



# War Stories

*Leslie Campbell*

As she braided a rug, LoLo would tell us WWII stories about the Philippine jungles. My cousins and I would lie on the floor, our mouths wide open, listening. We listened so closely, the sounds of our relative's conversations were blurred by LoLo's voice.

LoLo told us of a time when the train she was traveling on broke down in the middle of the jungle. For one week, the only thing she had was a canteen of water and a chocolate bar. When she was hungry, she would go pick a banana to eat. We asked her if she was scared, and her reply was simply, "No, I knew the military would take care of me." She said this with a smile. We couldn't believe someone so small could be so brave.

The smile left her face as she told of the not so pleasant times. The extreme heat brought the stench of death from undiscovered bodies in the jungle. At times the smell was so unbearable, someone throwing up or gagging was not an uncommon sight. I guess being an army nurse, you got used to things like that.

I don't know how she could watch men die in front of her almost everyday. Once a bomb went off in the jungle wounding several men. All of the doctors and nurses were running around trying to do what they could. A bloody and burnt hand grabbed LoLo's arm; she looked down to see a young man. His bright blue eyes were fixed on her as he gasped his last breath. "It's memories like that, that never leave you," she said as a tear rolled down her aged face.

She shivered as she told us of gunshots so loud they'd make your ears ring. So loud, she said, they'd wake you from a much-needed sleep, and bring you back to a reality of death, pain, and sadness. Sometimes the shots were so close you would have thought the person was right outside the tent, and they very well could have been. An attack on their army camp would have been feasible. Yet, she and the rest of the nurses, doctors, and soldiers went on for themselves and for their country.

So we'd listen to her stories, trying to take it all in. I can't imagine myself in her place. She is such a courageous and strong person. I think you can really learn a lot about history from those who were there.