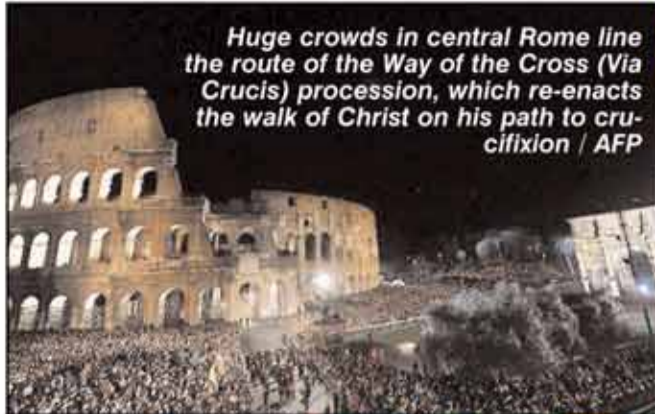


Easter around the world



Huge crowds in central Rome line the route of the Way of the Cross (Via Crucis) procession, which re-enacts the walk of Christ on his path to crucifixion / AFP



The Royal Easter Show drew the crowds in Sydney and there was no greater attraction than the flying pig show / Nathan Edwards



A Palestinian priest swings incense over a statue of Jesus during a procession in the West Bank / AFP



People are reflected on a podium in front of Kiev's cathedral, beside the "Sphere of Good and of Spiritual Renaissance" installation / AFP



Hand-painted Easter eggs displayed for sale at a market in downtown Sofia. AFP PHOTO / DIMITAR DILKOFF



More than 60 people have helped carry a cross to Holy Island in Berwick-upon-Tweed, England / Getty

EASTER IN GREECE



Eggs which is painted and decorated for Easter are displayed during an Easter exhibition in the town of Varna east of the Bulgarian capital Sofia. Pic: AP



"The Pacific" by George Pelecanos

George P. Pelecanos is well-known for his major work on HBO's popular show, *The Wire*. This Greek-American writer and producer is author of several novels including the *Nick Stephanos* series, in which the main character, Nick Stephanos is a Greek-American licensed private investigator. His new TV mini-series, *The Pacific* began airing on HBO on Sunday, March 14, and will run a total of ten hours. It has been said that this is a sequel to *Band of Brothers* but that is not quite accurate aside from the fact that it is a WWII story and some of the same creative talent are involved.

You can spot actors, Joseph Mazzello and Jon Seda playing the main characters. In addition, another fellow Greek-British actress, Zoe Carides will be included in the cast.

In a recent interview George Pelecanos said: "The nature of the war in the Pacific was different than that of the European conflict both in terms of the geography, the fighting arena, the perception of the enemy, and the extreme level of brutality. I got involved with this series to honor my father, Pete Pelecanos, who served as a Marine with the Eleventh 155 MM Gun Battalion and fought in the Philippines, most notably on the island of Leyte in October, 1944.

To my dad and all of the men and women who served: Thank you. I hope we did you proud".



Easter with hot air balloons in the small town of Leonidio

A unique and spectacular Easter custom has been revived in the small town of Leonidio in Arcadia Prefecture, southern Greece.

At the stroke of midnight on Easter Sunday, the sky was lit up by hundreds of multicolored hot air balloons that offered a captivating spectacle as they rose into the horizon for 30-40 minutes before burning out or disappearing over the sea or the nearby forest.

They are handmade by the local people and the town's five parishes compete with each other to keep up in the air as many balloons as possible for the longest period of time.