



***To Bataan and Back: The World War II Diary of Major Thomas Dooley***  
**Edited and Transcribed by Jerry Cooper with John A. Adams, Jr. and Henry C. Dethloff**  
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There are times when a book's road to publication can be long and winding. Such was the case with *To Bataan and Back: The World War II Diary of Major Thomas Dooley*. For nearly 70 years, the diary of Dooley was only read by family members and close friends. These written words were contained in six paper notebooks totaling some 500 tiny printed pages. It appeared that these journals would never be seen by the public. However, the availability of the Dooley diary would begin to see a significant change in the summer of 2005.

During that time, Jerry Cooper (editor of this volume and a 1963 graduate of Texas A&M University) asked the family if a document of Dooley's could be used in a book focused on a great Aggie tradition — the muster. This discussion led to an inquiry about the accessibility of Dooley's diary which Cooper was well aware of. Conversation continued until 2009 when the journals were released to the Texas A&M archives, and then subsequently Cooper received permission from the family to publish them. After substantial annotation and editing, the diary was available to the public in book form in 2016.

Before discussing the diary itself, it is important to provide a brief synopsis of Dooley's military career. After graduating from A&M in 1935, he entered the Army as a second lieutenant. When the United States entered World War II, Dooley was serving as aide-de-camp in the Philippines for then-MG Jonathan Wainwright. Dooley was part of the force that fought gallantly (he was awarded the Silver Star for his actions) when the Japanese invaded the Philippines. Like many, Dooley was ultimately captured and a prisoner of war for 40 months. He survived this incredible ordeal and continued his military service until his retirement as a colonel in 1969. His career culminated with assignments as Fort Knox's Armored Command chief of staff and deputy post commander.

Dooley's diary encompasses the period from the beginning of the Japanese bombing of the Philippines (8 December 1941) through just after the Japanese surrender in the Philippines (6 September 1945). As you would expect in a wartime diary, Dooley writes on the subjects that were part of his everyday life. This is amplified even more when the diary moves into his ordeal as a prisoner of war. Dooley writes of his struggle to survive and details his challenges with the availability of food and water, his relationship with guards and fellow prisoners, and describes his day-to-day activities which included reading more than 200 books (these books are listed as an appendix in the book).

I believe readers will find two aspects of the diary especially beneficial and appealing. The first is the breadth of Dooley's experiences which he provides incredible insight. These include the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, his capture by the Japanese, his 40 months as a prisoner of war, and his attendance at the Japanese surrender ceremony on board the USS Missouri. The second is Dooley's perspective on Wainwright. Certainly, Dooley, as his

aide, was in a unique position to see a side of Wainwright which most did not experience. Dooley touches on a wide array of areas as they pertain to Wainwright. They include perceptions on his personality, leadership style, decision-making process, and his relationships with other senior leaders.

Cooper has done a remarkable job in transforming Dooley's six notebooks into a superb volume. In particular, two decisions he has made will clearly stand out for readers. First, he adds just enough of his own background copy to truly put Dooley's words in perspective. This is refreshing since I have read many books of this genre where an editor seems to want his words to be the focus. Cooper has placed the emphasis where it needs to be.

The second decision is the "extras" he has included within the text. Throughout the volume, Cooper has added numerous relevant photographs, maps, Dooley's own sketches, and official correspondence. He has also placed a pertinent appendix section which contains documents such as the Japanese instrument of surrender, a comprehensive glossary, a suggested reading list, and the aforementioned list of books Dooley read while a prisoner of war.

In summary, we are extremely fortunate that Dooley's words are available to the public due to the generosity of the Dooley family and the diligence of Jerry Cooper. The result is a volume which is a tremendous addition to the body of knowledge. It may have taken some 70 years to add to this body, but readers will find it was well worth the wait.