed on 8.22 cents a mile for such expenses as gasoline, oil and maintenance and 13.58 cents a mile for insurance, depreciation, license fees and finance charges. (It wonders if we should have taken the turn of the century advice to car owners: "Get a horse.")

**THE OAKLAND COUNTY** chapter of the Michigan Republican Women's Task Force will meet from 7:30-9:30 p.m. June 24 in Rochester. A seminar on "Grass Roots Politics — From Precinct Delegate through the County Organization," will be delivered by Dorothy McIntosh of Birmingham. She will discuss the ever-timely topic of running for office, too. Volunteers are being sought to hostess a hospitality suite sponsored by the National Republican Women's Task Force during the week of the Platform Committee meetings as well as the week of the Republican National Convention. For further information, call Alice Williams at 1-354-4600.

**THE BRODHEAD** Farmington Hills VFW Auxiliary conducted their installation ceremony recently. The new president is Jean Telford of Farmington Hills. Mrs. Telford was the 10th district president of Auxiliary 3401 in Morris Plains, N.J., before coming to Farmington Hills. She is active in the Farmington Hills Beautification Committee and in hospital work. Other officers include: Florence Allen of Detroit, senior vice-president; Fran Buscavach of Novi, junior vice-president; Irene Johnson, treasurer; and Joan Simonson, secretary. Bill McGrath was elected the post's new commander; Bill Neibling, senior vice-president and Tim Zahn, junior vice-president.

**WHAT DO YOU** say to a singing ape? That was the problem confronting Maureen Bryant who works in the Farmington Hills Police Department's juvenile division.

She met the gorilla of her dreams Tuesday when a person in an ape costume approached her at the office and sang "Happy Birthday" to her. Tuesday's hairy recital was courtesy of Ms. Bryant's sister, Mary who thought it'd be a real scream to have the ape serenade sis. Wednesday was Ms. Bryant's birthday, but the ape was already booked for that day. Angles realizes Ms. Bryant always wanted to meet someone tall, dark and handsome, but wonders if this is what she really had in mind. (It sends a salute to both Bryant sisters: B-A-N-A-N-A-S)

**POT POT POT** Just when you thought the world was going to pot, Pewabic Pottery proves it. The Michigan State University operated pottery will have a show and sale of ceramics by students from noon-5 p.m. June 15 at the pottery, 10125 East Jefferson, Detroit. The show and sale continues from noon-4:30 p.m. daily and Sunday through July 13. Tours for adult clubs and college art classes can be arranged by calling the pottery, 822-0954.

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