

American POW

By

Earl Anderson, U.S.N.

And

Shawn Davis

May 28th, 1942. I'm trying to sleep. I'm lying on the ground in the pouring rain. If I roll over onto my back, the rain pummels my face. If I roll over onto my stomach, I have a face full of mud. I haven't eaten anything in days. The hunger pains are unbelievable. I never thought I could survive this long without eating. Last night, I was one of seventy-five men packed into a train so tight we had to stand shoulder-to-shoulder. The train stopped and they brought us to an abandoned schoolyard. I guess the Japs thought it was a good holding pen for us because there was a high fence around it.

Suddenly, I hear shouting in Japanese. I figure it must be time for us to get up and begin our twenty-mile hike to the prison camp. Despite my weakened condition, I stand shakily to my feet. We are in such weakened conditions from malnutrition, some of the guys are having trouble standing up. A Japanese officer spots two American POWs who are having trouble standing. He draws a samurai sword from a scabbard on his belt and slices off their heads with two vicious strokes. Blood spurts from the stumps of their necks like fountains as their heads drop into the mud. Their swaying bodies collapse, soaking the ground with blood. I now knew I would be lucky to make it to my twenty-third birthday.

I don't know how I survived the hellish twenty-mile hike to the camp. I was so tired, hungry, and dehydrated that I felt like I was walking on air when we neared the end. I barely made it to the camp without collapsing. The thought of what happened to the two POWs at the schoolyard helped keep me going.

When we arrive at the entrance to the camp, we see four American POWs tied to stakes. Apparently, they were placed there as an example for trying to escape. They are in horrible conditions. They must have been there for days. Their gaunt bodies are like skeletons with skin stretched tightly over them. I feel like throwing up, but there is nothing in my stomach to throw up.

How did I get into this situation? How did I go from a happy-go-lucky young Navy sailor to a starving POW? I could say it started three years ago in 1938 when I enlisted in the Navy. However, the horrific event that really started the chain reaction bringing me to my current predicament happened on December 7th, 1941. The news reached us at 04:00 the next day.

December 8th 1941. Olongapo, Philippines.

04:00 Everybody was turned out of their bunks and told that the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor. Not having been assigned a battle station, I just shrugged my shoulders and rolled over. I figured it was just another drill, not realizing it was the real McCoy.

06:00 A Manila news broadcast wakes me up and now I realize that it's not just a dream. For the past three months, I've sweated out a transport, and now that I had almost realized my dream, them bastards have to set up my playhouse. Oh well, that's life for you.

All of us were shaken out of the sack and issued rifles and ammunition, 100 rounds each. The 4th Marines, 1000 of them, had been with us one week, so the base was crowded now. They had come down from Shanghai, China.

Now we settled down to wartime routine. No more liberty, no pretty gals, no place to drown one's sorrows, or just drown. The job I'm working on requires day and night work with only a cat-nap once in a while.

December 9th, 1941. American PBY seaplanes {seven} had just landed and were anchored out in the bay. At about 10:00am, two TYBF's {Jap planes} came skimming over the water toward the PBY's, firing their machine guns. We had been warned and we were waiting for them. Three hundred sailors with rifles and four to five hundred Marines were all firing at these planes. The Jap planes set all seven PBYs on fire and flew off. No loss of life. Years later, I found out both planes crashed in the jungle.

December 10th, 1941. Caviti Navy yard was destroyed. Two subs hit, one destroyed. The destroyers Sea Lion and Sea Dragon were badly damaged.

December 11th, 1941. We abandoned the base, leaving the Marines to destroy it. We left Olongapo in school buses and took two days to reach Manila. Everywhere we go, we meet Filipino soldiers who greet us with confident smiles. Way down deep I know we are only stalling for time. We don't stand a chance unless help arrives.

The only surviving U.S. ship in Manila Bay is my old ship, the Canopus. Back aboard the good ole Mama-san, and boy am I glad I didn't get stuck on land to fight. That's no good.

The crews aboard the Canopus repaired the destroyer, Sea Dragon, which left on December 14th. The Canopus did three mine sweeps and then gunboat and pigeon sub salvages. We could have made a run for it, but I guess we were too slow. I'll never know.

December 15th, 1941. I'm now assigned to the Oil King Gang. I had been one before for a short period of time. I knew all five guys in the group.

December 16th, 1941. Big day for the Canopus. We were sitting on the bottom between piers one and three, acting as anti-aircraft protection. Most of our oil was pumped out to hidden tanks ashore. We took on water ballasts. We were equipped with four 3-inch A.A. {Anti-Aircraft} guns shielded with 2 inch boiler plates.

Here they come. Fifty-four Betty's {Japanese bombers} flying in formation heading right for us, and the port area of Manila. Noontime. About a mile from us, they hit the Navy Club and many cheers went up. I'll tell about that later. We took shelter below decks. Why? We were told to do it. The bombs began to hit all around us and some actually hit us. All members of the A.A. battery, 36 men, were hit, but none were killed. We went around plugging up holes in the side of the ship with wood plugs. Later, I went up to see the damage. The thing that I could not believe was the shrapnel holes in the A.A. guns' 2" boiler plates, as if a welding torch did it.

The reason the cheers went up when the Navy Club was hit was because the enlisted men of the Asiatic fleet paid for the Club through a forced collection. On opening night, some drunken sailors threw Admiral Hart into the wading pool, not knowing who he was. Apparently, he was interfering with the fun. The next day, the club became Shore Patrol Heights, and enlisted men were restricted, as the previous agreement was no officers and no Shore Patrol. Just being run by four CPOs. All this was gone. Years before, the same

thing happened and that became the Army and Navy Club-officers only, enlisted men had to stay away.

Working in the Oil King Gang, I knew the status of the oil on board- there was very little. But the plan was if we were to move, we could take our oil back and fill up our tanks. Oil and water don't mix, which we found out later.

The Skipper, Commander Sackett, decided that as long as our guns were falling short, all hands would seek shelter ashore when the air raid alarm went off. That was all we needed. We found a nice bar and grill two blocks from the ship, right next to the slit trenches we were supposed to use as cover. The bar was a cabaret-type place called the "Black Cat", where there were five or six cabaret girls and all the booze you wanted. The bar was run by a retired Army Sergeant. Everyday bombs hit close by. They were some hits!

December 24th, 1941. No sooner had I sat down to dinner, when the air raid siren goes off. There have been so many mistakes made in the Manila signals, so we're not supposed to pay any attention to them. We're supposed to wait until the siren is sounded aboard the ship. There it goes and away I go. Only the A.A. crew and some black gang stayed aboard. The rest of us seek shelter ashore, but it gives us a good excuse to go over and have a few cold ones. Well, here I am having a nice cold one in the proper atmosphere {our favorite local bar}, when the front window is shattered, tables are blown over, and everybody is on the deck. Things quiet down and we rush outside to see what the score is. There's a bomb crater right in front of the joint. The port area is burning in many spots. The retired Army Sergeant, who owned the bar, told us, "I'm heading for the hills. You guys help yourself." That was the end of the good times.

It looks like old Mama-san, the Canopus, had taken it on the chin. So we went back to the ship and found out that they dropped bombs all around her, but there were no direct hits. That night on December 24th, our ship started to take on oil to prepare for departure. When we left, Manila was going to be an open city with no defense.

One or two nights later, I had to work guard duty. We were told there was the possibility that Japanese skin divers would come in and place explosives on the ship. We were supposed to patrol back and forth on the deck. Another guard patrolled one section of deck and I patrolled the other. I said to him, "I don't know what you're going to do, but I'm not going to stomp up and down all night. I'm going to find a cubby-hole somewhere where I can sit there and get some rest. If someone comes by and doesn't respond, I'll just shoot them." We carried rifles with fixed bayonets and kept the safety's off. I was resting in my cubby-hole when I heard someone approaching in the dark. I didn't say anything at first. I cornered him with my bayonet. Then, I said, "Who the hell are you?" He answered, "I'm Captain Sackett." I looked at him and said, "Okay, you can pass." He saved a lot of us by getting us off the ship during the air attacks. He was all right.

Captain Sackett was a good guy, but the guy before him was even better. His name was Captain Bannerman and he was an old drunk. Every time we went to the Navy Club in Tsingtao, if he was there, he always sent over a round of drinks to us. That was very unusual at the time. Usually, Officers had nothing to do with enlisted men.

I got sent back to the ship once for slapping a girl, while I was in a bar in Tsingtao. It was early Sunday morning. We had got into an argument, so I slapped her in the face. It was the only time in my life I did something like that. This guy came walking by

wearing a “pit helmet”, which we used to call a “Frank Buck helmet”, which meant he was an MP {Military Police}. He had a whacking stick in his hand and he wore Bermuda shorts with high socks. He said to me, “Son, you shouldn’t treat a woman like that.” I said, “Who the hell are you?” He said, “I’m Captain Carroll, Chief of Staff, Asiatic Fleet.” So I said, “Why don’t you take the four stripes out of your ass and put them on your shoulder where they belong?” Then I ran out of the bar, jumped into a rickshaw, and took off.

He blew a whistle and suddenly I had the Shore Patrol all around me. They picked me up and sent me back to the ship. I was under Shore Patrol arrest. I had to go to mast, but I missed Exec Mast, so they held me over for Captain’s Mast. Captain Bannerman was presiding. He looked at the Shore Patrol report and asked, “Did you really say that to Captain Carroll? I want you to repeat what you said to him.” I repeated it. He broke out laughing so hard, he almost fell down. He said, “Two days deprivation of liberty.” This meant nothing to me because we went ashore whenever we wanted to.

Captain Bannerman’s tour was eventually up, and he was replaced by Captain Sackett. Commander Sackett had a lot to do with submarine engineering. He was instrumental in salvaging the Squalis, which sank off of Portsmouth NH in 1939.

We are getting the ship ready for getting underway. Boy, I hope we join the rest of the fleet down south, but I doubt it because I’ve already been told the inside dope on how much fuel we have and how far it will take us.

It is dark and we are underway in Manila Bay. I take a trip up topside for air and now I realize something disastrous is taking place in Manila. The sky is red and heavy. Explosions are going off continuously in that direction.

We took on as much oil as we could and got underway. We had to go through Navy mine fields, which contain contact mines. That night, we lost the fire in the boilers twice because of water in the oil. If the ship remained dead in the water, we could have drifted into one of the mines. We had to hand feed the boilers. We formed a “bucket brigade”, which handed off buckets of diesel oil from man-to-man, so we could keep the boilers firing. Luckily, we avoided the mines and arrived at Mariveles Bay, which is on the southern tip of the Bataan peninsula. We covered the ship with fishnets and tree branches to hide it from air attack. This would be the last place the Canopus would stay before we sunk her.

We were still fully operational. All shops were at 100%. We had time to fix anything mechanical, which we proceeded to do. We were able to service jobs until February, 1942. We serviced PI boats and all kinds of small crafts that patrolled the defense area.

December 25th, 1941. Yeah, today is Christmas, and here we are in Mariveles Bay, tying up to a makeshift dock. Why? Because we are too big and slow to make a run for it, so we have to stay here and let the Japs use us for bombing practice. Oh well, that’s the breaks.

December 29th, 1941. We thought we were pretty well camouflaged. That is, up until today. A group of high altitude bombers came over and dropped the mail around old Mama-San. We were pattern bombed. We were hit once by a 500 bomb. It went through the three decks aft and exploded on the propeller shaft in the shaft alley. The force of the explosion traveled upwards and killed one man, a friend named Rex. The shaft alley sent the main force to the engine room. This is where the engine room crew and fire room

crew took shelter. Five out of ten men were killed and four were wounded. Only the Chief Officer was uninjured. A sailor named “Bull Shantz” had carried away nearly everybody who was injured in the engine room.

My boss, Squire Boon Zane, who took the place where I was usually assigned, was killed. I had taken shelter ashore. There were four of us under an overhang of rock on the beach about a half-mile from the ship. The bombs were exploding all around us. The one that hit close was ten feet directly above us. I thought we had it, but when the smoke cleared, we were shaken but okay. We ran back to the ship to help put out the fires and buried the dead that night at sea. I was in the burial party, as I knew all the men who were killed. As we were committing one at a time to the deep and after counting six splashes, we heard a seventh splash.

I remember it was pitch black and talk about being scared. We fished out one of the party from the water; his name was Earl LaFrance. He was alive. It was like a scene in a movie, as I think back.

The ship was patched up and back in business that day. A few days later, she was seaworthy again. I had many duties besides pumping oil, water, and different fluids off the ship. As time went on, our supply got low and in order to replenish it, we would patrol Manila Bay during daylight hours all the way to Manila thirty miles away. There would be five in the crew of a forty-foot motor launch equipped with empty 50 gallon barrels, a couple of pumps, and shallow water diving equipment. We had a 50 caliber machine gun mounted on the stern. Our Skipper, Commander Sackett, wanted the gun mounted on the bow. He relented when we told him we weren't going in to attack, but the

gun was there so we could get out of any situation. We salvaged quite a bit of oil from barges and small ships that were abandoned all over Manila Bay.

On one occasion, we salvaged a sailboat, which was partly submerged. This was going to be our getaway, if we needed it. Another time, we spotted a sunken barge in about ten feet of water. It was still in tack and covered with canvas. Red Christenson, who was the Boat's Mate first class and all-around handyman, went down and cut through the canvas over the hatch. We then lifted the hatch off and found that it was a barge full of scotch whiskey.

We salvaged twenty-five cases that day. We figured that when we got back on the ship, we would be considered "millionaires" because whiskey and cigarettes were at a premium back then. Our Chief Warrant Officer, a hell-of-a nice guy, found out about the whiskey we liberated from the barge. He liberated twenty out of twenty four cases for the officers. We ended up with four cases of scotch whiskey, which was still pretty good.

The next day we went out with better salvaging equipment. While we were anchored by the barge, artillery shells began falling all around us. We got out of there fast. We didn't know where it was coming from. I found out the next day that it was the U.S. Army on Corregidor that was shelling us. They were trying to chase us away, so they could salvage the whiskey themselves. We went out again on the third day and found guys from the Army on a tugboat anchored next to the barge. They had all kinds of divers and equipment. They were well-equipped to retrieve the rest of the booze from the barge.

when all the shops aboard were humming, the officers had parties with nurses and army officers, who could get away from the front lines. This went on night after night.

As I said before, my days were spent salvaging oil. One day, we looted some of the stashed food the officers had hidden in their rooms, and we also took back some of our stolen scotch. We took advantage of the opportunity when no one was aboard to go up to the officers' quarters and rummage around their rooms.

One day while aboard, an air raid alarm went off, so we left the ship. There were a series of flats that allowed us to get off the ship. Five of us ran to shore and when we looked up, we saw a dive-bomber coming straight at us. I looked up just as he released his bombs, six of them. I threw myself against a bank of dirt. The bombs hit the hill in front of us, covering us with dirt, but were quickly up and running again {probably broke the record for the 100 yd dash}. When we got to safety, we found the Chief was missing.

We ran back and dug him out. He was buried up to his neck. He said, "I thought you S.O.B.'s had left me to die. Such things like that happened, of course, never recorded. Another time I had the midnight watch with another guy at the head of the bay in a rice paddy. The PPI scouts had an AA battery of three-inch guns. In order to give them a rest, us sailors took guard at night.

It was a dark night, you couldn't see very well, but I started toward the jungle. After about four hours, I saw someone crawling toward us. So, the two of us took aim and started firing as fast as we could; scary. We gave no warning. The scouts got up and joined us. Then, all was quiet. But, then something out of the dark ran toward us. Six of us firing and what do you think it was; a big dog. I guess we woke him up. None of us made a hit and he ran away. A year later, I was telling this story to a group of POWs and

an army captain came up to me after and said the dog we thought we shot at was actually him taking a short cut across the HCP paddy, after spending a night in a cat house. I never knew there was one within 50 miles. This is the way it was then. He said our shots were close and he sobered up fast. Then, he crawled away slowly.

Another time, the Japs landed behind the mainline on Bataan about five miles from our ship. The landing party from our ship was organized and we called it the Bridget's Brigade. Frank Bridget was the Lt. Commander in charge. Their objective was to contain this force until the army could relieve them. I was not in the landing party, but on the tenth day, I was with the rescue party to carry out the wounded and the dead. Scary detail!

Commander Bridget had approximately one hundred and fifty Naval aviation men under his command, many of them ground crews, who were out of work after their planes had been destroyed by the initial Japanese bombing raids on the American airfields in the Philippines. He recruited a hundred and thirty sailors from the Canopus, a handful of survivors from the Cavite Naval yard, eighty men from the Ammunition Depot, and about a hundred Marines.

Supplies were extremely limited for Bridget's Brigade. They had a difficult time finding rifles and ammunition for all the men. They ran out of canteens, so they had to use tin cans. The Navy sailors dyed their white uniforms a khaki color. The cooks made a strong batch of coffee and everyone soaked their whites in it. Most of the men had never been in combat. Many of them had only received limited field training. The Marines gave the sailors and aviators a "crash course" in infantry warfare.

Our ship, currently under the command of our Exec Lt., Commander Goodall, a great guy {a prince}, armed two motor launches with cannon and 50 caliber machine guns, to strike a cave the Japs were using to hide in on the shore {Longoskawan point}. They were successful the first day and brought back four wounded Japs and their arms. The prisoners were tied down to hospital stretchers and we brought them to Corregidor to get their wounds treated. Most of the prisoners closed their eyes and wouldn't look at us. Many Japanese soldiers did the "honorable" thing and killed themselves before they were captured. Only some of the soldiers surrendered.

The second day was a disaster. Jap dive- bombers sunk one boat and badly damaged the other. We had to bring the wounded back over land to the ship. There were five sailors wounded badly. Commander Goodall had his heel blown off, and that was the last I saw of him until after the war was over. After the war, he was the commanding officer at Anacosta Naval Station in Washington. When I met up with him, he told me he'd get me transferred to his station and get me promoted to Chief Warrant Officer. I didn't take the opportunity.

Another time, I was on lookout on a spike of rock thrust upward about 75 feet {ideal place for a lookout}. It was above Seaman Cove, where the PT boats were stationed {hidden of course}. While looking down, I saw two men come flying out of a PT boat and then heard an explosion. They landed in the water. They came back to the surface and swam back to the boat. I talked to them a few days later when they were alongside the Canopus for repairs. It seems one guy lit a cig {cigarette} and that's what caused the explosion.

Everyday there was something going on. Every night a Jap airplane would glide over us and drop a bomb just to hone our nerves. Our records were kept in a tunnel {King's Hotel} about a mile from the ship. If we had any business there, we walked up there in the early morning. I was not warned about the Jap plane that liked to strafe the road on occasion. My morning was his occasion and we had to hit the dirt pronto. He was a good shot, but missed the both of us. The sailors named the tunnel "King's Hotel" and Commander King was proud of that sign, not realizing the King Hotel was the best whorehouse in Manila. Of course, that was news to me.

Another time, two barges pulled alongside, loaded with butchered sides of beef from Corregidor. It seems their cold storage plant was bombed out. These sides of beef were from the mules that were being killed from the bombings. Our ship was the only place to store the mule meat. Our storage was big enough, but after a week we had to get rid of it because it was starting to smell.

The army sent trucks to pick up most of it for the front line troops. Everyday soldiers came aboard and I talked to one guy and asked him, "How was the mule meat?" He said it was the best food they had for months. He told me their rations for the day was a can of salmon and a pound of rice for each squad, which consisted of eight men. I don't know how they lasted as long as they did {five months}. I swapped a carton of cigs for a Garand rifle. I was the only one on the Canopus who had one. That didn't last.

Another time, Jap dive-bombers tried to sink a small ship out in the bay. It flew a Chinese flag. As they pulled up after their bombing run, our ship and the ammunition depot, which was located on the other side of the bay, would open fire. We could not fire before this, as we would be firing at each other. I watched this go on for nearly two

hours. Finally, we shot one down. We sent a boat out because he bailed, but we found nothing.

An hour later, a Jap biplane, looking for his downed buddy, came close to where we were staying on the beach near a rock formation. He came so close that I could see his face clearly. Everyone fired at him. I could see tracer bullets going right through the plane. I stopped firing and gave him a salute. He was a lucky S.O.B. that day. Something was going on all the time. I didn't have time to think about the situation. Some of us had been wounded by the enemy.

We have two meals per day, one before dawn and one after dark. When I see and talk to a soldier from the front, I consider myself lucky being in the U.S. Navy. I can now see the handwriting on the wall. We are doomed. Before we lost all our P-40 fighter planes, I witnessed many dogfights. The zero was faster and more maneuverable. Our China gunboats saved a P-40. He was diving between two of them, hoping to lure the zero into their crossfire, but the zero seemed to stop and pull up. The P-40 escaped. Everyday the Japs bombed Corregidor, which we could see from where we were camped during the day.

The AA guns on Corregidor {ours} hit a Jap formation flying at 28,000 and all of them were either shot down or broke formation. Great shooting. I later found out that one of our subs brought in ammunition that could reach that high.

Every once in a while, ships would hit a mine. I never knew what side they were on. We serviced subs until late February, 1942. A lot of our officers stowed away on them and escaped. I should have done the same, as they were not punished. They said the sub

got underway while they were visiting. Some story. The infamous sub, "the Squalis" that sank in 1939 was renamed the Sailfish and we serviced her at least twice.

Early February, 1942, General MacArthur sent notices to all units that hundreds of planes and thousands of men were on their way. It was a moral builder, but I for one didn't fall for it. I talked to the sub sailors who saw what happened at Pearl Harbor and they said the whole fleet sunk!

In February, 1942, I made out a ten thousand dollar insurance policy, just in case I am pushing up daisies later on. I also extended my enlistment two more years. I was planning on going out of the service, but Tojo changed my mind just recently.

March, 1942. Boy, those dog-faces in the front lines are taking a beating all this time with hardly any relief. Every night the artillery duels go on for hours. The port side must be okay because the Japs aren't here yet.

April, 1942. Things are pretty much the same around here, but something big is happening. You know that before there's a big storm, there's always a lull. I settled into a daily routine and then the PT boats {four of them} left our area and later we found out MacArthur had escaped to Australia. We had the sailboat ready to go, but the officers took it five days before Bataan fell and escaped that night. It seemed they had been given permission to do this. I guess they were more important than us sailors!

The submarine, U.S.S Permit, was originally supposed to take MacArthur out of Corregidor. Apparently, he changed his mind and decided to escape on the PT boats instead. Fourteen PT boats took MacArthur, the President of the Philippines, and all the high brass to safety. They were following one another, carrying extra fuel in barrels on board for the long trip. The next morning, down around Mendora, the Ensign who was

the Skipper of the 37 boat, thought he saw a Japanese destroyer following them. They threw all the extra gasoline over the side, so they could lighten the load and get away. It turned out it was just another PT boat.

The PT boat was dead in the water. The submarine, Permit, came by later and picked up the stranded sailors. I spoke with guys who were on the crew of the abandoned boat, after the Permit picked them up and brought them to Corregidor. When they got to the island, a junior officer on the Permit, Lt. Flashenhauer, let it slip to the people on Corregidor that they had the survivors of the PT boat on the Permit with them. The Skipper of the Permit was going to let them stay on the submarine and take them back out with them. When the Lt. let it slip, the Skipper was ordered to kick them off the submarine. They were later captured and taken prisoner with the rest of us.

The Chief Petty Officer of the rescued crew of the PT boat said to me, "If I ever get back to the United States, I'm going to kill that son-of-a-bitch, Flashenhauer." I met Flashenhauer years later after the war was over. Basically, we had two classifications of officers. They were either "a prince" or "a prick". He was a prick.

An officer was a prick if he always went by the book. There was no flexibility with them. Good officers, "the princes", would sometimes look the other way to help their men. Not so, the pricks. We were up at quarters one time and the Chief held us for an inspection. An inspection party came by led by a Lieutenant. Peterson. He looked like his head had gone through a meat grinder. One eye was shut and he was really banged up bad. It turned out that Lt. Peterson was looking for someone who beat him up. Apparently somebody went up to his room, grabbed the curtain on the side of the door, and wrapped it around Peterson's head. Then, the guy beat the shit out of him while the curtain was

around his head, so he couldn't see who was doing it. Peterson wanted to inspect all the sailors to see if any of us had bruised hands.

Whenever Peterson had the deck, and everyone had lined up to go ashore, if he found any little thing out of the way, he would take your liberty card away and put it in the box so you couldn't go ashore. Years later, I was at a reunion in a bar in New York where I met this guy who we suspected had done the deed to Peterson. He was an old buddy of mine named Walter Kakkan, who we had nicknamed "Snake". I said to him at the bar, "Snake, you must have been the one who beat Lt. Peterson up." He said, "I don't know about that. All I know is that the guy who did beat him up was wearing gloves." Now I knew why Peterson couldn't find anyone with bruised knuckles at the inspection. Four days later, they transferred Lt. Peterson off the ship.

A week or two after that incident, three or four guys came aboard who were called "replacements". They were dressed like sailors, but we could tell they were really Naval Intelligence. We could tell they were officers because their hands were lily white as if they hadn't done a day's work in their lives. They stayed aboard for two weeks, trying to get some information about who beat up Peterson. If anyone knew who it was, they never said anything.

Snake stayed in the service and retired as a Chief Warrant Officer. Every time he had gone up on deck as a sailor, Peterson would find something wrong with his uniform. The men of the Asiatic fleet didn't take any crap from anybody.

One by one, our officers disappeared, so that when Bataan fell April 8th, 1942, we only had our Skipper, two Lt. Commanders, a Lt. JG, and two Chief Warrant Officers

left. Still, the parties went on every night, while we worked our asses off. Can I say more? They were still drinking what we salvaged earlier.

Our group, the “Oil Kings, were lucky because we used alcohol for test purposes. But the tests ceased, so we couldn’t let it go to waste. We still had the ice cream man freeze the booze into the ice cream. It was the best tasting ice cream I ever had.

One night, we were issued 45 pistols and our Chief was showing us how to field strip them. While showing me the safety’s, I pulled the trigger and it went off with a bang. It just missed the six of us in a small compartment. I dug a piece of the casing from my arm, but nothing was ever said about it.

April 7th. We got the word that Bataan was about to surrender. It was about midnight. We received orders to scuttle the ship and take off for Corregidor. It sounded like the world was coming to an end with all the explosions on Bataan. Everything of value in Bataan was being blown up and nearly all at once. We destroyed as much equipment as possible in a short five hours. Everyone got into our motor launches, except the scuttling crew of ten men. They backed the ship out into the channel and sunk it, just like that. We, in the small boats, were leaving Mariveles Bay when the Army blew up three tunnels on the side of the bay. One tunnel was full of gasoline. The whole mountain rained down on us. One boat was hit and we lost our Warrant Officer, a great guy. Some of the falling stones were as big as a house. Luck stayed with me and we got out just as the Jap tanks were pulling into the docking area. Next stop Corregidor, the Gibraltar of the Far East, so they say.

We left Bataan behind and landed on the north side of the island of Corregidor, which faces Bataan from a distance of two miles. We thought we would have some kind

of accommodations, but they landed us on an upwardly sloping area and we were told to dig in. We didn't go to the dock because the new powers in control figured that was where the Japs would shell. All day we watched the Japs bombing Bataan from the shores of Corregidor, which was known as "the Rock". They only bombed the Rock several times that day.

The digging was hard, for the soil was like concrete, so we took our time. About one hour after landing, the shells started to land among us. The digging was sped up and Harold Lundberg and I dug a hole big enough to get our heads in, leaving our asses exposed.

Every time a shell landed close, I would say "And may God have mercy on our souls." When there was a lull in the shelling, we stood up and Harold swung on me and said, "Don't ever say that again." Two guys next to us had a great foxhole dug. A shell landed between them and blew them out and they never had a scratch.

We stayed there that night and the next morning we moved to the south side of the island. We were two days without food and water. I was not used to this arrangement. This was a Gerry trail, where we stayed until the Japs invaded the island on May 5th, 1942.

Gerry Trail. It was a well-protected area located just below Battery Crockett, four 12" disappearing guns, and battery Gerry, four 12" mortar cannons. Battery Gerry could fire 360 degrees, while Crockett could only fire toward the sea at 180 degrees. We were located about a mile from Malinta Hill. Corregidor was shaped like a giant pollywog, and Malinta Hill was located halfway down the tail. It rose up about three or four hundred

feet. The headquarters for all the forces on Corregidor was located in a tunnel dug straight through Malinta Hill.

The Jap Navy would send in a small craft, either a destroyer or minesweeper, just to test our guns. They watched several displays of accurate gunfire, but they stayed just out of range.

We were now a part of the 4th Marine Regiment, a reserve battalion. At the time, I never realized exactly what a reserve battalion was. A reserve battalion was thrown into the battle wherever the fighting was the fiercest to help the troops being hit the hardest. Bayonet drills and practical infantry warfare was being pounded into us. We were willing pupils because we all knew our lives were at stake. It was a strong feeling, this “I don’t give a damn feeling”, when just a short while back all I could think about was going home. Sometimes, when I get a chance to think, I realize we’re doomed. Help is never going to arrive soon enough to do us any good. If only we had something to fight back with. Every time I think of it, it makes my blood boil. We figure this will be a fight to the finish, like the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas.

The Japs started shelling us and they never let up, even to cool their guns. Corregidor fired many outgoing rounds right over us. The rotating band would come off and they were worse than the shelling. We caught all the short rounds.

On April 25th, 1942, the shelling was concentrated on the two batteries above us. Then, for two days and nights we were shelled with 240mm shells. The digging was in earnest now. Ten of us had a tunnel dug ten feet into the hillside ten feet apart and then connected. It was the only way to keep from getting killed. We still lost about twenty

men at that time. Then, a mighty explosion blocked out all the light {from the sun}. We figured we had it.

I was in the back of the tunnel and I had the digging tools. I passed them toward the entrance and lo and behold, we weren't buried. Just a lot of dust. We ran to the head of the trail, where it made a turn, where the wind blew the dust away. Wow! That was the biggest explosion on the island.

The Japs blew the top of the mountain off, exposing the ammunition storage rooms. Finally, they knocked out both batteries. We sent a rescue party up the hill to dig out the soldiers who were buried. As soon as we got there, the Japs peppered the area with 105mm anti-personnel shells. Surprisingly, only five soldiers were killed during the rescue. That was a day I'll never forget if I live to be 100, which I intend to do. I later found out that some of the mortars weighing five tons were found two miles away on the other side of the island. Wow! Just like the fourth of Julys we used to have back in the USA.

The Japs had us surrounded and they had a long-range cannon on the Caviti side of Manila Bay, about 12 miles from us. We called it the Caviti Express. They would hit the island randomly. They had no set target. As I mentioned before, I had the only M-1 rifle and I fell in love with it. But, I didn't know how to field strip it. So, I asked a Chief Gunner's Mate to show me. We were kneeling just off the ditch in the road when suddenly he pushed me off the road. A shell then came careening out of the sky and exploded in the road. It blew apart our makeshift shower, which we had rigged up by tapping a spring on the side of the road. I asked him how he knew a shell was heading our way. He had no explanation for it. He just said he had a feeling about it. Another close

call. That was the last I saw of my M-1. I was issued a World War 1 rifle still packed in grease, a Marlin. Good gun, but slow firing compared to the M-1.

April 27th, 1942. We received word that B-24's had bombed Tokyo, Japan. Score one for the good guys. Ammunition was the same; .306. We were issued six hand grenades and taught how to use them. At that time, I realized I was not made for making war. I was made for making love. What a strange world. Our outfit was in the Fourth Battalion, Fourth Regiment, Marines held in reserve. All our squad leaders were Marines. A squad back then was eight men.

At this time, I started smoking. It seemed to calm my nerves at the time. What a mistake. I took them because they were free. The shelling continued day and night. Then, we got our orders to move. Off we go marching with all the ammunition we were able to carry, including a few pineapples {hand grenades} apiece.

It took us overnight to get to Malinta Tunnel, which was where all high-ranking officers were located. When we arrived in the tunnel, we were told to stand by for further orders. I was so tired, I just laid down and went to sleep. Later, I sat next to the headquarters tunnel, watching the officers eating and drinking coffee etc. Here we were hungry, thirsty, and tired, but no one offered us anything.

The tunnel ran straight through the hill. It was about 1000 yards long and had lateral tunnels branching off, which contained hospitals and such. In order to get to the tunnel, we had to run toward it immediately after a shell blew up at the entranceway. In other words, between shots. It was scary to say the least.

My squad left about dawn the next day. We left the same way we entered. Off we went running for about fifty yards. Then, lying flat waiting for the next shell burst. We

went to a fork in the road and found a Marine sitting behind some sandbags, bandaged around the head, staring straight ahead with a rifle still in his hands; dead. He had been shot between the eyes. That meant snipers were already in back of us. Now I knew it wasn't just a nightmare. Two miles down the road, we got pinned down by machine gun fire. Two snipers were firing machine guns from a catwalk circling the upper level of a water tower. Someone crawled up and shot them, so we could move forward.

Here I am and there is a war going on, and I have a rifle and some Japs have some rifles, but all the time I'm thinking I can't believe it is all just about knowing how to shoot a rifle. I now revert back to when I was a kid and play "follow the leader". But this is not good either, because them Japs have never heard of the game "follow the leader". All they know is how to "get the leader". At this rate, if it keeps up, I'll be the leader, so I figure maybe I should change my tactics.

The next thing I knew, were pinned down again. Luckily, we were in a depression in the road. The bullets were clipping the bushes in back of us, a few inches above our heads. Our squad leader said, "Okay, men, let's get the bastard." In unison, we all said, "After you Sarge." We finally crawled around, spread out, and fired at anything that moved in front of us. Apparently, the Sarge thought better of being a hero.

We finally succeed in wiping out three machine gun positions and gaining a hill. There were more over the hill, so over we go again. We take chances a man would never normally take because we've read about these kind of fellows, the Japs, and know them like a book. I guess a fellow goes nuts. I've seen men fall all around me, but what can you do? I figure we're all going to get it eventually, so what's the difference?

Night came and all was quiet. Still no food. What kind of outfit was this? Then, I figured it out. We weren't supposed to come back. The next morning, I used up fifty rounds firing at moving targets. I chickened out when I had a Jap all lined up about 150 yards away. He was unaware of us and rather than blowing his head off and alerting him to our presence, I let him go.

At about 10am, our Company Commander came up and said, "It's all over. Get back to the Manila tunnel and destroy your weapons. You're on your own." Apparently, the U.S. forces were going to surrender at 11am. The Commander who gave us the news was an Army Air Force Lieutenant. We were quite a mixed up bunch.

Three other sailors and myself improvise a stretcher and carry a wounded man back to the Malinta tunnel. Getting back took us about three hours. The Japs were still shelling the entrance to the tunnel. We got inside and collapsed into a dead heap. Still no food or water. I scooped some water out of the drainage ditch and drank it. Everyone is busting up rifles and equipment. The Japs are still shelling. Maybe they aren't going to let us pack in our chips.

I guess maybe they are going to let us cash in our chips, because the Japs finally came into the tunnel. They weren't here for half an hour when a private hit me in the guts with a rifle butt. They ordered us out the opposite entrance. This story is getting to me so I'll stop for awhile. It's like a moving picture in my mind. Damn, I was hungry and thirsty.

All of us are outside and forced to lie down. Evidently, somebody didn't get the word, because there is still shelling and bombing going on up topside and on Ft. Hughes. We all slept on the road that night.

Third day. I found a canteen full of water. Now, I, too, had some water. Four of us stuck together and would stay together while on Corregidor. There was no sign that we were going to receive food. So, I suggested we go look for some. There were no guards around at the moment, so we took off. We wandered up Malinta Hill and stopped near the top, where we located four well-equipped beds. They had nets and canvas to protect them from rain. It turned out to be a command post of Col. Howard's of the Fourth Marines.

All the luxuries of home. We couldn't find any food, but we located lots of scotch and whiskey. I immediately filled both canteens with scotch. No food, so we all got drunk and fell asleep on the beds that were very comfortable. This spot was well-located.

That night could have ended much differently, if they had been in a difficult mood. Evidently, they were just out looting that night.

We went back down into the valley where we came from. We called this area “death valley” because everything was reduced to rubble from the bombing and shelling. In peacetime, this area was a Filipino village. Now, it was just rubble.

Two days later, we were herded, 300 at a time, to the ill-famed 92nd garage area about two miles from where we were. Over eight thousand of us had been squeezed into a relatively small area. Five days, no food. I forgot about my canteens until we arrived at the 92nd garage area. Along the way, I picked up the tins of coffee that came with “c” rations and stuffed them in a sock.

For fourteen days we {the four of us} lived on whiskey and coffee. We had one faucet of water and there were 8000 of us. One man had to be in line twenty-five hours a day. We were allowed one gallon each.

We sheltered ourselves with scrap metal and whatever we could find. Everyone else did the same. What a mad scramble. We built a little shack out of tin, canvas, and dirt to protect us from the sun and heat. It didn't take us long to figure out that they didn't want to feed us. Apparently, “get along as best you can” was their attitude, so we went out and picked up a little can chow. We got most of our food out of old gun positions that had been covered over. I learned quite a bit about cooking in this period. Of course, it did not taste like anything.

The only way you could get food from the Japs was if you went on a work detail. On the fourteenth day, I went on a detail, loading Jap ships with all the good food they had captured from us. The first thing I found was a can of anchovies that had a key. I ate this

and a can of condensed milk. I stuffed my shirt full of canned goods, as much as I could carry back to the 92nd garage. When I emptied the food, you thought the world was a better place. The food that I ate gave me diarrhea so bad, it was two days before I could eat again.

May 21st or 22nd, 1942. We were moved by ship to Manila. We were loaded on three transports and every inch of deck and below space was loaded with people. There were no toilets and 50% of the men had come down with dysentery. It was a nightmare. This was nothing compared to what was to come in the next three years of prison life. I got shook down and had to give up the 16 pesos I had hidden in my shoe. We arrived in Manila two days later, where we were loaded onto landing boats. They brought us as close to the beach as was possible. Here, we had to jump out and crawl ashore. Many people had to swim ashore because they were dropped off in water that was pretty deep. I was able to wade ashore.

As soon as we hit the beach, we were lined up and marched off. This hike was through the heart of Manila, about an eight-mile course. The guards kept us hopping. If a man was tired and fell by the road, he was beaten up. If he still did not get back up, he was left behind and eventually picked up later by a truck. About halfway, we stopped and the Filipinos were allowed to give us water. They also gave us cigarettes, candy, medicine, and ice cream on the side. Their actions re-affirmed our faith in them.

Not surprisingly, the Filipino people hated the invading Japanese as much as we did. Even the primitive tribes of Filipinos living in the jungle hated the Japanese. I knew about one tribe, the Igorots, who were located just north of Subic Bay. The Igorotis were medium-sized people who lived in the jungle and they were very friendly with the

Americans during World War 2. The Igorotis killed any Japanese soldiers who wandered into their jungle territory. The Igorots had no problem surviving the Japanese invasion. The Japanese had learned to stay away from them. They would silently kill the Japanese soldiers and then disappear into the jungle. They didn't have any guns. They used machetes, blow-guns, and bow-and-arrows.

During peacetime, some Igorotis visited our base. They brought a twenty-five foot python with them. They had the python strapped to a pole. They carried it into the base and tried to sell it. Years before, the explorer, Frank Butte, came back with the largest snake ever captured in the world at that time. He supposedly captured the snake himself, but it was really the Igorotis who captured it for him.

The Igorotis helped train the Americans in jungle survival. Most survival training for the Army and Air Force was done in their area. The Americans figured if they could survive in the jungle without the Igorotis tracking them down quickly, then they were successful in their course. Of course, the Igorotis always found them eventually.

Later that day, we arrived at Bilibid Prison, an old Spanish prison. The next day, we were fed our first meal of rice {steamer}, some soup, and yes, some hot water. Of course, some of the men had canned food, but they weren't sharing. It was dog-eat-dog from here on out. It was strange how men changed under situations like this, but it happened. It didn't happen to everybody, but it did happen to the majority of men. As for myself, I didn't have anything in the line of extra food or money, so I had to take what was given to me by the Japs. By this time I was down to 128 pounds soaking wet.

We stayed in Bilibud four days and were then moved out in a group of 1500. On the night of May 27th, we were marched to the railway station, where we were loaded 75 men

to a boxcar. The boxcars in the Philippines were about half the size of a U.S. boxcar. The trip to Cabanatuan lasted all night. We were transported north for a total of about 60 miles. We had to stand up, we were packed in so tight.

Then, the Japs herded us into a schoolyard that had a fence around it. That night, we slept on the ground in the pouring rain. I told my brother, Walter, what happened there. Two soldiers were beheaded because they didn't move fast enough. We were marched about twenty miles to Cabanatuan. I now knew I'd be lucky to make it to my 23rd birthday.

When we arrived at camp Cabanatuan, I was walking on air. I guess I just barely made it. The Japs had four soldiers tied up to stakes at the entrance for us to see. They had been there a long time; they were in terrible condition. Two days later, they were executed by a firing squad for all to see. Graves were dug and they were forced to stand in front of them, and then shot. Their crime was escaping and being captured. The date had to be May 28th, 1942. I now weighed less than one hundred pounds.

We found out later that some traitorous Filipinos had turned in the escaped American POWs. The Japanese were offering rewards to anyone who turned in escaped prisoners.

The Japanese divided us up into groups of ten, which they called "squads". They told us if any one of the ten men in the group escaped, the other nine men would be executed. We had a Marine in our group whose face was severely battered. He had open wounds on one side of his face. His last name was Wolf. He kept saying, "I'm going under the wire tonight." We kept a watch on him all night. We figured if he took off, we were all going to take off.

June-September, 1942. Here was my home for the next three and a half months. Camp Cabanatuan had been built for the Philippine Army just before the war started. Cabanatuan was now the holding camp for all U.S. POWs. From here, work details were sent out all over the Philippines. Some of the stories that came back were horror tales. Some people who came back were at death's door.

Poker and dice games were in progress all over the camp. Before the Rock fell, some men in the tunnels had access to money that was going to be destroyed, or apparently taken if the men wanted to. Well, some of these games were really big-time; thousands of dollars in every pot. Boy, what a fool's paradise that place was for some.

Truck drivers {American} went daily to Manila for supplies with a Japanese guard. By bribing the guards, they were able to buy medicine at pharmacies there. Most were mercenaries and did it to make money off American POWs who were sick and dying. We did not have to work at camp except to maintain ourselves. Dysentery was the big killer and in our weakened condition, it killed many.

The Japs allowed us to bury our dead once a week on Wednesdays. Why? I'll never know. The bodies were badly decomposed. We received no medical attention, except from within, from each other. All kinds of old remedies showed up. Some of them worked very well.

Pop Lundberg, myself, and another sailor team up. It's an even split on everything we have. Pop and I work together swell, but this other guy is a dope. Maybe he can't help himself like many men who have gone off their nut, so we gradually ease away from him and are on our own. Pop and I.

All the month of June we made out okay. I supply wood for the galley, where I am allowed to eat extra food and take all I can lay my hands on. Funny, that I never stole a thing in my life before. Now, it's dog-eat-dog and to hell with you. Yes, that's easy to say, but when someone you know is down and out, you forget this rule of prison life.

My closest shipmate, Pop, came down with dysentery and almost gave up the fight. I volunteered and worked for the Jap guard, making wooden go-aheads {shoes}. I received a can of evaporated milk and a biscuit. I forced Harold {Pop} Lundberg to eat the biscuit. Sometimes I had to chew it first because he was so dehydrated. It worked and he survived.

There were so many deaths, I decided to go on a work detail. The Japs wanted 300 Navy men to go on a detail. Lundberg, Floyd, Woodward, and I volunteered. We were shipped back to Bilibud Prison in Manila about September 13th, 1942. There were all kinds of civilian internees there with us in the prison. Some of them were newspaper correspondents. Some of them came up to us and said, "You know where you're going, don't you?" We said, "No, we have no idea." They said, "They're going to ship you Japan. You're going to be the first group to go. Actually, it turned out we were lucky to get out of there then. The Japanese tried to ship thousands of POWs to Japan, as the American forces were advancing on them. Most of the POWs died when American planes and submarines sunk the ships they were being transported on.

We stayed in Manila about four days and boarded a Maru. We were going to Japan. I was glad about this because the work details in the Philippines were very bad. The newspaper correspondents had been right. We were the first group to be shipped to Japan. At the dock, we find out we are going to have some distinguished passengers. Twenty-

seven high-ranking Army officers are with us. You would think that the Japs would show some consideration to these officers, but no. Down into the same hold they go. We were all locked into one hold below deck. There were over four hundred men placed in an area that we wouldn't squeeze that many pigs into.

For the next ten days, we live in agony, taking turns to sit or sleep, faking dizzy spells so we can go topside for a breath of fresh air. Finally, the ship comes to a stop and we are herded down to a dock.

It took us six days to get to Formosa. The officers were marched one way and we were marched another way. We were lined up and deloused. After being in a dirty, stinking hold of a ship, they spray us with a solution that smells of rat dung. Our baggage, if you can call it that, was inspected for arms. Several weeks later, I saw some of the arms they missed. Colt forty-five revolvers, knives of all sizes and descriptions, rifles, and last but not least, enough hand grenades to blow up a battleship. They were all concealed in our baggage and kept in the hope that some day we may use them on these little brown brothers of ours. At this time of the war, the Japs were riding high. I guess they thought they were going to win, but I never believed it and never gave up.

We took a train ride lasting one day and one night, no food or water. It was a ten-mile hike to the POW camp. First, we are examined and our shoes are taken away from us. Evidently, they figure that we might escape if we're wearing shoes. But I say, "Where could we possibly go from here?" Next, we are forced to sign a paper, stating we will not escape and we are now guests of the Emperor. Naturally, we all sign, but I know that if I even get the chance, I'll pull up stakes and just haul. We were given a speech that lasted two hours by a Jap who looked like Boris Karloff, which is I don't named him. All of

the red tape takes us well into the afternoon. Before being dismissed, we were warned not to drink the water unless it was boiled.

This was easier said than done. Have you ever gone without water for days in the tropics? When they turned us loose, we all headed to the washstand where I drank gallons of delicious drainage water. By the time we finished washing our bodies and clothes, all we had left to do was dry our skin. Yes, but boy, what a relief.

This was supposed to be a model camp. It consisted of two long huts, mats on raised platforms with mosquito nets. At the end of the huts {hipa}, was a water tank. The main water supply came out of a bamboo pipe to a tee and these tees were wooden plugs that released the water. The water came out of the rice paddies that surrounded us. Surprisingly, no one got sick that I know of from drinking the water.

The next day was a workday. We made a two-mile hike to a riverbed full of rocks. Our jobs were to carry these rocks to the road and load them onto trucks. This is what we did for the rest of the stay from September 18th to November 19th, 1942.

September-November, 1942.

04:30 Tinko time- roll-call or “muster” for us

05:00-05:30 Tiser- physical culture or just plain torture

05:30-05:45 Mese- Chow down on food, consisting of a bowl of 50% unpolished rice, 30% barley {moldy}. The second course was a small bowl of pipe-steamed tripe. The third course was a cup of green tea.

06:00 Work Parade- Here we are given a pair of canvas shoes, a pick, a shovel, or a yo-yo pail with two baskets.

While eating, we were instructed to sit cross-legged, Japanese-fashion, and to use chopsticks, which they furnished. We comply with these rules if a guard is watching, but when he isn't, we use a spoon or a fork and dream about steak and all the good food we ate before this all came about.

We were given Jap-English books to learn the Jap language, which we were supposedly going to use when the Japs took over the USA. They wanted to teach the U.S. how to be Japanese. We went along with it, as they were easy on us. They told us that when they took over the United States, they were going to send us back and put us in charge of cities and towns. We pretended we were all for it. We said, "Wow, a whole city? Really?" We read their books and listened to their lectures. Of course, we knew all this was never going to happen.

Eventually, they stopped teaching us. Apparently, we were learning too fast. They were getting wise to the fact that we were just going along with it, and really didn't believe anything they were telling us.

After two weeks, we were ordered out on the parade ground. Here, we stayed for eight days and were questioned one at a time. They knew all about me, my date of enlistment and qualifications. The amazing part about it was that they knew my entire life history. Here I am, a little old sailor, and they knew all about me! They knew when I was born, when I enlisted in the Navy, when I went to boot camp, and what schools I attended. We found out later that they knew a Jap code man, Radio, was among us. They never did find him. Our treatment then changed and the Japanese culture books were taken away.

How did the Japanese obtain all the detailed information about me? The answer is a mystery. I figured that since we lived in such an open country, the Japanese were able to infiltrate spies into some of our organizations and obtain the records that way.

After the war, we found out who he was. It was no surprise he could read, write, and speak Japanese. He was an expert Radio Tech and built a short wave radio, so we knew how the war was going. This info was given to us much later than when it happened. He took a dead man's ID to avoid detection. He was a Chief Radioman U.S.N.

We departed Formosa about November 19th, 1942. We were loaded on a Maru and arrived in Simonsinko in southern Japan. We took a ferry ride to Moji, which is the southern tip of Honshu Island. We were surprised at the good treatment. Japanese women fed us at train stops, mostly rice balls and dried fish. My spirits picked up.

Yokohama, Japan, November 28th, 1942. Pop and I arrived at the prison camp and we were put in a warehouse on the waterfront close to the fish piers. This was to prove to be our home for more than 2 ½ years. Pop weighed 106 pounds and I was 115 pounds. We were allotted our 1/8th of an inch of bed space, but that didn't matter because we slept next to each other for warmth. The building is an old warehouse fitted with double bunks, Jap-fashion. Over 500 men crawled into a space that we wouldn't put 500 pigs in. There was no heating system, holes in the walls, blown-out windows, stinking toilets. Everybody is in a weakened condition with dysentery, malaria, and God knows what. I make it about twenty five times a day myself and Pop is much worse off. This is the lowest my spirits have been and I don't expect to ever leave here alive.

No sooner had we settled in, when a series of five explosions shook us up. It seems there were five French ships being blown up by their crew, as they were free French, not Vichy. At that time, there were no sub attacks or air attacks yet.

Our first day was rest and organization day. We were told that we would be working in a shipyard owned by Mitsubishi. At this time, Mitsubishi was Japan. They pretty much controlled what happened-at least, where I was at. Mitsubishi owned extensive mines, aircraft factories, tank factories, and all kinds of heavy industry. They built all the Japanese Zero fighter crafts and twin-engine bombers. The military complex in Japan, like in this country, controlled the country. They told the politicians what to do and got all the money they want.

You can see the same thing happening everyday in this country. President Bush gets up on the podium and rants and raves about the need for more money to go to war. And he gets it. He doesn't know what he's talking about most of the time. To be frank, I believe the man is an idiot. I'm amazed that he got re-elected. The story about Bush shirking his National Guard duties is true. Cheney is even worse. Cheney got five deferments from military service. To explain these cowardly actions, he said, "I had other priorities."

I believe the only way to counteract the corrupt political/military alliance in this country is to reinstate the draft. We should not have an all-volunteer army. That way everyone has to serve-including the children of the politicians and military industrialists. They would all have kids who were in the service, so they might think twice about sending them to war. An all-volunteer army is not right for the country because the only people who are going to serve are the poor people. This is the way it has always

happened throughout history. One of the reasons I went into the service was because there was no work around.

Our guards were Jap army and Mitsubishi half-and-half workers assigned as guards. Where the hell could we escape to? White men in Japan would stick out like sore thumbs. Plans were made to capture a fishing boat and sail away, but it never amounted to much. Over time, our guards became civilian workers, except for a Jap commander and a Jap army sergeant.

Yokohama 2nd day. We were issued work clothes and brought to the shipyard. The yard was about three miles from our quarters. I told them I was a plumber, so I was assigned to the pipe shop. This was where they bend pipe for new ships under construction. I knew that Japan could never win with their ancient methods of construction, and we POW's did nothing to help. I think we held them back. We did as little as possible.

The electric welder {Japanese} in the pipe shop was a pretty decent sort. He gave me rest periods and cigarettes. He asked the regular run-of-the-mill questions and treated me like a worker instead of a prisoner.

I worked for two days and then had to stay in sick. What exactly was wrong I don't know, but I figured if I wanted to live, I have to snap out of it and get back to work.

My next job was located just outside the main shop where the flanges were cut out and straightened for fitting to the ends of pipe. My job was to chip and stack these flanges. They were red-hot. The furnaces were fed by coke and I had to keep them supplied.

This gave me the opportunity to leave the area and go to a pier where the coke was stored. I used to push a cart that carried about ten bushels of coke. This routine went on and on, day after day. My strength returned somewhat, but the main cry is food. We never get enough to eat. Next to the shop is a Jap Navy galley. Every meal they throw away is better food than we get at camp. Some of the boys are going into these boxes and getting meat, fish, and rice. They say it's okay, but my pride holds me back, as my belly says go ahead. If I want to live, I will probably have to do the same.

December 4th, 1942. Today, one of my buddies brought me a mess kit of hot rice, which I ate. He later told me it came out of the swill box at the galley. That converted me. I threw pride to the four winds. If we were caught by the foo {guard}, we would sometimes get punched and slapped. But, this never stopped us from going after the extra food. Sometimes, a Japanese sailor would give us food right out of the galley. We carried sampan bags {garbage bags} with us as the opportunity arose.

My shop was eventually moved to a building located 18 feet away from the Jap Navy galley. I thought I was in heaven. Day after day the cooks would come over to my fire to get warm and naturally would converse with me, some in English and some in Japanese- a few key words I knew. They were all right, in that they gave me food where and when I requested it. Gradually, I got back in shape, and the winter months gradually wore off.

Days and weeks on end the routine was eat, work, sleep, and so forth, without one minute to yourself. One of the biggest hardships was the lack of soap to work with. The most disheartening thing wasn't when the Japs said they would win the war. It was the number of deaths that occurred in the camp. Every day I would come into camp

exhausted and after eating my bowl of rice every night, attention would be called and another mother's son would be carried away. Twenty-nine Americans and fourteen others passed away that horrible winter.

Spring came on and a man was able to take a few clothes off his bones and get clean again. But the work continued, ten hours a day, with only two days off a month. I nearly blew my fuse in early May with those pesty mosquitoes. They were a plague to us the rest of the year.

The Japs had thousands of Korean school kids working at this yard and they hated the Japs probably more than us. They were paid mostly in cigarettes, which we used as a medium of exchange. The Koreans were always trying to exchange cigs for whatever we had to trade. I got along very well and carried on many trades with them.

As I said before, our guards were civilian workers and while we were working at the shipyard, we saw very little of them. I would pick up trade items at camp, take them to the shipyard, and trade them for cigs. There were payoffs to guards, workers, and fellow POW's. My share was over 50% and I had nothing invested except the risk of being caught. It was exciting, so it kept me going.

There was a Japanese guard at our camp, who we nicknamed "Charlie Chaplin" because he walked like his namesake. We got along well with him because he was always looking for a payoff. The guards used to periodically inspect us for contraband. They would conduct a strip search, where we took all our clothes off and they would go through the clothing to see what we had. Charlie would come up to me, kick my clothes, and say, "Tobacco?" and I would say, "Yea." Then, he would walk away without

inspecting my clothes. Later, he would come by for his payoff. I would give him some of the cigarettes I got from trading with the Korean kids at work.

At the camp, there were five of us that stuck together. We trusted each other implicitly. We shared everything. I did most of the trading. They called me the cocan {exchanger} kid. My best friend was Harold "Pop" Lundberg from West Newbury, MA. The youngest guy in our group was Woodward. He was only nineteen years old. Stan "Ski" Weisnewski was the oldest. He was in his fifties. Stan was always sick, so he stayed in camp and took care of the clothes, bedding, and found places to stash our loot. He was a Chief Radioman with nearly twenty years of service. The other guy in our group was Red Christianson. He was the "jack of all trades" who salvaged the scotch out of the capsized barge in the Philippines. Christianson had been a professional hockey player before the war. For some unknown reason, he migrated down to the state of Washington and enlisted in the Navy.

Weisnewski had tuberculosis while he was in the camp and most likely gave it to Woodward. After Woodward came back to the states, he also came down with TB. A lot of guys came down with it.

The five of us helped each other to survive. We stuck together all the way through. There were other groups of guys who stood together, but I didn't know that much about them because I was always concentrating on my group. There were two brothers in camp who stuck together, the Jaeger brothers. They came from Des Moines, Iowa. We called one "Senior" and the other one "Junior".

This camp had 500 enlisted men, of which 300 were Americans from all branches. The other 200 were British, Canadian, Aussie, Norway, and Swedes. Some were civilians

called camp followers. We also had 50 officers, about 10 were American. They kept to themselves and had nothing to do with us. They got preferential treatment as POWs. They did not have to work unless they volunteered. Some six of them did. I understand they handled blueprints in the yard. Most of the time they sat around playing cards all day. According to International Law, they weren't supposed to work officers.

However, any officers who gave them a lot of problems were sent to a "special" camp, where they had to work. We had a Dutch doctor in our camp who complained about the lack of medicine for POWs. He spent some time at the camp commandant's office, trying to advocate for us. I remember the little Dutchmen standing at attention by the Japanese commandant's door, protesting the fact that the POWs had no access to medicinal supplies of any sort. He was a courageous man. He was sent to the "special" camp.

The Yokohama camp would periodically change commandants. One time, we got a Japanese officer who had lost a leg in Manchuria. He was the best commandant we had.

Every night our quarters were like a Chinese bazaar. Men walking around swapping this and that. Cigs were used as a medium of exchange.

We were supposed to get a Red Cross package once week, but we never did. All the time I was there, 40 months, I received one Red Cross parcel, which had been looted of all the good things. I also received a package from home, but that was it. So, you can see that anyway you could supplement your diet helped. I still only weighed 100 pounds.

Often, we were wakened at night for a roll call, called tinko. While we stood outside, the Japs searched our personal quarters and belongings. These sleep interruptions kept us in weakened conditions, and it went on and on, week after week.

The Japanese ran their trucks on charcoal. They used charcoal burners on the trucks because they didn't have enough gasoline. There was a charcoal factory behind the prison camp in Yokohama. Someone broke a hole in the fence, so we had all the charcoal we wanted. We had pot-bellied stoves in the warehouse we were in. Of course, we didn't have anything in the way of food to put in the stoves. Still, we loaded them up with charcoal to keep warm. Sometimes, Japanese guards would come inside to warm their hands by the stoves, without knowing where the charcoal was coming from.

May, 1943. A dysentery epidemic broke out in Yokohama. We had to give stool samples to test for this. I thought this was a good chance to get off work for awhile. So, I used another POW's sample, who I thought had it. Sure enough, he did and I was taken off work and isolated with about twenty-five others in camp. Everything was okay, until they shipped us to Tokyo to a hospital camp called Shinagawa.

This camp had about 300 POW's from all over the Tokyo area. There were huts with four rooms. Each room had twelve men. Everyday, we were given medicine, which we were supposed to self-inject. The American Army MD, Cap Weinstein {from Chelsea, MA} told us to throw the medicine away, which we did.

The food was about a cup of cooked grain and watery soup twice a day. Our ration came from sweeping at a warehouse near us. I know because I was on that detail and swept the floor for our rations once. I weighed myself after being in this warehouse. I was 75 pounds. One of the most important parts of our diet was our bone ration. We got bones from a slaughterhouse and made soup with what was left over and given to us. We were on a bone list, and I couldn't wait for my turn. I took a half hour to pick out the rat shit, before eating it again, the grain.

Five months later, we were sent back to our work camp in Yokohama. I could just about walk and that was the time I almost had it. The garbage at the work was a welcome condition and I put some weight back on. I never did get over 100 pounds. When I met my brother, Walter, in Oakland, CA, I had put on about 20 pounds in two weeks. My body was like a sponge.

Winter of 1943-1944. We worked at the shipyard all winter with very little rest or time off. Most of the Japanese workers were now of the opinion that they will lose the war, but not for quite a while yet. Tanabai has helped me a lot by dealing with me. He says, "American good. Nippon damn." He believes me no matter what I tell him. Of course, some of it is baloney, but we Americans are a bragging race anyway.

In 1944 the Japs had a bathtub built, which was 15'x 15'x4'. We took turns once a week. The ones that came up last, 25 at a time, had some dirty water. I never took a bath as long as I was there. I bathed at work once in a while. I also washed my clothes there.

The current boss is no damn good. He asked me to shave him one day. I did, but all the time I was tempted to slit his throat. Then later, I shaved myself on the job, unknown to him. He later found out and got pissed, but I just ignored him. He's a working bastard, but in many ways, I impede his production, although it puts more labor on me. Oh well, I'm in good shape now and I don't give a damn.

Spring, 1944. In spring, a young man's fancy turns to love. Oh, yes, it seems I've heard that before, but that was before Pearl Harbor. The boys {American POW's} rob the Japs blind, out-trade them, and sabotage them whenever they can. I threw nuts and bolts into a big diesel crankcase, broke a gas line, and broke an airline. The war work has slacked off tremendously in the last few weeks, but that is because no new ships have

been launched. It takes them at least six months to build a tanker and a year to build a seaplane tender. It is poor work at best. When are the boys {American soldiers} coming to this dump? If they only knew what we prisoners know. The Japs haven't got anything so speak of and no modern equipment. Their transportation system could be knocked out with a few well-placed bombs.

Summer, 1944. The normal routine of beatings, night stand-ups, and punishments occur when the least little excuse offers itself. The Japs on my list include "Kotex", "Pretty Boy", "Bat Eye", "Bulldog", "Black Sleeves", "the Co", "Suzuki", "Gertie", "Liver Lips", "Crook-shank", "Super-stripe", "Horai", and all the Jap Army guards and foos not mentioned here.

Mitsubishi LTD has done the minimum to ease our situation. Here they are, a big, profitable outfit, and they are going to pay through the nose for what they've done to us. The personnel supervisor in the shipyard was Udo San {Mr. Udo}. If it wasn't for Udo San, our lot would be hopeless. He's nearly as American as I because he spent some time in the U.S. He worked for Mitsubishi in the United States for many years. He had an American wife and three kids back in the states. He did as much as he could for us.

When President Roosevelt died, Udo San assembled three hundred of us in front of a podium before we went back to the camp at the end of the workday. He informed us that President Roosevelt had died and he said, "Anyone who wants to wear a black armband, I have them here in this box." None of us took a black armband. We figured Roosevelt was the son-of-a-bitch who put us in that position by getting us into the war and not backing us up in the Philippines.

I always figured Roosevelt and Churchill let Pearl Harbor happen. It couldn't have been any other way. It was the only way to get us into the war. There were many warning signs that Pearl Harbor was going to happen, which were blatantly ignored. There were a number of blunders made, but the attack on Pearl Harbor was obvious. Did it make any sense to send the fleet out from Long Beach, California, where they were safe, and relocate them to Hawaii in the middle of the Pacific, where they were exposed and vulnerable? The Japanese were using our fuel for their ships, and if they couldn't get fuel, they were out of business. They had to knock our fleet out to keep their war effort going. They needed to go down to the Dutch East Indies and get the oil down there.

At the time, the U.S. had a boycott on giving the Japanese oil and steel. The Japanese were negotiating in Washington to stop the oil and steel embargo when the Pearl Harbor attack happened. Obviously, their negotiations were all a big hoax. No one was ever able to determine who the top guys were in Washington and the military who allowed Pearl Harbor to happen. General Marshal was horseback riding that morning, when they knew the Japanese were going to attack Pearl Harbor. Telegraph messages were sent to Pearl Harbor from the Asiatic fleet, warning them they were about to be attacked. I blame the heads of the Army and Navy at that time. They knew what was happening and they let it happen, so we would be forced to go to war.

The Navy had radiomen stationed all over the Far East, including Corregidor. Their jobs were to copy Japanese messages. Each radioman was assigned to monitor a specific Japanese ship. During the week before Pearl Harbor, all radio communications in the Japanese fleet went silent. In warfare, radio silence is interpreted to mean an enemy is up to something; planning an attack. This was common knowledge to many of the enlisted

men stationed in the Philippines. Later, about 100 radiomen were evacuated from Corregidor before the Japanese invaded the island.

Okamoto {"Silver"}, the interpreter for the guards, has done his best to make us as uncomfortable as possible. He's probably a spy and is acting as an interpreter to divert attention from what his actual duty is. He's got a damn good-looking daughter though, who I'd like to go a few fast rounds with.

When are the air-raids going to start? The sooner the better. I know this place will get it, but that will do my heart good. We were aware of the progress of the Naval war in the Pacific from flyers that were taken from prisoners from time to time. Sometimes we received an English edition of the Nippon Times. All we had to do was turn the news around 180 degrees and that turned out to be the truth.

Around Thanksgiving day in 1944, an air raid alarm went off at about noontime. Myself and several other POW's were outside and looked up and saw four vapor trails very high up. We watched a Jap fighter plane diving on a B-29 bomber, but it missed. We now figured the end of the war was near.

On February 22, 1945, early one morning, an American dive-bomber appeared. They bombed Yokohama Bay and sunk five ships, one of which was an aircraft carrier. On March 8 and 9, 1945, the B-29's flew overhead starting at 10pm. We could see the sky aglow in the distance. An hour later, the main force came over and set everything on fire from Yokohama to Tokyo, a distance of 25 miles. I saw 29 B-29's shot down right over us.

Two days later, we went back to work. Everything around the shipyard was gone. There was nothing but rubble left. Then, during late March, we were at work when we

were ordered out of the shipyard to the area outside the yard. 125 B-29's flew over in formation, led by a B-24. They dropped leaflets and flew on unopposed. Now, we knew it was over. No bombs were dropped!