



# San Diego Chapter 1 Member Biography

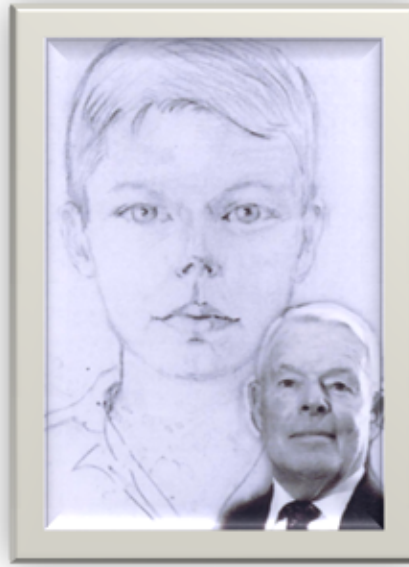
## Tom Crosby

**W**WII Civilian  
Prisoner of War  
for 37  
Unforgettable Months

Tom was born in the Philippines to American parents who were working in Manila before the war. On December 7th 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed, military installations in the Philippines were also attacked on the same day.

Shortly after the Japanese entered Manila, Tom, and his family of five were taken to the University of Santo Tomas, built in 1611 with no dormitory facilities. There, with 3700 allied nationalities, Tom would spend the next 37 months in captivity.

At the end of three very hungry years, on February 3rd 1945, General MacArthur's 1st Cavalry Division spearheaded "Flying Column" mechanized units through the Japanese



infantry lines to rescue the prison camp before the Japanese could carry out orders from Tokyo to eliminate all military and civilian prisoners.

Tom, now 11 years old, was among 220 prisoners held hostage by 65 Japanese for 36 tense hours until negotiations ended in exchanging the prisoners for the safe escort of the Japanese fully armed to the enemy's front lines a few blocks away and released. Two days later the Japanese found out about the rescue and began shelling the camp for four days resulting in many

casualties. Tom and his family survived this ordeal.

Tom regained his health and education, later joining the Navy during the Korean conflict, then worked in aerospace for 13 years and finally retired after 25 years with the City of Coronado in San Diego County.

Tom and his wife Nancy are proud active members of the San Diego Chapter-Ex-Prisoners of War, with 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.