

Papers of John Monroe (Jack) Owens, Jr.

Compiled by Joe Owens
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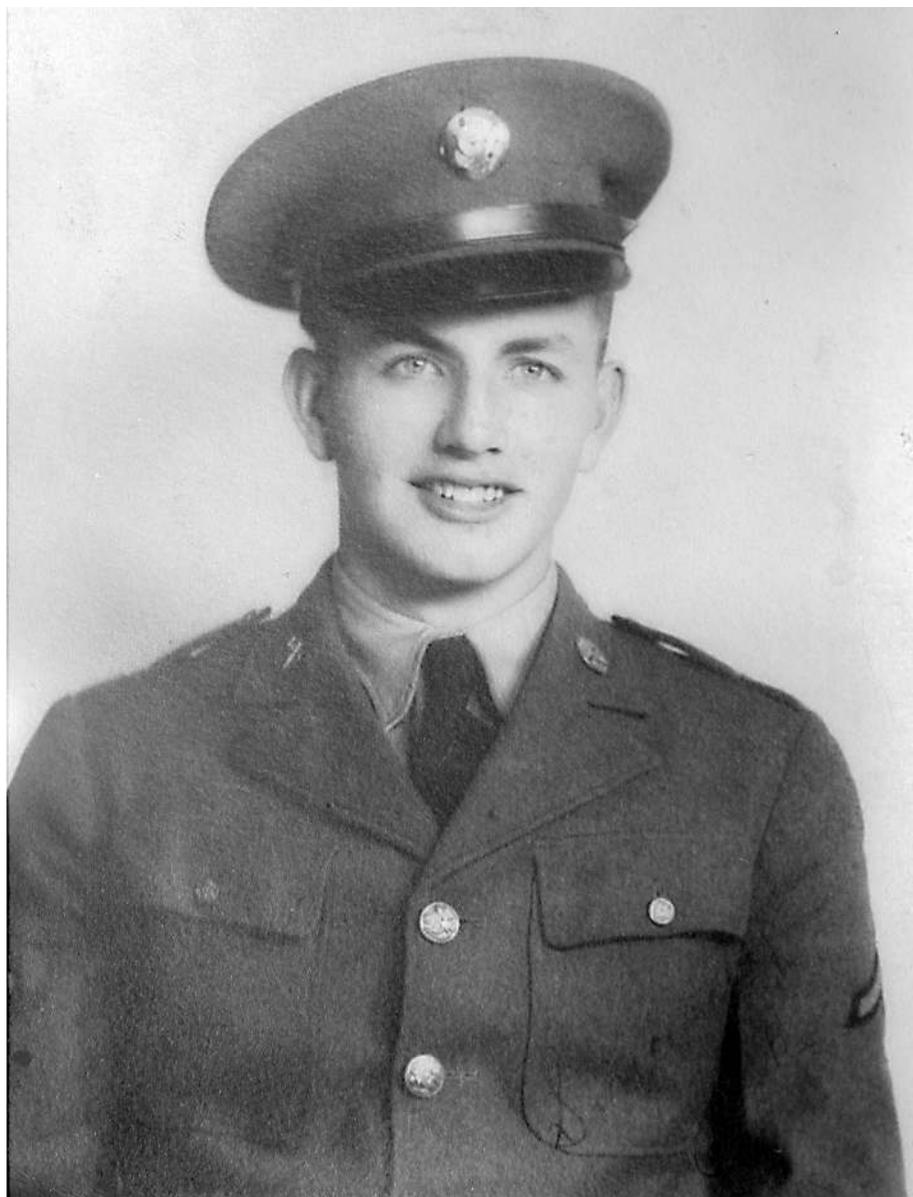


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Foreword

John Monroe Owens, Jr., known to his friends and family as Jack, was born in 1921, the oldest of eight children. He died in 1987 at the age of 66 of emphysema due to years of smoking. After his military service in W.W. II, he was a truck farmer near Blossom, Texas and raised peaches, watermelons, tomatoes and other fruits and vegetables for sale. He was active in hunting and fishing and seemed to enjoy a good life even though he had been given a 100% medical disability from the military and died so young. This is a collection of a few things written by him and about him, gathered together by me, the youngest of his siblings.

By far the most important document here is the story that Jack wrote about his W.W. II and POW experiences after he returned from that ordeal. After returning to the States, Jack had attempted to attend Paris Junior College where his sister Alice was enrolled. He just was not able to sit in class, it seemed, after what he had been through. Someone suggested he sit down and write some of his wartime experiences as a means of therapy and that's how we have this story now.

His original story has now been digitized and made accessible through the efforts of Lisa Johnson, a history professor at Paris Junior College in Paris, TX.

Jack spent a lot of time in the Veteran's Administration Hospital in McKinney, Texas, and that's where he met Rose Ellen Ward, one of the medical workers there, and they were later married.

I remember Jack sitting in our living room in a ladder-back chair with a rawhide seat, hunched over the piano bench, writing his story on thin, onion-skin paper with pen and ink. As I think about it now, that must have been a difficult posture in which to write, but we had no other table in our living room on which to write. It would have been too cold to write anywhere else in the house since our little wood stove could heat only the living room. My sister Alice had rented a typewriter because someone had hired her to do a fairly large typing project. Alice would pick up Jack's handwritten pages and type them up on a manual typewriter, making a regular page and one carbon copy. She would have to ask him to decipher his scrawl at times. It must have been many years later before I read his story. Since I was in the second grade when he wrote it, I didn't know how to read very well and I'm sure my parents would not have let me read it even if I had been capable.

In about 1985 I looked for the story so I could make copies for my brothers and sisters. Jack's son John Owens had a copy of the story but probably not the original copy. John gave it to me for distribution to my family. Unfortunately, I discovered that pages 9 and 10 (of the 72-page document) were missing. My brother Alfred had the carbon copy (or maybe just the handwritten story, I don't remember which) and I used that to type up pages 9 and 10 after making some small editorial changes for the sake of clarity on these two pages.

Jack's manuscript has been through several changes (intentional and unintentional) since Alice typed up the original version. John Owens, while he was in college, had someone retype it. That version was missing pages 9 and 10. Lisa Johnson had a slightly different version which she used to have her students retype it as a digital document. When I compared the versions, I found many typos and missing sentences. I tried to bring these two versions into agreement and I also made spelling and capitalization corrections, as well as changing some sentences to make meanings clear.

In 2002 I discovered a few precious items my mother had saved from the WW II period. Besides some old letters, which will be included herein, I found four phonograph disks, 6-1/2 inches in diameter, with a printed label "A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM A SERVICE MAN THROUGH FACILITIES PROVIDED BY AMERICAN RED CROSS." The disks appear to be thin cardboard with a celluloid coating on each side. According to Jack's writing on the outside of the envelopes, he recorded these disks at Brooke General Hospital, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. These were likely created within a period of three months from the time he returned home in October 1945. After I modified a turntable to operate at the required 78 RPM, I transcribed the three stories that he recorded on the disks. These transcriptions are included with this document.

I have also included "One of the Stories Jack Told". John included this material when he gave me the main story. This was written in long hand with the title "This Is One of the Stories He Told." As far as I know, John wrote out this story after hearing Jack tell it to other people later in life. The event is mentioned on page 56 of Jack's Story.

There is a remarkable photo taken as Jack was walking out of a POW camp moments after his release and I describe how we obtained the photo.

Included are stories written by my brother Charlie and me about what we remember about Jack during the war and at the end of it. I also have added a story written by Charlie's son Eddie about Jack and one of his fishing expeditions in his later years. (I suppose that I must explain that Jack had become estranged from his wife Rose and was living with Velma Pool when the events of Eddie's story took place. Jack and Velma lived as man and wife until Jack's death.) Eddie enjoys creating and telling oral stories and this story is one of those—it is transcribed here as a practical matter. Jack's son John Owens recently wrote some memories of his childhood years (Growing Up With Jack Owens) to better describe Jack's life and experiences after his WWII ordeal. These interesting stories show why Jack was such a respected member of the community.

I found several letters that my mother had saved regarding the early war years and before. I included the various letters and documents in chronological order. Since these letters are sometimes hard to read now, I transcribed them just as they were written, except I often corrected the spelling of Phillipines to Philippines. Any comments of my own are enclosed in brackets [like this.]

I let my friend, O. Wendell Cockrell, whom I had met while we were students at Texas A&M, read Jack's story. He pointed out that the Capt. Dyess mentioned on page 18 was probably Captain Edwin Dyess, Wendell's father's cousin. I notice that Captain Dyess is also mentioned on page 44. Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas is named for him.

Jack Owens' Manuscript

(Handwritten notes above the typed text read as follows:)

3 yrs ten months in the East

It happened in the Pacific

It was hell then but now its over.

Here in the Manila Bay in '41 we are buzzed by the modern air corps, yes, three Martin B-10's. What a disappointment, even though they almost rolled their wheels on the bridge. "If that's what they've got over here, what the hell do they expect of us?" was our cry.

Upon docking we were greeted with "it's a long way to Tipparary" and the infantry "As the Caissons go rolling along" which were both lost in the roar and the grind of the machinery of the wharf. In fifteen minutes we were being unloaded according to rank among the many odors in the colorful city of Manila. Colorful, I say, streets laden with dung, GI trucks and very numerous profiteers who were selling coca-cola and sundaes to a group of GIs, fresh from the cold country and were willing to give anything to relieve the pressure caused by sultry November heat.

Upon our arrival at Nichols field, we were again disappointed. Tents, mosquito bars, and canvas cots. That wasn't bad enough; we were given our first field ranges and our chow was terrible. We had to start unpacking to the tune of 18 hours per day, and on Thanksgiving we were given a real chow. Yes, salmon (we called it gold fish) and coffee, which was half chicory. For supper it was gold fish which were left over and stuffed bell peppers. We complained, but that's all the good it did for we had to get back to our unpacking.

November 21st we were given five airplanes, planes which carried Swedish numerals on their instruments and the tech orders were the same. All our airplanes had over four hundred flying ours on them, and in the climate, magnetos and generators are always fouling up and you can guess what fun we had. Our pilots couldn't tell whether they were ten or a thousand feet by the instruments and we couldn't guarantee the condition of the ships at any time.

We were bundled up one morning, with a four-hour notice, and shipped to Delcormen, Pampanga. What a lovely place, just at the crest of a large plateau and the sugar cane growing all around. Just west of us were large, green mountains and often we looked toward them, hoping for a weekend and thinking perhaps it was cooler there and not so dusty.

Our landing strip was terrible. You could walk across and the dirt poured over your shoe tops. A plane could warm up, and you'd breathe and eat dust for two hours afterward. However, this dust later proved to be a good camouflage. We were alerted almost at once by Lt. Merritt, and we had to take twelve hour shifts. I drew three planes to crew and a night shift. What a scream for my day men were just green tinkering mechs who knew how to tear up everything, but nothing about fixing anything. Two of the planes were out of commission most of the time.

A group of night crew and I went into the smelly sugar central for an afternoon of entertainment. As we tramped down the dung littered, elm shaded lane which served as West Third Street, we were met by a screaming group of naked and half-naked boys and girls. Give me

nickel, Joe, give me chewing gum, Joe, give me cigarette, Joe, are the most common. Give me twenty centavos, Joe, and I take you to my sister, Joe.

On this day there was a public market open. We stopped by for a “look-see” and what we saw we would have for dog food. Old women with open sores squatting over shallow but wide bamboo, woven baskets of some home-made candy, coconut and peanut being most common. They would arrange their baskets for show and pick their sores, rearranging the candy every five minutes, and it seems they didn’t care how many flies settled there. There were many hondos of dried fish, we thought them to be rotting by the odor which they give off, live chickens, dressed chickens, hogs, carabaos, carameta ponies, cookies, hardware, leather shoes, cloth shoes, rice, sugar, both brown and white, cigars, good ones too, (that’s all we bought), gin, rum, and that mellow Philippine drink, Tuba. It was mellow alright, went down like liniment and knocked your hat off when it hit the bottom. When you reached for your hat, you were lucky if you found it at the first grab. Most generally you were hurraed by your buddies for trying to put a basket or a fan on.

We pushed and shoved our way through those lines until we came to a box. Upon it was an auctioneer who was about to let a pony go for thirty-five pesos. Cpl. Canaday’s Tuba had begun to work and he had thought he was a better auctioneer, as a result he took his pay check in his hand and began to climb the box waving excitedly and shouting, “I’ll give fifty, who’ll give sixty?”

There were only two men who wanted the broken-down animal and both were dismayed to hear the bid, up to sixty, sixty-three, sixty-five, and if you will haul us back to camp at five o’clock it’s sold at sixty-five. We were sorry that Canaday made such a bargain. Fifteen dollars and another quart of tuba, for that night as soon as the pony cleared the “shady lane” he balked and we had to walk the other three miles.

We left the market with naked kids following, fighting over the centavos like chickens over corn, and we were enjoying it so much we tossed all our silver and copper before we reached the American Club. This was called this because there was a bowling alley, pool tables, restaurant, American library, even dated back before the days of the Spanish occupation, and believe it or not, a piano and shower room equipped with hot and cold water and a flush toilet.

We tried to drink all the beer, and what we couldn’t, we tried to buy for the Spaniards and the Germans who owned and operated the place. The people were very nice, endeavoring to entertain four GI’s who were trying to spend their roll and everything was free. And if you don’t think that’s a job, go out with a group on payday.

There was a young Spaniard, her name was Carmen Felix, which all the boys made a play for, but not me, for what’s the use if your wife is being good back in the states? We were given any number of songs to sing. None of us would pass for anything less than mountain canaries, but we tried anyway. Several times the pianist reminded me that I was two tones lower and about a verse behind, but still I thought them so good I couldn’t help but sing them over. You know that I’d lose the place and I couldn’t carry a tune unless it was in a bottle and labeled Hague and Hague or Vats 69.

Five minutes to five o’clock our clessia arrived, and while the driver held the pony down we boarded. Held him down, I mean, for the lightest of the four weighed 189 and I doubt the pony weighed 350 pounds. Back to camp we started, almost half sober now and the driver pulled out

the bottle and we passed it around. It started by, "Joe, I like the Philippines, yes, Joe, the Filipinos are really good people, they do everything just right, work three months of the year and rest the other nine." Before we turned the first corner Canaday and Marshall were driving. Canaday on left and Marshall on right and the Pino saying "Boys, I sure like you; even though you make me pay sixty-five pesos for this pony. You do it only for fun I know. I like you too much." Just then the pony stopped, lifting his tail like a Texas pole cat; he even bowed his back. Marshall shouted, "Hurry up and get through for we've got to go to work at six." The pony never started, he just balked. We were disgusted, we kicked the pony, pushed him. He just braced his feet forward and slid, turn him around and he'd run for all that he was worth, but the minute we got him off the pavement he just took the pole cat stance and remained that way. Later we learned that he was from Manila and had been stuck once on a dirt road. Well, we don't blame him now for after all what would we do if we hooked on to seven hundred pounds?

One night Lt. Hankin was O.D. driving a jeep about the 'drome. He drove upon a sleeping GI in the plane, rocked the wings about twice, and the guy came out, fired three shots toward the jeep. We found Hankin two hours later with his lights on and flying a white flag. Soon after, one of the boys returning to a machine gun position, Fields by name, found a herd of carabao grazing near. He didn't know but what some saboteurs were about so he opened up. A line was formed and the next morning at the crack of dawn we decided his saboteurs were only five carabaos.

Time is December 7, chow time. Most of the men are at mess, and I'm stuck in a P-35 trying to tighten a starter. Lt. Hall jumped from a recon and said,

"Will she fly, Pea Picker?"

"Sure. Where you want to go?"

His answer was, "The Bastards have bombed Pearl Harbor, and almost got the entire Navy and Army there. Now they're bombing Clark Field. Yes they're giving us three minutes notice for I don't see--yes, there it is. Look at those planes and at that smoke over at Clark now."

He was excited. So was I. "Engage it now," I cried, so afraid that he would burn the starter out. With a grinding clash the starter hung and the prop started over. There was a backfire, as the motor caught up. Planes were taxiing into take off position, and Lt. Henry was almost in front of our plane. There was a rat-tat-tat as our synchronized guns went off. I jumped from my plane and ran directly in front of Henry waving my arms. He put on his brakes and over on his nose he went, washing the plane out. Waving Hall on, I checked on Henry, thought he was hit, but decided since there were no bullet holes in him he was just scared stiff. We got five planes off before the zeros hit. Three about two thousand feet and the other two had just cleared the runway. When the zeros came in the three separated, one down in a 9G, one to the right and down, and the other straight up.

Two zeros ran the ones who had just cleared the runway, which dropped down the river and up the side of the mountain. When the planes came in that afternoon, Baker had his right aileron shot almost off, gun solenoids shot out, Gaskel had his right magneto, battery and holes shot through the prop, Nichols had his battery, right tire, oil lines broken and ran out of fuel just before he landed. Some other pilot came in with a hole through his canopy just to the right of his ear and went through the starter pedal and entered the blower section. By the looks of the planes, we decided the Nips only attacked from the right side or else our boys rolled just right to get hit in the right side.

Next day we got no warning whatsoever for from out of the river, it seemed, fourteen Nip fighters came in and strafed us unmercifully. I was working on the generator on No. 51 when the raid sounded. Turning, I looked up and thought my number was up for they'd already started shooting, and I was twenty yards from the nearest foxhole. I hit the dirt and waited, knowing any minute that one of the slugs would get me, but still the way those planes came in. A sheet of flame, coming from those wings, suddenly stopping while the plane swung upward upon the left wing, the tail swung around and back down the runway, raking up the dust and firing up the gas drum and the planes. No. 51 was destroyed by fire, though not beyond decoy stage. S/Sgt. Spanonich was on the other end and before the raid was over we were just about the same depth. At least we had a place wide and deep enough to hide buffalo. One other fellow, Yoeman, hid under a tug until they made a pass at him, then he evacuated the tug and ran under a gas truck which was servicing a P-40, stopping there until one end of the truck had melted, spilling burning gas around, and out from there he rolled, just like a rabbit from a grass fire, straight into a nearby ditch. No one got hit but this guy had three bullet holes through his coveralls. S/Sgt. Malpass and Sgt. Campell got a zero.

After the planes had made about three passes, there was a roar which was easily recognized. Yes, a P-40 had joined the raid. Later we learned that it was Buzz Waggoner. He was about out of gas and a good chance to knock off a Nip so he got in line and let one have it. One burst and he was scooting into the clouds while the Nip went down in a cane field. He got four that day before he had to bail out and let his ship into the mountains. We lost many planes the same way, but we never lost many pilots for long. Little Hall went down over Orani, Bataan. Hall got his from ack-ack, but even today I find it hard to believe he was hurt, for after O'Donnell I was on a party reclaiming equipment, I saw a P-40 crack up and investigated, finding a form, and saw written on the second page, "Hall's last flight, see you boys in Tokyo."

We had a number of noncoms and officers who pushed off after that big raid, leaving us with only six planes which operated correctly. Lt. Meritt, our Commanding Officer, took them to Ceba, we thought for the night. Next day, 13th, he said he had received orders to go to Vigan for there was a rumor that a Jap landing was in progress there. With him there were Knackstead, Crosland, Baker, Bryant, and some other fellow who had been transferred to our squadron. Three planes came in about ten-thirty. I flagged Knackstead in, jumped on the wing to see how everything went. He only stared at his instrument panel and when I addressed him a second time he said, "Those damn Japs."

"What's the matter, Lt.?" was all I could say. "Sam made a pass at a freighter over there and it blew up under him, and his plane separated and dropped into smoke." I had nothing to say for Lt. Merritt was a good Commanding Officer, and two or three days before he'd received a cable saying he had a son.

It seems that when things are going the best for anyone, everything and the worst possible can come up. Lt. Brown was our next CO. A good man, but he didn't have his bluff in on the boys, and the noncoms got so they never did their work. You'd never find one during the zero hours. We called that from 11:00 to 1:00 because the Japs laid it on us at that time. I guess they wanted us to be eating chow and get us all at once, but it merely changed our meal times to 10:30 to 2:30.

After our planes got so few, we're "sweating" a shipment from the states. Mostly, guard duty and such are our only duties. J. I. Flores and I get a Lewis gun and hole up with food, beer, a

quart of rum and plenty of ammunition on the east end of the landing strip. We seldom see anyone for six days, and one day I spot the CO coming back from Carmen. I flagged him and asked for relief. "Sorry Pea Picker, but men are scarce these days," was what he gave me. About that time Flores came up and said, "If you can't give us a pass, what about a can of water." The CO looked from one to the other and said, "You're capable of getting your own." My dandruff got up and I said, "Lt., we've been up here for the last six days, only leaving to service a plane, been shot at every day and we're tired of it. If the Lt. will, he can send up a relief, and I'll pull squadron duties. I'm only a buck sergeant and check our records for mechanical ability. Lt., just what does that make me?"

His answer was, "You're just a damn fool. You should have told me how long you've been here. You're supposed to be changed every day. Come down when your relief comes up and I'll give you a truck to go into town."

Thanking him, as we departed we settled down to the monotony of Casinos. During the next few months every time I saw a deck of cards, I shouted "rummy", "Black Jack" or "hi, lo, Jack, game."

It was in Gua Gua where we learned from a motorcycle rider that the Nips were well on their way from the south and everything was under control for them on Tinguyan Gulf. The retreat was in progress. Yes, the boys were moving back to Bataan. Our visit here was almost a blank. We took a bath in one of those Filipino bathhouses, the kind located in the corner of the house with a blanket curtain on one side, bamboo mat on the other. Both of us were tall and the curtains were only about three feet high. The women in the room continued to peep and titter like a bunch of old hens when they find a worm on a wet morning. We were invited to a dinner at the house, rice and fish. Neither of us enjoyed that, but we surely did like their gin. Flores was broke so I lent him a ten spot. He had that urge of all single men, but he was very disappointed for he was soon informed that during peace time O.K., but not now, Joe, it is war and we must not divert our attention from it. We went to a cock fight and from there to a card game. Our gin was taking affect, and when the Pino started dealing Flores pulled his gun saying, "Joe, I'm not that drunk, deal from the top." The Filipino deals from the bottom of the deck always for luck.

That night as we started back to camp we were stopped every few yards by the evacuating troops saying, "password, Joe?" We knew none so we pulled in a side road and slept until sun up. Arriving in camp in time to help the cooks scrape the pans, then the 1st/Sgt. Reynolds sent us into Del Carmen. I was sergeant of guard, and Flores was one of them.

Here, I really learned to like Del Carmen. It stunk of decaying pummies and dung, but the hospitality of the people was remarkable. I can truthfully say the only meals I ate at the American Club were my breakfasts and Christmas dinner. We took over the baking and ice plant, and also the hospital for our own use. Our Mess Sergeant, Hardy, was one of the best bakers I have ever seen. He and Leroy Garganus really put out the bread and pastry. Batson was our chef in charge in town, had about ten Filipinos working for him, and he really planned a Christmas dinner. It went over in a big way, too. Yes, the only and the last large meal in the early part of the Philippines. The only slip up was they forgot to serve the pie until everyone had started on their beer, and the 803 engineers stole our Christmas cake and there was no cranberry sauce. Japanese bombers came over about six thousand feet unnoticed for let me tell you that dinner hit the spot, and there was so much of it there was enough left to feed a thousand hungry men. Most of it was perishable and we had orders to move, naturally a big feed followed.

While here in Carmen there were a few laughable incidents. One was about the third night I was on duty when the telephone seemed as if it would jump off the hook and answer itself. I came down buckling on my gun and buttoning my shirt at the same time trying to wake up, too. An excited Pino said, "Hello Joe." "Yes." "Sgt. We have a light here, it was a bright flash of green and there is someone here."

"Where are you Joe, I can come out there."

"We are over here sir."

"Where the deuce is over here?"

"I am sorry sir, we are the home guard and at post No. 3."

I did not know where No. 3 was but I stampeded upstairs and shook out three of the guards giving them the hurry up signal. We dashed out, still not knowing where Post No. 3 was. When we asked someone, "Over there Joe, other side of the bridge."

We're there at last after a front fender is mashed in, windshield knocked out by some Joe for my black-out lights were on and he didn't know me from Adam. The guards are still very excited and have formed a line around the house. After a five-minute jabbering contest, I decided the only way to find out anything was for a "look-see". I walked in with my light on and my gun drawn, expecting a bolo or a sawed-off shotgun to meet me. All I saw was eleven grown Filipino brothers and their mother asleep in a hut that was wide and long enough for the men to lie comfortably crosswise and the mother perpendicular in the corner. I spoke several times before I got an answer. I asked one of them what was up and he woke another. I asked him and he said, "I speak very little English, Joe."

Most of them couldn't speak Tagalog. I finally decided to search the place and one I wonder for here is a list which each suitcase contained. One sharkskin suit, complete and new; one brown coat and green trousers, worn well; two of the loudest ties you'll ever see; hair grease and comb, shoe polish, cloth and brown slippers; two packages of cigarettes, lucky strike; in two of the boys' were leather belts, the rest was the gourd fiber weave. In the woman's bag we found a long cast iron comb; two cartons of Alambra cigarettes and three eggs. Sitting in one corner were a few stones with two cooking pots on them and very near was a fork about 18 inches long. I never saw any matches, soap, or meat anywhere about the place, no lights of any nature, and too, they slept in their clothes. The old lady stooped over and to my surprise she had on a black underskirt, four dresses which were dull print, and dyed burlap sack apron. Can you tell me how they do it? Men dress like a million bucks, when not working, smoke finest of cigarettes, have no furniture, women do all the cooking in a place like that! One dress gets dirty and it is put on first, round and round till all of them get that way.

Upon finding nothing, we go back to the billet to find a call that a flare had gone up three miles west over a train load of gasoline. Planes were overhead, too, but no bombs dropped. The train comes back and away we go. We arrived with three Lewis guns, rifles, and automatics for a very uneventful ride, just a wild goose chase. It is 4:00 a.m., and we're coming back when from both sides of the track came the flares. Captain Munton stopped the train and we sprayed the cane fields good. By daylight the "setter offers" had vamoosed. Between our disappointment and blackjack we got very little sleep that day, and at ten that night, Cott, the radio man of the outfit, called me telling me that Foster was drunk and out of bounds, bothering everyone, and off I went. I picked him up, brought him to the club, saying, "Foster, you can keep your gun, but come on up and go to bed."

“Pea Picker,” he said, “You’re young and a friend of mine, so I think I’ll just shoot you to get you out of the miseries ahead. Yes, life has so many promises, but yet you just can’t seem to reach them. You’re a good guy, and I just hate to think of you being disillusioned. You know in another month from now, if I don’t shoot you, we’ll be prisoners and buddy, I just can’t see that.”

I reasoned with him that if he did that our army would be just two men weaker, and at least we’d have a chance. He lay in the floor, using his gun for a pillow, waking early and slipping out while I’m still asleep. About ten-thirty I get a hurried call from the Filipino Club. I rush over and find Foster and Britt standing and staring at one another. Foster has his gun out, and Britt is afraid to move for Foster hated him, and he knew it.

I broke in with a “Have a nice sleep, Foster? You don’t look very rested.” Foster said, “Pea Picker, you know what a sorry so and so he is. I think that while you are here I’ll kill him. He doesn’t deserve to live.”

I reminded him of his earlier conversation pertaining to the misery of living, and at the same time saying, “Joe, bring out two bottles of beer.” When the beer came, we walked over to a table and sat down, talking about the Filipinos and fellowmen coming from behind upturned tables, and from behind the bar. Every one of them had a sheepish grin. Shortly afterwards, Foster gave me his gun and I left him with about ten bottles of beer set up by the Pinos. About four o’clock I was again called, but by the time I arrived there, Foster had been busted and moved back to camp. Foster proved to be one of the steadier soldiers on the front and in the bush.

During our retreat to Orani, which started December 25, S/Sgt. Dickey was killed when a tug overturned about five miles from the airbase. Traffic was very heavy that night, and we rolled about forty mph with no lights. We were very fortunate that he was the only fatally injured.

Orani was so very different than any place we’d ever been, other than the work and dust. Yes, we lived in a school house; no cots, just blankets and a hard floor, but a sheet iron roof overhead. Our landing field was well camouflaged, a rice field in the center of a cane field. When we had planes coming in, the Pinos ran out, grabbed a shock of rice straw, and away to the sides they would run. Before the dust settled the field was another rice patty. Our planes were well hidden in the mango and bamboo trees. We had seven makeshift machine guns which worked very effectively. They were air cooled .50’s which we’d taken from unrepairable planes and mounted on a frame which was made from narrow gauge railway tracks.

Here the men stayed away from the line worse than ever, for there seemed to be more Nip planes about and the civilians opened more beer parlors for nothing. Yes, for a short while this was a boom town, then one day at eleven o’clock three horizontal Nip bombers came over, dropping their stuff at a bridge which was in the center of town. Jimmy Kincaid can say he’s the luckiest person alive for within twelve feet of him there were several anti-personal and five demolition bombs dropped, only deafening him. 454th Ordinance Company really got hit hard. They were in line for chow at the time and their field ranges were totally destroyed. Sixty-five civilians were killed and four score wounded. We dug them from revetments. Many were buried alive. From one revetment we removed two generations of one family. The only survivor of that family was a nine-year-old boy who was in a machine gun pit with Madison of our squadron. Our gas trucks were destroyed by fire.

A Lt. Wray had been put in command of our squadron. The first morning he stayed on the line, watching our work, helping to eat the dust as the planes came and went, never having much

to say and very calm in a dive-bombing raid. They missed the field so as we resumed our work, Lt. Wray asked for a plane. I rolled out a P-40 which I'd just O.K.ed. He had trouble starting, got a backfire and as the flames began to get longer he became nervous, leaving his throttle open, leaving the gasoline to siphon to the cylinder. I told him in an authoritative manner to energize and engage the starter. He started it and the fire went out. That gave him cause to watch me more closely and later disrate me. He went out on his flight, which lasted an hour or so, and when I flagged him in, checking the bullet marks I found elm leaves in the cooler. I gave him the usual, "How goes it sir," without an answer. After I'd given the ship a daily inspection from the ground, he came from the cockpit saying to the officers who had arrived, "Over near Clark I spotted four Jap zeroes rising to intercept me. I made a pass at them and they separated, knocked one out and the other got under me, trying to scissor me as I came up. Well, I fooled him; I just held my dive and started pulling out just in the tree tops. The Jap crashed and I just made it by the skin of my teeth. The Sgt. said there were leaves in my cooler scoop, aren't there Sgt.?"

"Yes, Sir." He went over big after that until we went into the brush. But that was the Commanding Officer's last flight.

Our field here was down hill and there was only one way to take off and one way to land. Landing planes had to taxi straight into the trees, down hill, cut their engines as soon as they hit. Paulger, a very good friend of mine, was out on a flight, returning just at dark, undershot the crest of the hill by about fifty feet. Coming over the crest he regained flying speed for a short distance and over on his nose he went. There were only a few men on the line, two in a machine gun pit nearby. I called an ambulance and jumped on a tug, the tug will only do about thirty with the governor off, but I got all of it. When I reached the scene, Carson and Flores were trying to pry open the cockpit with their rifles. I used a tire tool, and we had laid Paulger out when the ambulance arrived. He had battery acid, gasoline, and plenty of oil all over him, out cold and bleeding over the forehead. Two other planes which were out were sent to Bataan field for the night. Captain MacFarlan came in from behind the lines in a Beechcraft, civilian job, which had been damaged by the Japs and rebuilt by himself, before we had the wreckage clear. We thought the Japs had pulled a surprise raid on us, but he was on the ground before our gunners could get back to their positions. He gave us a scare and we thought for a few minutes that we'd been caught with our pants down, and it was lucky for him that we had.

Next day the famed Filipino Captain came in in a PT-13 and asked for another ship to go to Bataan field. We had a number of P-40's and I tried to get him to fly one, but no, he wouldn't because our pilots were more experienced in them and he just wanted a P-35. Well, the P-35's weren't in A-1 condition but he insisted, so away he went. An ack-ack battery tried to bring him down, for P-35's were almost the image of the Japs' P-96. We never saw him again until he flew his PT-13 to Corregidor. Next day, Jan. 2, we dispatched our planes for Australia. Mostly 20th pursuit pilots took them. One turned back, two burned, but the other six made it OK, according to information received there.

Lt. Bryant of my squadron was lost for a few days. His plane was hit behind enemy lines, and in the process of opening his chute, he lost his .45 and didn't know what to do. As he was settling, the Filipinos began running and firing toward him. He was really in a quandary, so he removed his hat, pointing to his red hair, trying to keep them from killing him, at least before he hit the ground. Firing ceased immediately and apologies were numerous and very sincere. In fact, so sincere he was bundled among a Filipino's household goods and moved in front of the lines in broad daylight. When he came in two days later we were overjoyed, as the squadron was in the process of moving.

There were five enlisted men and one officer left behind to take care of the planes. Lt. Pagel was in charge and he was so afraid of his shadow he sat in the shade most of the time. In the morning of the 5th two P-40's were flown back to Bataan field safely. About 2:00 a red headed lanky pilot came up for the P-35. After much cussing and cranking, we got him away. Just as he cleared the runway he was shot down by our own ack-ack. By this time the 192nd tank battalion had moved into the trees where our planes had been and 155 howitzers had already rolled past. Our transportation had not yet arrived and we were beginning to wonder if it would ever get there. Miller and I got some chickens and potatoes for supper and Malpass was trying to fry them in a cut-off lard can. The solder would melt, our grease would leak out, and we used almost a five-gallon can of shortening before the chicken was pronounced done. Darkness was settling and small anti-tank guns had been put up all around us, when two of the boys brought up a truck which had been abandoned. It had no low gear, but we got out OK. We drained the gasoline and burned the wreckage of a P-35, an A-27, and that of a P-40. I thought the cavalry unit, what was left of them, would shoot us for firing those planes that night. On the congested road our truck went dead and we salvaged a number of cigarettes, Piedmonts, and a goodly load of type C rations which were in stalled, unoccupied trucks. We picked up a cavalry officer who said that while he was coming down Trail 27 he was crossing the road with his horses, holding up his hand to stop a tank to permit his horses to cross. Hearing an excited jabbering, he looked toward the tank and, what'dye know, it's Japs. They killed most of his horses and Filipinos there.

We left Orani at eight in the evening and arrived at our outfit about five in the morning. What a place, this little Baguio. Troops, troops, you'd never dream that humans could be packed so tight, just like a colony of ants. We were told by our CO that we'd be shipped to Mindanao. But no, for on January 7 the boat which we were supposed to leave on was sunk by dive bombers. Then we were given rifles, and instructions on how to use them were given by Lt. Jennings, our squadron adjutant, an ex line officer. A person should be surprised at what he taught that group in two days. At any rate, we had no idea that in such a short time we'd learn to use them, to protect ourselves from raiding Nip parties and also from starvation.

Every day until 10:30 we had to drill in teams, scouting and such. We really enjoyed playing games. From 10:30 on we were aided in staying in our fox holes, for the Nips would get started on Corregidor and Corregidor flak came down like rain in every respect excepting the fact that it killed the 'Pinos who didn't have brains enough to get under cover. While here we saw a shell burst under a Nip wing, separating it from the rest of the ship. Down it came, like a falling leaf, to explode upon touching the surface of the bay.

Then one morning our CO lined us up for inspection. I was in a front rank doing "present arms". The CO came by and grabbed my rifle, taking it from my hands. He said, "Sgt., do you want that rifle?" "No, Sir, not if you need it that bad, Sir", I answered. Everyone laughed, even me, and the CO rapidly and heatedly reminded us we were at attention and explained that it was a necessary function that we should hold onto our rifle at all times. He then gave us a very disheartening lecture: "You boys are good men. You've not been trained for infantry, but that's what you'll have to do until we can get some relief. I'm well in up at headquarters and I've been told that I must take you either to the front lines or to beach patrol. I accepted the beach patrol on the condition that I pick my part on the map. They okayed this and I've chosen a spot where a hand full of men can stave off a thousand for months. I know this country where we're going and I know you'll like it. We're leaving at seven o'clock tonight, and you shall have to walk a bit before we get there. Pack everything you think you'll need and leave the rest behind. All you'll need is a

rifle, a .45 if you have one, two bandoleers of ammo, and your change of clothes in your knapsack. The mess is cooking any perishable food that might be here, and you are going to be forced to half ration. That's all." We stood there dumbfounded, not at the idea of being shoved into a danger zone, but that half ration deal. He shouted for us to get moving and we loaded every available truck with food and equipment. Much of the food we'd gone into Manila on the 31st of December and brought out. We hated to leave it behind, CO or no CO. We talked to a Philippine Constabulary officer, making a bargain for extra transportation. We gave them three cases of Piedmont cigarettes to haul us to our new assignment.

The CO found out about the arrangement and beat his gums for hours, though now we wished he'd beat his head against a tree somewhere. We were only about two hundred in strength now, and it took eight GMC's, two panbusco buses, and five ton-and-a-half trucks to move us. Among our groceries were one hundred packs of flour. Just think of ten thousand pounds of flour and a truck and trailer of type C. If we'd kept our mouths shut we'd have been able to keep it I guess, but after about three weeks there the QM seized almost everything we had. Never found our cigarettes though. Ha ha.

The CO made a show place of our camp at our expense. Yes, we labored like the dickens for three days cutting a hundred yards square out of that jungle. It was rough, vines, stickers, ants, rough ground where wild hogs had rooted, and to top it off, it was two miles from the beach.

I was given a squad to patrol and install machine guns on Quinian Point, which was on the north side of Agaglalma Bay. One of the most jungle-y places I saw while in the Philippines was here. If you got off the trails, you couldn't see three feet in any direction. The trees were an ungodly size and height; and you'd have thought the vines to be trees, and they were thicker than dog hair. There was a short growth of small bushes, somewhat like haw bushes, that grew about five to seven feet high, and each and every one had a million stickers. The west end was not so bad in undergrowth and had plenty of vines and large trees. You could see perhaps ten yards if you looked very hard.

After we'd been there five days we had a camp fixed with two machine guns in position on our side. It seemed as if we had carried a million sandbags to the "south point" to make an igloo looking affair for a twin .50.

January 22 was a big day for us because the Commanding Officer sent a group of men and one machine gun to the north side of Quinian. Eleven men who were formerly of the photo squadron of which Wray was commander at one time, and four of my men and Lt. Henry had installed a third gun on the very tip of Quinian 34.

That night we were all so tired we just fell asleep anywhere. About three a.m. I was awakened by Carson who in a whisper said, "Pea Picker, they're here. They're coming in."

I thought perhaps the long-awaited convoy¹ was coming in. I was very excited and soon frightened for he said, "The Japs, they're coming in in small boats. Landing just under the gun, laughing, talking, and smoking cigarettes. Not very quiet but I never heard Filipinos talk that way."

¹ The men on Bataan originally hoped that they would be rescued before they were over-run by the Japanese forces. Eventually they realized that no convoy would arrive to take them to safety; they sometimes pretended to believe they would be rescued just to keep up the morale of the Filipinos.

I went out for a looksee and sure enough there, seventy-five feet below me, sat a number of barges. The Japs were really having a good time. We were all of ten minutes trying to get the Commanding Officer, but Cpl. Schmitz said we were only kidding and wouldn't put us through. "O.K. Smitty, I'm opening fire in two minutes, orders or no orders."

We had just finished our second gun position and were trying our vantage points when one of the boys spotted a Philippine army Cpl. coming down the trail. He was a bit frightened. I spoke to him and after he acknowledged the meeting, I asked what his business was this far back in the jungle. He informed me that he had a position farther northward and that it was his duty to patrol this area. Informing him that he was late and that we had already finished our positions, I reminded him that he should phone in, saying that he had contacted us. One of my men was always up to devilment so as soon as the Joe had run about fifty yards, he shouted, "Joe, Joe, do you know whom you've contacted?"

"No, Sir. Who shall I say?"

"Tell them you've contacted the flying infantry," was the answer and the Filipino took out. We had tied on his phone line, and sure enough he called for the commander of the Philippine division on the west side, telling him he'd contacted the flying infantry on his south flank.

I gave each man a moment to think what the best thing to do was, then I gave each one as much ammunition as I could, dividing a case of grenades between two men and said, "Take your positions; three seconds after you get there, throw your grenades; when they go off empty every gun you have. O.K.?"

That was good enough, they were just like me, buck fever and I mean bad. We heard the hand grenades strike a boat, everything got quiet, and below all lights went out. The expectancy of a bursting grenade that never goes off is terrifying. It seems for minutes I waited, then I opened the .50. A wall of flame and a terrible hiss of bullets greeted me from below, and my gun jammed. I fired my .45, and in that roar below me, it sounded like a pop gun. Carson came back and said he was out of ammunition for his Lewis gun. I'm stuck, I said, complete jam and I can't fix it. I called the CP and asked for a new bolt and carrier guide, and any extra ammunition in drums for the Lewis guns, and there was a click in the receiver. The Nips had found that phone wire.

Then the boys across the bay opened up, half their slugs striking our position. The phone dead, and our own men shooting at us didn't make us feel any better, so I offered to make a speedy evacuation. Stripping the bolt and carrier from the gun, we ducked out the trail the back way, shouting to keep the boys on the two rear guns from opening up on us. We were just like four kids when we see our first mad dog or a bear. Getting back to the CP we find everything in a turmoil. Men were rushing here and there, and everyone trying to talk at once. While we were getting the bolt and carrier from the armament section, the CO spotted us and gave us the very devil for coming after our parts. He sent Carson back to the position, accompanied by two other men. John Morel volunteered to go back with them, and he had me install an anti-tank gun at the top of the hill on the road nearest the CP.

By daylight everything was well under control. Half a dozen more guns were stuck in all around the place. It's a wonder some of the guys found their way around after that.

“Pop” Miller took over on the front and scouting expeditions began to go out. John Morel got hit just at daylight. They had broken an ejector spring and needed someone to go after it. He thought he saw a Filipino coming around the trail, shouting at him to stop and to go around to the CP to pick up the spring. The Joe just stood there, then he cut John in half with a tommy gun. John fell back in the pit and the Nip tossed a hand grenade in after him. Carson and the others went over the bluff after firing a few shots.

The next few hours I did some things I never thought of and saw things that made me think of the kiddies Gene Autrey. Lt. Nichols and Knackstead, Campbell, Miller, Getchus, and two other guys went out for an estimate on how many there were landed. The officers took pump shotguns with buck shot. The rest were armed with rifles and we had about a case of hand grenades. We were going down a winding trail in Indian style, as much as possible, when Nick gave the stop and quiet signal. Just before us sat nine Nips, all on a log and to the right here was one just relieving himself. They were laughing and jabbering like a spaghetti and meatball party. Just as the Nip raised up and eased his trousers up around his rump, Nichols let him have it. He almost jumped clear his pants as he went into the jungle. We never got a one for our hand grenades were duds and we hadn't shot our rifles enough yet. They scattered like a bunch of quail and we got a good laugh from the way the big one jumped. We crossed the valley and ran into a rock walled cliff. Just at the bottom there were fourteen of the largest Nips I ever saw. We prepared to toss our grenades in a circle behind the Nips. We figured that by this way, we could get them all. At the signal we tossed and the Nips lay flat. One had the nerve to say, “Aha, you Americana son-of-a-so, you missed me three feet.”

We got seven of that group. By night we figured we had harassed them enough and pulled back to set up some sort of a defense. Everything that night was quiet. A hog came near a gun pit and was disintegrated. We could hear the Nips digging in about thirty yards away, but we were beginning to settle down and take everything for granted. Yes, we even tried to dig some infantry style, but they looked more like hog wallows than anything else. Lt. Jennings and the CO decided that there were only twelve to eighteen Nips up there, but not me. I said two fifty, Carson said five hundred, but none of us knew there were a thousand.

For three days and nights we seventy played hide and seek with the Nips. At first we used all precautions, then it was just another duty, just another rabbit hunt.

One afternoon I was taking a scouting party through the brush, and we were just plain tuckered out. The boys sat down for a rest and stupidly leaned against a hanging vine. One fellow complained about some wasp stinging him on the cheek. Someone looked up and said, “Peapicker, just don't move because if you do...,” and by that time they were gone. I looked up and saw a hornet's nest, and when I moved seven of them got down my neck. That night we went out there, cut it down, rolled it in a shelter half and wrote “Hold, war souvenir, Third Platoon.” Some curious officers and other scared persons investigated it. After that all bags had to have its contents listed.

On the morning of the fourth day reinforcements began to arrive. They were the P.A. Co., a very nice bunch of boys, too. They lost seven flying officers that day. Each American was given a number of the Pinos. Everything went well until just before dusk when the Filipinos started looking for his “companion.” I'd had no sleep for three days and nights and everything seemed to go blank. I came to with the Filipinos grouped around me, and the fire was just as hot as it ever was; one was saying loudly, “Sgt. Peapicker's hit.” I thought perhaps I was for a minute and then decided to go back. I got back to the kitchen and asked for food and water. I'd had only one

canteen of water and no food since the fighting started. The CO came by for coffee and gave me the devil for being in the cook house at this time of day. One of the other six fellows who had been with me told him the situation. I guess he wasn't as angry as the rest of us for we were certainly shoving down that chow.

We were given the anti-tank position about one-half mile down to the rear, and all night long the Filipinos came back from the front. All were in search of the same thing with the same excuse: I am looking for my companion Joe, and I haven't had anything to eat for three days.

We worked in three-hour shifts, using the cards. I drew the four to six with Edwards and Cox. The boys said that they walked me four or five times before they were sure I was awake.

A person would be surprised at what we would talk of on that night and the next few to follow. It was always what a good time we'd had since we'd been in the army or our early childhood days. Most people in civie street would think smutty jokes would have been the topics, but it was many months before I heard one.

My favorite was to talk of some neighbor's kids. One which always went over big was: A cousin of mine was sick and his brother was staying at my home during this time. While there, a hog became sick and died, and we dragged him off with a team of mules. Early one morning my mother was waking us and when she shook my cousin he wanted to know what was wrong. Mom told him his brother had died. "Mrs. Owens, can't they drag him off alone?"

The same kid was visiting us one summer when a young calf had had a cob in his throat. The calf finally died. That winter the kid came over for Christmas, getting a sore throat on the first day. He came in from playing in the creek with the rest of the boys and was unusually excited and crying. Mom wanted to know what was wrong, wouldn't the boys play with him? "Mrs. Owens," he said, "I've got a cob in my throat."

During daylight hours we played cards, casino, seven up, euchre, pitch and rummy. We played so much that we made a password, "rummy," but it was often mispronounced and we were called "dummy."

The first afternoon here we saw a Filipino battalion coming up the road. They hit the dirt suddenly, and we jumped to position, charging our gun. Nothing happened; it seemed that all the brush below us was going to move out. They had been ordered for a practice skirmish, and they looked very convincing! One Joe had an empty tin can, others a match box. When we asked them what they were for they informed us it was to put Jap ears in. They were enthusiastic about it, too, but that night about dark they were looking for their "companion" and they too, had had nothing to eat.

On the third day things were really going rough up there. Nip planes were giving them the devil and men were being brought out by the score. The Nips were getting out of hand and the Twenty-First Pursuit and the 809 Engineers were losing men right and left.

A kid from the 21st was in a Bren gun carrier and a Nip one pounder came through and sheared off a leg. Harringote really caught a lot of shrapnel from that one. Before he finally became well, he had five cases of gangrene and five operations. MacFarland got one in the mouth which knocked the teeth out on the left side. One also entered a full canteen of water and lodged there. Lt. Jennings got two or three through both knees, as he said, "Come boys, let's get him

out.” Paulger got one as he was about to fire at some movement in the brush. It caught him in the right hand, pierced his left lung and lodged in the liver. “Ole Nick” Nichols walked amongst them just as unconcerned as ever, without a tin hat and only a .45. He and Capt. Dyess did more for that line than anyone. They used their brains and brass as well, and never got a scratch. Rumors were thick and hot at all hours, they’ve just about got them out:0 did you hear about the convoy coming in, some P-38’s landed today at Marivelles; we didn’t believe any of them, but frankly they were good to listen to.

One afternoon I’m sitting by the pit in the sparse shade and trying to read a biology book that had found its way there, when I hear a zip, splat, near me. I didn’t move for I recognized that noise, again and again it came. There was so much firing going on up there I couldn’t tell where it was coming from. Then there was another one started on the other side. The first one stopped and there in a tree about 800 yards away was someone moving across a brushless limb, pushing some things in front of him. I jumped into the pit and fired three bursts. The guy keeled over and hung there. Another sniper had got his. There was an argument as to who got him, and the engineering officer won out. For every sniper we got, we got a quart of Hagg & Hagg and a carton of Camels.

That made me nervous and I just wanted another crack at the line. Knackstead came up with five men a few hours later and asked for some men to go up on patrol. I told him to order us and we’d be away for there were three of us not on duty now. He did, and I left the gun with Sgt. Knight in charge. Edwards, Sheppard, Sharp, and I went up there. We knew just about where the line rested on the southwest end, so we go around there. We see a guy and ask where the line is. “It’s right on out there about fifty yards,” was the answer. By now the jungle had been pretty well shot away so the going was good. Before we realized it, a Jap jumped from a fox hole. He never knew what happened, just fell back into it. We had a good laugh because we thought we’d killed a Filipino. We were arguing the point, mentioning the bayonet, camouflage netting and the clothing when there was an “oe-oe” and several Nips began running toward us. We laid a volley in their direction, taking cover behind the Nip foxhole for they were throwing grenades. Others came up from the left and we tossed them a few shots. We figured we got eight of them and we were sure that Edwards got three in the last few moments. A hand grenade landed in between the three of us. Two of them jumped to run, and it was the worst thing they could do for both were hit. Sharp got it through the right hip pocket; and Shepard pulled out saying, “I can’t be of any help.” We left Sharp’s rifle, but retrieved him O.K., me carrying and Edwards shooting. When we go back to the aid station we found everything in an uproar. The line was changed and everyone was trying to find out just what was happening. The Pinos were again looking for their companions, pulling out and leaving the few Americans to their fate.

The Americans shifted south, firing as they went to build up camouflage. The Nips were behind, in front, and all around. Sgt. Lawrence Getchus grouped the few together and over the cliff, through the Nips they went. It was seventy-five feet below, but that was nothing to a group of men who had the Nip horde on their tails. Everything went wild and a summons for help went up from every CP to all gun crews. Edwards and I went up again to find the strained, frightened men coming back. We were informed the Nips were all around and to be careful. We turned to the right, starting down a trail to the 71st Infantry CP. There in the center of the trail was a Nip with a rapid firing machine gun. He was easy, for after he fired a clip he started for the brush on the east side of the trail. We dropped him before he could leap and we saw our first Nip light machine gun. We walked up and down these trails until it was almost dark, carrying the souvenir and never seeing any other Nip or our soldiers.

Upon arrival at our position we were informed that a line had been thrown up on the west and north of the point. Many people stopped to admire our trophy. Then came word that the CO wished to see Edwards. Twenty-five minutes later he called for me, and I'll never forget what he had to say. Upon reporting, he said, "Sgt., did you give this man permission to go up to the line this afternoon?"

I looked at Edwards and I thought he'd seen a ghost, shaking like a leaf and looking at me like a dying dog. I answered a "yes sir," there was no doubt now the CO was after me. He commanded Lt. Henry to take my guns, rifle and automatic pistol. As I was relieved of them he was telling me that I had committed a very bad offense and that I should be punished, telling me that I had let my men endanger their lives and saying that he could charge me with inefficiency. I was terribly hurt. I was mad and as tears came into my eyes I drew my knife from its scabbard, tossing it onto the desk in front of him. I offered, "Captain, what the hell do you expect? We're fighting for keeps now, and I can tell you I think a lot more of my men than I do of you, so how do you figure it?"

He ordered the guards to remove us to camp and that next day we'd do squadron laundry. Edwards was very grateful to me for he knew all I had to say was no. Lt. Knackstead had asked if we wanted to go and he'd be pulled upon the carpet for the chain gang.

We moved back to the camp area and what do you know, people whom I'd not seen since the battle had started were in the hospital. They were no more sick than I was before I was taken into custody. Hewgley, my pride and joy, a fellow who was from my home town, lay in bed with small bubo; Franklin, a guy who was one of the up and coming noncoms in the emergency office, his trouble was diarrhea and slight fever. We learned this was caused from the GI soap he used to wash his mess tins with. There were a flock of them, men who held a good rank and look at them now, cowards to the nth degree. Every time a stray shell whistled over, they hit their holes like rats when the cat comes around. You couldn't smoke that far back at night. Bill Cott was so nervous one guy came back for a relief change on us. Cott jumped from his bunk into his hole and started firing.

Next morning we were herded through our own chow line before what few men who had assembled there and what a humiliated person I was. All that shooting going on up there and me here washing clothes and being told when I could smoke a cigarette. Some of my friends tried to talk to me, finding what it was all about, but no, my guard was another of those "fraidy" boys.

By the next afternoon we had washed a ton of clothes and our backs were about to break. I had talked to Edwards and told him to prefer court martial when the CO called for us. Lt. Nichols, a staunch friend said he was doing everything he could to find out the trouble and to get us back up there in the brush again. All the noncoms who we had been with were after the same thing, all telling us not to worry and to prefer court martial.

On February 3 the CO called us down. He talked to Edwards first, taking him out to one side. By the look on his face I figured everything was O.K. Then Wray called me over. He started out, "Pea Picker, you'll find things never just right. Now that little maneuver of yours was not becoming of a noncom. I guess you thought it was alright, didn't you?"

I acknowledged it.

“Well, Pea Picker, I’ve got to make an example of some one, and I’ve decided it to be you.”

By this time we had stopped fifty feet from the CP and upon a bridge across the river. As he came face to face with me, I asked why should he pick on me. His only reason was I was the first man who had given him an excuse, and I’d make a better Cpl. than a noncom.

“What! From staff to a Cpl. That’s a hell of a bust, Cap’n,” I said.

“Yes, I know it is, but Edwards seemed to think that taking a bust would be easier than taking a court martial,” was his comeback. I began to get mad and lose my reason. “Cap’n, you can give me a court martial. To hell with your bust. I made mine crewing airplanes under another CO, and I’m dammed if you’re getting my stripes for killing some Nips and taking some help along. I think Edwards will go with me all the way, too. You know I could have cleared myself by saying no the evening you got my guns.”

He called Edwards and asked him what he wanted to do.

“I’m sticking with Pea Picker.” We were sent back up the hill.

At three the next morning I thought a convoy had come in for all hell was a-popping. P-40’s were coming over, strafing, other planes were in the air, bombs were falling and these scared critters were dancing around, trying to find a deeper foxhole.

The phone rang and the CO wanted me, very excitedly. He wanted me to go up on the photo pit which was on the north shore of Quinian Point. I reminded him of my state and asked that the charges be dropped. He wouldn’t consider so I rolled back into my sac. Edwards wanted to know what was up. By the time I’d told him, the guard was shaking me again. This time the CO had given me a direct order and I was away. He gave me my .45 and two hundred rounds of .50 ammunition and said get over there as soon as possible. I found my way down those trails some how. Tracers and flares almost blinded me twice as I started up the shore line. The sight beneath me was one of color, a dozen or so barges were lying in the bay, tracers going from them to two shores, flares going up all around the shore line. These flares were trying to decoy the landing parties. Then would be the show. As the roaring planes dived, suddenly it looked as if a coal stove had been upended with all doors open. Those tracers were a bright red and they poured on the barges further in like molten steel into a mould.

When I reached the gun the men were crouched beneath the surface. One frightened fellow had a .45 in his hand. I said, “Don’t shoot, it’s Pea Picker.”

He murmured, “I think I’ve lived long enough.”

I kicked him and shouted, “What the hell’s wrong with this gun?” “Nothing,” was the reply. Knowing that there were plenty of spare parts, I swung the gun around to two barges which were less than 50 yards out. Holding a steady burst, fire came back to meet me, but they checked their speed. Many of them were screaming. We were on an eighty-foot bluff and had the advantage. I used every bit of that, not trying to save the gun. After seven belts of ammunition, the gun began to jam and lead started dripping from the muzzle. The muzzle began to drop like a fly rod when you’ve got a five-pound bass. One barge was sunk and the other one stopped with very little fire. We changed the barrel with gloves on. After melting the second one I slowed down to

about three fifty rounds per minute until the third one had been ruined and no more barges were moving. Some of the Nips had made it ashore and they were easy “pickers” as we called it, in the light of our flares as they tried to scramble up the sides of the cliff. In twenty-five minutes the landing was disrupted. About six hundred got on the adjacent point, eight hundred yards away, but none on Quinian.

When dawn broke there was one barge sitting on her tail end, about fifty yards out. As the waves struck her, her bow dipped shoreward like an ugly finger, seemingly saying, “You got me this time, but you can’t do it always.” It was an eerie thought, but it was very common and none of us weren’t so sure that it was true. The Voice of Freedom said there’d been thirteen thousand in that landing, giving credit to the howitzers for breaking up the party, but as Air corps, we gave the P-40’s credit for it. The bay was littered with bamboo rafts which served a double purpose: a mode of transportation and a ladder. By dark the bays were full of floating Nips. They were dressed in sarongs and tabbies with a piece of cloth tied around their heads.

The CO and Colonel Grover came up about eight, and upon seeing me the CO bristled. I still had my Staff Sgt. chevron on and he addressing me as Cpl. asked how everything went. I informed him O.K., had sunk two large landing barges which were coming in. He asked if the one protruding was one, and I informed him so. He mentioned the fact I used a lot of ammunition for the boys were still tossing brass over the side and the pit was still ankle deep in them. He popped his cork when he saw the three warped barrels lying there. He swore at me and screamed. What he said isn’t fit for any officer to say, let alone to be published. The colonel didn’t like it a bit and said I shouldn’t have burned them up that way, but since I told him there was no choice in the matter he shut up. Then I asked the colonel if it was O.K. for me to stroll around in the brush out to the point. Assuring me that it was, he left, talking the depreciated captain with him. The boys talked about what a heel the captain was, and Becker said he wouldn’t make pimples on a heel’s ass. I thought perhaps they were doing it for my benefit, but soon afterwards I knew better.

I met a group of Filipinos who were just coming up under the command of a major and a seasoned scout Sgt. I talked with the major and found that it was his first trip up there and he wanted some assistance. I offered to help string his men out. He referred me to his first lieutenant and then left. The Lt., Sgt., and I decided to move up and over a small hollow which lay before us. By now the jungle had been mostly shot down. A person standing could be seen just above the debris, but when kneeling or any other position he could not. There was a clearing in front of us about thirty yards wide, so we decided the Sgt. was to take his men through the center; the Lt. and I were to go around either end with ours. At a given signal we started on a run. I have a browning automatic now. I could see the Sgt. and Lt. but no men. The Sgt. got about ten yards from the opposite edge of the clearing and went down, clutching his stomach and leg. I called to my men to recover him, but I guess they had gone to join their companions. There wasn’t a one there. I ran across the opening, firing into the brush from where the Sgt. had been shot, at the same time. I shouldered the Sgt. and started running back to our own lines. Something hit me in the left foot and knocked it up against my right. I sprawled face downward, Sgt. on top of me, and almost out of the clearing and out of breath to boot. As I arose I felt numb around the toes and knee, but the Sgt. didn’t weigh any more. I made the clearing and ran around the trail we had come up. There was Lt. Nichols and the Pino major. I tried to tell them what happened, but I just couldn’t talk. Then Nick asked me where my rifle was. I suppose I lost it where I fell, but I’ll never know for the Sgt. was saying, “Pea Picker, take my rifle, he is a good one and take care of him.” He had brought it out when he came, and what do you know, it was a Garand. The first I’d ever owned and the second I’d ever known. Then Nick said, “Pea Picker, you damn fool, you’re hit.” He scared me. I looked down and saw torn coveralls, and I had no heel on my left shoe. I pulled my

coveralls up and there were two places on my thigh which looked like a cat had clawed me. They weren't sore, just bleeding. I pulled my shoe off and there were two slivers of steel just in my instep. They'd stuck together and hadn't gone to the bone. Boy was I lucky. I wanted to go back after my automatic but no, Nichols took me to the aid station. They tied up my scratches and the major brought Colonel Hilton, the commander of the division, around to say hello. I asked the Colonel if I could go back now. He said, "Pea Picker, you're not hurt much it's true, but I think it better if you helped here in the aid station." Of all jobs I've had, there is none to top the one the medical captain gave me, reading funny papers to the wounded Filipinos. Every one of them thought they'd die and were much more interested in the Bible than funny papers anyhow. I tried to explain this, but the captain wouldn't hear of it. He was called to the CP and just as soon as he turned his back, I picked up the Garand, found a size eleven shoe for my left foot, and away I went. When I got back to the photo pit, I learned I had orders to report to a S/Sgt. who was an archenemy of mine. There was nothing left to do, so I took off for there. It was exactly three and a half miles there and just about dark. I tapped the type C which I'd been given at the aid station, and by the time I reported in, it was dark already, and the Sgt. was beating his gums for another man.

The first thing he did was to inform me that I was still wearing my stripes and that called for a court martial. I was disagreeable from the first and told him to "can it," asked what shift I had, and upon learning it was a double graveyard, rolled in my blanket, disgusted. It really seemed like the whole world was against me.

After I'd been on duty for a while Sgt. Browning lit a cigarette. This almost started a shooting scrape for I immediately informed him to douse that light. All he gave me in return was a bellyache; for every fifteen or twenty minutes, he would ask me what that noise was as some hog or monkey came down the trail, getting a sniff of a strange being, then would go crashing through the brush. Browning was on more of an edge than anyone I've ever seen. He'd come into position shouting, "Shoot him, wake up, they're here."

Next morning the anti-tank pit was dive bombed. Cox was killed, Chandler injured in the leg, and Sharp had his arm blown off. The rest of the men were in the chow line.

Again I was put in the position, almost the same old crew, but with a different man in charge. The boys were the same toward me, always invited me into their yarns, card games and sing songs. That afternoon as the men had gone for chow six dive bombers came over. Garrison was in the pit with me. I said I'd get one of those babies if he'd feed the ammunition. I fired several bursts after they came in range. I saw the bombs coming and fired all the faster. The concussion knocked me out and when I came to I was lying across the barrel of the gun and firing straight into our own sand bags. My hand was hung on the solenoid trip and couldn't free it until the last of three hundred rounds had been fired. We thought perhaps they had bombed the kitchen but learned they dropped their bombs just behind and to the left of us. Observers said I held my tracers in the front Nips canopy. That made my second canopy to knock off and they hung "Trigger Happy" onto the Pea Picker.

I volunteered in the afternoon to direct a relief battalion up where the fighting was going on. They were 803 engineers and 45th scouts. This time we went to a different place. You could see snipers hanging around in the trees above with maggots dropping from them. It stunk like the very devil. You'd be crawling along, blowing the green flies from your face, brushing the maggots from your cheeks, detouring every few feet and finally crawling over bodies which you couldn't go around without having to crawl over another deteriorating body.

Those Nips were really numerous and tough, too. They got Major Jones and his command car and driver. We saw the command car converted into a fox hole, but never saw any one else connected. A Filipino colonel disappeared, and we never found hide nor hair of him. One question every one asked was where are they getting their water? There was no water supply. We captured several parachutes which were dropped, but all there was in them were medical supplies, rice cakes, and ammunition. We never found their water system, but we did catch one in our chow line. He was a runner and could speak Tagalong. He made some remark about the Philippines and pronounced the r instead of l. A Filipino who had been to Japan overheard him, and upon searching found maps and papers in Japanese.

They used firecrackers dropped by snipers and planes for firepower, and it made a very good decoy for a long while. One day a plane dropped his a bit high, and the crackers were spotted. Even seeing them didn't keep one from being nervous when they started popping behind you. At times during the late afternoon and after dark you could hear one say, "Joe! Joe! Are you there?" If you heard that you'd better not say anything, for if you did, there would be a lifeless body where you had been.

Their knee mortars were very deadly though they were only about two inches in diameter. They could drop one in your hip pocket at two hundred yards. They were very persistent, too, firing as many as fifteen or twenty at one target. The last shells never varied more than fifteen feet from the first. They blew a track off one of the 194th tanks. Our men could not recover the tank or get to the men inside for they stormed it immediately, setting fire to it and cremating the occupants alive. Then they filled the tank with dirt and made an excellent foxhole for themselves underneath. They could fire from there and never be suspected.

The dumbest mistake they made was when they landed on Quinian. They dug in, but if they had pushed on there would have been nothing to stop them; just seventy Americans and fifty Filipinos, and none had ever been under infantry fire. Another one was one night after they had seen they couldn't hold out and had barges brought in to take them away. The barges were very close in before we spotted them, and about the same time one on the point lit two lanterns and began waving them. They were immediately understood, lights put out with machine gun fire, and barges sunk with artillery.

On the sixteenth of February most of the Nips were about killed on the point. We were poking around the bodies in the rear trying to separate the allied from the Nip dead. One fellow poked a Pino with a pole and he said in a very weak tone, "At last you've come, Joe." We learned that he had been here since the 27th of January with only one can of food and water which he had taken off the Nips as they were killed in the same foxhole. He was shot in the shoulder and hand, and was covered with maggots just like the dead Nips in the hole with him. Doctors said his were the easiest wounds to dress of any because the maggots kept infection from setting in. I couldn't see the idea; I know I'd hate to be a living fly hatchery.

We saw Nips stacked in heaps, just like cordwood. When they were unable to dispose of them, they began to toss them in heaps, leaving them that way. Their one-pounders were riddled. They looked like they might be a percolator stem. One barrel had one hundred thirty-eight bullet holes in it. They were only about three inches in circumference and three feet long. Behind one of these guns we found eight dead Japs. One had the trigger mechanism in his hand, another the block; all the rest had ammunition and were lying in the same position. All bodies were riddled and looked just like a sack of meat.

In search of maps and papers we discovered everything upon their persons: small Bibles, small English handbooks, mathematical devices, pictures, probably of wives and children or friends. On one we found a "life" photograph of President Roosevelt. I suppose he wanted to know him when he got to the States. In their helmets we found millions in currency and a Jap flag. (We were dumb enough to think the "tabbie" a split toed shoe was sewn on their feet.) Among an officer's stuff we found white shirts, civilian suits, kimono, some of the sweetest smelling perfume most of us have ever seen, and a toilet set we will always long for. We found radio equipment that had never been unpacked; its crate was worm eaten. Cases of rifles were also worm eaten. Now we knew. Yes, they had a cave over the bluff where this stuff had been stored long before when they could fish the waters surrounding the points, storing this war equipment unmolested. It also gave the answer to the disappearance of officers who had entered this area before when hog hunting.

Everything was dry as tinder, the debris was about knee deep, and you were apt to step up to your knees in the belly of a rotting Nip in a brush-covered foxhole. We, the enlisted men, wanted to fire the brush, and get rid of the flies and what few Nips there were still fighting. We were informed it was against the international treaty and any such measures were punishable by death. Every fire which broke out had to be extinguished at all costs, and my, what a terrible one it was. Many men were slaughtered as they grabbed a dampened sack and started forward. There was always another person to replace the fallen Joe; that's why we beat them. They brought tanks in finally and put the twenty first pursuit squadron after them as infantry clean up. Lt. May was the first follower killed, but before he hit the ground, there were a hundred holes in his slayer. He was a well-liked man and you can guess how they missed him.

What a mop up. By ten thirty all the Nips were over the bluff and into the cave. From there we tried everything to get them out; setting up a loud speaker system, but no; pouring burning gasoline in the mouth of the cave then asking them to come out, but no; then we planted fourteen cases of dynamite, but they still wouldn't come out. The concussion still rings in my ears, but it never sealed the cave. A man was let down over the bluff to see if there were any one left alive. He was hauled up, shot to pieces.

A secret landing party was planned for eight the next morning. The boats pulled in and as they did they drew fire from the cave. There were several men hit in the boats. 37-millimeter cannons were fired unmercifully into the mouth and as the boats touched the coral reefs six dive bombers appeared without warning. Many of the landing men were killed, many injured, and almost half of them were pronounced insane. Soon there was no more fire from the cave. Colonel Hilton let out a sigh of relief for he was the third commander of that end. He'd won, but what a loss, estimated at ten thousand casualties, twelve hundred fatalities, about three hundred million rounds of small arms ammunition spent, twelve thousand rounds of artillery. There was nothing else which could be estimated other than eight hundred fifty dead Nips on top, and an un-estimated number in the cave. Colonel Hilton and General King entered the cave but returned shortly, saying it was too dangerous for there were so many mortar shells, mines, and what-have-you lying around. There were three Filipino girls lying in front near the water's edge. Their clothing was stripped from them and they were badly cut up. We couldn't tell whether it was artillery wounds or knife. One of the women was identified by a brother who was in the scouts. She was a civilian nurse. The scout went crazy and ran into the cave screaming bloody murder, only to be blown out by a land mine.

General King immediately ordered the tunnel closed and I was referred to him by Nichols. I set twelve cases of dynamite five feet inside and lit the fuse. When the dust settled, around the mouth of that tunnel there were large slabs of white limestone stacking upward from the sea to the edge of the cliff seventy-five feet above. Colonel Hilton murmured a prayer and so ended one of the bloodiest, toughest bunch of Nips I've ever seen. From the way they battled there we knew that it wouldn't be long if that convoy didn't come in.

About this time our extra food had been seized [by American officers who took over our warehouses and poured fuel over the food stores] and we were given twenty-one pounds of rice, three cans of milk, five pounds of sugar, and two pounds of salt daily. We were given fifty pounds of meat for two days, ten pounds of flour for two days, and we couldn't get gas for our field ranges.

That fight really took it out of us, and burying those bodies was worse yet. Yes, all the glamour was gone now. Just drudgery. We started, doing a good job planting them in what used to be one of the worst jungles yet known, now just a wanton heap filled with the laziest, but yet the buzzardiest green flies you ever saw and odors which cling to you even after hours in salt water. As time went on they were so decomposed we just piled them in heaps, putting splinters and what we could get with them. Afterwards we poured kerosene over them and ignited it. What a stench. You could smell it for miles.

There were few awards handed out. Many of us expected something. I for one, for I had been recommended by the major and Lt. Nichols. We expected Nichols to get a soldier's medal, but instead he got sent to Guay Bay which was about five miles from our area, and that's a long way to walk for chow twice a day, for that's all we were getting.

Captain Wray, who had been promoted when the fighting had started, recommended himself a silver star for Lawrence's preserving some men that day when everything went haywire. He was in the CP at the time this took place. He also asked for a Distinguished Service Cross in straightening things out when that landing took place. Captain Shapario recommended his medical staff for what they did in bringing wounded men out. The CO stopped that in his tent. Everyone expected "Pop" Miller to make warrant officer for he was in the thick of it from the start, and one of the best men there as far as the rest of the men were concerned. It was a disheartening blow when Pop Reynolds got it instead. He was our first sergeant and a gripey old cuss at that. Later one of the boys from the office got kicked out and told what happened and what was happening in the official line. The CO had a "clique" which wouldn't quit. These men got first priority on everything including food and work. The noncoms and officers who were my friends kicked up such a stink about my having been knocked off that the CO attempted to arrange two-thirds of the squadron for a court martial after the fighting was over, but when he found he couldn't do it I was made back to Sergeant.

Things were not going too well for us for the CO ordered that pilots were to take it easy and eat all the food they needed to keep in flying trim. That took about half our meat and all milk and sugar. It shocked some of the officers so badly that they went through the chow line with the men.

By now many men were coming down with malaria and dysentery. The rest were starving and digging in at the same time. We made a little Gibraltar up that coast line and it was dangerous for even the lizards to be crawling around after dark. We would work in shifts on my position, each one work half a day, the rest hunt hogs, chickens, and lizards. Then at noon we would

“swappie-change.” We did all right until the hogs ran out, and then we started on monkeys and pigeons. Here my Garand came in handy.

I made friends with the Filipinos who were stationed adjacent and our boys really did all right. There were twelve of us on “Aggie”, a three-inch fifty caliber naval rifle and positions surrounding there. Those Pinos were the beat chiselers you ever saw, but they had no cigarettes. I had a barracks bag full and seldom smoked. One afternoon I found half of them gone and had my suspicions as to who took them. I shouldered the cigarettes and took them to the Sgt. in charge of the Filipinos, saying, “Joe, here are some cigarettes. You boys have been a lot of help to me and I want you to smoke all you want; don’t give any away and I’ll know where to get a butt when I want it.”

The Joe was so thankful that my entire group had a tin of condensed milk or fish every day, besides sugar and other food his boys went behind the lines and brought back. One night he lost five men back there and he just barely got enough food back for a week. He was in a quandary as to what to do and I asked if he liked fresh fish. He was overjoyed, thinking I had plenty of them. I forged an engineering officer’s name to a requisition slip and got twelve cases of dynamite from the ordinance depot. Not once but several times and I got plenty of fish. We would take a Nip landing barge and paddle well out in the bay with three sticks of dynamite dangling over the sides on bamboo poles. We’d see a school of fish coming by and touch the battery with the wires. After about three shots we’d have plenty of fish for three meals and some to spare. We always split 50-50. I used the dynamite; his boys did the retrieving and cooking. Very soon every Filipino on the west side knew me and respected me as a person of ways and means. I say respected me because one day two privates began fighting over three fish I’d given them. There were enough for four or five people, and I thought they were of the same platoon. When I realized I’d made a mistake, one fellow pulled a knife and I knocked him out cold, pushed and slapped the other one around and made him pour his water on the other. When he came to I said, “You boys make an even division of those fish and don’t ever quibble about such as that again. If you do, and I find out, I’ll shoot both of you.” They were the best guys you ever saw after that. They even washed my clothes for me without soap, and that is the hardest thing you could get one to do.

One afternoon I decided to go hog hunting. Calling to the Filipinos for a guide, I was very disappointed because five of them wanted to go. My own men had told me there were no hogs. The neighboring Filipinos insisted that there were. All of them claimed to know just exactly where to go, but listening to reason I decided if they all knew where to go, why couldn’t they kill one. Finally I asked them to cut the cards, low man to go. A tall awkward kid won out. He took me into the jungle about one hundred yards without stopping to listen or anything, just crash, bang, and any other way. Suddenly he stopped, whispering excitedly that there were many hogs about. I couldn’t see a one, no matter how hard I looked. All I could see was brush and those ever-buzzing mosquitoes dive bombing my nose. I almost laughed at him. He told me to crawl quietly northwest and he’d go due west. I thought perhaps it was a ruse, but I began crawling and had no more than started when I heard something which sounded like an elephant coming toward me. I kicked off my safety and what do you know! I jumped to my feet and started running back. It looked like an oversized alligator charging me. There were so many vines around me that I couldn’t get untangled to run or bring my rifle to bear either. The Filipino came running waving his bolo, shouting, “Stop heem, Joe, stop heem.”

“Stop him hell, you stop him.” Just before he disappeared into a hole, the Joe got two and a half feet of his black tail with the bolo. He dug the rest of him from a rotten stump. He weighed about twenty pounds and was about five feet in length, his claws were about two inches long. The

Pino informed me this terrifying creature was only an iguana lizard and very good eating. It was my first to see or eat, but fortunately not the last. We went forward about thirty yards and the Joe hit the dirt; I followed suit as he motioned for me to crawl south. I had gone about twenty feet and not being able to see him, but hearing something in the brush directly ahead of me, I thought perhaps I'd veered around to meet him head on until I heard a sniff. I looked right and left for a minute and thought that I saw a stump move. As it moved to the right more, I could see a hog turning broad side to me, just twenty feet away. Buck fever! You have never had what I had that day. I couldn't get my rifle to my shoulder for the longest. I could taste that thing barbecued and yet I was so nervous I couldn't fire. As the hog sauntered toward me his hair bristled and he looked straight at me. And I was as calm as I ever expect to be again. How it happened I'll never know, two shots, and I thought the whole jungle was about to fall on me. I've never heard such crashing noise and I've been in three earthquakes and several sub attacks since.

The hog dropped in its tracks, and three pigs appeared form nowhere, sniffing their mother. I slipped an extra clip form my belt and fired three shots. I got one dead center, broke another's leg. I heard the Joe open up, taking his time. Six shots and everything was quiet, that is except my heart. It still rang in my ears like a bass drum, and I was so happy. I put the other pig out of his misery and the Joe shouted, wondering what I was shooting at. I told him just taking up the slack in my belt and that I'd got one. The Joe came down after about fifteen minutes carrying six pigs, weighing about twenty-five pounds apiece. I thought I was happy, but you should have seen that Joe. He was so excited he had left his lizard and rifle behind. He told me there was a trail about twenty feet back which would take us to camp, and we'd move the lot out to it and make two trips. After we got them to the trail, he fixed me a pole which I could tie them on and carry them back. We'd have to leave the sow, but could take the rest. I started out with four pigs and my rifle. He had the same and the lizard. By the time we got to camp he had six pigs, a lizard, and two rifles. He was so strong and I so weak. He also got there twenty yards and fifteen minutes ahead of me.

That Joe was the man about the camp that night, and I'm sorry I can't remember his name for he talked steadily for two hours after we'd eaten all we ever thought of. He told us of his people in the Basyalian Islands, how they fished, their native customs, etc. It was really very interesting, especially their religion. He said that each year when the society went to the resurrection of the spirit in the mountains, everyone beat everyone else with whips and marked each other with knives, bleeding upon a rock which served as an altar until the thin wounds clotted. They would be considered pure, all their sins would be washed away, and when a person bled to death, he was immediately tossed into a large fire pit so that his spirits would burn with him, not contaminating the other celebrators.

The one thing about him was that he had four deep knife scars on his back and he still wore a catholic emblem. From what I've read they've adopted only part of the Catholic religion and have mixed it with their barbarism.

We had so much meat that we invited all our friends up for some. Filipinos came in droves and very nearly all my squadron showed up during the next few days. I almost burned up my mess kit frying pork chops and pulled most of the buttons off my trousers getting them down the next few days.

The CO heard of this hog roast and investigated it. After he found it was true, he gave us the devil for not putting it in the cook house. I reminded him that I had heard enough about the mess and what he was getting from it not to feed him pork chops. Afterwards Wray let me alone. When he had something to say to me, he said it to the first sergeant. One of the fellows, we'll

probably never know who, shot at him in the timber. I suppose he thought it was me and is still wondering how I missed him for he knew I could hit a fish in the water at fifty yards, a hawk in the sky at five hundred, and a Nip in the water at eight hundred. I had proved it. He never gave me any trouble and he made it a point to have his henchmen around when I'd show up. One afternoon as I came up for treatment, he spotted me as I rounded the bend. He ran over to the radio and supply shop looking for Hewgley. Hewgley said Wray said he had some papers in his hand for promotions, but when he handed them to Bill they proved to be toilet tissue which had been placed there for issue. Hewgley said he had eaten too much sweetened condensed milk.

After I'd received my treatment I started back to my position through back trails. I came upon a trail which had had a car down it some time before. I don't know why but I just followed the old trail and soon I came upon a trailer with a tarpaulin over it. Before I could investigate some one coughed. There was Wray, Pagel, and Raker coming from the brush on the right side of the trail. I almost broke my neck getting out of sight. I lay behind a fallen log watching them as they lifted the tarp on one corner and slipped out a case of iron rations. They divided it, Wray taking the lions share and back down the trail they went. Raker and Pagel straight to the beach and Wray going back to the CP. I jumped and ran toward that trailer like a dog who had found a new bone, shaking like a wet baby who had been left too long. I lifted one corner of the tarp. Yes, full, maybe ten cases of chow. How many did I want? I wondered. I soon made up my mind, not taking any and running all the way to the road which led to my position. Previously I did not believe the stories I'd been hearing about the CO and his wolves, but now I did, and they would get little more from there.

It was getting late already and most of the men were there. When I started talking so excitedly, everyone thought I had popped my cork; also, I was wringing wet with sweat. I gave them the details as I'd had it planned, but the only thing I'd overlooked was where we'd put it. Well, we'd get it, then decide where we'd put it. It was still light when we got there; ten of us because I left one man on each position. We got twelve cases and left a large card pinned on the tarp, just over the place where Wray had taken that case out. Just as we got back the OD was making his final rounds. One of the fellows heard us coming, shouting, "You boys should have enough camouflage by now." We dropped our boxes off to the side and grabbed a hand full of brush. The OD sat and talked a while saying we could let the nets go till morning and that the Nips couldn't see our positions in the dark. We thanked him and he soon took his leave, feeling that he had done us a good turn. He did, but not that way, for we were bursting with excitement. We stacked most of our naval ammunition out and filled it with food, replacing some of the ammunition for a blind. That night we ate and tossed one and a half cases of wet and dry rations into the China Sea. We were full, satisfied for once, and soon turned in. Our secret was all over camp next day by mid-afternoon so we decided to divide the chow equally and dispose of it before it was found. We posted a man at the position about half way to the CP. He called us saying everything was O.K. We split the chow, burned the boxes, and called our spotter back in. By the next day there were no more cans in our boys and lucky for us, for a shakedown was called of the entire 89th. They tried to say some Type C had been stolen from the CP. It was an excuse anyway.

On the 15th of March, Hewgley called me saying the CO had had enough trouble with me and had recommended me for Staff just as he had promised me when he broke me. Times were getting rougher and we felt like we needed another "stuffer."² Lt. Markham was new to the squadron; therefore he had no friends away from the men quartered on "Aggie." He'd been to

² ie, a feast

Corregidor and given some naval commander a sob story, getting a case of assorted groceries. He made a five-gallon bale up of Type C rations and the stuff he had gotten from Corregidor. When it was finished we just dug in and stuffed until the stuff started running out of our nostrils. Not our ears, but it would have if such were possible.

Next morning about six, several seaplanes began coming up and down our shore, very close in and not firing a shot. We figured they were ours and that long-awaited convoy had come in. After the third time we saw the rising sun painted on the fuselage. Everyone snapped to positions and when he came in this time we drilled him. He settled to the water seven thousand yards away. That's what the indicator on the gun said any way. We whipped up the shrapnel ammunition and got our range, slammed two shells out, one long and the other home. He sank in a minute. By this time the gun mount which was made of 12 by 12 by 12's was unbalanced, warped and what have you. The gun was ten inches higher on one side than the other. We were a happy crew and hoped we'd get a carton of camels for it, but for some reason it never got past the CP, and we had to be satisfied with Piedmonts which were getting very moldy.

Next afternoon a PT boat started out on patrol early (it got a freighter that night in Subic Bay) and had come as far as our position down the shore line when two Nip dive bombers came across the China sea. The men anchored the boat and ran for shelter. We hung to our guns and waited. The wary Nips came in then just behind the trees, dropped their bombs and headed out to sea. As the bombs hit we sent our tracers following them. The top of the rudder fell off the rear plane, but a Filipino claimed that. We didn't argue because the plane didn't crash.

The field pieces' booms had come closer and every once in a while a Nip 240 would slip overhead. Sounded like a freight train out on the plains on a quiet night. The Nip cruisers began to come closer in every night and in very large numbers. We'd tell the Pinos to keep a good lookout for we were expecting the 100-ship convoy which had been dispatched from the states for the far east about a month earlier. We'd say, "Joe, keep a good lookout tonight for those ships will have plenty of cigarettes and good chow aboard and we want to be there when they come in."

The Joes would wake us up every now and then and say the ships were coming in. We'd check, seeing a couple of extra war wagons out there. We'd tell the Joe that it was a couple of patrol boats going out to guide the ships in. It was terrible to have to lie to them like that, but we had to do something. One night the ships opened up and the shells went over. The Pinos thought we were lying, but we assured them it was our ships checking their range.

Then one day the Filipino sarg came to me and said all Filipinos had been ordered to the front on the east side. He gave me a thousand pesos in notes and asked me to come to see him when I could. He told me that Pea Picker would be long remembered by Filipinos in that quarter.

Next morning, April 9, at seven forty-five a.m. we were given orders to blow up our guns, destroy our ammunition and keep what we could carry for we might (slim possibility) have a long walk ahead of us. We were broken in spirit and very glad the Filipinos were not there any longer. I hate to be caught in a lie, but their absence didn't help our conscience very much. We filled "Aggie" with dynamite, damp leaves and sand, stuffed her swab in her muzzle, tied a rope to her trigger and got in a foxhole fifty yards away. With a yank on the rope, I turned a lovely piece into a twisted, warped heap of junk. It blew her breech off, split the barrel about fifteen inches and knocked swells into her that made the fellows laugh.

I stripped down to a blanket roll and musette bag after all machine guns and ammunition had been destroyed and found my way to the next position in time to watch a six million candle power search light unit ignited and pushed over the cliff. Lt. Nichols was burned badly and after Jensen violet had been applied he laughed, "I'm a blue baby now. Them damn Japs have got me and I'm blue."

Bill Williamson, Chester Hag, "Slugger" Wilson and I talked about our money, cameras, and what not we had to take back to the States. We took a case of paraffin, poured gasoline over it and set it afire; while the fire was burning we filled the can with what we had, placing a note with it to our folks, in case we didn't get back. It was to be delivered by the one who did get back to our people. Then we poured the can full of paraffin, put it in a straddle trench, poured paraffin over it this time to keep it from rusting and buried it there. After hiding all signs we went to the main CP where everyone was standing around, waiting to be called in. We waited until ten o'clock and not having received any orders the CO sent after some chow. The truck was seized by the Nips, so we had a long wait. We burned our supply shed, buried countless numbers of Nip rifles, sabers, pistols, and money which had been taken during our Aglaloma campaign. Our radio set was still operating, so we heard the terms of surrender. We were to stay where we were until we were moved by the Nips. We were to do anything they said and we were to be treated not as prisoners, but only as captives. We were to carry a white flag and wear a white arm band, otherwise we'd be searched.

Next day we'd had no food and no orders. The noncoms decided we'd move out and to the main road, which was nine kilometers away. The day before we thought we'd been shaken by another earthquake, but learned that it was a boat load of bombs going off when we got to Marivelles. There was another terrific explosion which proved to be the ordinance dump.

Some rode and some walked to the cutoff. Captain Wray took Hewgley as a driver for his Buick, which was supposed to have been turned in three months before, and four officers, Henry, Gaskell, Pagel, and I don't remember the other officer. He said, "See you boys at the main road."

We, the entire squadron, got there about three in the afternoon. We were told to sit down and take it easy. We sat down but couldn't take it easy for the Filipinos would come over, offer a can of milk or Type C for fifty bucks. I still had a thousand so I bought a couple of tins. Then many Pinos started coming directly to me. I thought something fishy so I bought a third can, this time watching the guy. He ran across the road, darted into a revetment and out again. In less than a minute I was sitting on top of the world I thought for just in front of me were cases of chow, but as I began setting them out I thought I was in hell for the horde of Pinos and all the squadron ran over me. When the scramble was over some one else found the milk stash and how I would have hated to have been there; two Pinos got their legs broken and one came out with a broken arm.

The chow was given out supposedly "as much as you can eat" but some of the boys began filling their knapsacks. Wray offered to haul six cases to Manila for us. I objected but I was told I was just prejudiced. Well, perhaps I was, but he had a car full of chow before he started loading that, and, too, he had the squadron fund and mess fund which was well over twelve thousand dollars in bills and checks.

He had his gut full by four-thirty and he called his party together for a departure in five minutes. He called to the squadron, "See you in Manila," and snarling at me said, "well, Pea Picker, see you in hell." Laughing at his own joke (he would), as the car vanished around the corner. How little he knew that the next time we met we'd be so close to hell.

As many of the boys as could loaded into trucks and waited for the Nips coming down the road. They looked us over for arms and bid us in their bright English, "How do you feel now." That cooked my goose forever against them. They said, "Hoping you boys have a good trip and we're so sorry we cannot furnish you transportation, though only because you burned your trucks." They never told us where to go or how to get there, just to go.

We took out, Mortimer and Foster walking in front with me. Braw was also foot-back. We made cracks about Braw's foolishness when the planes took off for Australia. Always putting emphasis on the part where the Nip bombers were overhead and Braw would jump out of his foxhole and shout "Roll 'em out" and look up at the bombers, jumping back in and crying "roll 'em out boys, let's get 'em." He couldn't get away from the foxhole himself, but he wanted the planes away.

Then Foster broke out with "Boys, I've got a feeling that we've got a long hard road ahead of us. Pea Picker, remember what I said? I wished I'd been just a little drunker and bumped both us off. Well, the bastards can't treat us much worse than we've been already. You know what would sort of end some of this pain (He's full now). Well, if we had enough whiskey to get drunk on and stay that way 'til MacArthur gets back." He is a southerner and he'd been gassed before. His pronunciation and expression relieved the pressure for the moment.

Mortimer, also a southern accenter, said, "Well, boys, I'm afraid they'll find what kind of a bastard Mac is before he has time to start back, let alone get here. Now, if they just had some planes over here before this happened we'd be O.K. But they didn't, so what the hell did they expect. If we ever get out of this alive them Japs will have to have better food for us than we had in our own army. Perhaps they won't be too rough and make us work too hard. What do you reckon they'll have us doing?"

I said they would have us shining boats, driving trucks and probably building airfields. I was met by much argument for both Foster and Mortimer were old timers and they said it was against international law to work PW's on a military reservation. Trying to take up my end of the conversation I said that if the people would have listened to President Roosevelt in '36 this would never have happened. Foster brought forth the fact that if the dog hadn't stopped he'd caught the rabbit, too. All I could say was, "And when I return I shall bring hundreds of planes and thousands of men." But he didn't say how long he would be getting back."

Leave it to Foster to say, "Well this is life I guess. Boy, I'll bet many a mother in the States is sad tonight." We soon shut him up for we were all thinking the same thing and such thoughts since the surrender had already become sacred and not to be said aloud. Naturally we wanted to talk about things, but we just couldn't bear it for each one thought his was the worst case.

Lt. Markham had decided to bring us through and was walking with us. He started singing songs such as "You Are My Sunshine" and "I Only Want a Buddy." Everyone chimed in (all 40 of us) and by sundown we were about twelve miles down the road, resting, out of breath before we knew it.

After we had a short breather, we assembled and began marching toward our destiny in growing darkness. I spied a small pot by the side of the road which I thought might be good to cook some rice in if we ever got far enough to get any. As I picked it up, someone said the Japs were in the road in front of us. My heart went where everyone else's did this time. No gun, no

protection, just me and my baggage. Most of us had flash lights. We turned them on, careful not to shine them into the eyes of our captors or not to shine them so those eyes of Corregidor could pick them up. The first thing the small, dried up, short haired devil took from me was my flash light. Then he felt my bags, inspected a medical kit which I had picked up. He okayed me and I thought I was through, but how little I knew. Before I had gone three feet further I had seen two Filipinos heads cut from their shoulders with bayonets. They had some Nip currency on them, and I began to hope I'd thrown all of mine in the fire. One Nip would jostle me around, throw my bags on the ground, motioning for me to open it. Before I could get it unwound other Nips were piling stuff into it which they had removed from other PW's. In about an hour I'd advanced twenty yards and had been searched fifty times or more. Now I only had the medical kit and a blanket roll. One Nip didn't like it because I didn't work fast enough to show it to him. He knocked a guy down with it, laughing his head off, and then he tossed it into the weeds.

One short bastard tried to put the pail over my head, when it wouldn't fit, he pulled his bayonet. I thought it was my end, and I reached for the pail. I would put it on any how. He merely widened the sides by splitting it. It fitted nicely and I was shoved along with the pail serving as a new tin hat and all the Nips laughing at me, trying to put it on better by hitting it on the top. One liked my looks so well that he pulled me out of the column and sat me on the hood of a bus. All his comrades gathered around, grinning sheepishly. One offered a bottle of beer. I didn't feel like it, for I was afraid my tin hat would fall off. Trying to refuse it, I waved my hand to my mouth, palm outward. In my excitement my thumb, instead of going in my mouth, went to my nose. The Nips roared then, patting the originator on the back and having a good time. After they tired of me, I was put on the road, my tin hat on my head, my thumb to my nose with fingers out-stretched in a vertical position.

These Nips loaded me with food and cigarettes so I could hardly walk. One grabbed me by the seat of the pants and the nape of the neck and down the road we went. I made about one hundred yards in about three minutes, all Nips roaring with laughter. But as soon as that Nip turned loose of me about forty of them covered me up, taking all food from me. One grabbed my hat, others tried to get it but he won out. They got almost as much laughter out of him as me. No one bothered me for another twenty-one yards. They wanted to see what the excitement was about and didn't even notice me. I was about to go around a corner when an officer came down the hill. He shouted something. I don't know what it was, but later I figured it was attention. I just kept watching until he told a Nip to do something. Three of them jumped for a Filipino and me. We were stood upright, holding my baggage and wondering what next. The Nip sat me down in the center of the road, standing on either side of me and the traffic. Two convoys came through and there I sat, in the middle of the road with nothing between them and me but a Nip guard and I just didn't have much confidence in his stopping one of those speeding trucks. After a while the General came back and the guards forced me to follow him up the hill about twenty yards. He dismissed his guards and sat me at a table where he served me tea and a soft sweet dish. I had eaten very much this afternoon, but this chow tasted very good. I ate very rapidly. After tea he offered me cigarettes which were taken from a supply dump a few miles back.

He asked me questions, telling me that he wanted a definite answer. I assured him I should not answer any questions of military importance. He asked what we Americans thought of the Japanese. I told him that in the States people thought them to be a group of little nobodies and a source of cheap labor. Very little intelligence, short eyesight, and lacking in business principles, however some had made good respectable citizens. I added that we thought them the same until we came in contact with their foot army.

He was very inquisitive as to where I came in contact with them. I told him on the front line. He asked where I received my training and my answer was in the States. He questioned me the number of Americans there were on Bataan and I answered possibly five thousand. He was terribly surprised, saying I must be wrong or lying because we could not have possibly held out that long. He asked when I thought we would surrender or if I thought we would at all. I told him we expected it by the first of February, but his forces had let up. He asked then if I'd seen many Japanese die and I told him I'd seen so many die that I thought we were killing their ghosts. They fell in heaps of ten to twenty before the Pino guns at the extreme base of Zombales. He gathered from this that I was in that area for he asked if I were fatigued. He had some trouble in making me understand the word. I thought he was asking if I'd "shot a pig." He said "fotiteeg." Assuring him I had I asked if I might trouble him with a few questions which might be helpful to make a model prisoner. Upon his acceptance I asked if we should be governed by international law. He smiled saying, "Very few Japanese people know there is such law, and I can now say you are a captive and not a prisoner of war. You'll be governed by Japanese law and I think (very slowly and softly) you'll find it very, very hard to your gentle way of living. You must salute every Nipponese you see, for our one-star Nipponese private now out ranks your highest officer, his code of ethics will be different from mine as you'll see before many more days. Do you have any more questions?"

I asked him if we were going to Manila and would we feed enroute. His answer was yes and no, that we were routed to Manila, but he thought perhaps we'd enjoy the surroundings very much there and there was another place near Clark Field that we might go. Then he told me how foolish the Americans were for destroying the vehicles we used against them, how we opened our storehouses in Manila to civilians and he gave a "maybe" meal at Linary, but until then and from there we'd be on our own and on finding me interested in what we'd do after we got in camp, he told me that we'd do orderly for our officers. You know they are gentlemen by order of Congress, (he laughed at his own wit here) and orderlies of the captor, God made them gentlemen you know, and perhaps you'll do what ever they should tell you. You know you ruined very many roads between here and Balanga." Closing the interview, he bade me goodbye with two cartons of camels and a half case of Type C, GI rations. He summoned his orderlies and said "walkaway" it sounded like. They bowed and I saluted. They led me to the road and pointed south.

The moon had risen by this time and I was overjoyed to have been in the presence of an English-speaking Jap general for it wasn't every day a doggie had this happen, and, too, there were only five trucks before me and hardly any Japs. One of them called me. I rushed by him but another one stepped from the next truck to stop me, but then another in the last truck stuck a Buck Rodgers looking gun at me and I turned from the grasp of one to run to the other. I left my musette bag with him. I didn't feel so good. Good cigarettes and good chow had just gone to the dogs who only had two legs. I looked to my right and left, I was alone in this world now I knew, and I was glad for I never prayed a real prayer before, but I let out a good one then I thought as I walked down that road. I enjoyed it so much that I didn't see Kocis or Haag as I came around the corner. They were waiting for the rest of the gang and they heard me talking. Kocis said something and I answered then. He asked me if I were beating my gums to myself about "them damn slope headed bastards too." All I could say was that they gave me the works. Finally, Lt. Markham and a few more of the boys came through, telling stories of bloodshed and roughness by the hands of the Nips. It was now eleven o'clock, according to a watch which had been tossed into my blanket roll and I had stuck into the roll of tape I had in the medical kit.

Markham decided that we'd be the last ones through and we should go into Marivelles. We walked about five hundred yards and around the hills. There we found a number of trucks stopped. Most of the boys were in them who left us earlier in the evening. Another truck pulled up behind

empty so we crawled aboard. We were tired of walking anyway. Though Marivelles was only two miles, the trucks began to move forward. As they did, we saw what was holding things up. Another shake down! Before the Nips got to our truck we were loaded to capacity. There wasn't an inch of standing room left. Both Nips were drunk and looking for whiskey. Of all things at a time like this, we thought, though we appreciated the brand he was looking for, but he could only say Hog and Hog. We thought he was looking for meat at first.

Before we had finished our two-mile ride, we'd been through the Marivelles cut off. There were a number of the little squat devils standing around with fixed bayonets, shouting orders, directing traffic, strutting like a turkey gobbler in the spring, slugging who ever they could reach with their rifles. There were several bodies lying under foot midst the dust and tin cans, rubbish which they had left to be tramped under. Their efficiency as traffic directors was excellent only because of the artistic way they flourished the bayonet. Little I knew how easy anything was to do when one of them took the bayonet to you.

We were driven on out to Marivelles, fixed for the night, unmolested further, but once there we were not allowed to get down from the truck to relieve ourselves or smoke a cigarette. I was in a bad way for so much rich food which I had consumed such a few hours before was bound to come out in a liquid form. Finally I figured a faint, fell out of the truck. The sentry became excited and poured water over me. I hadn't had any water in about six or eight hours and my mouth was dry. I began trying to drink the water without moving. I almost drowned and got very little down. I motioned that I must go to the latrine. He pointed to the ground five feet away from the vehicle. By the time my trousers were down the ground was covered by men who were in my same state and the Nip had his rifle by the barrel and using it to knocking the men around.

At eight next morning we were told to go back to the Marivelles cut off and we should remain there until we were told to move. Every small pond along the road was well padded down by men trying to get drinking water. It was more mud than water, but yet it was wet.

We went into a barbed wire enclosure which had once been a farm and carabao pen, with no latrine or drinking water facilities. There were about twelve thousand people here already and profiteering was in full swing, only tobacco and foodstuffs going. Lt. Markham had come through much more fortunate than many of us. He had a bag of chow. He led us as a squadron off in a cleaner corner of the area and organized us as a group of laborers and he was to be the "bull" of the gang. Then he asked if there was anyone who did not want to share with the rest of the gang. Chattel, Tweed, Britt, and Browning were the only ones who walked away when the count was taken. About this time Lt. Nichols came up in his Jenson Violet disguise, pale under the cheeks and dark under the eyes, but yet laughing. Telling of the organization and that he was invited to join, he accepted by saying, "I have a bag of chow and almost everything else for them bastards were afraid to touch me, they would say "Be okay" and I'd say, "Hell now, I'm a Texan from Dallas" and they'd say 'paralysis same as Roosevelt' and they'd steer almost two hundred yards clear, then it'd be to do all over again."

He asked me to get Gaskel in. He wasn't as liked as Nich though and he was almost knocked out when Markham said, "Does anyone want a cigarette?" Half the outfit wanted one, but he merely took two cartons of cigarettes from Gaskel and passed them around. Only one cigarette came back in a package, but when he asked Gaskel if he wanted anything, his wish was for a bed or a place to sleep. Someone popped a bedroll to Gaskel and he was well in. He said, "My bag is full of chow, and don't wake me when dinner is ready." Wray and Pagel came up then. They were treated indecently and for the first time I felt sorry for him. The Nips had taken his car,

driver, and food and made him walk. He was tired, hungry, and would like to have a drink. Before I realized it, my hand was on my canteen. He looked at me like a hurt dog saying, "This is it. Yes, just where I said I would meet you." He was run away after he was given two cans of food and a half cup of water. He said he had some cigarettes and money if we'd see him though, but everyone remembered those days just behind us and that old saying, "once a traitor always a traitor" passed many lips. He then said Markham could be tried, shot for such a degrading act, and he was informed by many that he'd have to get back first.

After Wray left we talked of international law. The general idea was a life of ease the men were looking forward to when we reached main camp. I took the floor then telling them of my episode with the general the night before, giving his answers to them just as he had given them to me. This spiked many rumors which had sprung up and made the boys feel as though the world was at an end. All day Nips rode horses through the crowded area, finally one officer came for Markham, complimented him on the way he handled the men and how clean his are was. Markham saluted him as he departed, and again Markham brought up the point of cleanliness. We had dug straddle trenches with bent iron straps nailed onto a board. We used our mess tin lids as shovels. Our cook pot was a fifty-gallon drum cut in half with a piece of broken axe we had found here. We used this for boiling our water, too, and sometimes our water had a slightly soupy taste.

The next morning Markham was taken away on a truck, headed toward Manila. No one had strong enough personality to control the fear-crazed group other than Nichols, who became very sick. The men began fighting among themselves, stealing one another's food, packs, anything, and lastly they began to drink un-boiled water. On the third day this was a sorry mess. People wouldn't go to the latrine, just squat where they stood and the flies had become so plentiful you'd thought it was a group of bees in a sweet clover field. Diarrhea sprang out and became worse. You were afraid to go to sleep, afraid someone would use you for a straddle trench.

After our fifth meal (two meals a day) we were stripped of everything except our clothes, shoes, mess gear and set upon the road. The traffic was heavy, roads dusty but still a relief to be away from that stinking place. We crossed the Marivelles airfield again, this time we picked up a few guards who would direct us through the military zone. They made us carry their rifles, water bottles, and mess kits. They walked us about one hundred thirty steps per minute and when we began to lag behind, they would beat us with their rifles. Some of the weaker ones were knocked down and before they could arise they were bayoneted through and through and then shot. They lay in the road to be trampled into the dust. Many a time I stumbled over such a body in daylight as well as darkness.

Our canteens were dry, no water was to be had though it came gushing from pipes by the side of the road. We were about eight thousand in column (of Americans) when we started out, but the steady grind, the hacking bayonets, and the hunger and thirst rapidly cut our members down. We were marched all day and night without a break and all we could think of was the clear cool water we saw sparkling as it flowed by the side of the road. We were given our first break at Cabcaban, allowing us to rest there until gun batteries began to open up all around us. They were firing upon Corregador. By the time we had been moved a shell landed in our midst blowing a number of PW's to eternity. A Sgt. on my right had been killed by a two-pound slug of shrapnel. It went through his body and broke a medical officer's leg below the knee. He made it to O'Donnell some how and I've never seen him since. Many a salvo went over our heads, we couldn't duck those for every time we tried, the guards fired upon us. We witnessed three gun batteries blown up and were showered many times by bursting ack ack which was after a balloon which the Nips were using for observation.

Before nightfall we were in Balanga. We were told we'd spend the night there. We were able to get water from a stagnant river which lay behind the camp. About ten o'clock the Nips came into camp and began beating us, running us around as though we might be cattle. We didn't know what they wanted. We'd line up on the road, they'd run at us and we'd run, jump over the fence, be down in the dirt. They would run at us again. Then finally one Nip caught me, after about three laps around the fence, took my canteen and sniffed it. He pointed toward the river and poured the water out, shaking his head that the water was no good and motioning for me to tell the men not to drink the water. I shouted the order at the top of my voice, and there was many a person's canteen turned up until the precious liquid was absorbed by the dust, and believe me, we watched that water as it became no longer water, but mud as though it were the last drop of water in the world.

So still and quiet, so tragic, stillness disturbed only the rattling of the chain on an empty canteen, a delirious cry of a man gone mad, and by the blood rushing through our own ears. The quietness lasted all of five minutes, but it seemed ages before there was a frightened stampeding herd. The Nip walked over to one guy who showed bulky in the moon light. He took the guy's canteen, smelled its contents, then his voice became really low. There was a surprised cry as the fellow was bayoneted, the rifle shot that followed sounded like a cannon and converted us into a frightened, trembling mob. Shot after shot rang out, many men met their fate because they would not give over that precious liquid.

We were soon assembled and once again on that long, cruel march. It was a perfect setting, no noise other than the tramp of thousands of feet and the breathing of weary men, the moon was full and almost red. Now I still shudder every time I see a dusty moon. We stopped somewhere next morning in a bare rice field which had grown up with weeds since there were no people to take care of it. The sun had just risen and the Nips were cooking breakfast. Boy that rice and stew really smelled good, and when they threw away about twenty gallons of it before our eyes, a number of men fainted. Colon Allan for one. We were dying for water and only the men who had passed out were given any. Soon there were many fake pass outs and all water was stopped. There was an interpreter who separated us. Air corps one way, and the other corps another way then noncoms, privates, and officers were segregated. When someone got in the wrong group he cursed us in our own language because he had been to UCLA.

We were very submissive by now and thought it all in a day's work. By four that afternoon we were on the move and my eyes were swelling, throat parched and my stomach was grating my backbone every step I took. I became desperate. I grabbed a guard's hand, pointing at a nice bubbling stream and motioned toward my mouth. I couldn't talk. He shook his head and pointed to a village which was three miles away. I clung to that hand like it was the last straw until he neared the village, and he slapped me away. There were a group of guards sitting on the first porch and there by the side of the road hung a large water bag which I recognized as a lister bag of the US Army. He shouted something at the guards. They ran out, slapped my face and as I turned away, grabbed my cup from me, replacing it with a cup of ice water. I tried to smile back but I suppose I frowned for then they began to throw water at the group, tossing it wildly into the air, watching upturned faces trying to capture it with only half opened mouths. I put the cup to my lips, and how cool I thought, how nice; then I swallowed some. The cup of water disappeared down my throat like it might be a dusty road. I never spilled one drop and then I got a cramp in my stomach. My mouth was again as dry as ever. Many envying eyes looked toward me and my misery, but no one said anything. There was a sudden rush forward and to the side of the road; then to the other side of the road. Yes! Water at last. The Nips cheered the rushing, pushing,

fighting horde on. Those three pipes were surrounded immediately, and I spotted one further down where three Nips sat washing their evening chow buckets. I ran for all I was worth for the hydrant. I could hear the pack coming behind me and the Nips' bucket which was under was full. I darted in, grabbed the pail and ran to one side, away from the spot. The Nips were caught in the rush, one was trampled in the mud, while many PW's were trampled as well. Some fellows saw me with the three gallons of water and I waved them on, drinking as fast as I could with my canteen shoved to the bottom. I drank three pints of water with out drawing more than that many breaths, filled my cup and there was the Nip for the bucket. The PW's pushed in to get what water was in it, never noticing the club he was swinging. There was a pile up and the bucket gave way. I got out of there as fast as possible and sat by the side of the road, sipping the water. A Nip walked from the roaring group, grabbing a hand full of horse manure and tossed it into my cup. I came to my feet, tossed the water and the horse manure into his face. I figured this was the end, but the roar of the Nips laughter behind increased and as the soldier drew his bayonet, several rushed out, grabbed him, refilled my cup with tea and gave me a cigarette. I sat back down and became suddenly sick.

I spewed (it seemed) three gallons of water at a gush, just plain water and some of it still cold. I didn't feel any worse for it though. A Nip rushed into the house and returned with a bag of medicine. He gave me two soda pills and about that time an officer rode up on a starved pony. The soldier jumped from the road, leaving the bag behind.

We were moving out again. A guard saw the bag and made me pick it up. I tried to explain that it wasn't mine, but he struck me in the face with it and I turned into the column, less a hat and with an extra bag. I had a knife in my sock and it had begun to hurt terribly. I looked into the bag to see if I could find some tape to strap it to my leg, but could not. I found some gauze and wrapped the knife, putting it back in my shoe and hobbled along. I remembered seeing a wide piece of cloth in the bag and thought perhaps I could use it for a hat. I tried it on and it worked pretty well. There was Jap writing on one side of the red cross. Soon after a guard spied it and made me pin it on my left arm instead of my head, and "Kit" Carson gave me a handkerchief for a hat. I didn't know what that meant for three years, but it kept me from being searched. The writing was Emergency Medico Di. Nippon. Every time during the rest of the day that anyone fainted, a guard grabbed my arm, led me to the victim. I didn't know what to do the first time so I made out that I couldn't read the labels. There was a large square bottle which the guard handed me. I unscrewed the top and saw a sponge there. I sniffed and it was ammonia. I revived the man and remembered the bottle as I went on. After that when anyone shouted, I grabbed that bottle.

We were rained on the next morning, and what a reviving shower that was. We came through a town which had been burned, Balanco, I believe, and there I saw a nice pool of water standing on a piece of warped sheet iron. I looked behind to see where the guard was. He was far enough anyway, so I darted over, filled my canteen and cup before the rest of the men got there and the guard started shouting. I saw a ten gallon can which had been cut off about five inches from the bottom. I grabbed that because they told us that when we got there we would rest when we got to Orani and Carson had a sack of rice, but no pan to cook it in. I scraped the pan with a lancing knife as we walked. Men began to rush toward a shady spot which would accommodate about half the group for they were told when we got there we would rest. My feet were dragging and I began to get thirsty again. I took two canteen lids of water and as I dropped my eyes back to the road I saw a Filipino crawling from the ditch, holding an empty cup. His voice was almost a coarse whistle as he begged for water. I filled his cup and Carson said, "Peapicker, why prolong his agony? He'll be dead in a little while and you know you need the water."

The Filipino was still looking at me as the guard came up, clubbing me and shoving me on. The detail was getting settled and my pan was almost clean when I saw a hydrant about one hundred yards away. I walked straight up the road until I came directly west of it, then I broke into a run. Some fellows saw me and followed suit. I got there twenty yards ahead and filled my canteen, held my pan under the water until the group got there. Before I could get away the guard began shooting with captured forty-fives and rifles. When the men got back on the road, there were seven dead. For some reason I felt responsible for their deaths. I gave the pan of water, what wasn't spilled in my dash back to the road, to the unfortunate men who had none. There was one old gray-haired civilian in the shade, no hat and perspiration was running down his forehead in three great streams. I squatted beside him with the ammonia. He asked me to leave. I then asked if he wanted water, and he informed me in no uncertain terms that he was ready to die and would not move out when the rest did. By this time the Nips are shouting and the men are walking forward. A sentry shouted at me and when he waved a six gun around his finger, Buck Jones style, I hit the column. He shot the old man twice, leaving him to die crawling around on the ground. In the next fifteen miles I saw seven men killed, for no reason other than they were lagging behind. I saw a Capt. Adams pull off his clothes and jump into a creek to cool off, and then rejoin the column. He walked with his clothes over his shoulder until he came to a house by the side of the road. He calmly said, "This is not where I live, but here's as far as I'm going this time."

He walked as casual as could be, the Nips shouted at him, but he merely thumbed his nose. Three of them shot him, laughing as a pleased expression came over his face, and he tried to crawl under the house. Those Nips, I'd like to call them something else, but it's against my religion, would do plain cold-blooded murder and then laugh about it.

They finally called a halt in the barrio. There happened to be a Filipino farmer here with a load of watermelons. We told the Pino to turn his back and watch the guard. We took all eight melons he had and chipped in ten pesos each. The guard saw us eating them, and came in swinging. We mixed with the crowd who were standing there to get out of his road. One poor devil got a piece of rind from the dung-littered street and was eating it when the Nip saw him. He lived only a few seconds, fortunately the slug broke his back.

When we were given orders to move out, we were slow about lining up. They used their clubs and one fellow was hit over the head. He swore the day song at his assailant. The guard understood English so he struck him with the bayonet. The guy turned to run and the Nip stuck him in the backbone. The fellow turned, helplessly lifted his hands as the Nip shoved his bayonet through his gut, shooting on each jab. God, was I ever glad when that day was over.

We got into Orani about midnight. All water bottles were again empty and the blood was roaring in my ears. I was burning up with fever. We were stuck in the spot where our gas trucks had been burned earlier in the war. A few pieces of tin were lying about, cinders and melted glass were plentiful. We were four hundred in about twenty foot square, packed in like sardines. Then they said, "Sit down, you may go to sleep."

Said it just like you would to a naughty baby. We finally got sat down and before we knew it were sound asleep. My clothes had been sweated in so much that when the sun would dry them out, they would chafe my body and my knees and they began to break in the inseam. Were we ever a foul-smelling bunch!

The Nips kicked us out at six, lined us up in the road, counted us for two hours, then our trek out of Bataan began. I looked Orani over good because I'd heard Hall had been shot down on a mission here. I could really see signs where he had been, too. Sheet iron roofs were perforated. I was exalted and before I knew it we were on that long straight stretch of highway which leads to Gua Gua, San Fernando, and from there maybe Manila, we thought. This morning the sun came up hot and my fever the same. Here I am with no water, in the middle of a million rice paddies, on a long bare highway. We walked and walked, hoping to see some water supply, but there was none, just that along the road in the ditches, and there were too many dead people there to drink it. At last we came to a shade tree on the left side of the road. Two guards called a halt and took shelter there. We went into the paddy on our hands and knees. I drank until I thought I should burst. Most of the men were satisfying their thirst. If you've ever seen a mule drink after he's gone thirsty for a long while, you'll know what we looked like, our faces into the water to our eyes. I saw four snails there, picked them up and sat in the water. I split them with Carson and we ate them raw. His stayed down, but I vomited mine before I got the first one all down. He ate a third. We walked over to an overturned car; he looking for more snails and I for shelter. What we saw made us vomit again. Deteriorating Filipinos with flies all over and maggots crawling out their eyes, ears, and mouths.

We got our water up and I lay down on the road. Carson kept kicking and pulling at me, so afraid that I had given up. The guards today were very nice. They would give a break every mile or so and let us rest fifteen minutes. The only thing wrong was there was no water. Our group of five hundred went on through Lubao. The civilians turning their backs when the guards were looking, infiltrating when they weren't. They had food, cigarettes and brown sugar to sell. Carson had ten pesos which the Japs had overlooked, I had none and was in no mood to take anything from him. We were given a break about this time and I saw a bunch of bananas hanging from a window which was a Jap bunk house. I'm six feet two inches and those bananas were about nine feet away. Perhaps you think I didn't stretch to get them. The only trouble was every time I'd grab one, only one came off. After the third stretch some Nip was short about two dozen bananas. Carson and I cleaned them up and began to eat the peel when he looked across the street and saw a Pino woman in a window. He pointed her out to me. She had a gallon can of sugar. I got the sugar and we filled our pockets, then we filled our stomachs on what was left. The men ahead were getting water at a well which had a pump attached. If you had a bucket you could go through on the separate line so he and I both made a trip. Now our canteens were full and I was sick again. I ate soda tablets like candy and took four quinine tablets. I made a mistake here for my blood was already crowding my ears, but the quinine made it worse. I could not see more than fifty yards in the bright sunlight and we were again on the move. There was an increase in the number of dead men along the road and the number who were falling out. I told Carson if I should fall, just roll me in the ditch and the Nips who were shooting in the rear might miss me. I really thought my goose was cooked. We began to see more and more civilians along the road. The guards permitted them to sell us foodstuff and cigarettes, but they had to keep walking. I spotted one fellow who had worked for me on the airdrome at Orani and told him I was broke, sick and damned hungry. I needed food worst of all. He shouted to two or three Pinos who were loaded with everything and from their baskets we filled our pockets and shirts. Somehow that chow wouldn't stay with me, and I just kept trying, knowing that if I didn't that I'd never get back.

We heard rumors that when we got to Gua Gua we'd be placed on the train and sent away to Manila. This rumor set the pace of from forty to about one hundred per minute. We lost many men from there on and I was almost one of them. We were through Gua Gua by daylight the next day, and we saw some of the most gruesome sights you ever saw. They were shining examples of the Nipponese work. No one else could think of such. There were three dead men set by a water

spigot and two Japanese standing at attention near by. One man had his head removed and set upon a pole, its glossy eyes staring at us, underneath was the inscription, "This is what happens to Filipinos who try to aid the Americans in escaping this march." The second man was leaning to the left, bayoneted probably fifty times and his eyes were bulging, underneath him was the inscription, "This Filipino gave an American some sugar, will you give them sugar?" The third man was an American, half his head was cut away, his hands were tied behind his back and he was stripped to the waist. The inscription underneath him said, "This is what happens to people who try to steal from the Japanese, will you try to steal?" There was a mess kit of rice set there beside him. We could only stare for we knew what would happen if we got a chance at some chow. After we filled our canteens we began to move away from such gay scenery. The Nips laughed at us for being white around the gills.

Before we got into San Fernando late that afternoon we saw few Filipinos who would sell anything to us, let alone give anything to us. Those guards were fresh (we changed about every eight miles) and just delighted in making us hike. I remember very little of the walk from Gua Gua because I was chilling and a Nip thought me more frightened than I really was. He slugged me over the head with the butt of his rifle. I managed to catch Carson before I hit the dirt. Carson flashed the Nip arm band in his face (so he said) and he turned away.

I remember jogging along, thinking I was walking in plush cushions so deep that I had to labor to keep from falling and to get one foot in front of the other. There seemed to be endless miles of these and somehow it proved to be a contest, just like a track meet. My lungs seemed to be burning and I was afraid I just couldn't make it, but I kept running, looking behind. Some fellows I knew were coming up close behind me, then my foot slipped. I was falling, falling, I never seemed to hit though, and every thing seemed so quiet.

When I came to all my dreams were disturbed. I was being ducked time and time again in a well by two Japs. I saw the bottle of ammonia and grabbed for it. The Nips were laughing and talking in Japanese, but they stopped, watching me sniff the ammonia. One addressed me, wondering where I was from in the States and then telling me he had some brothers in a camp in the States. He wondered how his people were doing and when I left him unanswered, he became excited about me. The men were standing around out side lining up, so he gave me a pack of cigarettes, helping me in line he said, "You're heavy enough now, what did you weigh when you were filled out?"

I told him about 188 and sat down thanking him. He asked me to come to his fruit shop in Riverside after the war and talk over old times.

We were counted and counted again before we moved into that filthy, dirty, stinking cock pit. After looking the premises over, I moved into a field which was in the same compound. There were only a few fellows there when I bedded down, but when I awakened there were so many of the PW's there you couldn't stir them with a stick. It was about eight o'clock and the Japanese were bringing their change of guard on. We thought they were a shooting squad.

For breakfast we had pony sugar cakes, brown sugar with a bit of bran mixed, just a solid sweet cake. After we had our breakfast some Nips came in and asked for a volunteer grave detail. We had a number of men who had passed away during the night so in order to pay my respects to them, I volunteered for the party.

We were taken out and into a cane field in back of a large sugar mill. There were fourteen of us. We saw a group of Filipinos standing, some in and some on top of a trench, and we thought we were to relieve them. The Nips ordered the Pinos into the trench and when they made them kneel down, we were dumbfounded for we could see they wanted us to bury them alive. Two of the Pinos had broken arms, but the rest of them were physically fit. We just stood there, with our mouths open until the Nips began waving their bayonets. As the dirt began to come in the Pinos came up slugging, and Nips began to push us harder. One fellow was yelling for someone to put them out of their misery. I raised my shovel and came down with all my might then threw dirt as fast as I could. We stood up, frightened and breathless. Under normal conditions one would have fainted, cold blooded murderers now. Yes, helpless, they say and we do. How many times since that statement has crossed my mind and lips I'll never know. We were given a shot of whiskey, cigarettes, and a pack of "dog biscuits" as we called the Nip dry ration. Someone spied a dump hole with all sorts of garbage in it. All fourteen made a dive at once. I came out with both hands full of burned rice and shoved it into my shirt with the rest of the dog food; I tried to look innocent but too late. The Nip in charge slapped the hell out of all of us, swearing at us for being the same as the Filipinos. They said that's what happened to the guys we had just buried. Then we were marched into camp.

There were only a few fellows of my squadron in at that time so we had a feast. Lt. Nichols joined us in our party as it got in swing, saying he didn't care where the deuce the rice came from or how we got it, it was still good. He said he was still chilling but his fever wasn't as bad it had been. He'd been fortunate at Balanga and had had a ride the rest of the way in. He told me how the officers had done in the earlier part of the march, how they'd rushed past the enlisted men shouting, "I'm an officer, let me get a drink." He said some of the boys had kayoed them where they stood, but most generally told them the line was to the rear and the war was over, and now it was root hog or die.

Carson and I had no experience with the officers because they were always in the tail end of the line anyway. By the time they got to the spigot, the column was already moving out.

Carson told me that I got so heavy that he decided to carry out my request and was taking my bag of medicine when he was accosted by the English-speaking Nip who said leave everything be and he would see I got in all right. He remarked he thought the Nip to be a liar but he guessed he was a better person than he took him to be, in fact the best Nip he had ever seen. I quickly reminded him we had seen so many good ones at Aglaloma. If you can't catch on, well, the only good ones were dead ones.

That afternoon men began leaving in groups of four hundred. Where to they didn't know; just anywhere they could go where there was some sort of a latrine. In the daytime we used the fence or the corner, but at night they didn't care where they were.

Upon arriving at the gate I saw much candy, rice cakes, and fresh fruits for sale. Yes, the Pinos and Nips were profiteering, then the PW's would in turn profiteer off their fellow men. One peso was as good as twenty for you couldn't get more than one peso's worth from a Pino and he would inform you he had no change. You couldn't say anything for the Nips would intervene.

About that time a Nip called for four hundred men to leave the cock pit. I raised my hands indicating the front of the line, Carson got lost in the rush, but he made the next train the next day.

We were checked and double checked, marched away from that stinking hole, bearing its odors with us, to a railway station. Here we were pushed around for hours, until the sun got so hot you could fry an egg on any part of the box cars. We were then shifted seventy into a car. The cars were three meters wide and ten meters long. You can figure out how much room each man had. There were two guards on the door and they took up enough room for four of us. As we rolled along that long road the Filipinos would throw food and even sugar cane into the doors. One guard's nose was bleeding before we had been enroute twenty minutes. He then shut the door. And maybe you think he didn't get a cussing for it was hot as blazes in the car and, too, he stopped a chance of getting food which the Filipinos had and were willing to give to the starving Americans.

We arrived at Capas after a two-and-a-half-mile ride and were met by hordes of Pinos who used their heads. They set their baskets down in lines so we'd have to get some of them when we lined up. On the station was a sign which read "Any Filipino who offers aid to an American prisoner will be shot, any Filipino who talks with a prisoner will also be shot," signed The Japanese Armed Military Forces.

We were started on our hike out to Camp O'Donnell, later known as the rat hole of the Philippines. Arriving there about three o'clock, we were searched and then formed in a tight group facing west. Time was four o'clock and the lower the sun set, the hotter and brighter it got. We were then confronted by the Nip commander, some colonel whose name I wish I could remember as well as his speech. His looks gave his personality away. He looked like a half-done wiener with a hat and glasses on top and his uniform looked like an over dose of mustard with a tooth pick stuck through it. His speech goes something like this:

Now the time has come to tell you and set you right. You were my father's enemies one hundred years ago, you were my father's father's enemies one hundred years before that. You are a spineless, shiftless lot without credentials. You have violated the ideals of the Nipponese and now ruined the few principles which you have at one time attained. You wish to be given food, you wish to be given rest, but all I can give you and all you deserve is nothing. You are only captives and you'll be treated as captives until otherwise announced. If you have any money or valuables I will give them to your people when our forces go to the States. You say if we don't get there, you'll regret [it] for one hundred years (and in a subdued tone) or we will, one [or the other].

Everyone laughed, but regretted it immediately for he talked for almost one hour and a half. All he said summed up was, "You are my enemies, we can never be friends because of tradition, that we were captives and were to expect to be treated as such; take care of yourself for we need men to do our dirty work and an outline of what we must do in accordance with the Nip regulations." Everyone felt faint before that ordeal was over. A number keeled over for it was necessary that we look at the speaker from the position of attention at all times; too, we were facing the sun.

We were then separated into groups, air corps, tank battalion, infantry, ordinance, quartermaster and what have you, then dispersed to our areas. There were already a few men here, said they'd been there two and three days. They had been brought up by truck to fix a fence and cook houses. I went to sleep in a carabao wallow that night and it was the softest bed I recall I had for three and a half years. I let myself down gently, took two tablets of quinine and just lay back, looking up at the stars and the moon. The moon was full when I started, now look at it. I had covered approximately ninety-six miles foot-back the way I counted it and the moon had only

changed a few inches. While I was trying to figure how many days it had taken I went to sleep, my head on my pack and snuggled below the breeze in a carabao wallow.

The sun came up in the east as usual, though I thought it was the west. It was hotter than the blazes when I woke, stiff and as sore as could be. Seeking a shelter from the sun, I wandered into a hut which was built of nipa and floored with straw. There were already too many men here so I started by the eaves. Some one called my name and I saw Ed Sydnor, the first time since we'd graduated from Boeing School of Aeronautics in Oakland. He opened the conversation with, "How the hell did you get in this mess?" He told me that Gottlieb, Mackey, Elton, and Wisner, former classmates, were in the same boat, saying this isn't such a big world after all. He said he'd come over with the seventh materiel squadron one month before I arrived and had been working like hell ever since, doing both air corps and infantry duty. He said he had malaria in the fall, but now had nothing wrong with him. Mackey was down with malaria and the bug but the rest were o.k. I told him Garrison and Cocklin were with me somewhere, but I'd not seen them since the twelfth. The date was the nineteenth. Golly, I thought, what I'd seen in just ten days. It was almost unbelievable and sometimes seemed as a bad nightmare. I wished I could only wake up and find myself.

We began to get new arrivals that day. They were tuckered out more so than we because they came in in the heat of the day and had to stand with their hats off while the Nip officer welcomed them in.

We were organized in companies, would have a roll call twice daily and every one must be present. Carson was put in a different company, both of us tried to get a mutual transfer but headquarters would not permit such an arrangement. We'd decided we'd sleep together anyway. We picked us a place about three hundred yards away from the "barracks" and moved some hay from the hill down where we made our "boudoir." We put up an occupied sign there and then went after water. We had to walk about two and a half miles down a road which was fenced in on both sides and patrolled by Nips on horses and bicycles. The Filipino camp was on one side and American's on the other, but the road was full of both. The Pinos were carrying water in 50-gallon drums from the river. Our boys were carrying it from the river only to cook with. We saw a line and fell into it. We'd missed roll call before we got any water. The pipe was only one-half inch and there were about three hundred empty canteens in front. When we got back that night we couldn't find our beds so we just lay down using our mess kits and my pack of medicine for a pillow. When we awoke next morning, we had only the mess kits there. Someone had seen the bag and I guess they thought it was food. We found two bottles of sulfa thiasol and one of quinine where the thief had left his trail. That was all we ever found. The only disturbance we heard was empty canteens rattling together as the fellows started after water about four in the morning. Carson joined them and for that reason I was skeptical as to the thief. If he took it, he was gentlemanly about it for he knew I had need for quinine and the sulfa.

We were fed our first meal at eight thirty that morning. It was of soft rice and rotten sweet potatoes, a small pat of oleomargarine. It looked much worse than it really was. A blueberry pie with too much corn starch would make a good pass for it.

Many men had no mess kits so they used anything from their caps to split bamboo and flat boards. The food was a little watery and you can imagine what a job they had keeping it on a flat board.

I blistered my mouth for I was so hungry and that rice was so hot. Maybe it was the potatoes or maybe it was the dirty mess kits, but I got a very bad case of diarrhea. It made me weak as could be and stay as close to the latrine as possible. I took four sulfa following that and didn't know when supper time came but Carson saw to that. The water bottles were full when I awoke that night too. Hewgley came to see me about some medicine he had heard I had. I gave him a bottle and he in return promised to give Carson and me a hand when we needed it. He also gave us two packs of cigarettes and a pony cake. Shorty Batson came over and played some of our old songs and Captain Dyess and a few others told stories which made us forget where we were for a while.

MacArthur was the main topic though and before we broke for the night each one figured we knew him well, for one fellow had been with him in the States. He had married the wrong woman and there was a fight when his superior officer tried to make her. He was sent to the Philippines, put in the office of Counselor and very soon after put in command of both Philippine and U.S. Forces. On the side he played all available rackets, and before he left he owned two thirds of the sugar centrals in P.I. and had a couple of gold mines. The thing really emphasized was the fact that he knew that the Nips had hit Pearl Harbor and would not let the air corps fly. How true this was I do not know, but we were air corps, morale was low, and we were ready to believe anything we heard now after what we saw on the march. Besides, it made good listening.

That night it rained. At first drops we began running for shelter; finding all barracks full, we ran under headquarters building. The water was only running in under. Already there were many men there and all trying to find a dry spot. No one trusted anyone and every one slept very little. I slept and was sorry for it for the next morning my medicine and cigarettes were gone. My diarrhea had slowed down some and I wanted to get away from this hell hole. I turned my name in as a truck driver, mechanic, and a farmer, and was told to go back to my area and wait to be called. Carson didn't want to leave for he said things would begin to get better. Now we were losing men at the rate of thirty and forty a day. Hudson, our Sgt. Major had died already, Garrison was pulling his last breath. He was the first person who wished me to tell his people "How we lived and died." His last words were, "Tell them how much I thought of them and how much I took for granted."

His was a dose of malaria and excessive bacillus dysentery on top of such a trying situation with no medicine, food and only bad water. He was buried in a common forty-man grave on the hillside three miles away. We lost several men from our squadron here.

After the funeral party came in my name was called to go back to Bataan. How I hated to go there, but it was easier than staying in O'Donnell. We were loaded on trucks on the twenty-third and moved to a school building in Fernando and were sent daily into Bataan recovering trucks and ammunition, and were surprised at the way the Japs did it. Any truck which they could run they would hook four or five that wouldn't, behind. Can you feature pulling five two-and-one-half ton trucks behind a Chevrolet pickup? The Nips did. When they would get a flat on one tire they never thought of changing a tire. They'd give you a bolo and tell you to start cutting. After every tire was cut off, you would drive on. We made many outrageous deals with the Filipinos, giving a good new tire for a few bananas, a few pieces of candy, or fifteen pesos.

I was the last in the convoy coming in one night and as I was refueling a Pino offered two hundred pesos for a light pick up truck which was on the rear. I took the money and told him to untie it before I finished for the guards might miss me and come back for me. Before I had time to lift the gas can again, the Pino and truck were gone. When I got in that night which was after

dark, the Nips wanted to know where my other truck was. I looked behind and two trucks were gone. I guess those Pinos did a quick job after all. I was then sent back to the cock pit though this time, besides a knife, I had nearly five hundred pesos.

I met captain Wray and Raker here. They had a deal with the guards whereby they were able to buy at a high price, then in turn they sold at a profit to us. They'd buy ponchitos at one-seventy per box of one-seventy. In turn we bought from them at one peso per box. In the three days that I was there, I was broke and as hungry as ever. Every time I thought of that Pino stealing that other truck I would cuss and think what a wise bird he really was. Sometimes I would really laugh at my dumbness.

I awoke the fourth morning here, feeling swollen and stiff. I asked Fields, a fellow of the thirty-fourth, if my face was swollen. He laughed merrily, causing everyone to look and laugh as well. It was the first case of beriberi they had ever seen. The doc said, "Don't drink too much water, eat all foods such as eggs, tomatoes, plenty of fish and meats, drink a quart of milk daily and eat only whole wheat bread." I stood flat-footed and called him every thing I could think of for being such a wise guy.

We were then sent to Cabanatuan, rebuilding a bridge across the Nueva Cieva river. We were stationed on Cabanatuan North Elm School No. 2 which was about two and a half miles from the detail. We were given a kitchen force and one hospital orderly. A man by the name of Folio got that orderly job and he was the most hated man about camp, other than Captain Wray, because he would misappropriate medicines which were given to the Pinos over the back fence. It is thought he gave thiosol and quinine to two fellows who escaped the detail.

Our hours were decent enough as well as rice, meat, beans and sugar, but the way it was prepared was terrible. Every thing was just plain boiled and we soon tired of it. The reason for our gumbo rice was that our men knew of no other way to cook it. The Japs were not at all informative. Our meat could have been fixed differently had we had more receptacles to cook in. Four pots for rice and stew for three hundred men.

All we had to do was fix up our own area when we arose in the morning, have fifteen minutes calisthenics, then breakfast and prepare for work. We had four squads with an officer in charge of each. The officer in charge had a first Sergeant. From there we were on our own. At first our work was easy, four men on a ten-foot timber twelve inches by twelve inches. We only had to move eight a day and only about seventy yards. Then we took over the cement mixers. The wooden boxes two men had to carry filled with sand and rock, held a yard; and a goodly number of men came down with piles. Many a time the man on the hand winch would pass out, and a fifty-gallon drum of wet cement would come flying down. The guards would only get another man and laugh at the Filipinos and PW's ducking into the river to get out of the flying timbers and about five hundred pounds of cement.

I was then put on a truck detail. We had to haul cement, lumber and rations. When we were enroute from the saw mill one time I was driving alone and about ten minutes ahead of the guard. I ran into a car with a Japanese officer aboard. I ran off the road and stopped. When I got back to the Nips they were just climbing out of the overturned car. The officer drew his saber and addressed me in Japanese. I shook my head. I suppose it was the right thing to do though I had no idea what he said for he struck the Nip driver with the side of the bare saber three times. Then he made him kneel and sit on his feet. I was standing at attention and afraid to breathe for this was the first time I had ever seen any of this and I was afraid I was next. He bowed to me, motioning

me away and looking hard in my direction when I didn't bow back. I was so excited I'd completely forgotten. The truck was a ten-wheeler and was no trouble to drive out. After that every truck had a guard in it.

If a carabao, hog or pony crossed the road in front of the truck, he was a goner for we would hit him for meat. We killed many carameto ponies and they tasted just as sweet as they did when we were hungry in Bataan. When a pig was killed, a Filipino was given a few pesos to barbeque it, the Nips taking what they wanted and leaving the rest of the tasty meat to the prisoners. Capt. Wray would take a bigger cut than the Nips. After all, "I'm an officer now and the Japanese make allowances for the differences and distinction for their officers and men."

One day we brought a load of overhead braces out to the center of the bridge. They were 16 by 16 by 16 and weighed about a hundred and fifty pounds. One fellow looked over the bridge and shouted Wray was below. The men ran around with a timber and heaved it over. It hit a twisted girder and took a sudden detour, missing him ten feet or so. Naturally no one left their head over because Wray had turned a man in to the Japs for punishment. They beat Fox with a belt but being unable to knock him down, they grabbed a baseball bat. We had to stand and watch that. They'd hit him on the head two or three times before he fell, then jumped and stomped him. As soon as he was dismissed he walked over to Wray saying he would get him if he ever lived long enough. He was turned over to the Nips again and worked on until chow was served. The poor devil thought he was eating ice cream and talking to his neighbors. The Nips tied him to a telephone pole so the rest of us could sleep that night and was taken away next morning. Where he went no one ever knew, supposedly to a hospital. Capt. Wray never went out on detail after this. He just stayed in camp and sat in the shade and stuffed. He would buy flour and eggs through the Nip commissary and used the sugar and grease and what wonderful odors came from the kitchen! Men swollen with beriberi, feverish and reeking with dysentery, couldn't eat the rice and stew but the odors got the best of them. Many nights they lay awake talking about that captain and the way he did things. There was one fellow by the name of Fenton who he took care of, though it caused more jealousy than anything else. I guess it did some good.

From my squadron there were Fields, Edwards, Spanonich, and myself. If anyone got any good out of being in Wray's squadron I don't know about it. I forgot Lt. Gaskell.

One day a group of boys were moving some heavy timbers from one end of the bridge to the other. A Filipino passed them some cigarettes. The Pino was brought in and beaten unmercifully that night. They used belts and a ball bat. Next day he was caught again and strung up to his tip toes by his thumbs. They tied a weight around his scrotum and let it dangle over a back of a bench. The Pino was calm for a while but as they would tickle his feet with pins he'd stretch upward, naturally the weight went forward and he screamed. The Nips thought this was so funny they took a bat and beat him into unconsciousness. He was lying in the yard when I went to sleep on my space on the hard floor in my worn-out clothes and shoes on.

I came down with beriberi and malaria after the twenty-second of May. I worked until my legs were swollen so I couldn't bend my knees. I just felt that if I ever lay down under the conditions, I should follow the other four guys to the corner of the school yard.

While working on the bridge I recognized a Pino who had been on the points with us, dressed in civilian clothes. He was very encouraging in his smile so the next time he went for a bucket of water for the cement mixer, I went to the river for a wash. The men were about to knock off for the day and they were beginning to line up. I pulled a faint, the Joe hurried over and began

to wash my face. I asked him the rumors, what had happened to the majority of the boys and anything else he had time to tell me. He said most of them were in the "Hell Camp" but not he because he was a civilian. The Americans had arranged a defense in the Pacific. He told me to go to the latrine at eight that night for the boys had something for me: here came the Nips. He shouldered me, cursing them and began telling me of the hell he'd seen on the march. Men had their ears cut off for getting water, shot for falling or talking to the civilian populace and for nothing at all. The Nips guided him to where the fellows were lined up and I did my best to look sick. That's hard to do when you've seen some old friend, especially in a tight.

At eight that night I got a pie and a carton of long brown dobies over the fence. Made myself sick as usual and almost smoked myself to death.

Two fellows went over the hill about eight-thirty one morning. They were found out about three o'clock and were brought in. Everyone lined up; cooks and sick men as well. We stayed in line until nine that night and that was a tough bunch of guards from there on out. We were told that fifty of us were to be shot. We wonder how or why they ever got that idea. Our guards were doubled and we were not permitted to go to the latrine without asking the guard before we went and thanking him. This practice was maintained as long as we were prisoners.

The next morning we were lined up and beginning to draw numbers, what a tight faced, regretful bunch, when a car came sliding into the school yard. A new order had been published. Now only twenty-five would be shot. Numbers were to be drawn next morning. What a sigh of relief went up. We were so tired that we just lay down anywhere and went to sleep. I awoke twice, thought someone was being executed. I know I aged ten years the next few minutes. A fellow had gone off his nut and crawled to a window sill saying, "Before I go I want you fellows to know you've been a damn nice bunch. All of you except Cap'n Wray and that dammed Folio are O.K., so I want you to line up here and have a Lucky Strike before I go." As no one lined up "Well, since you've got plenty, I'll set them on the window sill. You'll need them before you get out of this. Good night!" He leaped from the window eight feet below and into a hedge. Truly we felt sorry for him but we had to laugh because we'd been picking up snipes from the manure on the streets for months, and because the Nips hollered like the devil was after them. All men were finally reprieved and we believe the escapees killed.

We got a Filipino doctor and nurses who did the best they could for us. They had two hours twice a week to wait on about one hundred patients. They built our morale more than anything else. The doctor left orders that all men were to drink tea which had a puckery taste and was made from the guava leaf. It's good for your kidneys and if you have sugar its not a bad drink with your meals, otherwise it tastes like a green persimmon. The worst cases given were beriberi, dysentery, and cold shots. All men were given cholera prevention treatment. The doctor tried to get more cooking utensils but had to settle for quinine bark. This bark was bitter when boiled up, but our only source of malaria treatment and it went like tobacco as long as it lasted. The woman doctor and her aides used to slip candy in their bags and give it to the sick men. When the Nips caught her, she simply smiled and said it built up our morale. After that she brought it in the open.

Finally they told us we were to be moved into the big camp and life there was really hell. Men were dying in great numbers daily and the food was very bad. We were, at present, eating a good ration of rice and stew, were given two spoons of sugar twice a week besides. The main camp sounded tough to us so we did everything we could to get something together before we got there. I swept the Nip quarters twice for a package of cigarettes each time, stole a carton by throwing them out the window and when I dumped the trash in back, I tossed them into one of the

PW's room, afterwards going back for them. I picked three coverall pockets of butts that day and settled down for the move. I entrusted them to Fields to keep for I had no bag, just the clothes I had on my back.

Next morning we moved among victory shouts and a shower of food and cigarettes tossed by the Filipinos to Cabanatuan prison camp No. One. We were packed forty men to a truck but we didn't mind too much for by now we were used to being packed like sardines. Lt. Crosby and the men who were driving the trucks returned to Manila, the rest were left here.

We were about six miles away when we smelled the prison camp. It really had a definite odor. One a person can't explain, just a clinging, grave yard smell. There men rushed to see if a buddy was on the detail, but the Nips ran them off until we were searched. When we saw we were to be searched, Fields and I took the wrappers off our cigarettes and I pocketed them. When the Nips came to me I only had the papers in my pockets and a knife in my worn-out shoe. They asked what the paper was for, I motioned toilet tissue and they passed on. I used it for that too, but I never thought I'd have to.

Here I met Hewgley, just the same old boy but he had a haunted look in his eyes. He told me of the profiteering being done here. Cigarettes were two and a half a pack, ponchitos were three for a peso, sugar candy one peso, an onion two pesos, raw potatoes one peso, pony cakes, large size, two fifty, small, seventy-five cents, and he added, you'd better sleep in your clothes for they were selling. He said there was only one water spigot so we'd hear the rattling water bottles about four in the morning. At present chow was only two meals a day, but there'd be another mess hall opened tomorrow. Then he told me the most startling thing I'd yet heard. Ross and Ed Betts, men of our squadron and brothers, were on a detail where guerrillas made a raid. One fellow was taken out and all guards were killed. Next evening at sundown, Ed had to watch his brother, Ross shot. The men were picked according to colors. Three of two, red and blue, and four of green. One fellow whose number was green was called was sick that day and couldn't come. Ross's number was then called and he had to line up with the other nine victims of Nip cruelty. They were offered water, cigarettes, and a blindfold. All men calmly refused the offers. When the executing officer asked the men if they had anything to say, one fellow raised his hand and said, "You boys try to keep your noses clean so you can tell the people about this and (with clarity and emphasis) May God Bless America."

The officer moved his saber downward. A volley of shots was fired. Only one man fell dead, others clutched their breasts in agony crying, "Please shoot me, get me out of my misery." The Nips emptied their rifles and four men were still wandering around. Betts tried to break through the PW's to get a Nip's rifle to finish his brother, but was knocked down. When he got to his feet, it was all over and the Nip officer was putting his pistol to the men's head for the mercy shot. The men were then told not to tell what they'd seen. Our chow was called so Hewgley bade us goodbye until later. We gave most of our food in exchange for water and the men thought us crazy for they hadn't had a decent meal in weeks.

Captain Wray stuck to me or I to him. We just couldn't get away from one another. Captain Robertson took the other company and Wray got ours. Sgt. Roberts lost his position and talked about what a dirty trick he'd been handed. He cashed checks for Wray, which were written on our squadron, and now he'd been cast off that he was no good any more. "How many times had he endangered his life for such a bastard?" The rest of us laughed at his stupidity for Wray had his dobe chow and he'd keep it.

Fields asked me to stick around for a while and now that I was chilling, I was more than willing. He wakened me about twelve that night talking about Britt and his profiteering. How one time he'd given Britt some money in O'Donnell and he hadn't been repaid as yet. Before the night was over, we had eaten a box of ponchitos, which he'd promised to sell for Britt.

Next morning we had two dead men in our barracks and a number of fresh stools were around the barracks with green flies hovering them. When we got our breakfast they hovered around it the same way, lighting on your spoon and the only way you could get them off would be a thump. When you set your mess tin down to thump him off, others would light there. We finally got so we'd blow the fly off if we could, if we couldn't, we'd suck the rice from under him. It's hard to believe, isn't it? After breakfast, we were told to stick around for work parties. I stuck around but not for that, for my fever came up. I went on sick call but they only laughed at me. Hewgley got me eight quinines for twenty cigarettes. I was so grateful that I gave him ten for swinging the deal. He had plenty I know, but every little bit counts.

Sgt. Bediger died that first night and was so happy everyone thought he'd flipped his cork. Harroll said Bediger had been trying to die ever since O'Donnell, and nothing he could do would change his mind.

I saw Sgt. Lawrence wandering around, just hobbling. He'd stuck a nail in his foot while working at the cook house on a bridge detail. The Nips gave him four bottles of beer and were so surprised when he didn't pass out. They gave him a quart of saki. Lawrence said he was doing O.K. and had about two thirds of it down before it hit him, then he couldn't hit his mouth, just put his rice in the eyes and nose. He would rise from his stump and stagger around and the Nips got a big kick out of the monkey shines he cut. Matisovosky said Lawrence tried to eat while drunk and sitting on a stump. When he couldn't get his spoon in his mouth it was thrown away and his hand used instead. Lugao was from his chin to his eyebrows. He'd then fall off in the dirt, Nips setting him back on the stump, watching him eat the dirt his sticky hands had picked up, laughing at his state of incapability.

We were told of countless hours of punishment men had to take for nothing at all. One instance was where the Pinos sabotaged a bridge which one evening was nearing completion. Next morning it was a fallen wreckage. The PW's had to work on half rations and when they returned to camp, they had to stand at attention at length. The detail which was far out in the provinces had very poor chow and the guards were tough. On our detail, we'd only lost fourteen men in two months, whereas some of them lost as high as forty-six.

Lt. Nichols took a serious case of diarrhea, ruined his pants and wore his raincoat for he could get no water to wash his face, let alone his pants. In three days, he looked like a darkened skeleton in a rain coat and was barely recognizable. On July 5 it rained. Yes, a nice brief shower, so nice everyone got wet and soapy; so brief we couldn't wash the soap off. Everyone got a lovely soap rash.

On the twelfth of July I was sent to the hospital area for malaria. Here I met Slugger Wilson, now a barracks leader, but a mean one. He was as large as ever and when some poor unfortunate crapped on the bamboo slats, Slugger threw him out and in under the barracks. This treatment of sick men was new to me and I became very frightened. A man whom I knew had done that to a sick man. Fields had accompanied me and he said for me not to worry, that he wasn't too sick to look out for me yet. My cigarettes disappeared and he laid the blame on Fenton who strongly denied it and later told me Fields had exchanged them for some candy. I shuddered

to think of this but I decided it was O.K. for he had a blanket he let me use. I had nothing to be on but bamboo which was spaced a few inches apart, high in some places and low in others until some fellow offered a thin woven grass mat for five cigarettes. I made the deal and started smoking butts. My cigarettes were gone now. I went to chilling one afternoon about three. Awakened the next afternoon just at chow time and the sun was very red like it was rising. We had beans for supper, the first and last for sometime, and I remarked how strange it was that they were feeding us beans for breakfast, but then it began to get darker I realized why everyone laughed.

When I awoke after a three-day siege of continual chill and fever, I had been moved to the other end of the barracks and we now had a Major Snyder for a doctor. He had a very good vocabulary and an excellent memory. He would ask where you were from and began telling you people who lived in your city, naming all nearby towns. He also grew a "Goatee". I spelled it with a capital for he thought it was all of it, but everyone else thought it made his short figure look like an abnormal goat.

Each morning he took commissary orders and always told us that he was sorry he could not do more for us, but there was no medicine available, —leaving as soon as possible. The rumor was out that the medical officers were served milk every day at ten and that was what his rush was about.

It began to rain cold water about this time and every one almost froze as the wind whipped through the cracks in the floor. Slugger Wilson had begun chilling now, had crapped his pants and was going naked. Luckily, he had a pile of grass to sleep on. He would lie there moaning every night, trying to get in bed with Fields and me, but we showed him no sympathy for his throwing guys out of the barracks when they messed the place up. He was served chow in bed and the wolves would gather around him, encouraging him to eat. If he took a bite of food, they were very disappointed for he would give it to them if they'd wash his mess cup. Several nights he would get up and walk out the wrong end of the barracks, falling in a carabao wallow filled with muddy water and blue mud. Some one would bring him back in to his pile of hay and next morning we'd be as muddy as he. Finally, he became too weak to move about so he lay there in his bed, and cursing me when I moved the hay he ruined. I was truly glad when he died. I awoke one morning to find him cold and stiff lying across me. I'd taken a pair of scissors and a set of brass knuckles which he had in his bag before because he'd threatened my life several times and I figured him in the state of mind to carry out his threats. This morning I took a deck of cards and a bottle of peppermint laxatives. Sgt. Lawrence took the rest.

Fields sold the scissors, unknowing to me, and told me that the seventy cents he'd gotten was from washing some clothes. This sounded plausible enough, but my coveralls needed patching and I couldn't find the scissors. I was told then that there were some at the cook house which I could borrow. Upon going there, I recognized the scissors which so recently belonged to Slugger, but was afraid to say anything for Fields' blanket was so nice and warm.

While at the cook house, one of the cooks wanted me to wash his clothes and in return I got a bucket of burned rice. Boy was that ever good and did I ever make a mistake. Lawrence was given some of the scraps and he immediately got my position, only he washed for all the men.

Fields took to all sorts of principles now after our can of fish and pocket of butts had vanished; that's what we got for the money. He went to the trouble of not only drinking my milk (it clabbered on my stomach and came up green) but began to drink all the clabber he could find in

the area. The men would let the milk clabber for their flat morning meal. He was never caught at this but he often waked me at night to split some poor unfortunate's savings fifty-fifty. He always got more than his share but who was I to complain. It was against my religion to steal from fellow prisoners but I was eager to accept any thing stolen or not.

One night we made a raid on the bakery shop which was down the hill a quarter of a mile, taking a board off the outside, removing ten loaves from the supply and replacing the board. One was set back crooked and the next morning when some one was missing, he got the blame for the theft. I was so frightened that every time I moved my feet I thought some one was after me. That bread was really good and we ate more than three loaves each before leaving the weeds and returning to the barracks.

We were counted a number of times that day and weren't allowed to leave the barracks. A fellow escaped the nut ward, which served as a guard barracks as well. Ten guards were picked to be shot but four of them got sick and died before the shooting came off. Then only a few days later a fellow escaped from ward One and ten men were picked from there as well. One fellow died of a heart attack and the rest are still awaiting execution today. If they were ever reprieved, I don't know it.

We were then organized into shooting squads, as we called them; if one man escaped, the other nine were to be shot. Many fellows were thrown in the guardhouse but none shot for this offence, though they became extremely nervous and gray haired overnight. Did you ever see a twenty-two-year-old fellow with solid gray hair? They were common there.

I went to work on a clean up detail which Lt. George sponsored. Each man who worked with "Skipper" Harris got a few bites of food extra each day. I worked here four or five days until for evening chow we had sweetened potatoes galore and ate three mess kits of them and brought Fields his usual, and drank four cups of the water. By morning, I had the worst dose of diarrhea you ever saw. I moved to the latrine and bunked there. You can guess how much rest I got.

One afternoon "Toppin" helped me back to the barracks where Major Snyder was waiting for me. He introduced me to a Major Strand, one of the best men I met, though for a while every one thought he was being wise. I was told to get my stuff together for I was moving to ward Zero. I was startled because that's where the doc always sent men before they died. I cursed the major for all I was worth, telling him that he was merely sending me there to die and that he got medicine for some men, why not me, and let me stay with Fields where I could have a warm blanket at night and that (when he refused, telling me that Fields was to be transferred from his Ward because he had been caught searching dead men and stealing milk and he was just no damn good anyhow) some day I would see him when he was well and kill him with my hands on that lovely goatee and my teeth in his neck like a dog and enjoy hearing his breath come like a winded mare with the heaves.

I was led away to one of the most unbearable sights I ever saw. Men lying around, skeleton like, moaning and crapping on theirs and other naked bodies and then moaning again. Many of them were burned from the sun. They had strength enough to crawl out of that shitty house but not enough to crawl back in when they'd had enough. The corpsman would laugh just like the Nips had on the march and tease the men in a loud voice, "Wouldn't you like to come in where it's nice and cool," letting his bass voice, down and continuing, "Yes, where it's cool and shitty, other bastards to shit and piss all over you, these little flies to light in the shit and corruption on your balls and then when you go to sleep, crawl into your mouth, eyes, and nose? Wouldn't it

be nice if I helped you back in?” Then his voice would ring out loud and clear, “You can’t? Well lay there in the hot sun until it burns your ass off and then die you damn dirty rat, by morning you’ll be in the morgue and tomorrow you’ll be pushed under the water while the boys shovel dirt over you and then you’ll rot. Yes, moan louder you bastards, you’ll have to die before I’ll fuck with you.”

God, how I feared and hated that man. I’ve seen him sit on guys who had their hipbones showing through bleeding bedsores and squeeze the puss around it, digging in it with scissors while he changed a three-day-old bandage. As the victim screamed at the top of his voice, he remarked, as casually as could be, “Hurts, doesn’t it? You bastard, shut up before I rub your nose in the shit.” Naturally, the guy wouldn’t shut up and Crues would shove him over, smearing his nose around over the floor like someone who is trying to housebreak a cat.

I’d just been moved from death row and feeling good one morning when Crues started swabbing the floor with water, pushing it up one side and moving those patients who weren’t able to be outside over on the clean floor. As the crappy water began to reach me, he walked forward and lifted me to the clean side. I asked for a bedpan, but all the answer I could get was “Reach it yourself, and you starving son of a bitch, shit on that floor and I’ll throw you into it.”

The fellow next to me handed the pan over and as I reached for it, I let go. I tried to make it quietly but it popped like a motorcycle. Before I could hide it with the pan, he had me by the heels and the floor seemed to start revolving about me then, splash, as I hit the floor and bounced, scattering that yellow stuff way up the wall. I never said anything, but I vowed to my neighbor that I’d get well and kill that “gruesome bastard” as he was called to his back. When he made the afternoon check he moved me fifth from the end of death row for my fever was coming up.

In the night, I awoke. My head was much clearer than it had ever been since my internment. I heard a voice, which sounded far off. “Pea Picker, Pea Picker.” I answered, “over here.” In a few moments, he called again. This time he was at my feet. He said he had brought me medicine, which would make me well, and a little food, which I could eat when I got that way. He was a Filipino that I had given water to on the march and had much trouble finding me. He’d crawled under the fence just after the guard had passed and must return that way soon for the guard would be going back. I thanked him and tried to get some rumors of how the Americans had progressed. All he gave me was that everything was getting under control.

That was my second and last trip to death row. Within a week, I was on my feet and walking to the hydrants for water and in two weeks, I was out of Zero and in Ward One. I stayed there only four days and then to the work barracks. I got on the chow detail and carried rations down to our area for a few days. In between times, I worked at Ward Zero, washed crappy clothes and blankets for nothing and it got me something. Major Strand was doing his best to get the dysentery area cleaned up and by now, you could only find about thirty or forty stools between the barracks and the latrine. There had been a solid patty from one end of the barracks to the other and thence to the latrine. Now the latrine was the only place that way. Major Strand offered five cigarettes for flies by the milk can full and five for each rat which we could kill.

I made a flytrap from a mosquito bar and bamboo, like I’d seen at home. I gave one fellow three cigarettes a day to watch them when I went to work in the kitchen. He sold one for ten cigarettes and was about to sell another when Lt. Francis took over the detail.

My cigarette problem was now solved so I built me a trap to catch frogs. I set it in an old foxhole and the normal person would have thought it to be a mosquito net thrown away, but not those PW's. I gave MacElvain half the proceeds with the understanding that he watch the net and clean the frogs. I'd take care of cooking them; for one cigarette a batch I had them boiled in the cookhouse. These frogs were about the size of your thumb.

One morning as I was washing blankets, a fellow who was on the improvised portable latrine informed me there was a cat under him. I pulled a bucket of the stuff out a little and the cat tried to jump over me. I drowned him in the bucket. That night I had my first cat stew and believe it or not, it was delicious. (You know we had no meat since the first of July, it was now the middle of October, and anything tasted good.) Among the things I ate were two small bats, which I caught one night while pulling guard over on Sub 2. They were after mosquitoes in the eaves and when they would dart in and buzz their wings, I'd swing at them. I finally got two of them before I was relieved from my three-hour shift. A Nip dog disappeared inside the compound one day and a liberal reward was offered. They made their offer too late for that dog had gone the way of all good chow.

The men began to talk of the food back home. How they used to eat at their parties and what they'd eat after they came back. Then times got rough. They began to talk of how good the food was at O'Donnell. The Catholic priest and Philippine Red Cross workers tried to get fresh fruit and vegetables to us. They even drove in several head of carabao and the Nips made them take them away again. The rumor came out that the chief priest in Manila had sent Tojo a wire stating the probable reason for so much guerrilla activity was the way we were being treated. That the Philippine people belonged and believed in the Catholic Church to the tune of ninety-nine per cent, the other believed in themselves but all believed in giving. The advanced guerrilla activity would subside if they were allowed to give. Tojo's answer okayed the idea and at daylight next morning thirty-six head of carabao entered camp for meat. The carabao meat is greasy and has a muddy smell but it went down very easy. We almost turned our bowels wrong side out when we passed it. There was a fellow who'd dropped his false teeth in a straddle trench from straining. People who saw him made a joke of it and on meat issue day every one would ask the next person who was going to the latrine, "Got your teeth in your pocket?"

The Pinos gave us everything, including musical instruments. There were enough men here who could play, sing and cut comics to put on a good weekly show. We had among them wonderful imitators. The best was a fellow who had been in the show business before and did a wonderful job of President Roosevelt. It went like this, "I hate war, my son Jimmy and my wife Eleanor hate war, and I hate Eleanor." This was his final act and always a scream. Another common act was dressing someone up as a woman, powdering them with cornstarch, making a whistle weed or coconut fiber hair and a toe sack skirt. It ran on the usual burlesque style but not near so rough. All programs opened with You Are My Sunshine, that is, all that I heard.

Major Strand took a hand in my life here. He recommended me for a roustabout around the kitchen. I was taken on by Lt. George. The first thing he did was weigh me and I tipped the scales at 40 kilos in my coveralls. He wanted a soup stove made from a 55-gallon drum with a hole cut in sidewise. In three hours, he had it. He thought it pretty good and I think he really liked it for I was put to the chow table with the rest of the cooks and kitchen help the first day.

Then he wanted a crane built to lift the heavy cauldrons from the fire. I put up a two by four with a wire rig that lifted it from the fire but not from the stove. He was satisfied. All he needed now was stands to set the pots on when they were full of cooked food. I built four of them

and on the third day, I was put on the wood detail in place of Le Croix, who had beriberi so bad he could no longer walk.

I started out carrying with a guy named Louis Cusano, a Wop, Connecticut, Stephen Matisvosky of Pennsylvania, and Cecil Ussel of Waco Texas. These three men were the best to make friends with I ever met. They would back you in anything you undertook. When I started carrying wood, Cusano started me out in front and with only a few sticks of wood. My hands got sore and I'd be so tired when I got in at night, I'd just crawl in my sack and when that urge to go to the latrine hit me, I would barely make it. Sometimes I didn't, but I didn't feel so bad about it now as I did at first. Before long, I was up to fifty kilos and swinging a chopping axe opposite "Pollock" as he was called. We'd get almost a week's supply of wood ahead and then we'd have to cut vegetables and help around the cookhouse until the supply dropped. Pollock finally made the excuse to the Lt. that we had to chop every morning for if we did not we'd get a cut on the wood ration. Some days we didn't cut any but the Lt. didn't know any thing about it.

Jake Dutzig and Matt made a confirmed petty thief of me in the cookhouse. When "the George," as Jake called him, was away, Matt would slip around, go through the line behind Jake's back, and get another cup of stew or so. In a few weeks, any time of the day you looked I had something to eat in my mess kit if someone else didn't.

Occasionally George would find it and get on me about having a very thick stew and I'd say I got that in my seconds. That's all we were allowed but since George kept his friends up we thought we might as well eat all we could. He threw several boys out for this. At times when he'd get on me, I would just say, "Well, I thought we'd only have whistle weeds for supper." We got along all right.

Some of the boys of the squadron were down and way under weight, so I took the task upon myself to feed them. The fellows in dysentery sections ate less than other groups so there was almost always an extra can of rice and stew left over. I'd shoulder the can and walk through the gate and a line of men who were waiting for the chow. I never made any bones about it; I just put my buddies up to the front of the line and gave them all their mess tins would hold.

Our food has been increased after an autopsy and the Nips finding that seven deaths resulted from starvation. All kitchens were given small round beans. Those beans look like buck shot but really were very good when boiled to a gravy with a good hunk of carabao. The only thing which I saw wrong with the them was when you ate a few of them they'd gas you and then when you think you have to pass off some gas, you'd crap in your pants. One day Loui waited too long and tried to pick up a log. The result was he was washing his clothes.

One day we'd had a big feed of fat carabao and beans, which weren't quite done. I ate a good bait of them and just after we finished our work at the cookhouse, it began to rain. I ran through the mud and just as I started into the hut, I slipped and fell on my stomach. My coveralls got a good filling. I had a good excuse for washing them though, for you know I had mud all over them, but the scent gave me away. Another case of the beans was when Joe Smith and Forbes got into a fight. Forbes hit Smith in the stomach and Smith crapped himself.

Now that we're off the beans, do you like cornstarch puddings? I had enough banana flavored cornstarch puddings to starch clothes from here to St. Louis twice. Any way it was a filler and made what few eggs we got go a long way. If you should happen to buy a dish of

scrambled eggs and they turn out too light, check up. You may have been fed cornstarch. Matt used to say he knew how JC fed the multitudes-- cornstarch.

By now, most of the men were getting fed up and they quit trading a cigarette for a ration of food. This practice was common from the first of July until about the twelfth of December. Therefore, they were stealing clothing and blankets from one another and selling them for two to five cigarettes per item. A pair of shoes inside the camp would bring twelve to fourteen smokes and on the outside, they brought about two cartons. You can imagine how much profiteering went on and it seemed the man who needed a good deal the most always was in the rear.

I saw some of the slickest hijacking of meat I've ever seen. While the meat was being divided some cook would walk over and remove the liver and any small boneless cuts from each pile. If any of the mess officers said any thing he came back with, "This is not to be divided for we have some wavering patients who need it and the Colonel said they were to have such." The Colonel never knew any thing about this for more than three months and when he did, he gave the guy ten days in the guardhouse. I would have liked to have been able to trade with him.

Matisovasky, Cusano, and I were bundled together one morning and walked into Cabanatuan and our last prison smell for a long while, in fact, almost three years. We were loaded on a train and shipped to Manila for a night in Bilibid. I spell it with a capital for it was a land of plenty. They had almost everything they needed. Almost everything was improvised but worked as well as tailor-made. The one-legged men were the happiest. Many of them had just learned to walk on pegs and would sit around whittling on their legs with mess kit knives, taking time out only for chow and to hide another war victim's leg or crutches. This always wound up in a race that any two-legged man would have to hurry to see. I suppose each of them had a number of chess sets, which he had whittled from some hard wood or from carabao horns. Many were from commercial designs but there were also a number of very original designs.

Some fellow counterfeited some Nip money on cement sack and it looked the same as a four-bit piece. He had several thousand dollars worth out before it was detected. Here I met J. C. Brill for the first time since the fall. We had each been told the other was dead and we both almost fainted with joy but he dropped a bucket of mutton stew to capitalize the situation.

Next day we were loaded for Lipa, Batangas, still seventy men per car and about to smother to death. When we arrived at our station, we were met by trucks, split into forty-man groups, and hauled away to the Nip huts, which for nineteen months were our homes. I can't say happy for we had too many hardships to surpass. As we were getting off the trucks one fellow tossed his skivvies (wooden shoes) near a guard, pointing to them, he shouted, "Joe, watch my skivvie." The guard became very indignant. "Me no skivvie, me no skivvie." Later we found out that "skivvie" was a Nip woman chaser.

We were lined up, divided into companies and made to bow to the Nips for the first of many times in blanket assignments. Our barracks were nipa covered with a hard wood floor on either side, which would accommodate a person five and a half feet long in a horizontal position as it was commonly referred to, with a space left open in the center about a yard wide. At first things went good, hours were very short and food plentiful. No one was beaten for many months. We worked by contracts which were laid out in the mornings and to last all day. When we finished we could come back to camp and cook. A new word was added to our vocabulary, "quan" which meant individual cooking in a small bucket, mess kit or what you could get and use recipes you thought of, never heard of but thought of in your strains of hunger. For ten months, Matt and I had

an egg fried for our breakfast. When Loui was with us, we stretched it with cornstarch. One of Matt's favorite cracks was, "Now I know how Jesus Christ fed the multitude, on three loaves of bread and a bag of cornstarch."

I planted a small patch of potatoes almost from the start. What a good crop that was, and what a blessing, for in May our rations were cut. Those and the other patches I had fed three of us. We had them baked in the ashes, boiled in a tin bucket, and fried in coconut oil.

Lice had been very bad at the other places we had been so we undertook to get rid of them. We boiled everything we owned (500 men used only three drums) for an hour and they were almost solid white with dead lice and cooked eggs. When a new detail would come in, we were quick to embarrass them by checking their blankets or bags for bugs.

On the first day of January, we had a ball game in celebration of the emperor's birthday. The game came out in our favor and Tagastia ran his soldiers around the field eight times, then he ran them around the barracks for over an hour, standing on one corner and swatting them as they came by. It was an enjoyable sight for us to see. One thing I can say for Tagastia is that he was an old soldier and really believed in better treatment of PW's. He treated his men a lot worse than he did us, therefore they called him a "tailless devil." The only man he ever beat was a Captain Coon who took some beans off a Filipino woman.

Captain Wermouth, who was in charge of the detail, had the nerve for his position. The Nips were deathly afraid of him for he told some of them if he ever caught them in camp he'd break their necks. After he shoved a few of them around they respected him as a god.

Toward us, Wermouth was not so good for he bought commissary weekly and retailed it to us on the percentage basis. He was nice enough to tell us what he paid for everything he bought and what he got when he resold it to us, always insuring himself by saying, "Boys, I'm not giving you something for nothing."

We heard a Major Farris was coming to take command and we even staged a demonstration trying to prevent this because some fellow had been on a detail where Farris had beaten a kid with a two by four because the kid didn't feel like going to work. He died that night, and the Major got credit for his death.

The demonstration wound up by a marine by the name of Keisier getting bayoneted and the Major's, "I've been added to this command and I'm going to run it as the Japanese see fit. You'll do what I say and like it or you'll suffer for it for I shall turn you in on any disobedience." The Major was escorted in by the guards and we were immediately put to bed.

The next day Wermouth left camp and every one had the gloomy air about them that this was the end, but Farris paved the way by issuing some Red Cross fruit, chocolate and cigarettes which apparently were hoarded by Wermouth.

Soon afterwards, our old reliable guards changed and we really missed their faces. We had them nicknamed and they really thought we were hot stuff for naming them after the American movie stars. Their names went something like this: "Porky" after the comic strip, "Dingle Hooper" because of his walk, "Rachel" after his high-pitched voice and womanish ways, "Wimpy" because he was so dumb and backward in all his dealings with the PW's. He was also bald headed and had a rice gut which would pass for a No. One beer gut. "Nix" because he was always on the

spot when he shouldn't have been. He caught many guys making deals with some guards and he always bribed them.

The group which relieved them appeared to be OK at first. They checked out to be a syphilitic group from China who did believe that we were only machines and never needed refueling. One day "Charlie Chaplin" as he was called, hopped on a car which had one bearing out of the wheel and was a bit slow. He put three of the boys in the hospital by beatings and two more from exhaustion. Three Whiskers, as Nocaheeche was called, was a gunso who had three, only three, lovely whiskers growing from his chin. His favorite game was to give us a contract which three men shouldn't have had to do. With a pick and shovel each man had to move eighteen cubic meters of dirt or else. Many a night have I come in after dark because I, or some unfortunate, couldn't move the required amount on time. Most generally we were beaten with a shovel or meter stick but occasionally he would pick up a pick, knock the handle from the pick, and then proceed to knock hell out of some PW. "Old Man" White as we called him was beaten up one afternoon by Three Whiskers so badly that his right arm was useless for many months. On another day, he hopped on four Mexicans. One of them tried to take a stick away from him. It resulted in a terrible beating for the four and fifty-two pushups on the part of each. "Hog Jaw", so nicknamed because of his hog face with buckteeth and hard name to pronounce, Yoni Mariu, was a student officer and was afraid or didn't reprimand any of his soldiers for their unmerciful beatings. He also saw to it that his men got part of our Red Cross food after House and Steele escaped.

He was our first of the many officers who thought more of his appearance than he did of the livelihood of the PW. "Dobie" Nelson B. Hale was the life of the camp. Around him all rumors ceased and began to be a bunch of lies. Every one thought them lies but when Hale started talking everyone would gather around. The canny devil then passed the buck to some one else in his ever-convincing tone. His favorite tale was to write on a piece of paper; then he would "find it" in a rock pile, box car or some place out of the ordinary, place it in his shoe and by the time he got into camp every one would be in such a suspense the guards would sense something wrong and thereby maintain a steady patrol of the barracks while we prisoners were sitting on pins and needles and "Dobie" laughing up his sleeve. Once clear, the paper would be read and most generally, it was nothing more than "The Americans are advancing in the Pacific" or "The Germans were pushed back fifty more miles this morning."

One day a rumor would get out that Rommel was surrounded. The next day Rommel would have been killed by one of his henchmen who had surrendered the German army. These rumors were very harmless but as far as moral went, very invigorating. The best rumors were the ones concerning an increase in food. They were meant well, but when some of them didn't come though it would result in some rumor-fed PW's death. His ambitions would be so high that his starved guts would be aching and his mouth watering constantly then the Nips would publish a bulletin that a recent shipment of food would be given to PW's only in Japan. It was in this way the newspaper was a detriment to the camps.

Garrett, a fellow with light or sticky fingers began to operate wholesale and almost openly. He would steal a blanket, jacket, shirt, or anything he figured that he could sell or exchange to the Nip guards. One day he was caught trying to sell seven blankets. The Nips beat him terribly then tied him up for four hours. Then all blankets were taken away from us and reissued. Two men should share one blanket after this and rainy season was just coming on. When these rains start and all your clothes get wet, there is only one way to get warm. That's go to bed and stay there, now we had only half a blanket.

Only a few days later Garrett was caught stealing jackets which were Japanese issue. A guardhouse was built for him and he remained there seven or eight days. He was released and returned to Bilibid, then sent to Nielson Field, thence to Zablaan. At Zablaan, he met his "waterloo" by reporting Nip soldiers to their superiors for hijacking prison rations. He was charged with attempt to escape (two fellows were trying to escape at this time) and beaten to death. Pistol Pete was his assailant as the rumor has it. He was tormented three days then taken toward Martinez River. A cross now rests there. His personal package, which came one day late, was placed in his grave.

There were a number of profiteering rackets operating, but some how I still managed to keep from stooping this low. Perhaps my potato gardens kept me too busy and Matt's tin shop kept him from getting into it just yet. For a short while we were given an afternoon off every other week and you couldn't sleep for the hammering going on around the place. All hammers were improvised from a shovel or a large flat-headed bolt with a piece of wire drawn up tightly in a twist for a handle. Cutting tools were mess tin knives and broken hoe or shovel blades and anything we could steal from the Nips. Matt bought a pair of pliers from a Nip truck driver for seventeen Chesterfields and a cold chisel for four camels. His anvil was a connection plate which we'd taken from a train which brought rock for the airdrome. His drills were fashioned from flattened twisted nails. You should have seen the barber chairs, strong boxes, tables and things which were built here. Matt even built a rat trap from a cot spring and a quarter inch rod fastened to a six by one inch board. When that trap went off in the night it sounded like a rifle shot. The only thing I didn't like about it was that we agreed to take turns removing the rats and resetting it at night for there were no lights and I was afraid I should break a finger. That trap really got rid of those rats, but their fleas would come down on our beds after the rat died and they required many hours of chasing through our underwear before we could catch them.

The Nips, for some reason, became very liberal and gave us Sunday rather than Saturday afternoon off. We were allowed to have church in the afternoon and a show at night. The Nips got a bigger kick out of seeing Negro walker's big apple and the brer rabbit dance than anything else. The show generally carried a dirty joke or song then there would be that certain person with their womanish ways do the burlesque. One night it was drawn up on a better plan, omitting the burlesque and dirty jokes. Favorite songs were sung and one fellow, Stevens, was looped with sugar alcohol truck fuel and he sang the parody, "I'm A Rambling Wreck From Georgia Tech." The Hog Jaw really liked it until the closing stanza came: "And when the American planes and those Yanks and tanks come rolling by, we'll blast the Flaming Sun from the sky," he changed his mind. As a result, we went to bed early.

Medford got tight on the P-40 as we called it one night and tried to enter the barracks everywhere except the door. Next morning he was terribly bruised and when we kidded him about it he said, "I'll never drink that damn stuff again. It took one swallow to get the alcohol and two swallows to get the gasoline."

Lt. Shope was called "8 Ball" because of the military principles he tried to carry forth. He was by far one of the best officers there was on the detail. His greatest trouble was his temper, which gave many of us a laugh when it got out of control, but we were all back of him when he was shanghaied off the job. The reason for this was the way he argued with the Nips. One day Buck, a Nip corporal, was beating a PW. Shope immediately intervened and was beaten terribly for his actions. This happened on several occasions but when the Red Cross clothing and shoes came out, he got in an argument with the Major because of the cut the officers were taking while

the men were still going half naked and barefoot. The result was a report turned in which removed him from the camp. Now we had only two men to look to, Lt. McShane and Captain Compton. The boys all said that McShane was too dumb to know better, but McShane was looking forward to having friends when the war was over. If he has no more, he has at least one. He'd argue contracts, figure them out always trying to make a mistake in our favor and when caught, he wouldn't give in. He took several beatings from "Three Whiskers" for this.

During our second rainy season at Lipa, we were given carabao hide shoes and raincoats which should have been discarded two years before. In a few days pushing those cars in the mud up to our hips, our shoes were gone and we wouldn't wear the raincoats because you were hindered in them and you'd be as wet as if you didn't have them on. The guards had become very unreasonable by now because they had to be out in the weather, too, and they had become used to the idea of machines, not men. They got very mean, never gave us a break at all. One day seventy-five men were forced to dig a trench over one thousand yards long, a yard wide and in some places over two yards deep. Many boys came down with diphtheria and pneumonia after this and the Nips walked around in their masks like we might be poison.

On the 29th of February 1943, two men escaped, House and Steele. Our work ended temporarily but the pains which we suffered still show. Everyone by now knew how to keep his mouth shut and, of the men who noticed their disappearance, the Nips found nothing. They resorted to the water treatment to make us talk. Gravitt suffered worse than any. He was turned in to the Nip MP who took him to Batangas and tied his head between his knees, and laid on a bare tile bathroom floor. They shoved a water hose up his rectum when he wouldn't talk. Finally, they brought him back and told him not to tell anyone how he'd been treated, but as it was, everyone knew almost what everyone else did about one another, from his parentage till the surrender. Perhaps he'd been in camp three minutes before we knew about his treatment.

Then came the sitting period. Twenty men were forced to sit in a kneeling position for five days and nights, away from the barracks and paroled to the guardhouse. When incoming details came in, their jackets would be found under those men's knees. This was unlawful and there were several beatings over it. The soldiers had enough nerve to beat the PW's when they tried to stretch their toes. Sit on your feet, stretch them straight from your knees and see how long you can stand it. Those boys took it for the full five days and nights though they pledged double work and half rations, but they couldn't get a budge.

The Nips lined us up for tinko (roll call) one night and let me tell you they had a playhouse. They searched every barrack for food, money and in general, took everything they could get their pilfering claws on. From Matt, Cobb, Wilson, and I they took enough Red Cross food to last us, as we were using it, until July. We only got about a third of it back. How we hated to see those bastards eating a tin of meat with their fingers, smoke stateside cigarettes and then the merry devils would occasionally give us a cup of the coffee from our packages with milk and sugar in it when we worked "hard." Matt had a bed built from two bys [timbers], which he'd stolen and covered with sacks, and we were lucky enough to have cigarettes and fruit hidden from them there. Those few cigarettes brought us more than anything we had ever dealt in, though we were almost caught a number of times, as we were searched in and out the gate daily, not partway, but thoroughly. Matt carried cigarettes in his socks, and I carried them in a crushed-in crown in my hat. Then I sold them to "Dolly", a queer Nip, but if there was ever a Jew, he was one of them. I made a deal whereby I'd sell five packs of butts direct to the Pino and in exchange, I would give the Nip one pack. The Pino paid from ten to fifteen pesos per pack, whereas the Nips only paid two fifty. I traded for merchandise and in those deals, "Dolly" would have to have an excuse to

get into camp with the truck to deliver them. These deliveries would take several days. By that time, it would be too late, for someone helped themselves every time they got a chance.

The guards became very, very nice all of a sudden and since we read that in June Sicily had fallen, we thought perhaps there might be the case of Germany surrendering and the Japs arbitrating, but it was personal packages, the next best thing to a surrender I guess.

At any rate, we were very glad to get them though they sat in the Nip office for about three and one-half weeks before they were issued. One Saturday the Nip officer announced the names and what the packages contained. My package was the first to be seen and I had a general idea of what it contained. The rumor had it that there was a churn and a clothes wringer by the time it had got to me, and I wondered what I could churn for the only milk we'd seen since we left home was coconut. What would I use the wringer for, grinding corn? We seldom had water to wash our clothes in and they'd dry in ten minutes in the tropical sunshine.

As the packages were distributed, the Nip officer opened and searched everything. All Old Gold Cigarettes were taken because of their victory verse, "Freedom is our heritage, etc." The majority of the others were opened to prevent their sale. Pencils and stationery were taken to prevent contact with the outside. This was a very slow process, for the Nip officer would taste this and that. How that burned us up.

Every one watched his buddies open their package and admire what he received. The most popular items were vitamins pills and cigarettes. By late evening, I got my bundle. Hog Jaw came by, turning everything over. There in the bottom was a page of the September 15, 1943, issue of the Dallas Morning News. He slapped me, naturally, tore the paper in two and threw it over the fence. An incoming detail recovered it and there was an immediate rush to our barracks. The Nips thought perhaps there was a fight in progress and before the paper could be read, burned it before our eyes and laughed in our faces. I was later questioned about this episode but was released.

Now came the moment I'd long waited for. I had the floor and intended to make the most of it. I rubbed my shaved head and, taking my time, rolled the brown paper off the box all the while saying the people down in Texas know how to pack something for emergencies like this. I took an undershirt, held it high for all to see, saying, "Well, I can use this for a Sunday when I don't have to work." Another undershirt, giving this to Cobb who had received no package, "Now you can rest in a clean shirt next time. Shorts, towels with a hard candy stain, yes, here's the hard candy, malted milk tablets, mother's cocoa, and boys, look here! Say they're starving to death over there, dehydrated soups and a pound of Sugarland, Texas sugar in a moisture proof package, razor blades, enough to last ten years and look at the soap, four bars of Palmolive and even two bars of laundry soap. Now you can't say they don't know how to ship it huh? Oh! Here's something else, handkerchiefs and – ", pausing. The boys in their excitement began shouting, "What is it Picker?" Of all things, a long comb, pretty flowers and all, and my blond wavy hair has been shaved off. Did those boys ever roar! They soon sympathized for our people had no way of knowing what to send or the conditions.

My package had arrived with no spoilage in my box whereas many other boxes were almost ruined. Every person was wondering what the contents of that newspaper was. Various rumors got out about it, but no one admitted starting them when they were tracked down. Naturally, I got the blame, for it came in my box.

Joe Camerotti and I got into an argument over a bean deal. The officers tried to get a vote on buying wholesale and putting them through the cookhouse. They would cost us 50 cents per month and we'd get a good deal out of it. Joe said he'd burn his money first and when the first poll was taken the score was about sixty-five Noes and seven Yeses. I gave a talk at the barracks that night, saying that if the officers got a few more than we, what's the difference for as it is we can't get any anyway. For two days I talked it up and down the line using the slogan "What's the use of cutting off your nose to spite your face," for you know it's a good deal. Polls were held and the score five against it, all the rest for. Joe was a hard loser and no matter how hard I tried, I never made too good a friend of him.

A group of men was about to depart for Bilibid prison when some quinine was stolen. The person buried it in a sack behind the latrine. The guard on the other side of the fence had me recover it and then he tried to identify the thief but he made a bad miss. The thief was Willy, but we couldn't prove it so this was the scheme which Martin and I planned. We'd charge Willetson with the theft and Willy would give us a lead. "Whitey" was placed under observation while we reported to Hog Jaw the detective methods, and what an audience. The boys really got a laugh out of my tossing clods out the latrine and what have you. They called me G2 and hurraed me so much about the deal that I almost gave up the deal several times. Then we got a break. Willy would be leaving next day and he came by Whitey saying, "Well, I know you're not guilty but boy, I sure feel for you. You know you're left holding the sack." I came up then and confessed to Whitey that it was a cooked-up deal. When he told me what Willy had said I reported it to Martin. In just two hours, Willy had been beaten for this by the fellows. He readily admitted having made the theft but he fought the boys like a pugilist. Whitey was thanked for his good-naturedness and some of the boys looked at me like I was crazy, calling me a liar.

Our work was getting us nowhere fast now. We had no shoes and ten men were doing the work of fifty Filipinos on the cement mixers. Pushing wheelbarrows on boards barefoot is no darn good if you're empty but with cement spilling over them, you make three rounds and look back and see blood in your tracks. We laid a strip one thousand meters long and fifty meters wide in two months. Then we were put to clearing and leveling a strip one thousand meters wide along the eastern side of the strip. Boy oh boy, what a job. We finished in record time and those Nip planes were coming and going daily. Cracking up too. Many trainers piled up one after another and perhaps you don't think we kidded the Nips about it. They weren't the appreciative type and as a result, we were beaten. It gave us something to do for a change anyway for we were generally struck whether we laughed or not. "If your planes crack up like this, what the hell do you think they'll do when the Americans come?" was the most common question.

A white Nip's³ leg was busted and cards were cut to see who would learn the Nip language. I was one of the low ten and what a job. In a couple of months, I could get by but this got me more beatings because I'd tell the boys, "This is the way they said do it, but if it were me I'd do it as you see fit." When the Nips complained, I got the blame.

We were transferred to Camp Murphy of Zablaan Field in April 1944 to what we thought our death, for here they gave us more work and less food than we'd ever had. We got to work early and it was very late when we got in, rain or shine. They brought our noon chow to the field, therefore putting more time on the projects.

³ This is a racial slur, meaning "a good Nip."

Now nineteen months construction work were behind us, our quan cooking stopped and our rations cut to very little, a small amount of corn, whistle weed stew, and a spud for our dinner and we were all down in weight. When we fell in for work, you could almost hear our bones rattle as we would get in place. My weight went from 140 to 120 in just a few days.

Every time we got a chance to steal something to eat, we took it, come what may, and many of the fellows were beaten so badly with clubs that they would lie in the hospital for weeks before getting over it. One time the guards shook down a boat detail of twenty men. They recovered over a hundred pounds of rice and peanuts. The entire detail was forced to sit in the kneeling position and beaten every hour, tantalized by food which the Nips cooked for this purpose. It was a common sight to come in at night to see a PW or two standing at attention holding a shirt or something he'd tried to sell to a Filipino or perhaps a sack of rice he'd stolen from some detail, tied around his ears. On the change of guard, he'd be beaten and poked in private places with a pick handle. I saw one fellow who had a coconut burst over his head when he'd been caught with it. Another had to sit and eat six coconuts in twenty minutes. His diarrhea was increased to mucus and blood as a result.

Another time the PW truck detail was lined up for bringing in alcohol. Some of the fellows didn't have the guts to admit what it was for but they were beaten along with two doctors. I suppose the doctors still limp and I know some of the boys do. I and another fellow said we brought it in to drink. They beat the hell out of us and let us go. The rest of them were beaten till three a.m. on the change of guard and were made to kneel in the rocks in between.

Some hot plates were made and operated from the electricity which supplied the barracks with lights. This provided a place to cook on. They were fashioned after the regular commercial plates, but were steel wire coiled and fastened to slate boarding. These burned out after about ten hours but they were good cooking while they were going.

One day I caught a cat, drowned and skinned it. It had been boiling for fifteen minutes before the plate burned out, but do you know that was as good a cat as I ever ate. I've eaten half-cooked rice for the same reason but it was no worse than that we got from the mess hall for the work ration was so short that the food was seldom cooked. A dog would come into camp and you would see a PW walking around, naked with a bundle under his arm. You'd never see hide nor hair of that dog any more.

I was put on the jackhammer detail. The compressor only carried seventy-five pounds of pressure and running five-foot steel on that pressure in limestone to the tune of sixty holes per day is no fun on anybody's chow. This was the hardest work I'd ever done. Besides the low air pressure, the drills were no good and you almost had to punch them down, then pull the hammer and steel out. Many times the drills became wedged in and we had to blast them out. This generally wound up with a beating. One day the Nips had me bore a hole in a tree with the jackhammer and blast it over. It wouldn't have taken but a few minutes to have chopped it down, but no, they made me put in a half day drilling the one hole.

One day we were drilling in a fifteen-foot cut and the previous blasts had loosened the stuff on top. As the operation increased, the rocks would come tumbling down. I was caught underneath the hammer when a large stone rolled down upon it. My left hand was swollen twice the normal size and I had to continue working.

One day at noon I slapped a Nip for fooling with the wires we used to ignite the charges. He marched us over to the Nip officer and when I told the Nip he was about to blow four men from here to the hereafter he himself was beaten and transferred to another detail, but in a few days I got the worst beating I ever got.

My hand was swollen from the rock fall and my knees were swollen with beriberi. I asked the boss, "Nockem Down Gunso", to let me drill thirty holes all day and then quit for I was sick. When he refused the request, I threw down the jack hammer saying that I wouldn't drill any. I thought perhaps I'd made it for he walked away but this thought was short lived for he called me down where he had the men lined up. He placed me on a rock which was about a four feet cube and began toying with a pick handle. I saw it all too clearly. He then made me tell the PW's that he was going to make an example of me, a man who wouldn't work while he was sick. He struck me on the shins eleven times before the blood started running out and then three fellows passed out. One of the inferior guards stopped him and I drilled those last sixty holes by dark.

One night "Smiling Jack" checked us as we came in from the powder gang. My hair was about an eighth of an inch long. He gave me a few licks on the rump with a pick handle, dismissed the other guys and gave me the "Yasimaye" treatment. They do this by putting you in a kneeling position with a two by four on the back of your knees. As one fellow slaps you, two more jump on the two by four. When I didn't complain too much he kicked me in the stomach and in the small of my back. I was groggy and could barely see when he put me in a half barrel of water. The water came up to the top and would not clear my head, just my nose. The devils then took turns striking the top of the barrel to keep me in the mood of holding my crown below the top of it. I almost froze to death.

By now the bed bugs had gotten well in the lead. You could not put your finger down without scaring some from their dusty shelter. You couldn't sleep until you were tired of fighting them off and sick of the odor of those you had killed. Some Nips brought a detail up from Palavan and the Nips moved into barracks that had been recently occupied by the PW's. The first night the screaming heathens moved in I suppose they got little or no sleep for the barracks had been unoccupied for three days and those bugs get terribly hungry during the day. Anyway, the next morning the Nips put their blankets out to air. One Nip saw a bug on another's blanket. He called it to the attention of the rest of the group. They rushed forward, laughing and screaming as a group of PW's would for a bit of extra food. Then after a glance at the adjacent blanket they walked away to their own, muttering and began to pick the bugs from them. We got a kick out of their expressions and we know they never appreciated it.

My kidneys had increased their output and many times during the night I would awaken to find myself falling down the tall cement stairs which led to the latrine. I was not the only person in this state. There was nothing the doctor could do for any of us either. I talked to a Captain Sabin, a level headed, quiet fellow who said it was a poison caused by the lack of salt and pure water. We were now drinking river water.

Sabin and I compared dreams. He'd had one whereby he'd become suddenly sick and told the fellows goodbye, tried to say goodbye to his wife but she didn't want to listen and before he could attract her attention he'd waked himself. I told him of my dream on board the Coolidge of being very crowded on some boat and an American sub appearing to throw a fish to us, and as I awoke the sub disappeared. Then at Delcamen airdrome where I'd dreamed of becoming a PW and being beaten by some giant slant-eyed devil. And another of American planes being shot down on the premises near our camp with the pilot killed. This worried me terribly, but the one

which I really reveled in was one night I walked in my own back door, only one brother and my parents knew me. The boys seemed as strangers who were willing to cooperate on anything, but before dinner was done I had to depart back to Nip camp. It seemed so real and do you know I could still taste fried chicken and sour pickles.

Captain Sabin said that there might be some of us get back to the states but that for some reason he just thought he wouldn't be one of them. A few months later we buried him at sea enroute to Japan. I suppose that some people would class them as coincidences but not I for every one of them came true.

The Pinos were being kept from us more than ever now and we were seeing more of them executed every day than before. It was really unbearable the way the Nips treated them. I was unfortunate enough to witness a public execution of an old man and woman, both white haired, and two small boys on Dewey Boulevard in Manila. They were beaten senseless then two Nips waded into them for a hacking party with their sabers. Then Pinos were called forward to remove the bodies. After this, traffic was permitted to continue. This is only an example of the daily roles which were supposed, I reckon, to harden the men for front line duty.

Air raids were being sounded regularly and ack-ack practice was held every day. The Pinos kept telling us the Yanks were coming and our main byword was "When the Yanks and the tanks come rolling in." We talked of what we'd do and about all it amounted to was to eat.

Then the day of all days, a red letter on all our calendars, September 21, 1944. The ack-ack began firing rapidly. At the time I was in quarters and I thought I'd see the practice. To my surprise, planes were mixed with the bursts of the shells. Shouts went up all over the camp and the siren sounded. Nip planes began taking off and cracking up all over the runway. There along the edge of the clouds came two hundred or so Navy dive bombers. Boy, what a sight for sore eyes. We really cheered as the planes shifted as though they were a football team and came down on their nose from about fifteen thousand feet, pulling out and leaving a sheet of flame and smoke. Was every body happy? And were we having fun! Suddenly four yanks came by and strafed the planes along the line toward the ack-ack battery and a sheet of flame shot forth from their wing tips, quieting those rapid-fire guns. The raid lasted about an hour but it seemed only minutes for this was our first ringside seat to a real show of this sort. Few details were out, and the ones that were out were entirely deserted by their guards. They came in trying to keep a solemn look on those faces of theirs, but it was just like trying to make the Mississippi river flow north. They had been told by a Pino to be ready to move that night for the guerrillas were coming after us. Between three-thirty and four that afternoon they came once again, this time leaving everything in smoking shambles.

The fellows said the yanks weren't bombing at us. If they weren't they were making darn good averages. They got three of five barracks, killed seventeen Nips in one bomb proof shelter we'd built and twenty-three in another. It was a very tantalizing moment as that bomb sped toward us. It looked small then began to grow with its approach. George Turner was in front of me and he said his name was on it. I kept watching, thinking perhaps mine, not his, was there, and to my surprise it was striking about twenty feet in front of us in the roof of our barracks. When the dust and the falling bits of the barracks and cement settled there was a quietness, then groans of agony came from some fellow who'd fallen in the open. He was moaning something terrible until one kid who was lying under a slab of cement about the size of a dining room table shouted in a laughing voice, "Shut up and come over. Give a hand to get this damn thing off me." Boy, were we happy, laughing, talking and everyone helping to dig some of the boys out, patting each

other on the back. The major was about as excited as anyone and continually walking up and down saying, "Now boys don't do anything rash. They ain't coming tomorrow, may be a month yet."

On a survey of the camp we saw an observation plane blown in half, fences broken in several places, one misplaced crater and three guards in the drain from our shower. What a sight. At last our wishes had come to pass. We'd seen the planes, seen the Nips run like scared rabbits and, too, the daredevil way our boys took to the ack-ack and their unerring mark.

We were talking over the escape; Cobb wasn't for it. Wilson and I packed anyway, but about dark our hopes vanished for there was by that time more than one guard to a man. We departed by nine to Bilibid and a bunk in the open for the first night. After that I slept under De Marko's bunk. He was one legged and didn't lie too close to the floor as a rule. Bilibid was a hole now. Two meals a day now, one small meal of rice, another of chops, same as you feed hogs, and a slim green stew. Boy was that ever rough, but we enjoyed the days when the planes would come over and the ack-ack rattled off the tin roof. The boys would rush to the windows and watch the planes come down and the rolling clouds of smoke as they disappeared. The guards would catch one peeping once in a while and lay the club on him unmercifully. During the few days that we were here some of the boys went insane from hunger, but when we were given the lice infected uniforms we knew we would be moved soon. This uniform was woolen and the one I got was cut to fit a person about five feet tall and about forty-two inches around with split cuffs on the trousers. My six two and those trousers gave me a clownish appearance.

I made deals with tobacco that I had for medicine, sleeping tablets, sulfa drugs, bandages and anything which I thought I could use for I knew I should need plenty of this.

When we prepared to leave the stricken, overloaded camp, I thought of the things I'd heard of while interned here. Such as this ran through my mind: I doubted more than ever that we'd land on Japan because of the previous reports of prison ships sunk, of the food and water they served and too, of things they'd done which they could have left off to make a more pleasant concentration camp: food, water, working hours and conditions and their lack of medical treatment. The question always arose why they tried to keep us alive for we were no longer an asset, just a burden to them. Of assigning a fellow a two-man contract because he said he could do twice as much work if the Nip would let him alone. The Nip understood English and the next afternoon the guy's head was brutally hacked off with a saber; of Johnny Long Knife, a fellow who killed and injured three Nips, to die a few minutes later and thinking he got more satisfaction than he would drowning like a rat. Of all the fellows who had been killed on the Nichols Field detail, of Betts watching his brother being shot and wondering how or whether I would be buried at sea. I gave Shorty Hempill and Haringula my parents' address so they could tell them that I was still kicking the last time I saw them. We walked through the rain to the boat and along the way we got the V sign from the Pinos and occasionally a morsel of food. Golly, what we PW's think of the Pinos today would put half the American population to embarrassment.

There along the way we saw numerous rail tracks blown out, buildings and gasoline burned and upon our arrival what we saw—the Manila bay was punctuated with ship masts and hulls to break the monotony, while the machinery was melted to bits. Large steel booms were bent to a sharp upside-down U. What a sight.

There was a group of PW's here already. They were from Los Penos detail and in much better condition than we. Naturally we were anxious to get with them for there were so many of

our buddies there. The Nips kept us pretty well controlled until they started loading us on what we thought to be our barge only to take us out to a larger ship. When we were pushed and beaten in as tight as we could stand and told to sit down and make ourselves as comfortable as possible for this would be our home for twelve days, we could only look at one another with despair and question marks on our faces. The scramble for a seat began and when I finally got settled I was under the edge of the hold, sitting on a blanket with my feet underneath me to keep them out of four guys' way. Now we were packed in and was it ever hot.

We moved out soon after and I do not remember whether it was that night or the next that it rained, but anyway I got wet and came down with pneumonia. Moorehead crapped himself when he could not get one of the four buckets which the Nips had supplied the seven hundred sixty men in the front hold to use. As a result, no one wanted him to sit near them and he was tossed about like a ball, beaten as badly as any one had ever been by the Nips. For the whole journey he was this way. Men suffocated, died from lack of water and were beaten to death just for a little more room. There was a continual argument from the first day and my codeine really came in handy. I'd take four tablets of this and three sulfa and then ask the boys if they wanted a soft seat. As they would rise, I placed my legs and shoulders where they had been. Soon I would begin to feel numb, and bright and dull circles would appear before my eyes. Afterwards, they would get together and never break their direction and I would know nothing until the next day.

Several nights the guys would get tired of sitting on me and try to toss me out. My childhood came back to me too readily and I suppose Foster still has teeth marks on his arm. I finally got up to top side to be beaten for trying to steal some water from the drain pipes and was sent down. "Little Speed" got me and as I climbed down the ladder I thought of the time when he'd beaten a PW for talking while he was setting out rice. After he finished the PW saluted him in a courteous manner and said in a very rapid voice, "When the Yanks and tanks come in, I'll get you, you son-of-a-so-and-so, O.K.?" The Nip said "Yosh, O.K."

We put men overboard right and left every morning; seldom anyone died during the day, though there were a couple of cases of salt water people. Anyway, now the hold seemed worse than ever for the water I'd gotten and the gumbo of rice and squash began to pass through very rapidly and three of our buckets were gone. I dug a hole in the coal pile in such emergencies. Our food, water and refuse were raised from the hold on a rope. Many times the rope busted and the refuse was the worst because of its odor, though several guys were knocked senseless by falling canteens, and twice large tubs of gumbo rice were dropped. The result was blistered bodies to add to the agony.

Fighting continued, men pushing for space would be attacked, or men walking to and from the ladder for topside were pushed and tossed around like a cork in stormy waters. These fights were generally just a show for the roll of the ship would throw the weakened men off balance and they were apt to go backwards when they wished to go forward. I knocked a guy's teeth out and I believe he was almost as proud as I. His actions were, anyway.

At first when the subs started pinging our ship (we were five feet below the water line) a silence would fall; before the journey was over a cheer would go up, "This is it! Let her rip, J.C., let her rip." They barely missed us a couple of times. Then one day in Hong Kong the planes came over and dropped a load along the shoreline. They were the first B-24's we'd ever seen in formation. About this time the dive bombers pulled a surprise attack from the hills and did it ever shake them up.

When Major Strand and Captain Sabin died it was felt so strongly that when their death was announced there was no sound, the ship was the quietest it ever was, and then suddenly everyone was trying to talk at once.

When we got into Formosa for a day or so the Nips battened down the hatches and out to sea we went. We rode all day long in a circle and many of us thought we were en route to Davy Jones instead of getting off as they'd promised us. Four PW's had been taken aboard and no PW was allowed to talk to them. When we finally unloaded we were told they'd been sunk in the Straits of Formosa and had been in the water four days before they'd been picked up.

After thirty-nine days aboard, we were surprised to find only thirty-nine men not getting off. (They had died en route.) We were pushed into barges and taken ashore for a spray job which did about as much good as putting a fire out with a quarter inch hose and no pressure for our bugs were still as bad. We moped around for a couple of hours, stealing copra, dried coconut, and then we were marched about a hundred yards to a railroad station. Every one was trying to shift into position for a cattle car for it had been so hot in the boat, naturally we expected the same. Instead we were each given a seat in a passenger car.

I gave my seat up and slept on the floor and when at nine that night they gave us rice and pickled papia with a bit of fish thrown in for good measure, I thought the war was over. Plenty of water, good food, and a handy latrine, and a floor to sleep on: what more could a man want?

We disembarked at Inden, Formosa November 10, 1944. Thirty-nine days had elapsed since our departure from Bilibid. Many men were too stiff to walk and they were loaded into carabao carts and hauled to our new home. Enroute we were served tea and a rice ball. Boy oh boy, everything was just hunky-dory now.

Upon our arrival in camp we were divided into groups of thirty-nine, noncoms one way and privates another. How about that distinction? Then we were fed by the Nips. We just knew the war was over then for it was the first time they'd ever done this. Our beds were already made and every one wondered why we were each given four blankets and a pile of straw to sleep on, but it turned cold that night, removing that question.

We were awakened to the bugle and on our first "tinko", roll call, the interpreter gave us a command in broken English which went like this. "Before you get up in the morning, open the window and let in the latrine, sleep around the barracks and the fresh air, then for breakfast prepare." Some one said for him to say it in Japanese. He did and this is what it was. "When you arise in the morning, open the window to let in the fresh air, then after going into the latrine, sweep around your barracks, then you may prepare for chow." Old "Wiggy", as everyone called him, was O.K. though he couldn't speak English.

I made up my mind not to speak Nip, for the boys who didn't, got off much cheaper than the ones who did in the Philippines. I stuck to this until I was separated from the Americans and the guards gave me so much hell for not speaking Japanese.

The British camp was nearby and they did our cooking for more than a month. It was almost that long before we were let with them. We'd be going down for chow and the guards would take us behind some bushes. The limeys would put the buckets down and go back. After they were out of sight we'd come out. I suppose they were ashamed to let them look at us for we were really a starved-out bunch.

Then all of a sudden we started to work, first mowing a hill to make a garden. We had contracts of about twenty stretches of dirt to move in each half day. The distance walked was about two thousand yards for each person per contract, that is, if the checker watched closely. If he didn't the same couple would walk by him and when he wasn't looking turn back and check in again. My checking in was just about over, though I didn't know it. One evening I took a seven-mile hike into the mountains for bamboo. We only had two guards and a "honcho" for ten men and when we were sent into the brush for this switch cane, we stole pineapples from the plants which were so plentiful. I ate one and a third officially, and two and one-half on the side. When we got in that night, I was just about dead and down with malaria again.

I tried to work next morning but I just couldn't and my food wouldn't stay down. I turned into the hospital. There was a Dick Merrisfield who'd been here for a few weeks already who'd lost the use of his legs; Jackson, the camp clerk was next, and then I. I suppose young Merrisfield had a great part to play in my life here for he admired the way I tried to eat and I told him I'd come out of it some day and see he got plenty of food for he was eating well. The fellows gave him anything he wanted and all of it. Very nice of them, too. Anyway, I barely remember anything for a few weeks other than being hoisted to the shoulders of some men and removed from the camp.

We were put in a place with a few sick limeys and a very good doctor but he had little medicine. He gave us what he had and it was sufficient, for Orvis Burnham, P-40 Smith and I were on our feet within a month or so and about the place like a bunch of kids.

One day while I was hanging out some clothes a Nip across the fence shouted for a salute, bowing as he did. I waved my hand and carried on with the clothes. Again and again he shouted, and finally I finished, thanking him as he brought his rifle to port. A limey came out and told me to bow to the little devil. This occurred several times before the officer called me in saying he admired my prestige but it must immediately stop for my reputation of doing things the way I wanted had preceded me by two and one-half months. He asked for full cooperation in the farming line and in return he would be sure to see that we got at least sixty percent of the harvests. Naturally I thought him a liar and when he moved us away I clinched my idea.

We were moved to the sugar central of Farrow and placed with a few more dregs just like ourselves. Here work was much more plentiful than before and it paid well for it increased our chance of stealing. Rations were shorter however. I had gained twenty-two pounds in the last camp but began to lose it steadily in spite of all the potatoes and cabbage we stole from the farms. The rumors were greater and more numerous now for the Yanks were coming over daily and dropping their stuff in greater quantities. These Nips were much more frightened than the ones in P.I. and they really believed in foxholes. One of the guards told us Inden camp was bombed to the ground. We doubted this until a large group of wounded men came in, telling of a Yank raid on a sugar central, killing nine of the guards and a number of PW's. Now we believed all the rumors we heard, whether there was truth in them or not.

One day the bombers came over just as John and I fed the carabao and started chewing sugar cane. The Nips became disinterested and headed for the hills but not us. We ate his and our cane before the twin engine planes quit circling about. So close and yet so far from free men.

When we marched in, "Baggy Pants", the Nip officer, lined us up, asking if we knew anything about the planes. I broke in quickly, afraid someone would be beaten if they admitted

seeing them, saying that I saw them and their tactics were new for we had been PW's for over three years. He merely smiled and dismissed the detail.

Tommaki was a real rascal. When the air raid went he would pull on his tin hat and dive, not ease himself, but dive into the fox hole nearest him and remain there until the all clear was sounded. He came out one day at the noise of the wooden shoes on the sidewalk as the men tramped to and from the latrine. Pole vaulting the fence he said in is high pitched broken English, "Come out, I will punish you! Come out, I will punish you!" Time after time he said this until he spotted the limey coming back on crutches. He lined the poor devil up and beat him with a fifteen-foot bamboo pole. If it had been short enough for a little leverage I suppose he would have been killed and not just badly bruised.

He is to be my topic for a few minutes. Tommaki was an awkward looking two hundred pounder and had an egg-shaped head on his short neck, unusually tall for a Nip and he didn't care how dirty he got his uniform. We had started working in the sugar central loading sugar when he wandered into the cookhouse asking if any one knew how to make chocolate candy. Naturally everyone spoke up they did, but he soon informed them they knew nothing at all. Grabbing the fire shovel which was covered with soot, he began playing like a kid on a wooden horse, yes, his clothes were getting soot all over them, as he straddled and pranced about on the shovel. Then he told them, "The first thing you do is you two men wash a pot clean. Are you going to get busy? Then you two get the sugar. I'll put you to work in the mill and you can steal sugar. Give it to me and if the guard catches you, you do ten days in the "aoso" (guard house to you). Then you melt the sugar with water and mix the chocolate in, (still prancing about) and then when it's done, you two men will break it up in very small pieces and sell it to the other prisoners. Bring me all the money and I give you cigarette. Bring me part the money and I give you hell, oh, I give you shovel on the head! Aah ha, I know, don't I?"

One of the fellows spoke up and he [Tommaki] drew his sword, tossed it into the air and jumped up and down with it, screaming, "When I'm talking, be quiet. You are only puppets and damn fools. All of you the same and you don't know how to do nothing, that's why you're losing the war!" And he relieved the situation by leaving.

He checked the record kept on the hens one day. He found that from eighty-five he was only getting seven eggs daily so the procedure was to tie them up where they could barely reach food and water for three days; sentenced turkeys the same; but he suggested hard work and no food for a carabao when he hit it with his saber and she ran away, breaking ropes which were used for traces. I niggered⁴ him there though. I took another carabao and tied it up in place of "the old girl" as we called it.

He flew into a fit one day when he assigned some men who were so sick they couldn't sit up to make some ink from a powder and water. Only four bottles came back full. Tommaki then lined up Captain Waters and Snyder. Snyder got off easy by telling him that he was not responsible for the detail but Waters was Judoid [Jewish]. He lined the Captain at attention and laid hold, trying to throw him. After numerous trials, always ending up underneath Captain Waters, he stood him against a tree and used football tactics trying to make the captain crap his pants. All he got out of this was a smile and a wakatimi. Waters was a man if there ever was one. The rumor has it that after the surrender, two American PW's pulled the Nip apart with two carabao, against protest of British officers.

⁴ Racial slur, meaning to cheat or fool.

One afternoon when there was no work the boys began their sing-song and, in the closing, the limeys sang their national anthem. The camp was lectured to for an hour or so for this and we were told why we were given no consideration. We were just a bunch of thoughtless heathens and should be shot, not even allowed the privilege of being starved to death.

Speed Murphy, Jo Orvis Burnham, and I had formed a syndicate by now. We would split all spoils and never be without something extra to eat. A raw cabbage could be had by putting it in the benjo bucket when we emptied it on the garden. Peanuts could be had by picking a lock on the warehouse after dark and burnt rice could be had by carrying water for the Nip cook house. The only thing we were lacking was clean water to wash in. You'd pump for ten minutes before your basin would be full, then you'd wipe your forehead, eyes and lips with your dampened fingers and you had it.

We were bundled up and sent to the "General's" camp at Shirakawa and naturally we had to pack and unpack for the Nips. We'd load their luggage and then get the dickens beaten out of us because we didn't have time to pick up our own bags. During the process the sick men were referred to as the men closer to the grave. This expression brought many laughs from the staring natives who flocked to watch our departure.

The walk from Cage to the camp was five miles of the muddiest, rockiest, and the longest five miles I've ever walked. In the dead of the night we arrived at the cool, shady camp. Everything here was different; with the exception of the Japs and the limeys this would have been a lovely place. Shade trees growing throughout the entire camp, Yasimaye park, and a pool which the Nips estimated cost eleven million yen. The general and colonels had built it with pick and shovel using a yea ho pole to carry it off. Also, here the sick men were separated, leaving only working men together with the exception of "blue balls" and "red balls." Blue balls could work a little, red balls were permanent disability patients.

During our entire stay here, Burnham and I worked every day until the end. I can't say we worked too hard all the time but when we worked we really had to put out. We plowed rice fields, potato fields and steep hillsides with carabao. When we wanted to go to work we just took off, when we wanted to come in, we just loaded up our gas cape with whatever we could find and come in. The limeys were very jealous because of the nerve which we Americans displayed.

We would be given, at Torroco, a pack of cigarettes for loading a car of sugar in 40 minutes per eight men. On our first day there, the Nips kept telling us we'd be given a pack of cigarettes if we'd hurry up. All we told them was that we quit smoking. They then offered us a pack per man if we'd load the cars out; all they ever got was three cars a day from the Americans and for the limeys seven. What we would do was to take the sugar in socks, canteens and hats and exchange it at an unfair price to the limeys who were working their heads off and didn't have guts to steal.

At Shirakawa the Americans took their time because they knew that when one detail was finished another would be given. I suppose the limeys would never learn for even after the war was over they jumped in and started stacking lumber for the Nips. When we were mixed with the limeys in the rice fields, the Americans were so far behind that the Nips didn't know we were there so we were segregated and put where we'd have to work. They put men to sewing machines, shoe lasts, carpenter tools and jobs like this we'd never seen operated. We gathered this was

because they were afraid we would get the limeys in the habit of standing around and they'd never get anything done.

Burnham and I stuck to the carabao driving and plowing in water up to our knees, hard places which were like a well-used road, and some of the hardest work we ever did I reckon; but the enjoyment we got from our planning and stealing was unexcelled. We'd wait until the details got in and pull a raid on the potato or tomato patches. Many times we'd bring in as many as a half a bushel at a time and those hot plates which we had hidden in camp were kept busy all the time.

On one particular day I was caught in the tomato patch by one of the guards who had a very good reputation for keeping the PW's toeing the line. My gas cape sleeves were full before I saw him coming and I lay a few nice tomatoes on the top of my arm. He wanted to know what I was doing here at this time of the day. I asked him if he couldn't see, I was hungry and had worked up an appetite, knowing how the chow was in camp. I'd come here to satisfy my hunger. He told me he would shove me into the guard house for my uncooperative act. Placing me about five feet in front he began marching me in, repeating his intentions all the while. I kept eating those juicy tomatoes as though it was the first time I ever was there and telling him that the guard house was the place for me because I wouldn't have to work, my rice wouldn't be much less than that at present, and too, I needed a rest. As we neared the camp I guess he figured I wanted the guard house so he changed his mind, made me throw a couple of tomatoes in the grass and admired my brassiness. When he dismissed me, I gave him the "googlo son," which means, "I thank you for your services" in Nip and he gave me the back talk that he was the one to say that. He never knew how much he helped me that day for my being out alone would have been hard to explain to an inspecting officer which we met just before entering camp. I was still shaking when I related the incident to Burnham and in the next few days we found several occasions to use the above excuse. The farm sergeant caught John once and wasn't nearly so easy to convince but he was the kind of guy that if your work was good you could just about get away with anything.

Our carabao would break away and perhaps stay gone for several days before the police would find and return them. This cost the Nips ten yen so after they'd paid out about a thousand the ruling was made that anyone whose carabao escaped would get seven days in the brig. This cut their cost in half for we found then nearly every time they took off. I'd take "the old lady", as we had the cow named, in the hills and tie her out, come in, report to "Joe the Bugler" that my carabao had run away. He'd say for me to find her or else be prepared to go into the guard house for a week and he sure to come back by six o'clock. I would take off in search of food, tobacco or what have you that I could beg or steal from the civilians or the Nips. I seldom rated anything more than a few cigarettes, a couple of eggs and a small bit of sugar cane or rice but I got to see what the other side looked like. On one of these trips I was stopped by the "Kempo" and I thought I would get the works for he thought that I'd been shot down in one of the American planes which had been flying over daily. I tried my Nip language on him in as convincing a tone as possible, telling him I was only a PW; a carabao driver and asked him how I could speak the Nip soldier lingo if I wasn't around them for some time. He let me off but after his report went in it was compulsory that a guard must accompany any carabao driver when he got off the camp premises.

Planes attacked us most every day and when they came over at first the guards seldom took cover. One day they strafed us in the fields. After that when they heard a roar of a truck and the PW's shouting "P-38" you could not find the guard for 30 minutes. By now they had tightened down on us, so it was utterly impossible to steal as we had been doing. Now shout the P-38 and run for the tomato patch. By the time you had returned and plowed a couple of rounds the guard would come from his hole.

We had begun to crave meat and grease so badly that we resorted to all measures of obtaining it. We baited straight pins as fish hooks to catch the sparrows, the Chinese sacred bird (you'd probably call it the Shy Poke), eating rice snakes which we plowed from the paddy fields, scraping the intestines of the pig that was killed monthly until the day someone put out the rumor that pork renderings were stored in a tunnel which was just outside the camp. Burnham and I began planning to steal this grease. We decided to let Chalmers accompany us. We carried five mess kits. After much feeling and smelling in the dark, we found our way to the cans. We filled all five mess kits, put them under our rain coats, and started back to camp. The lid came off Chalmers' mess kit first and pork grease went all down his trousers. Then my lid came off and I got very, very greasy—greased from my belt to the cuff on my Nip trousers. We saved three mess kits full. This lasted about two weeks, then again, we decided to enter the tunnel. This time we were to remove the tin. I was to go in and Burnham to watch for me. As I got the tin in the doorway, Burnham began singing "Empty Saddles in the Old Bunk House." The Nip almost saw me as I sneaked behind the barrel. Then he sang "There's an Empty Cot in the Bunk House Tonight." I grabbed the tin and ran into a nearby cane field. We filled our canteens, went back into camp bursting with excitement, talking about how close we had been to being caught. Next morning I lagged behind as other boys went to work and transferred the tin to a Chinese grave on the nearest hillside. We were about three days moving it into camp and storing it in wine bottles.

On our second can we were almost caught by a Nip fisherman while transferring it into our canteens. He'd seen us and was wondering how he'd get to the lake. We told him something and as he took his departure we transferred the tin to the brush on the other side where it was stolen by one of the limeys who was snooping around.

By now the guards had again become lax and the carabao drivers were allowed to go and come as they pleased. We started cooking potatoes and vegetables which we picked from the fields. We made a daily habit of cooking in the hills but for some reason John and I got cold feet. Luckily we did for one day when I came in the boys were lined up in front of the tool shed. The Wy Houchu, the interpreter and farm sergeant were giving them the works. Both of my front pockets were full of chili peppers and it seemed that every time I tried to hide them the Nips were watching me. I went on in hoping I would not be searched. I soon realized that the boys had been caught cooking. The interpreter asked me if I knew about or had ever cooked in the hills. I told him that if I was to be a model prisoner, how could I do a thing like that. He asked me then if I knew about it and he had me for a moment for I knew they would beat me worse for lying than for doing anything else. I told him that the Americans and Limeys did not get along and naturally we did not know their secrets. Then he mentioned goose feathers. I thought I had been squealed on, for John and I had stolen a goose one Sunday morning, placing the feathers in a tin and tossing them in the creek. As the investigation continued "Digger" got smart [became a smart aleck] and Wy Houchu lowered the boom on him. He dismissed all the drivers with the exception of Ward and Higgins. These he placed in the guard house, one for seven and the other for fourteen days, because he had Formosa money when they searched him.

Burnham almost fainted when I showed him the peppers which I had stashed the formation with. Now the stealing really got tough. We were searched four times. Not finding anything, they quit bothering to search the carabao drivers and John and I started again. One day a Limey was caught stealing and he squealed on us. Our guard tipped us off by telling us we would be searched when we went home that night. (This will illustrate how dumb our guards really were.) I filled my gas cape with potatoes against the guard's and Burnham's advice. Upon arrival at camp we spotted a guard who was making every one go by the office for inspection. I extended my gas

cape saying in Japanese, "Hold this a minute," and placed it on his arm, walked past, saluted the bugler, came back, removed the gas cape from the Nip with a "Thank you" and as I rounded the corner I broke into a run. I ran all the way into camp and put the potatoes in a cubby hole, untied the sleeves of my gas cape and began getting ready for supper.

The obliging guard came in, demanding to see the gas cape. Upon inspection he said it was not as heavy as it had been, it could not be the same. I insisted that he search the premises and by a nearby bunk he found a gas cape with the sleeves tied up. He was baffled because he could not find any loot. Another close shave, but a miss is as good as a mile.

Ko Ken CeSon had kept us fairly well informed on the war situation. Later his information checked out three days late. He was the kind of Nip that didn't give a hoot whether you worked or not. When he had cigarettes, he split them with you. When you had butts and he had no tobacco he smoked them after you. He is the type of person who should be taken care of but will never get any consideration for the good he did the PW's.

One morning at about 5:45 a.m., shouting "Pip Pick", I answered and he said, "Hurry up, I have some very good news to tell you." I thought perhaps the war was over. All it was was a bit of South African chow that had come in. The Americans had completed Okinawa. A few days later as I was plowing in a field near the Nip cook house, Gwuso came out and said in Japanese, "How old are you?" I never answered. Again and again he asked me. Then he asked in bold English, "How old are you?" I almost fell in the paddy. I answered, "twenty-four." Then he said, "How long have you been a prisoner?" I told him, "I was taken in 1942." Then he said, "You have a short time yet." I asked him in a very disgusted manner "Why do you say that? All the Nips tell us the same; why start such rumors? They are harmful now." He gave me a full cigarette and said, "My country will last but four days."

He left before I could answer. I sat there for at least 10 minutes, thinking of what he'd said. Then, perhaps, I thought "We won't have to steal from these bastards. We can take what we like, we can leave what we like." I went into camp that night so excited I couldn't sleep. I didn't know what to do. I suppose every PW that could walk came to verify the statement. Tension began to hang heavily. Next morning I crawled into the brush and slept for at least four hours. Ko Ken CeSon told me of the atomic bomb. He told me that it was small and that it destroyed six kilometers. This added fire to the rumor that was already circulating in the camp. I couldn't sleep again. Then on August 18 he came after me early at 5:30 before breakfast saying, "Hurry, hurry. I have very good news."

I could see he was bursting with excitement and I left my breakfast untouched, the first mess kit of lugas I had ever missed. As we rounded the corner he tossed his rifle to the ground, grabbed me around the neck, crying and shouting, "Censo a wattie." The sweetest words in Japanese I had ever heard, "The war was over." That day I never plowed a round. I just sat and talked. When I came in I told all the boys, "The war is over." My work was finished. I went on sick call and told Captain Waters that I was not a sick man but now that the war was over my work for the Nips was finished. "Captain, can't you put me on the sick book?" I never worked any more.

Some of the Nips got meaner. Most of them got much better. The boys had very little work to do. Then August 21 at 6 o'clock, the official announcement was made. I shall never forget the announcement. The Japanese had expected us to stage a demonstration so all guards fell out with fixed bayonets. They were sadly disappointed when the Nip commander said, "The long, long,

long, war is now at an end. The Japanese forces cannot withstand the overwhelming odds of the Air, Navy and footmen of our enemies. We must now declare the war at an end, and look forward to the woe that is befallen to us.”

As he finished his speech there was not even a murmur, not one man batted an eye. The Limey Colonel stepped up (no one else would do it) and shouted, “Ki otshic” which means attention in Japanese, then gave the command to salute the Nips.

Boy, the next day we really had the chow, a carabao, two pigs. It gave us the screaming trots, so much meat at one time. For the next few weeks my stomach felt like an inner tube with 200 pounds of air in it. I never quit eating and I was not alone. We ate continually from one meal to the next, only taking time out when we were in the latrine. We stole the ducks, rabbits, suckling pigs, chickens, geese and raided all store houses. We ate all the best, no more entrails, no more of them for me.

We were told we would be moved to Hi Hoku where we would be given more food, be easier to care for and have better bathing facilities (they never mentioned the bed bugs, though.) This time the Nips packed their own luggage and as we left the camp we left by the West Gate. The Limey Colonel bouncing back, “Strictly military,” and the men already beginning to bitch. We were marched out at eyes left, with a salute to the Japanese officer. Tears ran down the old Devil’s cheeks as the 420 men marched from his command. We were loaded on trucks and hauled to Cagee where we were put aboard a train bound for Tia Hoku. We were surprised that the once beautiful city of Cagee was now burned to the ground. A few weary civilians watched our departure. Among them were utterances pitying us.

Upon arrival at Hi Hoku we were given bed space that was almost double to what it had previously been. We were four men to a mosquito bar where it once had been ten. We were each given a bunk with a straw tick mattress on it. The only thing wrong with this bunk was that when you sat on it, it sounded as if you had stirred up a hive of bees. The bed bugs were thicker than hair on a dog.

The Limey officer laid out a detail to move stacks of lumber that had been previously placed here. When it came time for us to do our part of the detail we just took off and the Limeys worked like the Nips. The Limey Colonel called me down to see why I wouldn’t work. I told him any work that was necessary we would do, but work that wasn’t necessary we would not do and we figured this unnecessary. He made an issue of it, took it to Major Sherry, the American officer in the camp. The American officer said, “You are right.” When the Limey Colonel said, “The Nips have 60 men over here. Why can’t you get your 8 men out?” Sherry said, “Hells Bells Colonel, those bastards live here. They own this damn country and by God I’m not staying here any longer than I have to. If those boys do it they are on their own.”

August 28 we were liberated. Old Glory hit the top and what few Americans there were made more commotion than the Limeys and Dutch and Chinese together. Some of them actually hated to see the war over. Sounds hard to believe, doesn’t it? But not me. I was tired of being a machine. Those flags were made from parachutes that were dropped from B-29’s. The first stars and stripes we had seen since the Nips had used it for a floor mat in June, 1942. Every one went wild trading their Nip equipment to the civilians for eggs, milk, chickens, ducks, watches, whiskey, money and sake, that common Nip drink. Seven of us went into Tia Hoku. We went into a bank. There we saw a guy sitting with a lot of money in front of him. I asked a Chinaman in Nip how I could borrow some money. He said in English, “You’ve had it.” Then I asked him

where he learned that expression, which was a Limey expression. He said, "I used to work in a machine shop. When the Nips told the Limeys to do something that they didn't want to do they were answered with "You bastard, you've had it." He closed the bank and took us to an officer's club. This club was a large circular affair, barely furnished but with good carpets on the floor and a stage in the back.

We ran the Nip officers off and asked for some whiskey. They tried to give us hot sake and everything except whiskey. When we told them we wanted American whiskey now and not after awhile they brought out some Hog and Hog that was sealed with a glass stopper and paraffin which had probably been there 75 years. We saw our first geisha girl. They came on the stage, did several dances and asked what else we wanted to see. Naturally we saw a strip tease. Then one of the girls came forward and asked if we wanted to go to the rooms. Naturally the boys grabbed a gal and disappeared up a circular staircase. The madam asked me why I didn't go like the rest of the boys did and I said I wanted to go with her. I didn't want to go with one of the other girls (she'd already told us that they all were syphilitic.) After a few minutes arguing I finally told her that I was the first American she'd had a chance at for 50 years and probably would be the last one for the next 20 years because the Chinese were taking the place over. She took me to her room. There they undressed me, wrapped me in a hot Turkish towel, laid me on a tin slab that was three feet by six and built a fire under it. It may sound a little crude but it was a steam bath anyhow. I don't know how we got back into camp but just made it in time to catch the boat out.

I suppose the civilians will never forget the day we left. They were along the railroad track for 18 miles. We tossed them cigarettes, candy, small articles with food that had been dropped with Navy planes. The Japanese fought over these articles just like the starving civilians.

We were taken aboard the destroyer escort "Kretchner" and they treated like "somebody come." They gave us stationery, clothes, money, and even gave me a short snort that I still have. Those sailors looked like giants by the side of us starved, scrawny people. One of the Limeys came up to one of the sailors showing him a letter he'd received from home saying my bloody best girl friend married one of your blood night fighters. What is a blood night fighter? A Yankee sailor. The Yankee sailor grinned and said, "Bud, I hate to tell you this, but when the Negro went to England he said he was an American Indian who had been given an injection under the skin which turned him dark so he could move about easily without being seen at night." We never saw the Limey again until he got off the ship.

We were moved to Manila. Several of us saw the communistic trend the States had taken. The sailors laughed at us for having made such remarks. I met an uncle of mine in Manila. I was surprised but overjoyed to see him. I thought he'd still be teaching school in Texas. He told me how things were at home and for the first time I'd seen my mother's handwriting and pictures of my brothers that I didn't even know.

I traveled all over the island of Luzon. About all I could see was a shamble of what had at one time been beautiful cities and black-market operating Filipinos. The Filipinos had changed considerably since I'd left here. The dollar had depreciated in value. Now it was, "I love you, Joe. I love you a lot for 5 pesos, Joe. I love you twice for 10 pesos, Joe. I love you all night for thirty pesos, Joe." As yet I didn't feel like any lovin'.

One of the most shocking incidents that I've ever had hit me yet was this: I went with three of my buddies to Binan. Upon arrival we saw a crowd at the base of Rizal Memorial. There

was a basketball game in procedure. A large group of Filipinos, WACs, A.N.C.s, officers, and doggies, just like me, were there. We worked our way through the crowd and just as I was taking a seat a Filipino kid on the other side of the court began screaming and yelling, running toward me. It had taken us 10 minutes to work our way through that crowd but I'd barely sat down when that kid threw his arms around my neck yelling, "Daddy, Daddy." If there had been a hole there or even a crack in that cement I would have disappeared.

I finally got my clearance from hospitals and my records October 9, 1945 and flew back to the States, after four years, to Hamilton Field. I was placed in Letterman General Hospital where I saw many of the boys who were in the same boat as I. Money to burn, nothing but the best, and that was none too good for us while our money lasted. Seven days later I was released for 90-day furlough from Brooks General Hospital. I was in for a big surprise. Though I knew my mother, father, and elder sis I would have taken my brothers for some of the neighbors' kids. I asked one of my brothers if he knew me. "Sure, I know you. You're some soldier who has come to see Kenneth." I told him who I was. Another brother said, Aw, Shoot! Is that who that is!"

Now, just like all the rest of the PW's, lucky that I'm one of the few that came back, got me a "better half" (she thinks that anyway), can't be still until the water gets hot, distrust every civilian I see and am so doggoned disillusioned that I don't know what to do.

Manuscript Ends

Tagastia Son [1]

I'm gonna give a little of this poetry here. It's called Tagastia Son over there, our Japanese commanding officer in charge of camp down at Lipa.

Now rest your eyes and I'll tell you something too.
 When I was a prisoner, that was in '42
 We were moved from the big camp way down to Lipa
 We were given shelter under a thatch of nipa.
 What a relief to leaving that camp of desperate and Hell.
 A fresh odor now,
 What a change from that terrible prison smell.
 We were greeted by an old chap.
 He was broad and husky
 His face a rugged map
 His mustache, beady eyes, and wrinkled face.
 How he fooled us
 We thought we had landed in a Hell of a place.
 When he gave us our first CO [2]
 His eyes shown as in hate.
 His welcome was short
 Although he was sorry we had arrived so late
 "Your dinner is ready
 It'll have to do.
 What you'll find, though, is leftovers:
 Just a bit of rice and carabao stew."
 He dismissed us with a smile
 And that stiff Japanese bow.
 We grabbed our mess pans and ran like the devil for chow.
 It sounded like a rickety train a roaring through.
 We really went after that rice and carabao stew.
 We rested well that night
 For we left most of our trenches and lice behind.
 A mosquito net, a pile of hay, and no noise of any kind.
 We were wakened early into something new
 Called "tenko," [3] we sounded strange numbers
 Easy as far as you go. [4]
 I've committed a great error,
 I see I've been very mean.
 In English we said "roll call"
 And counted from one to fifteen.
 To our sorrow we found this stuff was held twice a day
 And the old man insisted on doing it the Japanese way.
 For all his shouting, his reprimands, and much ado
 It never changed our opinion of him, nor that rice and stew.

Now this man is, to the common person,
 Just another ornery cuss.
 Before our time was over
 He proved to be the best to us.
 He knew the work was hard and the food was bad
 And when you complained of something he could mend, he was glad.
 For nineteen months he taught us to work and play
 He gave us language lessons and taught us to live the Japanese way.
 Now they transferred him to a new project, an airfield, too.
 But before he left us he really issued that rice and stew.
 Finally we sang Auld Lange Syne
 And you should have seen the old man cry.
 We sang that song because, to them, it also means goodbye.
 There was a let-down feeling in that camp,
 All men felt it, I know
 But the geisa [5] had been transferred
 And it was time for him to go.
 We really lost a good commander
 And we thought we were through.
 But that next bunch of slant-eyed Nips
 Cut our rations of rice and stew.

[1] See Jack's Story, page 56.

[2] It sounds like "CO", or perhaps skiosis (and may be a Japanese word).

[3] "Roll call" in Japanese.

[4] It may not be this phrase at all, but a Japanese expression of counting.

[5] It sounds like "gay-suh" or "gay-soo" and I assume it's a Japanese word.

September 21, 1944 [1]

This one concerns a red-letter day for all PW's that were stationed at Camp Murphy, September 21, 1944.

September 21, 1944, yes that was the day at Camp Murphy's greatest pleasure.
We watched our planes in action and enjoyed feelings words can't measure.
An exciting day about the middle of the morning
The Japanese sounded the first of many air raid warnings.
They were very late for before the siren ended its wailing call
The American bombs had already begun to fall.
They came in great numbers, never diving under fifteen thousand feet.
They shifted as a football team for they had a lot of ack-ack [2] to beat.
They would play around, then hold their poise
Turned their nose to the ground; seconds later, create a heck of a noise.
Climb back into the sky with an accelerated roar
Then nose downward and give the Japanese some more.
They came so close to the camp—five hundred feet is not very far—
We thought they were just doing it for us to show us the new Yankee star.
But that evening we had reason to change our mind
For the way they bombed us we thought we'd left this world behind.
They came in smaller numbers but still they were a wonderful sight.
After about three passes the ack-ack was quiet.
Now down the airfield they strafed—they were only about five feet high.
One American caught fire—too bad the kid had to die.
With his burning plane we said his maneuvers were fine.
He took two Nip fighters to the end of their line.
We scoffed at the Nips. All their fighters had gone below.
We raised so much fuss. We had nearly a year to go.
Our barracks were in shambles, our bedding was ruined by the blast,
But yet we were happy, and sorry the day had passed.
At this time we planned an escape. We knew just where to go—
Across the broken-down fence two miles away waited a Filipino.
Now "Freedom" our crazed minds began to say
But before action was taken the Nips came and took us away.
The war was not over yet; in fact, we were in for a lot more.
But our morale was lifted by the Navy fighters, September 21, 1944.

[1] See Jack's Story, page 64.

[2] Anti-aircraft guns.

Thirty-nine Days of Hell [1]

This one explains itself—Thirty-nine Days of Hell.

Gather round while a morbid story I will tell.

It concerns a boat ride but really, it was just thirty-nine days of Hell.

On the first of October, 1944, from Bilibid Prison they gave us a suit of Nip OD [2]

Telling us we were going to Japan, a long boat ride across the sub-infested sea.

We shook the hands of our buddies, asking them to tell our folks goodbye.

We tried to keep up our hopes by laughing though we knew we were bound to die.

How many ships had gone before us? The rumors came back, none were saved.

Now our lots had been chosen and we made preparations for a watery grave.

We were marched from the prisons to the dock, a staggering group of men.

When they forced us into the hold, a thousand tonner, we knew it was the beginning of the end.

They shoved us as tight as we could stand, they beat us with a stick.

We were told to be seated, "Make yourselves comfortable"; that was a Japanese trick.

For we were packed in, seven hundred and sixty in a space thirty by sixty in the hold.

Our space was dirty and lousy and just a pyramidal pile of coal.

You might think I'm lying, but I'll tell you I'm not.

It was filthy, dusty, crowded terribly. No air-conditioning—golly, it was hot!

To get a little relief we removed our shoes and clothes;

Now we were near naked, no water. How we made it that night, God only knows.

The air was stifling, the feces and dysentery had already begun to smell;

This ship had only started this journey, thirty-nine days of Hell.

For many days we sweated, cursed, and fought,

Starved almost teetotally; dehydrated, same as potatoes, we thought.

Each morning we listened to that major roll call, listening for our buddy not to answer his name;

What a hell of a place to die in—it was such a terrible shame.

Men drank their own urine, water from steam jets, and salt water, too.

When once the stuff went down, they realized it wasn't the thing to do

For they failed to satisfy their immediate cravings or their thirst.

They began a hideous series of screams to bring forward failing voices and curse.

They cursed their patronage, the Japs and even Uncle Sam.

They knew they were done for and somehow didn't give a damn.

I can say I was fortunate for I hid my plight with pleasant dreams

With a dose of opiate. I was no longer at sea, but at home on a mountain stream.

Somehow there always entered some gruesome and abnormal snake.

He was large and small, beautiful patches and friendly. Somehow I knew he was Nature's only
mistake.

There are many such experiences that they cannot explain

For before the dreams would come true, I'd be wracked by another surge of pain.

Tobacco and water were the things most talked about

But when the food was lowered into the hold there was always a shout.

Our tobacco ration was nil, our water was a half a canteen.

Our food was lugow, a squash that was half green.

Now to the most dreadful: Our latrine was a five-gallon can.

It was raised and lowered and passed around by hand.

Many times some dysentery-stricken PW had to dig a hole;

Perhaps we were lucky we were quartered on a pile of coal.

Thirty-nine days we were subject to submarine attacks and by air.

We thought we were goners for our chances of escape weren't even fair.
Somehow the Lord was with us or it wasn't our time
For this boat ride, the depth of the ocean only received the bodies of thirty-nine.
Sometimes in my dreams I still see the grotesque heap
In the hold, fighting, cursing and starving;
The ship I still see in my dreams.

[1] See Jack's Story, beginning on page 66.

[2] Nip OD—a Japanese olive drab uniform.

One of the Stories Jack Told

Today is the first time I've told this story. Bear with me; I might not get through it. Sometimes I have trouble because the memories overwhelm me and I start walking in my sleep. That gets me into some odd places.

When General King surrendered the Philippines in 1942 we America soldiers were taken prisoner and marched on what later became known as the Bataan Death March. We were kept in compounds known as concentration camps where we served as slave labor building runways for the Japs from coral rock using picks and shovels and wheel barrows. We also carried sacks of cement on our backs. The first week I carried one; then two; then three; then four; then the fifth week I reached what the Japanese decided was my capacity—five sacks at eighty pounds apiece, and when liberated I weighed eighty-five pounds. I would lean forward resting my hands on my hip bones and keeping my elbows behind me. Then other PW's would load me.

There was an American major who was friendly with the Japs, who was given the chore of assigning men to the work detail every morning. He was the same one who told the Japs that we had plenty of shoes just because he had five pairs. The soles were worn through on mine and I showed the Japanese camp commander that my footprints were bloody. The Major Farris didn't like that because I had made him "lose face."

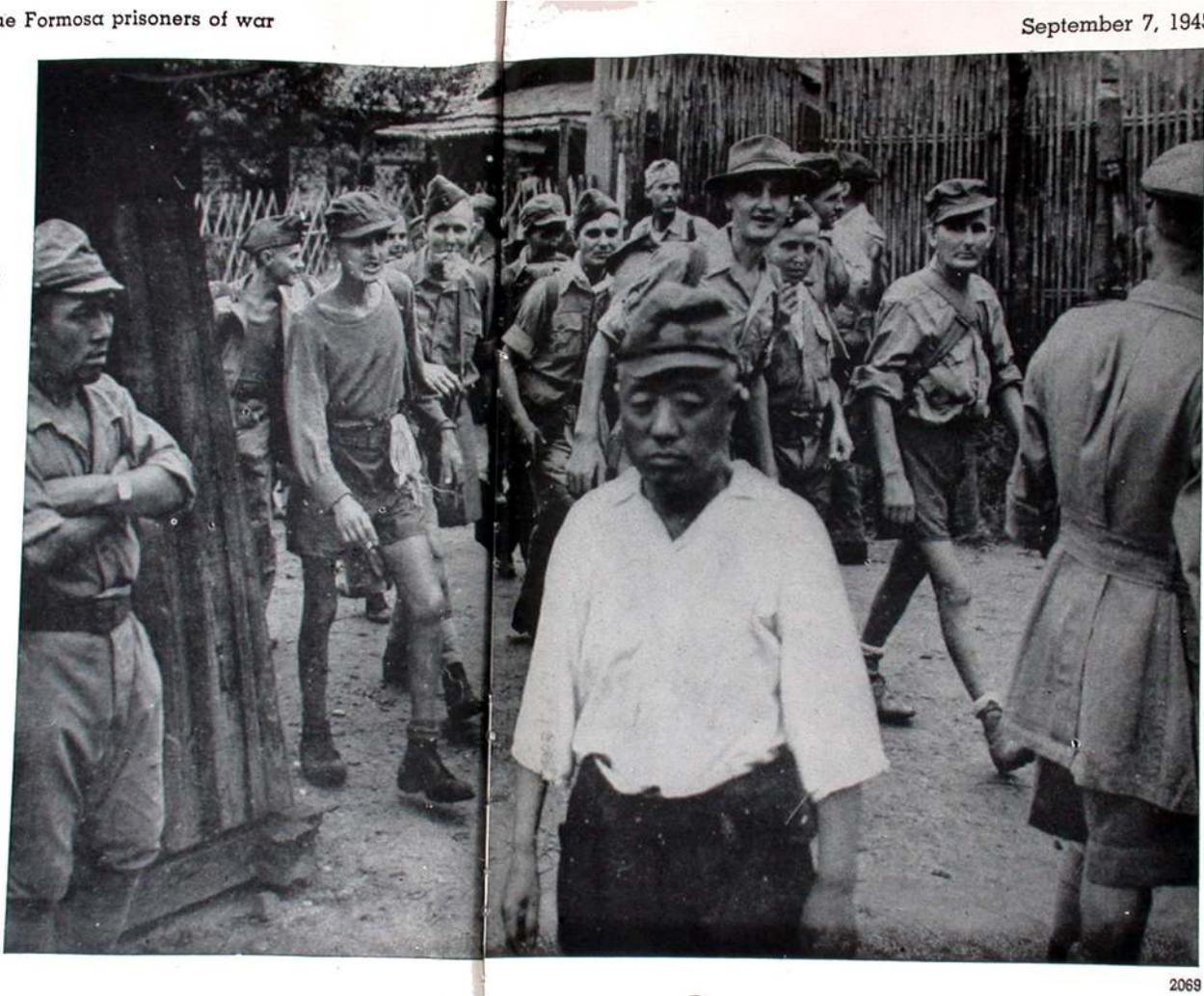
One morning the major had made a list of men for a certain detail but one of them had come down with dysentery. In other words, he was unable to leave the straddle trench. Major Farris got upset that he would have to make his list over again. He got a two-by-four and hit the soldier, knocking him into the straddle trench where he drowned in the excrement.

When we got home we reported Farris. He was believed because he was an officer and a gentleman and graduated from West Point. We had plenty of witnesses to his collaborating but our word was not good enough. We were all declared not accountable. You see, you just have to work with the system. So, Major Farris received a state-side desk job and we were all furloughed after spending time in veterans' hospitals. I received a card telling me he was in Kansas City. I went there and waved a knife in his face. I mean, I was in his office leaning across his desk. They transferred him. I moved to Texas. Eventually a card came in the mail telling me where in Louisiana he was I hitch-hiked and scared him again. Everywhere he transferred one of us would find him. We chased him until our accountability was about to be restored and then he fell on a bone-handled knife. That's all I know about it.

The Marines rescue Formosa prisoners of war

September 7, 1945

BRAVE MINE FIELDS. A United States task force swept through two mine fields to land marines on Formosa where they rescued 1,200 weak but happy prisoners of war who had spent the better part of the war in three "hell camps." The commander of the rescue force, Rear Admiral Dixwell Ketcham, sent out this radio message: "We are observing darkened-ship regulations, but the glow from within the souls of these men who were Japanese prisoners for almost four years lights up our whole horizon." Most of the prisoners were British, about 200 being Americans. The picture shows emaciated British and Australian soldiers streaming out of Camp No. 6 in Formosa as sullen faced, well-fed Japanese guards turn away.



2069

That's Jack on the left, cigarette in his right hand, left foot poised about two inches above the ground.

Tommaki, (aka "Baggy Pants") is in the foreground in the middle of the photo. See Jack's story, page 69.

About the photo: Jack Owens was a crew chief in the Army Air Corps in the Philippine Islands when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Not long afterwards it became obvious that the Japanese would overrun and capture the Philippines. The ships, planes and pilots were pulled out of the Islands and the remaining personnel were left to fight a delaying action to slow the Japanese assault. No attempt would be made to rescue them although the men had been promised reinforcements. The U.S. soldiers were pushed to the Bataan Peninsula where they surrendered on April 9, 1942, with the “impenetrable fortress” Corregidor Island, also known as “The Rock,” the last to fall. The captured men were put on the infamous Bataan Death March toward the first of various prisoner of war camps where some would survive until the end of the war in September 1945. You can find a recent story about the Bataan Death March in the Smithsonian Magazine (“In Their Footsteps,” March 2004, Volume 34, #12, pp. 80-87.)

Waiting for Jack
By Charles Owens

July 5, 1940 left an indelible memory for this eleven year-old boy. That's the day my oldest brother Jack left for the army. I just remember that something was different. We were in the kitchen and Jack was leaving, and Mama was crying. I could not imagine what the tears were about and I supposed that maybe she was peeling onions or something. This is coming from the limited experience and knowledge of a youngster, who's now looking back through the wrong end of a telescope to that earlier time.

Hearing about his experience and training in the Army Air Corps in California stirred my imagination. Later when he came home from California in a car with some of his buddies, tearing down that dirt road toward our house at about 4:30 Am., we were already awake. Nothing new about that--that was normal schedule. How handsome he looked in his uniform. Every word and action made me hunger to know more. Not long after his return to base, he was shipped out to points west.

He arrived at Manila in November 1941. Not long after that we all remember December 7th, that overcast Sunday afternoon, hearing the news of Pearl Harbor over the radio, and wondering what this meant for us. We heard from the War Department that Jack was presumed missing-in-action, and he remained in that category for more than a year. Finally a tattered post card, mimeographed with multiple-choice categories arrived, and he had checked "I am well.", confirming that he was a prisoner of war. Throughout this long silence granddaddy "Dock" Farmer always said: "Jack's a farm boy. He's tough. He's used to living off the land and looking after himself. He's going to make it." It was hard to remain optimistic with such a long silence and so much bad news.

When rumors of torture and reports of the cruelty of the Bataan Death March came out, that increased our anxiety. Time went by slowly and we lived in hope, encouraged by news that some few Americans had escaped capture, or their captors. The day came when we heard that we could send a CARE package, and Mama followed instructions. Later Jack reported that his captors had looted the CARE package, only allowing a large comb to go through, and by that time he had shaved all the hair off his body because of the lice. We could send letters and I remember the instructions to "Use all block letters." I don't know if they ever reached Jack. Now 16 years old, I fantasized that I would go into service and be able to liberate Jack.

The war ended and still no news of Jack. Then about September 15th, we received a long letter from Jack, saying that he was in the hospital and doing well. I set out at once to tell Granddaddy that Jack was alive and well. The seven-mile walk was easy because I was carrying such great news that Jack was alive, that he was free at last.

We always looked at the abuse and torture of our POWs with a sense of moral superiority. We --meaning our country--follow the Geneva Convention, obey the rules of war, do not abuse prisoners under our care, and give them food and water. Many of us had contact with German POWs in our country, working on our farms and we knew they were treated

well. That's why the prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq was such a shock, and a blow to that sense of fair dealings we have always felt.

The Day Jack Came Home
by Joe Owens

All of my memories of my brother Jack are viewed through the lens of his being a prisoner of war of the Japanese during World War II and I suppose that all his experiences during his life after that war were viewed by him through the same lens. Jack was 17 years older than I and I did not remember ever seeing him until I was in the second grade when he came back from the war. To me, Jack was that mysterious person whose picture (in his Army Air Corps uniform) sat on our piano. I was surprised to learn that he was kin to me, that in fact he was my brother. "When is Jack coming home?" I would sometimes ask Mama. She would cry briefly and say, "I'm not sure he's coming home."

I was not a very perceptive child, a trait that has pursued me into adulthood. You would think that I knew who all my brothers and sisters were, but that's not the case. When I was six years old, I began to learn about family relationships as my sister Alice began to explain how I was related to my mother's and father's relatives. I learned that Uncle Cleaver was my uncle because he was Daddy's brother and that Grandma Farmer was my grandmother because she was Mama's mother. It was a surprise to learn that Monnie, Betty Jo, and Wayne were my aunts and uncle because they were Mama's sisters and brother. Nobody ever used "Aunt Monnie" or "Uncle Wayne" (except in jest) because they were younger than most of my brothers and sisters. After all, Mama was the oldest of twelve children. I asked Alice about various family members and learned how they were aunts, uncles, or cousins. Finally, I happened to ask about Sybil and Earnest Merrit, who often visited with us. Alice, in great surprise, blurted out "Why, Sybil is your sister, just like I am!" "Sybil is my sister?" I asked, somewhat skeptically. With further reassurance from Alice, I discovered a new sister and she has been a little bit special to me ever since. Sybil married Earnest when she was 16 years old and I was just one year old so, as far as I was concerned, she was just someone who came around to visit on weekends.

One day in the fall of 1945 I was at home. It was probably some time in the afternoon and perhaps we had returned home from school. Charlie was sent to the mailbox, a mile away, to get the mail (which was usually just the Paris News, but we sometimes got a letter from someone.) He had ridden to the mail box on Kenneth's Harley-Davidson motorcycle. I'm not sure where Walter and Alfred were, but they weren't at the house. Mr. Gordon Hogue drove up into the front yard and he had Mama and Daddy, both dressed up a little, perhaps our postmistress, Miss Jenny Hogan, and a soldier in uniform with him. I looked out and saw the soldier and figured it must be Uncle Bill, since I had seen him in a uniform like that not too long before. I was a little surprised that Uncle Bill was back so soon because I thought it was going to be a good while before we saw him again.

The soldier walked up onto the porch and talked to the people around him, asking about various family members. I was a little surprised that this stranger (by now I figured he wasn't Uncle Bill) seemed to know so much about our family. When he heard that Charlie was soon to return from the mailbox, he decided he wanted to hide behind the front door to surprise him. When he came into the front room, he spied me, picked me up in his arms and carried me around and exclaimed, "Alfred, how you've grown!" What a joke it was

on him because Alfred is five years older than I! Of course, I still had no idea who this fellow was.

Jack was waiting behind the front door when Charlie rode up. I don't know if Charlie knew what was going on but he was encouraged to go into the house. I watched to see if the soldier could give Charlie a good scare (why else would anyone hide behind a door?) When Charlie came into the room and Jack stepped out, Charlie let out a yell "Whoaaaa!" and the Paris News went flying across the room as the two hugged each other for a long time. I was just impressed with how far Charlie had flung the Paris News.

After an hour or so I became convinced this was my brother Jack. Now our family was complete.

Uncle Jack and That Grindle

by Eddie Owens

Prelude

One of my fondest recollections of childhood was when my Daddy used to take us kids to go fishing. I look back on those days and remember my Daddy's big hands over top of mine, showing me how to cast a line and then telling me to count to ten before reeling it in. And he'd laugh out loud when that fish would hit and near 'bout yank the rod out of my hands. Daddy sure knew a lot about fishing.

We could tell when Daddy was gettin' ready to take us. He'd be reading the paper or fixing something around the house, and then he'd stop whatever it was he was doing and look up and stare, like he was lookin' at something 'way off in the distance. And then he'd say something like, "I wonder if there's any worms in the worm bed?" And it'd be just like asking a dog if he wanted a bone. Why, we'd run around there like chickens on a cricket chase. So Daddy would always tell us to go dig up some worms out of the worm bed. And we'd always ask him how many, and he might say "forty-two" or "thirty-seven." And we'd go out to the worm bed and dig up exactly how many worms he said and count 'em out twice just to make sure we had 'em all, and by that time, Daddy had all the fishing poles stowed away in the car along with the tackle box and a fish bucket, and we were ready to go fishing.

Boy, we sure liked to go fishing. And I think Daddy liked it just as much as we did. Maybe even more.

He'd get us all baited up and find us a spot to fish away from tree limbs and snags and bushes so we wouldn't get tangled up. And then he'd go get his fly rod and tie on his favorite home-made fly and go stand in his favorite spot to fish on the bank--'way on the other side of the pond. And he'd start swishing that line 'way out and then 'way back, over and over again, 'til finally he laid that fly down real soft, beside a lily pad. And after about two seconds--POW! That fish would hit that fly and jump clear out of the water, making the awfulest racket you ever heard, and that old fly rod would just double.

And then one of us would yell, "Daddy's got one!" And we'd fling our poles down and run around to the other side to watch Daddy reel 'im in. And Daddy would play that fish 'til we got there and finally he'd get 'im up close to the bank where we could see 'im, and we'd jump up and down and say 'pull 'im in, Daddy, pull 'im in!" And then he'd pull that old tired fish right up to the edge and slip his thumb in its mouth and lift 'im out. And we all "oohed" and "aahed" at that fish, and Daddy just chuckled and told us to go put some pond water in the fish bucket. "But don't get no moss in it," he'd say. So we filled up the bucket and moss got in it anyway. So me and my brother scooped it out but my sister wouldn't cause she said it was slimy. So we slung it at her, and it sure did stick good. And she'd tell Daddy to make us stop, and boy, he sure would. And Daddy slipped that fish in the bucket, and I still remember the smell of that green, speckled bass on my Daddy's hands.

Daddy said fishing was a whole lot like preaching, which is what he did on Sunday, and ever' night of the week during Revival. Said when he was preaching, he was really just fishing for souls. Way he put it, "If you worked up to your main point and delivered it just right and it landed real soft right on top of them hungry souls, why you was bound to hook at least one or two." Sometimes Daddy would talk about how he played 'em once he set the hook, and then when they

tired out, why Daddy said he'd reel 'em in for the Lord.

Some days when the fishing was real slow, Daddy would practice up on his preaching. He'd stand over there on the bank and lean 'way out over the water just like he was in the pulpit, and he'd fling that line 'way out and yank it 'way back, over and over again, and all the while he was admonishing and cajoling and pontificating, and all them other things preachers do, until his face turned all red. And he'd get louder and louder as he worked up to his main point, and we'd put our poles up and sit down and watch. We were always captivated by these performances, though we'd witnessed them many times before. But a man who exercised his skills with such perfection as my Daddy could not be easily ignored.

Why, Daddy could crack that fly rod like it was a bull whip, and you could hear that line singing clear across the pond. By the time Daddy delivered his main point, he had that one spot in the water whipped up into a froth, and then he'd zing that fly one more time, and we'd watch it land real soft on top of a cloud of foam. And then everything got real quiet, and we knew it was time to go home. So we pulled the worms off the hooks and slid the poles in the car and climbed in. And while he was driving back, Daddy would sing us a song about pine trees, and we'd stick our fingers in our ears and wish we were home already.

But this story ain't about my Daddy. It's about his brother, my Uncle Jack. And this ain't just another fishing story about the one that got away. It's the story about the one Uncle Jack wished he'd never caught.

The Story

I reckon Uncle Jack was the toughest man I ever knew. Why, he was so tough he could hold a burning match between his thumb and forefinger 'til it burned completely out and keep a perfect smile on his face the whole time. Uncle Jack was an East Texas farmer. Worked hard all his life. His old hands were rough as sandpaper and his face was cut deep with wrinkles and looked tough as leather. Uncle Jack was tough alright. He'd been a Japanese prisoner of war for nearly four years during World War II and was one of the lucky few to survive. Only it wasn't so much on account of luck that he pulled through as it was outright stubbornness. Why, he just flat refused to give in or give up, no matter how gloomy things seemed. And when Uncle Jack got back from the war and returned to the farm, he settled down into a life of ease.

It was just a few years ago when he and his oldest son, my Cousin John, took Uncle Pete out to the lake to do some fishing. Now Uncle Pete wasn't really my uncle, but that's what we called him on account of Aunt Velma said we could, even though she wasn't really my aunt. But Daddy said that was alright. You see, Uncle Pete never was quite right after his accident. He and Aunt Velma had been married 20 years to the day when it happened. He was an electrician with the power company; climbed poles, strung cable, that sort of thing. Somehow he connected up with the wrong wire and was nearly electrocuted. His mind never was the same after that. He was just like a little child. Mostly just sat around, and Aunt Velma would tend to him. And then she met my Uncle Jack, and he started helping her out around the house with some of the man's work. I reckon it wasn't too long before he'd taken responsibility for *all* the man's work. She cooked for him and made up his bed. And that arrangement worked out just fine 'cause Uncle Pete sure liked it when Uncle Jack would take him fishing.

Now the lake they always went fishing at was a real shallow lake. And the trees being so thick along the bank, why it was a whole lot easier to put on a pair of waders and fish out in the lake. That way you could wade around 'til you hit a good fishing spot, and when you fished that one out, you could move on to the next.

So, Cousin John went wading one direction, and Uncle Jack and Uncle Pete waded off in another. Uncle Pete always stayed close to Uncle Jack in case he snagged his line or got tangled up, and Uncle Jack would help him out. So they went wading through a stand of dead trees, and Cousin John was about 50 yards away fishing in a little pool.

And then Uncle Jack hooked onto something big. He couldn't tell what it was at first 'cause it wouldn't come up. It just stayed on the bottom and pulled like a rock. But he could tell it was big 'cause it wouldn't let up, it just kept pulling steady. So Uncle Jack kept his rod tip up and started walking toward that fish and reeling in the line. And finally, after about ten minutes, the biggest, ugliest-looking grindle you ever saw broke the surface.

Now most folks probably don't even know what a grindle is. And I ain't never caught one myself, but you can catch 'em in near about any lake, river, or even a creek in Texas. It's a peculiar-looking fish with a bony head, long pointy teeth, and a fin that runs all the way down its back. And it's got black skin slick as a catfish's. Now, some old-timers say that grindles come out of the water on full-moon nights and mate with goats. These same folks say catching a grindle brings on bad luck. Most folks just throw 'em back 'cause they figure anything that looks that ugly must not taste too good either.

Well now, when he got close enough, Uncle Jack could see he had 'im hooked pretty good. So he reached down with his free hand and, real careful-like, slipped his thumb in its mouth to lift him out. And just about then, that grindle thrashed and jerked that hook right through the meaty part of Uncle Jack's hand between his thumb and forefinger. And Uncle Jack let out a holler, and that scared Uncle Pete and he hollered too. But Uncle Jack clamped down on that grindle with his thumb still in its mouth and lifted it out.

Now that hook had gone completely through that place in Uncle Jack's hand, and it was still hooked in that grindle's bottom lip. So whenever that grindle thrashed around it would pull on that hook and hurt like hell. So Uncle Jack knew he had to do something 'cause that grindle still had a lot of thrashing left in 'im. But he didn't have a free hand left, and he wasn't about to let go of his rod 'cause it was brand new, and that reel would get all gummed up if it got down in that muddy water.

So Uncle Jack hollered at Uncle Pete and told 'im to come quick, he needed help. So Uncle Pete waded over to Uncle Jack, and Uncle Jack told Uncle Pete to reach in his right shirt pocket and pull out the pocket knife and open it up. So Uncle Pete did, and Uncle Jack told 'im to cut the hook out of his hand, and Uncle Pete just stared at 'im. Then Uncle Jack told 'im it was alright, and to hurry up and cut that damn hook out. But Uncle Pete kept on staring at Uncle Jack. And about then that grindle thrashed, and Uncle Jack hollered and that scared Uncle Pete and he hollered too. And the knife went hurtling through the air, and when it come back down it went kerplunk.

Now, my Uncle Jack had a tolerance for pain that most folks couldn't understand. And what he was about to do next might sound impossible, but my Uncle Jack could do it, and he saw clearly that it had to be done, and he knew he had to do it without hesitation. So he brought the hook, his hand, the fish and all, up to his mouth and clamped his teeth down on either side of that place and was just about to bite through the skin to free that hook, when that grindle thrashed again and jerked that hook all the way up through my Uncle Jack's bottom lip.

So there was my Uncle Jack, hooked through in two places, with that grindle, which had fared a whole lot better 'cause it was still only hooked in one. And those two were locked lip to lip in what appeared to be a kissing contest. And Uncle Jack started hollering for help, thinking Cousin John might hear 'im and come help. But his speech being somewhat slurred on account of him being lip-locked with that grindle, it came out "Hell! Hell! Hell!" And when Cousin John heard all

that cussing, he figured Uncle Jack was just bragging 'bout how big his fish was, so he just ignored 'im.

Now with Uncle Jack hollering and spitting blood all over the place, Uncle Pete got real excited. I guess he figured that grindle had bit Uncle Jack in the face and wasn't about to let go. And since Uncle Jack was his best friend, Uncle Pete took it on himself to free Uncle Jack from that grindle. So he raised up his rod and was just about to take a whack at that grindle when Uncle Jack saw what predicament he was in and decided to turn and run. And about the time he turned, Uncle Pete bore that rod down across Uncle Jack's back so hard that Cousin John heard it, and he turned quick to look see what it was. And Cousin John said the sight of two full-growed men sloshing around in tha tstand of dead trees was just enough to put him in a mind to laugh, which might not seem too unusual, but for Cousin John, laughing was a serious affliction. You see, Cousin John never could laugh and stand up at the same time, but it sure was a sight to see him try.

My Cousin John was tall, nearly seven foot tall, and thin all over. And whenever he laughed, that tall, thin frame would sway like a tall tree in a strong wind, and then it would snap and come crashing down. We used to lay odds on which way he would fall. Sometimes he'd pitch forward and land on his elbows, and other times he'd roll over sideways and land belly up, but mostly he'd just fall over backwards and bruise his tailbone. And as long as he kept laughing, he couldn't stand up.

Now this time it hit 'im hard and Cousin John said it only took a couple of seconds before his knees give out and he fell over backwards drenched himself head to toe. But once he stopped laughing, he stood back up and started sloshing through the water, fast as he could go, towards Uncle Jack and Uncle Pete to see what the ruckus was all about. And when he got close enough, he could see how Uncle Jack was hooked through the lip with that grindle. Said Uncle Pete kept attacking that grindle trying to knock it off Uncle Jack's face, and Uncle Jack kept retreating trying to get away from Uncle Pete.

And Cousin John said that feeling come over 'im again and he couldn't hold it back. Said he could feel himself begin to sway just a little bit. Then his knees give out and he lost his balance and plunged in face first. Said he flapped around in the water like a lame duck, and he just couldn't stop laughing. Finally, Uncle Jack got so mad he started cussing, and I reckon that's what got the grindle riled up again and it started thrashing. Cousin John said it reminded him of a couple of newlyweds having their first argument.

By then, Uncle Jack had had all he could take, and he chucked that brand new rod and reel, and grabbed that grindle with both hands, and yelled like a Comanche, and ripped that hook right through his bottom lip, and ripped it out of that place in his hand too. And then he smacked Uncle Pete about three times across the head with that grindle, and started heading straight for Cousin John. And Cousin John said he stopped laughing real quick and got up and started sloshing towards the thicket on the bank. Said he was almost there when Uncle Jack hurled that grindle at 'im, beamed 'im right in the head. But Cousin John said he kept his balance that time and ran on up the bank and into the thicket. Said it was about six miles to walk home. Only it seemed so much longer than that on account of he'd get to thinking about Uncle Jack and that grindle and how Uncle Pete tried to help and then that feeling would come over 'im and he'd have to lay down in the road 'til he could stop laughing.

Cousin John said he thought it must've weighed about seven pounds. Uncle Jack thought it might've weighed more but said he couldn't tell for sure on account of he wasn't studying that. Uncle Jack said the welts on his back disappeared after about three days, and they took the stitches out of his lip after about three weeks. Said he didn't know how that grindle made out. Said he didn't much care either.

Growing up With Jack Owens

by John Owens

In an attempt to describe my father, Jack Owens, I want to tell you stories that my sister, my brother, and I experienced as we grew up on our farm in Blossom, Texas. Our parents, Jack and Rose, shepherded us three children into adulthood. I mean no disrespect to my parents by using their first names in this story.

Normal is what you see every day. As we were growing up, Mae, Charles, and I saw things happen that very few people have seen. We knew what to do when Daddy had a seizure: cool his forehead with water, get him shaded, keep him from choking, etc. We saw him walk in his sleep and even drive in his sleep. We heard him revert back to speaking Japanese and get upset when he did. It was so funny to us, and also so normal to us. That used to make teachers really get upset with me because "He could have died!" and "You act like it's nothing!" They didn't ever know what I knew about him. They wouldn't have believed what he could do. Because they never knew anyone that compared to Jack Owens.

Jack Owens tied his own fishing flies. We had red, black, and white roosters. When he started selling the Red River Rooster Tail flies, he bought seven white roosters to get the neck and hackle feathers. He made weighted corks from balsa wood and wired the weight into one end and made a loop on the top end. He built the rod that he called a Calcutta from a male bamboo pole. Male poles have thicker walls at the butt end of the pole and are therefore stronger. His pole was about 16 feet long with guides and a Penn 209 surf reel clamped about 28 inches from the butt end. I never, ever, learned to cast that type of pole but, once when catfishing, he caught that big cable across the channel below the dam at Texarkana, while standing at the wall and using three spark plugs for weight. That's over a hundred yards and years later they were still hanging there.

But I want to get back to the flies and the sand bass fishing. Sand bass swim in large schools and attack schools of shad near the surface of the water out in the middle of the river. Jack would cast out there and the float would splash among the shad. He'd bring in three fish, cast back out, bring in three more, then three more, etc. No one else would be having any luck. They begged him to sell them some flies. Of course, he couldn't sell them on government property.

He was selling them through Thomason's Bait Store. He stored his calcutta pole there and would deliver more white flies each time he would stop to get his pole. Thomason's store burned and a company patented a spinner bait, similar to a Mepps spinner, as the Red River Rooster Tail. They got the *name* but their lure was inferior.

Jack had bought a large stack of cards from a printing company with the name printed on each 3 X 6-inch card. He would staple three flies to each card. The fire and the loss of the right to use the name for his flies shut down the venture. He was out of money. There was no doubt that no other lure could cover the bank with fish the way Jack's flies could. Frank Finley said, "If you go fishing with Jack Owens, you'll get tired of cleaning fish!"

Jack had a seizure in Cooper, Texas and the police arrested him. As they dragged him up the steps in his unconscious state, Bruce Ramsey, who was there to pay a speeding ticket, told them who Jack was and that he needed to be taken to St. Joseph's hospital in Paris immediately. The police asked Bruce to drive Jack to the hospital in Jack's Plymouth station wagon. A police car driver, intending to act as an escort, turned on his lights before he got in front of Bruce. Bruce thought he was about to be stopped, so he sped away. Outside of Cooper, a highway patrolman asked the

police what was going on. The policeman said he was trying to provide a police escort, but couldn't catch him.

The highway patrolman said he could catch him and chased after Bruce, but he couldn't keep up with Bruce. That Plymouth's engine was painted gold--a Golden Commando engine--and that's what Plymouth advertised. All the way to Paris, Bruce led the way. At the railroad tracks on Church street the patrolman saw air under all four wheels of the Plymouth. He clocked Bruce at 65 mph just before the ninety-degree turn onto Clarksville Street to go to the hospital. The patrolman covered his eyes, then opened them, expecting to see a wreck. Bruce made it to the emergency room and surrendered. The patrolman asked Jack, who was just regaining consciousness, what kind of engine it was. Jack said it was stock. Bruce quit driving Fords and drove only Plymouths after that. That's the only time he ever outran a highway patrolman with a car.

Jack walked in his sleep and once drove to Henderson (109 miles from Blossom as the crow flies), wearing undershorts and socks. He woke up with a truck driver beating on his windshield. The truck driver saw Jack parked on the side of the road and decided to check on him. Jack was out of gas and the trucker towed him to an open service station. Jack found that the change bucket in his pickup from the orchard had enough gas money to get him home. Probably all of his problems came from being a POW, the five skull fractures, and other damages to his health. It was normal to us for him to fall out; we saw it all the time.

He went to the VA hospital at Waco (the mental hospital) so they could work on his brain stem. They put him in a ward, a long room filled with beds. At home, Jack had kept a Mrs. Tucker's lard bucket beside the divan where he slept. When he needed to pee, he would get that bucket while still asleep and empty his bladder. Twice he set the divan on fire from his cigarettes and put out the fire with the bucket of urine. At Waco, he stretched out on a bed and went to sleep. Frank Finley was there, arguing with the doctors because they wouldn't agree that his nervousness was related to his military service.

Frank had been hired as a framing carpenter. A young guy started calling Frank Fatso, Fatso, Fatso. Frank told him to stop, but the guy didn't know where Frank had been so he started singing Fatso, Fatso, and Frank knocked him off the top of the house with a framing hammer. They sent Frank to Waco. Frank happened to get the bed next to Jack's and slipped off his shoes. Jack reached for the lard bucket to pee and found Frank's shoe and filled it. When Jack woke up, Frank asked, "Fellow, do you know what you just did?" Jack told him where he'd been and what he'd been through and told him he would buy him some new shoes. Frank said not to worry, the government would buy the new shoes. He waited until the doctors came in and pretended to be asleep when he peed in and filled the other shoe. *That* got his check started. Jack was trying to be sane; Frank wanted to be section eight. Frank fished with us for years after they met that way. Frank and Louise got married the day I was born.

One day when Jack was trying his weighted float and streamer flies below Denison Dam, Frank Finley and George Tompkins arrived to see Jack catching three fish with each cast. The other fishermen crowded him so much that he would have to move down the bank to cast. George said, "Hey Frank, you need to try some of your Waco stuff. Jack needs some relief." Frank got Jack's spare rod rigged up with a weighted cork and waded into the crowd of people, swinging the rod around overhead like a helicopter, arguing with himself loudly, as to whether the doctors knew what they were doing, prescribing fishing for his nervous problems. That weighted cork slapped a man upside the head and he went down. Frank got a backlash and started moaning, picking at the

snarled line. The victim got nearly to his feet when Frank cast again, hitting the guy again. That time the fellow just started crawling away and soon nobody was anywhere near Frank. He hollered, "Come here, Jack, I've got you a place to fish."

Lamar County wanted a Justice of the Peace from the area where Frank and Louise lived at Lamar Point. Frank was the only candidate, so he won. When the tornado came through Paris on April 2, 1982, Frank was the only Justice of the Peace that showed up. He signed all of the death certificates. He made a pretty good JP, considering that he was a section eight.

I was coming out of the house one day, carrying a casting rod and tackle box, when my cousin Kenny pulled up in his pickup. "What are you fixing to do?", he asked. "I'm going to the little east pool. There's a big bass there that I've lost several times." "Well, I'll go up there and watch you, but I'm all dressed up because I'm going to meet some girls and we're going out to eat and then dancing. Look at these new bull hide boots. They were \$175.00!" He was wearing a gray Stetson and a blue suit and tie. And, of course, a big grin.

My second cast with a yellow Pico Perch and now my rod was bending something fierce. There was a small bank of weeds in front of me. That bass had its mouth wide open, shaking its head and then it dove under the weeds. There was a flash of blue that cleared the weed bank as Kenny's hat hit the ground beside me. The fish got away. "What are you doing, Kenny?" I asked. "I was trying to help to get him." "Kenny, I woulda turned him loose anyway." Kenny sure could jump. I don't know if he went dancing or not, but he got everything wet.

Jack and I were on our way to Kiamatia when he asked if I had a five-dollar bill. I handed it to him. He pulled up at an old unpainted house on a dirt road. Little black children, like stairsteps, were standing in the yard, staring at two white people in a Chevrolet pickup. They slowly edged forward as Jack showed them the five-dollar bill and offered it for that big black rooster. The race was on and the rooster didn't have a chance. Two kids brought the rooster to Jack's side of the pickup. He used his scissors to trim off neck and saddle feathers. He handed over the five and told them to take good care of his rooster. The kid holding the money ran to tell the mother, who had stepped outside holding a small baby, about us, pointing and jabbering. The rooster ran back across the yard. Before we left, Jack told them again to take good care of his rooster. That's the kind of things he did.

Jack raised peaches from 1954 until 1969. That kept the whole family busy in June and July. In the north orchard, the sand was loose and deep. One day Aunt Estelline came up bringing my cousins David and Raymond and her brother Marvin to get peaches. Jack wasn't there with us that day. I'm not sure if he was in the hospital or peddling peaches. Suddenly, a 1948 black Ford pickup came roaring up into the orchard where we were. The driver jammed the brakes and that piled the sand up in front of the tires. Then he let out the clutch quickly and the back tires dug holes. He gunned the engine and dug deeper. The driver got out. I think he'd been drinking something strong. He was black and I'm sure the women were glad Marvin was there. Marvin would use the bumper jacks from our station wagon and Aunt Estelline's car to raise the front of the pickup and throw it sideways. Then he'd do the same to the back end.

Marvin kept him busy all afternoon, digging and jacking. He never said anything about what he was there for. After about three hours, he got lucky and got his pickup moving again. He didn't slow down. He floorboarded it all the way out of the orchard. After all that revving of the engine in that old pickup, I'll bet he needed to check his oil after he stopped. The thing about loose sand is that you don't jam your brakes to stop. You just clutch and roll to a stop. With an automatic

transmission, you back up a foot, then go forward gently. Marvin knew about loose sand; he grew up on it. He was making the guy sweat out his liquor and encouraging him to "Give it hell. That's the way." Marvin was throwing that pickup around and having fun. I'm sure the guy was glad to get away from Marvin.

My parents, Jack and Rose, got married after knowing each other two weeks. They first lived in Missouri but the doctor there said Jack was freezing to death. They moved to Texas. Uncle Cleaver paid up the taxes on the place at Blossom so they could have it. That place has been in the family since December 6, 1911. They tried plowing with a Jeep, but that didn't work well. They bought a B Allis-Chalmers tractor. He was plowing on the north end when he had a seizure and fell off. The tractor ran on until the plow hung a stump and the engine died.

The black man farming the Will Reynolds land to the west checked on him and saw him lying still and partially covered with dirt. Then he whipped his team of mules all the way to Blossom, past his house where his car was parked. He reported that Mr. Jack was DEAD! The sheriff and Monroe got there to find Jack digging out the tractor. The Veteran's Administration made him get rid of the tractor. His great granddad, Charles Thompson Farmer, was dragged to death by a mule he had raised. We didn't have a tractor until I was big enough to reach the pedals at ten years of age.

We got our setter, Jenny, when she was a little puppy. She became a member of our family and not just a hunting partner. It was December of 1963 when Jack and I were hunting a quarter mile east of our house. We heard a loud splash. Jenny had fallen into an uncovered well. The top was level with the surface of the ground. Jack told me to go and get the rope, ladder, and the Plymouth. He was going into the well to get her and I had to get him out. That's the hardest I've ever run. The ladder wouldn't fit into the well. I tied a loop in the end of the rope. Mama and I laid the ladder over the top of the well and passed the loop end of the rope down between two rungs of the ladder so he could put his foot in the loop. We pulled him up with the Plymouth, the rope sliding over a rung of the ladder. Mama told me when to stop. When we pulled Jenny out, Jack crawled through the ladder. He was cold and wet and really tired. Of course, Jenny was also cold, wet, and tired. No more hunting that day; only staying inside and trying to warm up. Jack was 42 years old and he had braced himself across the well with his feet to let himself down into the well a little at a time. Jenny was tired of swimming and climbed up on his lap. That made them both fall into the water. Jack would swim until he could brace himself against the sides of the well again. That's the kind of person he was; he put himself in danger to save someone else.

Otis Yates was from New Mexico; he was in the 200th Coast Artillery when the Philippines fell. He made the Bataan Death March with Jack. He would come to Blossom to fish. In New Mexico he was right in the middle of fishing country--between Lake Conchas and Ute Lake; one hundred fifty miles to one lake and one hundred seventy miles to the other. Here in East Texas, within five miles you can't fish all the pools in a day. He and I went fishing at a slough with bluff banks. Otis sat in a chair to fish so he leaned over to break out the weeds that could tangle his lines. Otis was top-heavy so he wound up with his hands on the bottom and one cheek in the water. His face was turned sideways so that he could breathe. I grabbed for him, got his jeans top, and pulled down his britches as he fell forward. I fell down laughing, unable to help him. He had to crawl down into the water and then crawl up the bank. He said I would tell everyone; I assured him that I would.

Jack always tried to help people, especially veterans. Early one morning he brought home a hitch-hiker, a veteran named Robert North. He ate breakfast with us and then Jack and I were outside

the kitchen door where they were talking. I was about four or five years old. Charles came out of the house with the Boy Scout knife that usually stayed in my drawer. Jack had given it to me and I was proud of it. Understand, Charles was in diapers or maybe just out of them. He dropped my knife on the ground. Robert North grabbed it up and said it was his now. He opened the blade and said he was proud of his knife. Jack told him to give me my knife but he said no, he would keep it. That's when Mama stepped out with the .410-gauge shotgun and cocked the hammer back, pointing the muzzle at Robert's belly. She told him to give me the knife and get his pack and hit the road. Some people you can't help.

Jack helped a lot of people; he built fences and did other hard work, hiring people that were out of work, and paying Social Security taxes on them and self-employment taxes on himself. He turned 65 on March 15, 1986. I went to the Social Security Office with him They turned him down and said he didn't deserve any payments. The clerk accused him of trying to get his wife's benefits. I felt like slapping the clerk. That's probably why the windows are designed the way they are. She kept smirking and insulting him. Jack stayed a lot more calm than I did, but he was upset. I don't know why the government puts people like that in charge.

I hope that these little stories show people other views of the person that Jack was.

Miscellaneous Letters and Documents

Paris Jr. College
Paris, Texas
June 27 [1940]

Hello Folks,

I am working harder now than I ever did. The work is easy but it is very tedious. I have to straighten fenders and paint hoopees [meaning?] I worked well after midnight Tuesday nite and late last nite. The reason for this was we had to get a job out in the hurry.

I like the surroundings all right. We live in the N.E. corner of Paris and our grub is excellent. Ray [h]as put up a buck to me if I would quit smoking and I took the hint and quit.

I am cleaning the basement and 1st floor too. Anytime after 11 o'clock you can reach me at 695 phone, or Faught Motor Company; before then at school

Adios
Jack

Letter to Alice

[Return address on back of plain envelope:]

Mr. John C Brill

34th Pursuit Squadron

Hamilton Field,

California

[Postmarked Hamilton Field, Calif. Dec 4, 4 PM 1940. Stamps torn off.]

[Addressee:]

Miss Mary Alice Owens

Route 1

Brookston, Texas

34th Pursuit Squadron
Hamilton Field, Calif

Greetings Texan:

So you greet me as a Yankee huh? Listen you night owl, if you didn't stay up all night you could get up before six o'clock. Whoever heard of a farmer getting up six o'clock. Even the Yankee's get up before that. Ha ha. Just kidding you Mary Alice. I guess you will have to carry some extra silverware, just in case they do give your silverware away again.

Why don't you invite that boy who runs over at your house the Saturday before we left. I think his name was Chuck. He seemed like a awful nice guy. And the way I heard the gossip, aint you and him supposed to be sweetie's. No story telling I want the truth now. Hows your mother and father and your brothers Mary Alice. I hope they are all well. Tell them all I said hello. Tell them all that I had a wonderful time on my Thanksgiving vacation although it did rain a couple of times while we was there. Ha ha. How long did it rain after we left or is it still raining. Old Peapicker is a long way from home now too. I am a little over 800 miles from home. Peapicker is about 1200 miles from home. And if I go home June or July as I plan to, I will stop by a[nd] see you all. Cause I want to see the country down there when it isn't raining. Ha ha. But I might not get to go home. But at least I will try and come back to Texas once more at least. Mary Alice you ought to see these pretty mts. They are on 3 sides of our field and on the other side is the San Francisco Bay. The mountains raise up so high and they are so pretty and green and then the higher ones goes up out of sight, till you cannot see the tops of them.

I guess you have heard of the prison San Quentin well it is right out in the Bay a little ways down from our field. You can see it on a clear day. But the only trouble out here is it is so foggy. Our field is sure a beauty. Hows Luva Jo and Nyna Bell tell them I said hello. Ask them if they want me to write them a few lines. Do you and Luva Jo still stay up and not let your brothers go to sleep till 12:30 or 1:00. You two are just night owls. That is all there is to it. Ha ha. Tell Ben I said hello and your big sister and brother-in-law too. He is really funny isnt he.

Well I will close now, I am going to have a few pictures taken maybe. I will send you's one. That is if you want it. Ask Luva Jo if she still sticks her head out of the door when strangers come up and say's "hello" with a look on her face, if someone said "boo" she would run herself to death. Ha ha. But I betcha she aint afraid when Kenny is around. Ask Kenny if he still likes Luva Jo. Tell Nyna Bell Peapicker crys every morning and evening over her.

Well I will close now. Answer soon as you have time and feel like writing.

Your yankee friend forever
Johnny alias "The Yank"

[Note: Peapicker is Jack's nickname. Luva Jo and Nyna Bell are Luvia Jo and Nina Bell Tackett.]

[Return address on back of Airmail envelope:]

Sgt. J. M. Owens, Jr.

34th Sq.

PLUM

c/o Post Master

San Francisco, Cal.

[No postmark or stamps because they had been removed by a stamp collector. Envelope addressed to Mr. Monroe Owens, Brookston, Texas]

Wednesday
Pearl Harbor

Hello Folks,

In a few minutes we will be in Pearl Harbor, and then in Honolulu. I haven't been sick as yet, maybe it's because I've taken a shower once since I left Fort McDowell. We do not and will not know where we are going, other than plum [PLUM.]

We sailed on the Coolidge from Frisco a week ago, here we are now. After some rough water, sharks and flying fish, I mean fish that really fly. I thought that that was only something that you read about.

I'm going to have my hair dyed when I get back. I've been up all night watching boats, lights and waking the fellows so they could go milk or put the cows in the lot. Anything for a laugh. Well, I've got to clean up now so good bye for now.

Jack

Empty Envelope

[Empty envelope, stamps and postmark removed by a stamp collector, with AIRMAIL written by hand on a plain envelope.]

[Return address:]

Sgt. J. M. Owens Jr.

34 Pur. Sq.

Nichols Field,

Manila, P.I.

[Addressee:]

Mr. Monroe Owens

Brookston,

Texas

[Envelope postmarked Paris, Texas, Oct 9, 1942, 10:30 AM]

[Addressee:]

Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Owen

Brookston

R.F.D.I. Texas

[Letter and envelope are written in ink with beautiful handwriting.]

Paris Texas

R-4.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Owens.

I know this will be a surprie [sic] to you all, but we saw in the Paris news where your son John W. Owen. was missing in action in the Phillipines.

We have a boy by the name of John H. Owens and he was reported missing in action and that was in June, but what bothers us is that in July some one came to our home and were trying to find us, or that is what one of our neighbors told us. (We were in Fort Worth at the time) and they got a letter from their boy in the Phillipines and said tell John Owen mother that he (John) was OK and well. These people read the letter they got from their boy to our neighbor they never ask who they were. So it has bothered us a lot.

We feel like now it was you people they were hunting--Because our boy was in Java when the Japs captured it. Would you mind to write us and tell us if those people came to your home.

I have not heard from our boy since February. He is in 131. Field Artillary [sic.] I hope it is a mistake about your boy being missing.

We live between Howland and Broadway if you want to find where we live.

Mr and Mrs C. H. Owens

Paris Texas

R-4.

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

1204

SYMBOLS

DL = Day Letter
NT = Overnight Telegram
LC = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter
Ship Radiogram

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENTNEWCOMB CARLTON
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARDJ. C. WILLEVER
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

DCK 21 GO VP

WX WASHINGTON D C 517PM MAR 29-1943

MRS MAE OWENS
ROUTE 1
BROOKSTON TEXAS

YOUR SON SERGEANT JOHN M OWENS JUNIOR REPORTED A PRISONER OF WAR OF
THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS LETTER FOLLOWS

ULIO THE ADJUSTANT GENERAL

5PM

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

Card from Imperial Japanese Army

From: **See DES PRISONIER DE GUERRE**

Name: John M. Owens

Nationality: American

Rank: Sergeant

Camp: Philippine Military Prison Camp No. 10.

To: Mr. John M. Owens,
Brookston, Texas.

俘虜郵便

比島俘虜收容所

検閲済

キガハ郵便

S. CENSORS EXAMINED I By 5047

IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY

1. I am interned at Philippine Military Prison Camp No. 10.

2. My health is — excellent / good / fair / poor

3. I am — uninjured / sick in hospital / under treatment / not under treatment

4. I am — improving / not improving / better / well

5. Please see that _____ is taken care of.

6. (Re: Family); _____

7. Please give my best regards to Ruby.

As ever Good

[Letter from Martha Jane Farmer Ritchey (Mrs. Charles H. Ritchey), Jack's mother's aunt.]

April 8/43

Dear Mae and Monroe

God bless you. I have just read in the paper that your precious boy is still alive. That is something to be thankful for. My heart has grieved for you ever since I knew he was missing. There is only one that can help you in your trouble you know, and isn't it wonderful that we can take our troubles to him. What is your dad's address. I was thinking of going to Brookston to see him when I heard he had moved so will you let me know how to write him for I want to go see them when I come back to Detroit. You write me at 245 Robinson Ct, Texarkana, Tex.

May God bless you and keep praying bless your hearts.

Love Aunt Jane

Postcard from James L. Rhodes

[James Rhodes is Jack's father's half-brother. Mrs. J. L. Smith is his mother and Jack's paternal grandmother]

[Postmarked Wichita Falls, Texas, April 12, 1944 1:30 PM, postage stamp area handwritten as "Free"]

FROM Cpl James L. Rhodes
Hq & [unreadable] Dep. B [unreadable]
Sheppard Field
Texas

TO Mrs. J. L. Smith
Blossom,
Texas

[Card has a small design of a USO flag in front of a billowing cloud.]

4-10-44

Dear Folks,

How are things down there? It is still G.I. Army here. I may get a furlough soon—in about a month or 6 weeks. We will come home when it materializes.

Have not heard from Bill recently. Will bring his letters when we come home.

As ever
James and Pauline

[On ship's stationery—drawing of the ship with following heading:

USS KRETCHMER (DE 329)

Fleet Post Office
New York, N.Y.]

Sept. 7-1945.

Dear Mother, Dad, and all,

Am at last a free man and am back on white men's food. Am really enjoying it. We were taken aboard last nite and the change in our treatment makes us feel as though we are privileged characters.

I learned of the fall of the Jap. Imperial forces on Aug. 18 through a Taiwan guard who was a friend to all prisoners but more special to others. No one believed me when I spread the rumor. The next day another source put it out and the Nips started feeding us more rice and veg. No one slept that nite or the next three for on the 21st the Nip captain read a message at tinko [meaning?] saying that "the long, long war has at last come to an end. The Japanese forces can no longer compete with such superior numbers and that what must be was at an end. You prisoners are now free men and we shall treat you with everything in our power to return you safely home." No one batted an eye and there was no murmur. I have often since wondered what they thought by our not giving an expected demonstration. The next few days we were given meat, something we had not had since the Philippines. Salt, sugar and cigarettes were issued in large quantities. We had not had any cigarettes since April and only ten then. Feb. 18 was last issue previous. We generally were issued a pound of sugar monthly.

I suppose you continued writing to me though I never received anything since your Feb. letters of '44. I left Philippine departments in Oct. last, were chased all over the China seas by the Yanks in subs, others in dive bombers and horizontals. "(Hand this to Ripley)", "Do you know that by Jap transport from Manila to Taiwan it is 38 days and a half?" It was for us at any rate. Of our convoy of 21 ships, only one transport, two sub chasers, one cruiser and a couple of destroyers docked. We only lost 37 men from lack of water, exposure and exhaustion, all due to being in a 11,000 tonner, 760 men on a coal pile 15 yards down and 30 X 60 otherwise. No one on topside.

On board I suffered from pneumonia and pellagra. As a result, I was left behind with Dick Merrisfield, of Los Angeles; John Burnha [maybe Buruha?] of Boston, Mass., and E. Smith of Arkansas. Merrisfield has not walked since, the rest of us are in fair condition, underfed but otherwise O.K, I hope. Ha ha.

Our stay on Taiwan was a relief to P.I. [Philippine Islands.] Work was fairly decent, for me anyhow, though food was terrible. John and I were the only Americans who were driving a carabao, water buffalo to you, plowing rice fields, carting, anything that came along. We made it pay, in other words we pioneered stealing Nip stores, potatoes, well most anything that was edible. We were fortunate, English did 5 to 10 days in "Aseo" on 1/2 ration of rice and no stew. I'll tell you all about it when I get there.

I've read several magazines on board and in some they mentioned the "White angel," "Pistol Pete," "Saki Sam." That was a consolidation of the details. "Pistol Pete" was our boss at Zablan [sp?] Field. They never mentioned "Three Whiskers" whose greatest pleasure was to put an American down on his hands and knees in a push-up position, beat him 'til he was senseless, pour water on him and start him back to work. "Smiling Jack," a two-faced sarge of the guard who searched us every time we come in camp. Once he found some alcohol on seven of us, beat the

dickens out of us and a medical officer who tried to break it up. We had a number of others, such as “Knock’em Down Goonso,” “The Nigger haicho [sp?]” were in P.I. “Joe, the Bugler,” “Baggy Pants,” and “To[unreadable]” were the two worst in Taiwan. The better ones we called such names as “Jack Hibbs[sp?],” “The Chinaman,” “Jo Toe,” “Ee Pie,” “Bulls Eye,” and “Bovine.” They all match their nicknames to a T.

I’ll be there in time for the hunting season so I want you to obtain a license for me. I believe the Texas Game Preserves shall be open this season.

Also obtain some data on some tech schools as I am planning on entering one. Don’t ask me which for I’ve yet to make up my mind. I hope you can read this; excuse: I have not been issued sea legs yet and am now sick.

Jack

Sept. 10 1945.

Hello Folks,

Am now in Manila and you can't, in two weeks, guess who I am with. Uncle Bill. Yes he came in this morning while I was having my physical check. I thought I was seeing things, but it was he. I cried like a baby. The last person in the world I thought I should see. Now am in town with him. He tells me that I should be home for Christmas and if he does not ship over he should be too.

Alice, I'm surprised at you, even now the ex-prisoners know as much about you as I. My, but you've really grown to be a good-looking girl. Am proud to hear you are taking it on your "own" so to speak. All I ask is for you to be polished up on the latest steps for I'm really going to need some instruction. I'm very, very pleased with your disposition.

Who is the good-looking boy that looks so much like me? Could not be Charlie, could it? I suppose you're a flashy guy now. Courting the good-looking gals and such? I thought you and Ken would have to come over and get me, you know that old "Yankee Doodle" stuff. I'd thought Joe was Walter and that perhaps someone had adopted another or something.

Have you been notified of my return or release yet?

My, I'll bet these last three years have been hell to you, Mon and Dad, not knowing from one day to the next where I was, and even then my health. I've had it rough, expected for a trench twice and a watery grave for some days, but our days of worry are over now. Am in fair health, eating anything and any time I feel like it. Everything is open to us at all hours, the Red X [Red Cross] is doing a swell job and the boys of the 29th are "fixing" us up just so-so. We hardly expected such treatment, even the officers are full of answers.

Have you heard from Ruby yet? I never did, and after your Feb. letters never heard of you either, 44. Have been unable to send mail since last June or near there. If you got anything dated in between it's from my buddies who stayed in P.I, or sabotage. Ha ha.

Well am very tired and sleepy so about now I should close; but I shall write more often.

As ever
Jack

P.S. Uncle B gave the details on grandmother. Glad it came about easy for her for I have seen so many go hard. Keep the grease hot and a fryer by the neck; I'll have him.

Letter from William A. Owens

Room 1226
Tower Town Club
820 North Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Illinois
November 16

Dear folks,

You will see by the address that I have taken a sudden jump. I came up by rain yesterday.

Charles will have some idea of where I live. It is an athletic club building on Michigan at Pearson. I have a very nice room from which I can see both the lake and the skyline. Yesterday was bright and warm, but today the clouds have been rolling in until the skyscrapers are dim shadows. Fortunately I don't have to worry about cold weather. I live, eat, and work all in the same building and don't have to go out at all unless I want to.

Please don't worry about me at all. I never felt better in my life. I have good food, good clothes, and an excellent place to live. My work is easy and pleasant. What is there to worry about?

I'll have to stop now and go to work. Will you send my address on to Roy and tell him to write? Or send me [a] line? Don't forget that it is mister when you write.

As ever
Bill

Letter from William A. Owens (#2)

[Back of envelope:]

[Drawing of a pair of crossed (old-style) cannons]

SERVICE CLUB

Camp Wallace, Texas

[Front of envelope:]

[Return address:]

Pvt. William A. Owens, U. S. Army

Btry B, 28th C.A.T.B.

Camp Wallace, Texas

[In place of stamp, handwritten "Free"]

Postmark: Camp Wallace, Texas, Oct 17, 1942, 2 PM

[Addressee:]

Mr. Monroe Owens

Brookston

Texas

[Heading on stationery:]

[Drawing of a pair of crossed (old-style) cannons]

SERVICE CLUB

Camp Wallace, Texas

Thursday

Dear Monroe and Mae

As you probably know, the army expects us to make wills and disposition of property in case necessity should arise. On the advice of a lawyer I have made Monroe full beneficiary with power of attorney to execute as he sees fit.

I am enclosing a copy of the will and a list of the property and dispositions in a sealed envelope. In case anything should happen, you will open and read the instructions. The original copy is in Mrs. Lea's safety vault in San Antonio. She will be glad to send it and other papers in case of emergency.

I must get back to work now. I'll write more when I get time.

So long,
Bill

you should also keep this letter.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TO MEMBERS OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES BEING
REPATRIATED IN OCTOBER 1945:

It gives me special pleasure to welcome you back to your native shores, and to express, on behalf of the people of the United States, the joy we feel at your deliverance from the hands of the enemy. It is a source of profound satisfaction that our efforts to accomplish your return have been successful.

You have fought valiantly in foreign lands and have suffered greatly. As your Commander in Chief, I take pride in your past achievements and express the thanks of a grateful Nation for your services in combat and your steadfastness while a prisoner of war.

May God grant each of you happiness and an early return to health.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Harry Truman". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly aged paper. The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent flourish at the end of the name.

115
Letter from William A. Owens (#3)

April 18, 1946

Dear folks,

As I don't know whether the War Department sent you a notice about my Legion of Merit Award or not, I will send you a copy of the citation. Jack will remember that I told him in Manila I had been recommended for a Bronze Star. When the recommendation reached General Krueger's headquarters it was raised to a Legion of Merit. Naturally I was very pleased to receive the award.

We are having Easter vacation this week, so I drove up to Boston with friends for a couple of days. The weather was clear and cold. Spring is awfully late up there. The trees are just now budding. The temperature was almost down to freezing at night. I visited friends at Harvard and went sightseeing in Boston. Yesterday we drove back down the coast road close enough at times to the Atlantic to see the waves rolling in. New England is beautiful--much nicer than New York.

I was very sorry to hear of Mr. Van's illness. I will write him as soon as I can. In the meantime, will you give them my best regards?

As yet I do not have definite plans for the summer. I might even return to Texas. My work will be over here June 2 and I must make plans by then.

I am enclosing some stamps for Alice. I wish I had known that she had a collection as I could have saved quite a few for her.

Mrs. Halliburton and Ruby Lee were here last week-end. I met their train when they came in and saw them one other time when I had them out to lunch at the Faculty Club. It was the first time I had seen them in many years.

I have written Roy about the possibilities of spending the summer in Seattle. I doubt if I will go that far away, but it is a possibility.

Thanks for your letters.

Love,

Bill

Owens' Citation for Legion of Merit

CITATION FOR LEGION OF MERIT

Second Lieutenant WILLIAM A. OWENS, 02026827, (then Technical Sergeant), Military Intelligence, United States Army. For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding Services in Luzon, Philippines Islands, from 13 January to 1 May 1945. Landing in Lingayen Gulf with the 306th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, Lieutenant Owens assisted in the re-establishment of civil government in the numerous liberated municipalities through which he passed in the drive to Manila. Soon after arriving in the Philippine Capital, he thoroughly exploited enemy records and documents and conducted an exhaustive study of the puppet government during the occupation. The results of this survey provided the Counter Intelligence Corps with valuable information on the activities of the puppet government and grounds for treason cases against specific officials who had collaborated with the Japanese. After the liberation of Manila, Lieutenant Owens accompanied his detachment to Central Luzon where he instituted a complete study of various recalcitrant guerrilla organizations, which, by their obstructionist and terroristic activities, constituted a grave threat to the security of our forces. He operated a Counter Intelligence Corps Office in the heart of the most troublesome guerrilla territory and through his broad knowledge of the political aims and tactics of radical forces, successfully prevented all attempts to preclude the re-establishment of lawful government. By his outstanding courage, noteworthy resourcefulness, and forceful treatment of agitators, Lieutenant Owens made a distinct contribution to the continued effectiveness of Counter Intelligence activities and to the expeditious restoration of civil authority in Luzon.

Moments in Time

By Robert A. Burns

10-25-87

Jack Owens and the Bataan Death March



Dr. Hayden called me this week to tell me of the passing of one of the heroes of our great land. I never knew Jack Owens personally, but I had known about him for many years. His name along with that of Oliver Allen has always been passed with awe and respect in small gatherings of men when talk turns to that dark day when American and the free world shuddered from the awesome prospect of global domination by the Axis powers.

Jack and Oliver among many others were captured by the Japanese forces which overran the Philippines in the months after the attack on Pearl Harbor. They were part of the infamous Bataan Death March from which so many were to never return. Jack died last week. The tremendous hardships of almost five years of forced labor and cruel deprivation took a toll from which his body never fully recovered.

We live easy in our lives of many comforts and easily forget those sacrifices made so that we can live

in a land of freedom and plenty. When I was at the funeral home Thursday, I called an otherwise young reporter and suggested that she cover the service at the cemetery so as not to let this American hero go to his long home unsung. After I explained to her about Jack and what he had been through, she asked me, "What was the Bataan Death March?" That remark is typical of the mind-set of America. How quickly we forget.

I was born more than a year after the war was over and was part of the baby boom which heralded good times and prosperity after such a tremendous sacrifice by our military effort against Japan and Germany. I shall never cease to be thankful for that sacrifice and for those who went and never cease to be thankful for the sacrifice and for those who went and never returned and for those who went and gave their youth and health. I salute you, Jack Owens, and shall revere your memory all the days of my life.

Monroe and Mae Owens' Family
Spring, 1934



Front row: Walter, Charlie, Alice, Kenneth, Jack

Middle row: Mae (holding Alfred), Alice James Chennault (Monroe's maternal grandmother), Monroe, Sybil, Jessie Ann Chennault Owens Rhodes Smith (Monroe's mother)

Back row: Charles Owens, Raymond Kitchens, Bill Owens, Austin Kitchens. (Charles and Bill are Monroe's brothers; Raymond and Austin are Monroe's cousins.)



**Calvin Johnson and Jack Owens
Brooks Field, Texas**



**Friend and Jack after return
from POW camp**



**Jack on October 15, 1945 upon
return from POW camp**



**Rose Ellen Ward
before marriage to Jack**



Jack, Nov. 1956



**In front: Charles
At rear: Mae Ellen, Rose, Jack, John**

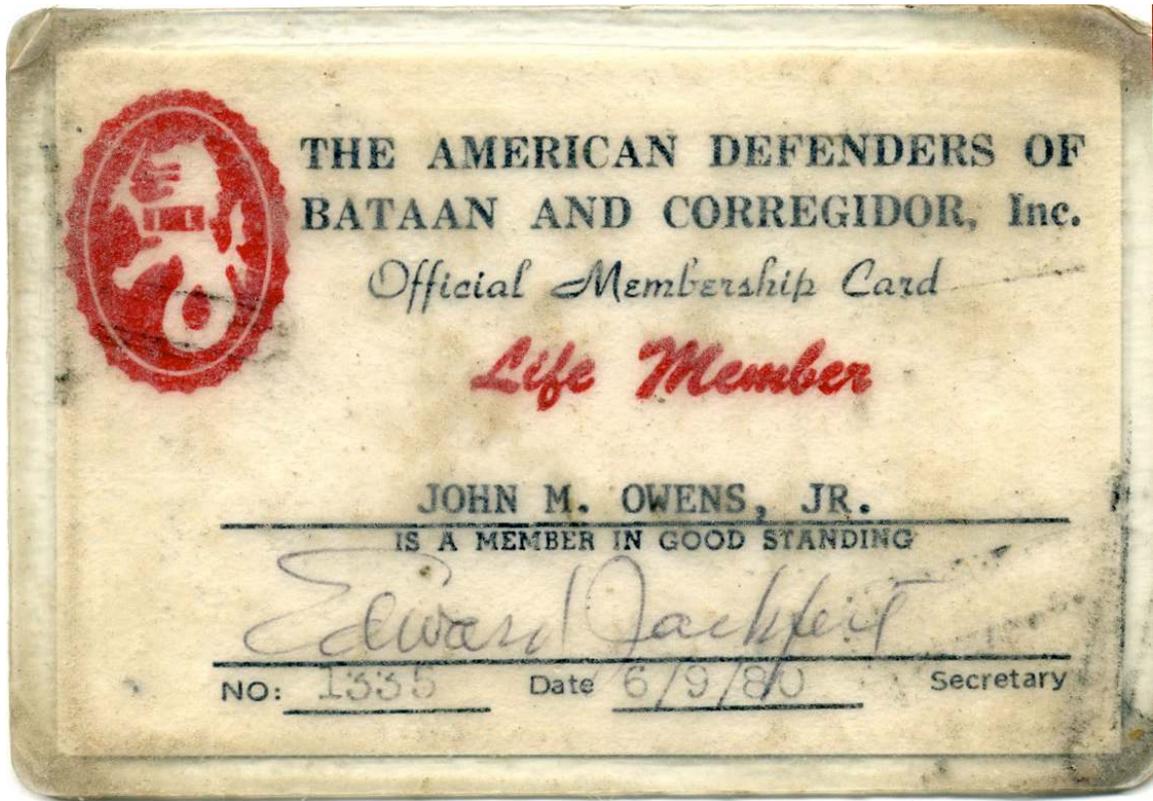


Jack and Mae Ellen



Charles, Jack, and John





THE AMERICAN DEFENDERS OF
BATAAN AND CORREGIDOR, Inc.

Official Membership Card

Life Member

JOHN M. OWENS, JR.

IS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING

Edward Jackheit

NO: 1335

Date 6/9/80

Secretary

Acknowledgements

This document would not be available without the help of Lisa Johnson, a history professor at Paris Junior College. She, with the help of some of her students, converted a copy of the original type-written manuscript into a digital format that I could easily edit.

Here is a note from Lisa Johnson after her and her students' work was completed in 2006.

"Several years ago I assigned my U.S. History students at Paris Junior College Oral History Projects for extra credit work. The topics students could collect oral histories on ranged widely from the Second World War, to Vietnam, and Civil Rights. One student brought me this manuscript as part of his project with the request that it be placed in the College Archives. The document was especially exciting for me to read since I was from the same hometown as the manuscript's author, Jack Owens, and remembered him for the exquisite truck farmed produce he grew. As a child growing up in the small northeast Texas town of Blossom, I was aware Mr. Owens had suffered unspeakable horrors in the Second World War. I had also learned of the "Big War" from my grandmother's scrapbook that included war era ration stamps and v-mail sent to her from my great-uncles who had fought in Europe. The stories of far away Pacific battles my middle school history teacher, a veteran of the Pacific Theater with buxom war era girls tattooed on his upper arms, told his students had also fostered my early interest in the Second World War. It was a war that touched and transformed my little hometown as it did hometowns across the nation. Sons and daughters of many Blossom families traveled the country and the world in service or worked as citizen civilians to support the war effort at home. Each had done their part for the war effort. Jack Owens was one of those Blossom sons whose service and sacrifice was well known locally. I never knew then the details of Mr. Owens' torturous trek on the Bataan Death March and his prisoner of war experience that followed since it was spoken about only in hushed tones by grownups and not considered a fitting topic for little girls. As so often is the case, the true story of what Mr. Owens had been subjected to at the hands of his Japanese captors turns out to be many times more horrific and remarkable than my childish imagination could concoct.

"Mr. Owens' story is an important original source and preserving his story became an important mission for me and my students. The copy of the manuscript was fragile, brittle, and torn in places and needed to be digitally preserved. Photo copies were carefully made of each page and the pages manually typed into Microsoft Word or Works. The typing of the manuscript was done by students enrolled in my history classes at Paris Junior College over the course of several semesters in 2004-2005. Their names are listed below this note. Every attempt was made by these diligent students to recreate the original manuscript as Mr. Owens had written it.

"I merged the students' transcribed portions of the document into one Word document, formatted and edited the digital copy. Hopefully, Mr. Owens' account will be published in the future.

"Oral history interviews will be conducted with Mr. Owens' children to illuminate and clarify aspects of Mr. Owens' war experiences. These interviews will become part of the Paris Junior College Second World War oral history collection and will be housed along with the manuscript from which this electronic copy was produced in the A.M. Aikin Archives on the Paris campus of Paris Junior College in Paris, Texas. A similar copy of the manuscript, photos, and additional materials compiled by Joe Owens, Jack Owens' brother, is also available in the PJC Archives.

"This is the sort of serendipitous find that teachers love their students to discover and explore. The students who helped preserve this document learned more about the Death March, the horrors of war, man's inhumanity to man, heroism, and the will to survive than I or any

classroom teacher or text could ever convey. I am proud this preserved manuscript will provide many future students, scholars, and interested members of the public access to Mr. Owens' account, thereby continuing to teach these lessons of history long into the future."

Lisa Johnson
History Instructor
Paris Junior College
Spring 2006

Student Typists:
Leigh Faulkner
Ashley Morgan
Tabatha Ottmo
Beverly Relford
Wilma Wintz

The following is a list of letters and documents I have included:

An early letter, before we entered the war, is a letter home to his family from Jack when he was living and working in Paris and attending Paris Junior College. Paris was only 15 miles or so from his home in Brookston but he had no way to commute daily.

Included is a letter to Jack's sister Alice from John C. Brill, one of Jack's Army Air Corps friends who had come home with Jack for Thanksgiving in 1940. J. C. Brill is mentioned in Jack's Story on page 55, paragraph 5.

Next is a letter from Jack (unknown date) just as he is arriving by ship into Pearl Harbor before the US has entered the war.

The next page shows an empty envelope from Nichols Field in Hawaii, but there is no letter.

The following is a poignant letter from another Owens family (not related to ours) who also has a son named John Owens who is missing in action. It shows the confusion and heartbreak of trying to find the status of their missing son.

Telegram announcing that Jack is a prisoner of war.

The family's first official notice of Jack's whereabouts is shown in a postcard from the Japanese Imperial Army.

Next is a letter from my mother's Aunt Jane in April 1943 about the news that Jack was reported to be alive.

Next is a postcard from Jack's uncle (Jack's father's half-brother.)

This is the remarkable, wonderful letter that Jack wrote home on September 7, 1945, the day he was released from the POW camp in Formosa. He was on board a ship, heading home, at the time.

Next is a letter home written on September 10 after he has reached Manila. It is here that he is surprised by his Uncle Bill (Jack's father's brother.) Jack had no idea that his Uncle Bill had played a part in the war, but you can read about his experiences in Eye-Deep in Hell, by William A. Owens.

Here is a form letter to returning POWs from President Truman.

Next are four letters and documents from or related to William A. Owens, Jack's uncle.

Included is a tribute, appearing in The Paris News, to Jack after his death.

Here are two pages of photos of Jack at various stages in his life.

I included the route of the Bataan Death March.