They Gave Their Blood

Memoirs of a Bataan Death March Chaplain

by

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1944, Mass in prison, Japan.

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Introduction

Gilbert K. Chesterton said of the Gael that "all his wars are merry, and all his songs are sad." Most certainly, Chesterton did not wish to give the impression that the Gaelic soldier – or any other soldier – finds the trade of war a pleasant business. But even in the midst of the most miserable of circumstances – war, and captivity – men can preserve a surprising amount of human dignity and even a sense of humor. War can extinguish the lives of men, but it cannot consume the humanity of the soldier.

Six years as chaplain with combat troops of the regular army, from the beginning to the end of Bataan, the measureless miles of the Death March, the systematic erosion of Camp O'Donnell and Cabanatuan in the Philippines, and the forced labor at the Yawata Steel Works in Japan have given me the opportunity to study this facet of humanity in detail.

The tasks and accommodations of army life are uniformly uncomfortable; sometimes they are downright miserable. Some soldiers give way to the misery and become miserable themselves; some do not. In most cases, I think, it depends on the man. If he had looked life in the face and satisfied its exigencies with personal integrity before he put on a uniform, the man in uniform continued to look both life and death in the face with plain, everyday courage that always carried flecks of merriment. Certainly the Death March on Bataan was the supreme test of human dignity.

I buried some twenty-six hundred men during those terrible years. Some prisoners informed me in advance that they would die, and some of them did. One I needled into surviving – just to spite me, I think. Bad rations, disease, plain downright exhaustion, all did their bit to snuff out the flicker of life in men who had been almost totally spent by the horrors of the Death March. Some gave up the ghost because the sheer effort to stay alive was too much for them.

Others, who had strenuously protected their lives against the cunning and ferocity of Japanese troops, gradually slipped into the defenseless condition where they preferred death to life, at least life under those conditions. In the same circumstances, other soldiers managed to maintain life because they had made up their minds to stay alive. The presence or absence of a will to live made the difference, for many men, between an unmarked grave in the Philippines and discharge papers in the U.S.A.

It is easier to see the whole picture now, from a distance. Nothing was very clear to us in those days of tension and confusion.

In the early hours of December 7, 1941, Japanese naval and air forces struck in concerted action at British Malaya, Thailand, Singapore, Guam, Hong-Kong, Wake and the Philippines: the attack on Pearl Harbor was not an isolated incident, it was part of a great plan. Malaya, Singapore, and Indonesia were targets because of their oil, rubber, and other economic potentialities. The Philippines came into it because the Japanese wished to seize and exploit the whole of Southeastern Asia, and they could not maintain a lifeline along the Asian Coast with the Philippines right on their flanks, a hostile country.

In March of 1941 the Japanese troops went into special training on Formosa for their attack on the Philippines. Their schedule dictated that it was to be a swift victory. Victory they did get, but it was not swift, and it wrecked their timetable. We were the ones who upset their plans, and we were the ones who paid for it – with the Death March.

Although we did not know the condition of the enemy troops at the end of February and could not have employed the knowledge if we had possessed it, we know now: the stubborn defense of Bataan had greatly upset their plans for allotting the victualling of Japanese manpower. The normal daily ration of 62 ounces of rice was cut to 23; disease and battle casualties reduced their men. Replacements during March considerably increased manpower and firepower, but nothing could replace the time that had been lost because of the stupid tenacity of "despicable Filipinos and effete Americans." The Japanese 16th Army had "lost face".

The revenge was swift and terrible. It is stated simply in an extract from "Dawn of the Philippines", by Nobuhiko Jimbo, Colonel, Japanese Army:

> "On April 9th, Bataan fell at last, and 60,000 prisoners were in the hands of the Japanese Army. In Manila and the Army, an order was issued to the effect that EVERY TROOP WHICH FOUGHT AGAINST OUR ARMY ON BATAAN SHOULD BE WIPED OUT THOROUGHLY, WHETHER IT SURRENDERED OR NOT, AND ANY AMERICAN CAPTIVE WHO IS UNABLE TO CONTINUE MARCHING ALL THE WAY TO THE CONCENTRATION CAMP SHOULD BE PUT TO DEATH IN THE AREA 200 METERS OFF THE HIGHWAY."

The Japanese expected many to die on the Death March. Many did. But a great many survived, to their surprise and annoyance.

The men of Bataan were caught in the wheels of plans that had been in motion since before many of them were born. Around 1920, our War Department studied the theoretical problem of a war with Japan in the Philippines, and devised what was eventually to be known as "The Orange Plan, WPO-3." The substance of it was as follows: in the event of a successful Japanese landing on Luzon, the Philippine Division of the U.S. Army, and the Philippine Army,

were to attempt first of all to contain the invaders. If unable to resist the advances of the enemy, they were to fight a delaying action until both the forces in the North and the South of Luzon could withdraw into the Bataan peninsula. The plan envisioned a six-month stand on Bataan, by which time aid from the United States would arrive. What it did not envision was the American air and sea power crippled at Pearl Harbor.

Since the framing of the Orange Plan, the higher echelons of the armies and navies of the United States and Great Britain had concluded that the United States could not defend the Philippines if we became engaged simultaneously in war with Japan and Germany.

Since the close of the Spanish-American War each succeeding Federal government had taken measures designed to lead to the complete emancipation of the entire Philippine archipelago. In 1935 the United States entered upon the last stage of transforming the Philippines from the status of a ward of the United States to the status of an autonomous commonwealth. The process would be completed within ten years. As the Filipinos progressively took over the administration of their own affairs, the commitment of the United States to their welfare gradually declined.

With nationhood would come, among other things, the adult obligation of self-defense. The Filipinos had ten years in which to diminish and ultimately dissolve their reliance upon the naval and military might of the United States and provide a suitable army out of their own resources. One of the first acts of President Quezón was to propose to the National Assembly a ten-year program for developing a national defense of regulars and reservists who would make up ninety divisions. General Douglas MacArthur was invited to realize the program. The budget for this large undertaking was the meagre sum of $80,000,000.

That the program did not progress satisfactorily is indicated by the fact that in 1940 President Quezón reduced enlistments fifty percent. By then about one-half of the time projected for training Filipinos to defend their homeland had been spent. They knew full well that you cannot establish a modern army in five or even ten years.

As of December 1941, not one division of the Philippine Army had its full complement of units; hardly a unit had anything like standard equipment; some units fired for the first time when they encountered the invaders. Infantrymen had about three or four weeks of training, with little or no rifle or machine gun practice. Some engineers got no training at all. The artillery outfits were introduced to obsolete 751s and 2.95-inch mountain howitzers.[1]

Tanks and anti-tank weapons were rarities. The supply of hand grenades and of rifle, machinegun, and artillery ammunition was short. Transportation equipment was utterly inadequate. Communication with divisions went over

public telephone lines or by messenger. After the war General Wainwright frankly and sadly summed up the situation: "The Philippine Army units with the North Luzon force were doomed before they started to fight. That they lasted as long as they did is a stirring and touching tribute to their gallantry and fortitude. They never had a chance to win."

The United States intended to abandon all American military installations in the Philippines by 1946, but in 1941 a garrison of 31,095 ground and air troops, including almost 12,000 Philippine Scouts were still on duty in the islands. The Philippine army of ninety divisions was in the very early stages of development. Thus side by side stood two military contingents, differing in nationality and in equipment and in training. The invasion would, perforce, theoretically amalgamate the Philippine Army and the United States Army into a single instrument of defense.

The campaign in the Philippines and especially in Bataan did not progress on the majestic lines of the Allied invasion of Europe. Except in the plains running down Luzon from the northern tip to the vestibule of Bataan, the terrain did not lend itself to the sweep of tanks. Tanks were put in action in Luzon and in Bataan, by both sides, but in neither place were they a decisive factor.

Artillery has long been the mighty power in ground warfare, but on Bataan the thick growth of trees rising to sixty or eighty feet heavily reduced visibility and therefore the accuracy of artillery fire. Thousands upon thousands of shells were fired from both sides on the general presumption that *something* of the enemy would be in the vicinity of the spot where the shell would explode. The presumption was not as rash as it may seem at first glance, for the reason that some two hundred thousand human beings were jammed into the narrow confines of a peninsula that was thirty miles long and twenty miles wide at its broadest.

Airplanes did not figure positively in our activities because most of the American Air Force in the Far East had been destroyed by the Japanese sneak attack at Pearl Harbor. Airplanes did figure negatively in our defense operations because we could neither observe nor bomb from the skies, whereas the Japanese could do both with impunity. As irritated and even as distressed as we were at the time because of the tree-top flying of the Japanese planes, it seems in retrospect that the Japanese did not use their monopoly of the air as efficiently as they might have done. Not that they did not wreak havoc when they got down to business; one mission knocked out all the guns of the 23rd Field Artillery[2] except one. But on the whole, they were not as busy as they might have been against an army which had no fighter planes and little anti-aircraft defense.

When time was rapidly running out for our intricate maneuver to move men

and materiel both from the east and from the north simultaneously into the narrow eastern portal of Bataan, a gigantic traffic snarl accumulated just south of San Fernando. Never in the whole Philippine campaign did the Japanese air force have such an opportunity to produce a devastating rout. Their inactivity becomes more mysterious when we reflect that they knew full well that we had no fighter planes, and they must have already realized that the joint movements from the east and the north would provoke congestion on the single available highway. Despite actions and even practices of audacity verging on rashness, the Japanese gave evidence from time to time of such deep-rooted respect for American ingenuity that it smacked of an inferiority complex. Even up to the very end, in the face of an incontrovertible mass of evidence, they could not believe we were as weak as we actually were. That strange attitude of mind must be remembered when one considers how they staged the Death March. All unconsciously, it seems, they were still trying to convince themselves that they had *conquered* American and Filipino troops.

That war with Japan was an imminent danger was not to be doubted in professional military circles, neither in Washington nor in Manila. But when could it be expected? In the Spring of 1941 the War Department in Washington ordered the dependents of military personnel in the Philippines to evacuate the islands. Two weeks before Pearl Harbor, MacArthur confided to Wainwright his own surmise that hostilities would begin in April of 1942. Evidently, he had not been kept posted on the critical diplomatic exchanges going on right then between Washington and Tokyo, but he had enough general information upon which to base a conclusion that war was very near.

The Japanese landings in the north of Luzon began on December 12, and continued until December 22. They were so spaced as to inaugurate a pincer movement that would surround and crush the defenders who came north to oppose the invasion. The devastating bombing of our airfields had left us without planes. The fat target of eighty-four transports safely disgorged thousands of troops and their equipment as smoothly as if they were making a practice run into the shores of Formosa. One reconnaissance plane hovered over them. Not a single bomber.

General Wainwright was in command of all forces in the north of Luzon confronting the Japanese. He had to oppose two major movements, one from Aparri in the north and one from Legaspi in the southeast of the northern tip of the island. The points of origin and the progress of these two movements indicated that the Japanese intended to envelope all the troops sent to oppose them. They were well on their way to success on the evening of December 23 when Wainwright received a phone call from Pete Irwin at MacArthur's headquarters in Manila. The message was brief but fundamental: "WPO-3 is in effect." Wainwright was silent for so long that Irwin prodded him: "You under-

stood?" "Yes," Wainwright wearily answered, "I understand." After one week spent in trying to hold Luzon, the Orange Plan had been reinstated. No hope was retained that the invasion could be stopped north of Bataan, but time could give us the opportunity to stiffen the defense of Bataan itself.

Some factors of the Orange Plan could not appear in the computation that Wainwright had to make. Help from the United States could not be expected within six months; the stores lodged at Corregidor were not in proportion to the hordes of soldiers and civilians who would descend into Bataan. Those factors belonged to the problems of the future. The present urgency called for an orderly withdrawal from the north of Luzon which would delay the Japanese as much as possible and which would conserve men and materiel as economically as possible.

The terrain was difficult, but the road surface was satisfactory, at least in the beginning. But the best highway in the world can furnish only a part of the answer to a huge transportation problem. The rest of the answer must be compiled from thousands of vehicles, and of vehicles of the right kind. Vehicles of the right kinds and in satisfactory number had not been provided. Our army was blind because it had no planes, almost mute because it bad no satisfactory communication system, and practically lame because of defective transportation facilities. From the very first day of hostilities the army went on the prowl for cars and trucks. Commercial trucks, even city buses were pressed into service to carry troops, to carry ammunition, to carry anything. I drove a taxicab that had been commandeered from the streets of Manila.

The Japanese unintentionally assisted us in gaining time by adhering mechanically to their plan of campaign even when it was evident that they were facing a situation entirely different from the presumption on which their plan had been drawn. The Japanese assumed that the capital city of Manila would be defended until the end, that when Manila fell the war would be over. MacArthur's declaration on December 26 that Manila was an open city did not change their way of thinking because his way of thinking was incomprehensible to them.

They diverted the major portion of their forces southeastward towards Manila at the very time our men in South Luzon were fleeing westward away from Manila. Even after the Japanese commander reached the suburbs of Manila he loitered there for two days, neither entering the city nor undertaking the pursuit towards Bataan. If the entire strength of the Japanese invasion force had been committed shortly after the landings in the direction of Bataan there would have been such a slaughter north of Bataan that not enough of our men would have survived to make even a convincing gesture at defending Bataan.

The plan for withdrawal into Bataan called for a complex and difficult maneuver of two forces: of one coming from the east and of the other coming

from the north. The movement from the east could not be completed unless the Japanese were kept north of San Fernando where the east-west highway joined the north-south highway. Whoever held San Fernando controlled all traffic from the Manila area into Bataan. The movement from the north required delicate timing and accurate coordination of many units. The troops from the north were to resist by day and retreat by night according to a determined schedule. The details of withdrawal were to be concealed as well as possible. For that reason the troops dug in towards the close of day, thus forcing the Japanese to halt in order to deploy their men. During the night most of our men withdrew as quietly as they could, but they left a screen of defense troops whose strength the Japanese had to ascertain each morning before they could afford to return to the highway without risking an ambush.

The retreat from the north was to be made in five stages, and the fifth position was to provide a firm and determined stand some twenty-five miles north of Bataan. Perhaps more stores could be moved from the east into Bataan. On December 27 General Wainwright modified the original plan and decided to try to hold the fourth position. At this point the Japanese mysteriously collaborated with our maneuvering by carrying out orders from Tokyo to make Manila their prime objective. The Japanese harassed our convoys west of Manila, but they did not wish to swing away from Manila and attempt to exterminate troops bound for Bataan. After December 28 the Japanese did not pursue the South Luzon force.

The fourth position was so soundly shaken, and the fifth position, some twenty-five miles above Bataan was again appointed for the strongest opposition yet undertaken in the retreat. Within the week between Christmas and New Year's Day the Japanese had rapidly moved in two columns down the plains of Luzon. On January 9 General Homma attacked the II Corps and within a week had turned its flank and separated it from the I Corps.

At this stage it must have seemed to the Japanese as if the campaign were almost accomplished, for they withdrew some of their best units, dispatched them to Java, and dropped leaflets inviting surrender. To us the situation appeared to be critical, although not desperate. Nevertheless, it was becoming more difficult to delay the Japanese and gain time for the men in the south of Luzon. They could not advance more swiftly, we had to try to retreat more slowly.

On January 15 General MacArthur issued a general order to be read to all the troops. A portion of that general order ran as follows:

> "Help is on the way from the United States. Thousands of troops and hundreds of planes are being dispatched. The exact time of arrival of reinforcements is unknown as they will have to fight their way through Japanese attempts against them. It is important that our troops hold

until these reinforcements arrive."

Perhaps that public statement was made to mislead the enemy, but unfortunately the promise of imminent help was believed by our own men, and for a long time. Actually, the promise had no possibility of fulfillment in the foreseeable future. Long after it became evident that the men of Bataan could have no reasonable hope of help from the United States, and that unfulfilled promise remained in their memory to plague the credibility of later communiques coming from general headquarters.

The dismal trip was illuminated for us from time to time with acts of outstanding heroism. I served long with the heroes of one of these events, 1st Lt. Carl J. Savoie. The commanding officer of the 21st Infantry, Lt. Col. Wappenstein, profanely and heartily expressed his admiration and gratitude for the men and their exploit:

> "Every man of the 21st Infantry who came out of Tarlac alive should get down on his knees and thank God for that red-headed son-of-a-bitch. He was everywhere he was needed at the right time. He kept his guns in almost three hours after he could have withdrawn to give us a chance to break off. We were all out and the enemy back in Tarlac before he pulled up a gun."

Victorious troops do not have to retreat. An Army retreats because something has gone seriously wrong, and something goes wrong with an army because a lot of things have already gone wrong, and more things will inevitably go wrong in the retreat itself. I noted a slight indication of what had gone wrong when units of the Philippine Army trudged by without footgear because the sneakers issued to them had not been rugged enough for field services.

As our troops became famished, it was reasonably to be expected that their morale would deteriorate sharply. But this was not so. For long they nurtured the sweet illusion that gigantic help would speedily come from the States. When time dissipated that unfounded expectation they still faced a grim future with the stalwart determination of the nobly desperate.

In beneficent ignorance of what awaited us, we went forth to do battle with high hearts. But our leaders in the top echelon knew what we did not know, and that knowledge must have been deeply disturbing to them. Theirs was the anguish of futility, generated by a familiarity with our unpreparedness. The computation of their courage must not omit the fact that they carried on with consistent bravery although they could calculate in advance that their richest accomplishment could be no more than to exact the stiffest price for defeat.

Japanese espionage furnished all the necessary information on what was visible. It did not detect the invisible fighting spirit to be encountered. The Japanese had such confidence in their preparedness and in their victim's

unpreparedness, that they allotted a mere fifty days to take the Philippines. Actually, it took five months to bring all organized resistance to an end. Their schedule of progress was thrown off by some three to four months. From that unexpected delay they never fully recovered. Strange to think that their decline began with the capture of the largest American force ever to surrender

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Chapter I
Philippines

It was dark when I first saw Bataan. I was standing upon the deck of a ship as we were entering Manila Bay. Lights were flickering here and there on the islands from many torches. It was a sight that did not impress me, for the simple reason that I did not know what Bataan was or who was there. Who could know then, that Bataan would make history?

I learned to love Bataan. It looked just as I supposed an island should look: it rose out of the water like a monster rising lazily and taking its place in the world. It was a beautiful place, lush with tropical vegetation and thick with forests, alive with all the vitality of the jungle. There were thousands of flowering plants, hundreds of species of wood of commercial value, much exotic food such as bananas, coconuts and the luscious mangos.

It was a pleasure to be driving along before the war and to ask one of the natives to get some fresh green coconuts. He would split one for us and we would take a spoon and eat the delicate meat. Even the natives used it for their best meals.

Bananas grew beautifully although they were not as large as those we get from Cuba. Papayas were used chiefly at breakfast. They were something like a cantaloupe but had a slight flavor of peppermint. Mangos were heart-shaped and smooth-skinned, with a large stone in the center. When you would break the skin of a mango, the flies would gather suddenly, the odor was so pungent. Nature just seemed to cry out to humanity in the tropics and invite man to a wonderful living.

That was Bataan before the war.

April was the autumn of the year. The crops were beginning to mature, much of the needed vegetation had not been planted because of the war, but the soil was ever fruitful. There was fruit for everyone: oranges and pomelos, pineapples beginning to ripen. Sweet potatoes, eggplants, beans and cabbages were at their best. Surrounded by the bounties of nature, we remained beggars at the table of our masters.

We were, as the phrase has it, the “brave bastards of Bataan” – no father, no mother, no Uncle Sam. We were Lazarus at the feast.

Somewhere in my early school training I learned this couplet by Frederick

Landbridge:

"Two men looked out through prison bars
– one saw the mud and one the stars."

The couplet meant something to me even then, but I never plumbed its real meaning until much later in life when I was no longer a child in Massachusetts but a prisoner of war in the Orient. Robust practical wisdom dwells in those two brief lines, and that wisdom can lead firmly towards the discovery of happiness in the midst of adversity, even in the adversity of captivity. A prisoner of long ago, St. Paul was preparing his converts who were, by that very fact, apt candidates for prison when he was directing them to generate internally a happy outlook on life, no matter what the scenery itself might be: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you abundantly; in all wisdom teach and admonish one another by psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing in your hearts to God by his grace. (Col 3:16-17)"

When there is no drink for the mouth nor food for the stomach, where the surroundings are bleak, and a man cannot improve the circumstances that afflict him, he can only fortify his posture before them. My term as an Army Chaplain in combat and as a prisoner of war drilled that conviction into me.

In 1940 we were not as yet engaged in war, and our military preparations did not have the hurry and grimness that actual combat communicates. A certain spirit of make-believe was in the air, and in the realm of make-believe a man can fashion reality to fit in comfortably with fancy.

I was accepted in the Army Reserve Corps in 1937 and soon went on CCC [Captains Career Course] duty. It was very pleasant detail and I enjoyed every moment of it. I traveled the whole state of Louisiana and met many future soldiers and officers. My talks at the camps carried the constantly recurring theme that some of the best was always to be found in the worst. My men were receptive; I kept up their spirits and they in turn kept up mine with the lightheartedness of youth. I was more mature, and I could decipher ominous signs of the imminent future. What I surmised I could not express publicly and frankly, but I developed a certain sense of security that if the huge and hazardous venture of war was thrust upon our nation I should go into battle with confidence in the men with whom I was then dealing.

After less than two years in the CCC, I entered US Army service at Fort Benning in Georgia. We went on maneuvers in Louisiana and, strangely enough, we bivouacked in Boyce, Louisiana, where I had once served as pastor. On our way back to our home base we stopped at Jackson, Mississippi, as well as Vicksburg and three other areas as we went north. I finally arrived with the 16th Medical Regiment at Forth Devers, Massachusetts, but within the week

orders came to report to Langley Field, Virginia. There I met Chaplain Carpenter.

Chaplain Carpenter had earned the respect of all the personnel to the benefit of all the other chaplains. Recruits were reporting by the hundreds, and consequently the base was expanding rapidly. Shortly after arrival, the recruits were brought to a chapel for the beginning of the process of orientation. The sum and substance of the procedure was to inform these young men where they were and what was there with them, ending with the tender pronouncement: "You're in the army now, buddy, you're in the army now." A big English-style brick building housed a morning chapel which Chaplain Carpenter permitted me to use for keeping the Blessed Sacrament and saying daily Mass. As the recruits rapidly increased in numbers, Father Siwynski joined me. Within a fairly short time our responsibilities were extended to Fort Eustis which had been reactivated by a regiment in the process of formation. The fort did not have the convenience of a chapel, but an antiquated assembly hall provided a place for saying Mass.

Basic military training for erstwhile civilians can become monotonous in short order. Some variety and diversion were real needs for these young men, many of whom were living away from home for the first time. Later on, I had the idea of organizing a theatrical group. A civilian on the field who had been at the Catholic University School of Drama was willing to run it. I then called for tryouts in the chapel. Our venture was scarcely underway when this young man was transferred, and by default, I became the director and organizer. The enterprise went off rather well. "Brother Orchid" was the first effort, and thanks to my good friend, Colonel Stewart, the performance was good enough to be called entertainment. We tried several other plays and had encouraging results, even though we achieved no great artistic excellence.

My career as a director was suddenly stopped by word from the Chief of Chaplains that he wanted volunteer priests for the Philippines. With no anxiety for the future I jauntily took off for what turned out to be war, agony, captivity, and still more agony.

Colonel George and his wife gave a farewell party in my honor. In the spirit of fun the colonel said jestingly, "We will now send our mail to Father Curran by way of Tokyo." He did not suspect how sadly true his little joke would be realized.

I had bidden farewell to New England a few days before in a BT 14. As we flew over Wakefield, Massachusetts, our pilot turned pixy and took us for a dive. I thought we would end on a roof. In this strange way he was saying goodbye to my aunt. She was quite proud, and turned to a neighbor who just came out to see what the racket was all about and said, "Did you see him?"

“Yes,” replied the neighbor, “who was the damn fool?”

Our military preparations constantly increased in tempo and in seriousness. Civilian public officials were careful not to reveal that we might be moving towards a shooting war, or that a shooting war was moving towards us. With the military a different attitude of mind prevailed; definitely, they expected the worst. The war games of early 1941 were honestly recognized to be the spring training for a grim season that could begin almost any day. Although we were not aware of it at that time, the higher echelons of the armies and navies of the United States and Great Britain had discussed during the first three months of 1941 what action the United States should take in case of a war with Japan and Germany. Some of the effects of those decisions seeped imperceptibly into our training camps. We were not going through motions simply for exercise.

I was certainly heading for the Orient, and probably for war. My brother Paul was in his last semester of preparation for the priesthood in the Dominican Order. In consideration of the fact that I was leaving the United States with no assurance of ever returning, Father Stratemeier suggested to the prior of the Dominican House of Studies that the ordination of my brother should be advanced enough for me to be on hand. The prior took the proposal under consideration and he promised that he would have a message ready for me at my cousin’s house in North Adams, Massachusetts. When I arrived there I received word that I should come to Washington early in May of 1941. My aunt Mary Regan, Miss Agnes Reilly, and myself constituted the audience for this premature ordination. The war spirit was already beginning to work strange changes.

I began the drive to San Francisco where I was to board ship for Manila. By chance I stopped in Reno, Nevada, at St. Mary's Hospital which is operated by the Dominican Sisters of San Raphael. They were extremely kind and sent me on my long way with the companionship of their prayers. Five years later, I would be a patient there, from malnutrition as the basic trouble.

In San Francisco I stopped at St. Dominic's Priory, where I received word from my Provincial, Father O'Brien, O.P, wishing me a safe return although as yet I had hardly gotten started. My peace of mind was not improved by the information that the military cargo was so large that I could not get my car aboard.

As I recall, we sailed on the *President Pierce*. Because I was the senior chaplain I had to locate all the facilities on board and report on them at a meeting of the officers that afternoon.

In Honolulu we had shore leave for a day, which fortunately fell on King Kamehameha Day, which is celebrated annually in honor of an almost legend-

ary monarch of the island during the early part of the nineteenth century. Everywhere the natives seemed to be dancing.

We came through the Magellan [?] Straits at night, and Bataan stood at our starboard. The night was so black that we could see only the gas lights that flared in the plazas of barrios. We pulled into Manila Bay very late at night or early in the morning, but we did not dock until daylight. Right then Manila meant a great deal to me, although I had never seen it; Bataan meant nothing to me, and I had never even heard of it until the preceding night. Within eight months I would come to know Bataan very precisely, by day and by night.

Chaplain John McDonald of Brooklyn greeted me as soon as I landed. He was Base Chaplain at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, when I left for Langley Field. Later on he was to save my life when both of us were in prison. A car took me to Fort Stotsenburg, Pampanga. Here I joined the Eighty-eighth Field Artillery of the Philippine Scouts, a crack outfit that had been trained by and were still commanded by officers of the US Regular Army.

At the Fort I met Father Zerfas[3] and Father Wilson[4]. Father Duffy[5] was the post chaplain.

Before setting sail for Manila I presumed that the transfer of troops and equipment to the Philippines carried a note of emergency. On my arrival I was shocked by the leisurely fashion in which the defense preparations were being carried out in certain military sectors. Langley Field was operating on a double-quick basis with the recognition that we had already wasted too much time; in the Philippines it seemed to be assumed that time was an inexhaustible commodity. That unrealistic outlook was tragically demonstrated on December 8, 1941 when Japanese planes found our air force on the ground some eight hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The Philippines were woefully unprepared on December 8, 1941. In the first place, there had not been a permanent definitive decision on the top level as to whether or not the Philippines could be successfully defended. Nor, secondly, had there been a decision whether all of Luzon could be defended or only Bataan and Corregidor, which controlled Manila Bay. By late 1940 and early 1941, the top brass of both Army and Navy had quietly conceded that the Philippines could not be defended against a determined attack by the Japanese. Staff talks between the Americans and British during the first three months of 1941 had concluded that, in the event the United States should be engaged in war with Germany and Japan, the subjugation of Germany should have priority; the business with Japan would be delayed as well as possible until victory had been achieved in Europe. Implicitly that decision recognized the loss of the Philippines, Guam and Wake.

It was not that there was an entire absence of talk about protecting the

Philippines. The government of the United States officially guaranteed the protection of the Philippines. General Marshall placed great reliance upon the use of air power in offensive action. General MacArthur drew up plans for a large Philippine Army. But as late as the summer of 1941 that army existed principally on paper. Not a single division had been completely mobilized, and no unit was at full strength. There was a comparable shortage in equipment and in training. A satisfactory corps of officers is not built up within such a brief period of time. These green troops would face Japanese regulars who had begun intensive invasion training in Formosa as early as March of 1941. After only a few weeks in the field some units of the untrained Philippine Army were already without footgear, because the sneakers issued to them had not been rugged enough, and without guns because they had not absorbed the soldier's maxim that his rifle is his best friend.

The Philippine Scouts were distinct from the Philippine Army in many ways. The Scouts were officered by US Army regulars, well equipped even though many of their implements were somewhat outdated, and trained rigorously according to no-nonsense standards. The rank and file of the Scouts were volunteers, and they bad been whipped into first-class fighting condition, as they would clearly demonstrate in the days to come.

As there were two battalions of the 88th Field Artillery I divided time between them. Major Howard and Major Vepsala were the chiefs. Within a short time, even under conditions of peace, I formed a firm opinion that the Philippine scout was a first-class soldier. Under conditions of war that opinion filled out into an indestructible conviction.

At Stotsenburg I would get occasional leave and head for Manila. There I would visit confreres, Fathers Tom Cain, OP, and Tony Norton, OP, who were from the States and studying for degrees at the University of Santo Tomas. At times Father McDonald and Father Zerfas of Fond du Lac and I would visit the Columban Fathers, who were from Ireland. Once at a Chaplains' meeting the Rector of Santo Tomas invited all the chaplains over to dinner. Army life was not so bad in the Philippines before December 8, 1941.

So far as we could observe, December 8, 1941 was to be just another day in the routine of army life. By orders issued on the preceding day we gathered for a briefing about nine in the morning. Briefings in peacetime do not usually overwhelm one's interest even in the monotony of an army post. But, on this morning we were treated to something cheery; in substance an officer declared to us: "Somebody over in Honolulu is really on his toes this morning. We just received an alert, and in order to make the alert sound authentic we have been told that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor this morning. Because of that alert we go on a wartime basis right now. You have your instructions. Shape up your

gear, get ready for an inspection."

Some of the boys griped that a perfect good Sunday was being stupidly spoiled. Little did any of us suspect the really serious spoiling that was in the making. Perhaps in the early morning of the last day of Sodom and Gomorrah some of the early risers were complaining about the pesky flies.

But within an hour or two the civilian radio stations destroyed all illusion that we were just going through the mimicry of war. The real thing was upon us. The first detail of our artillery units was ordered to dig up shells that had been protected and concealed in the earth. The Twenty-sixth Cavalry of the Philippines Scouts left immediately for territory to the left of Lingayen Gulf to resist the first landing of the Japanese forces on either side of the northern tip of Luzon. About a month later the shreds of that cavalry outfit backed up to the south, into Bataan. The terrain of Bataan was no place for cavalry maneuvers, but the horses and mules did contribute to the war effort when they were converted into rations.

Camp Stotsenburg was deep in the interior of the island and therefore held no strategic value for the moment. Consequently, all the personnel except a permanent guard were dispatched to various barrios to form pockets of resistance. The area around Lingayen was not fortified; the main installations were at Bataan and Corregidor. Between Lingayen Gulf and Bataan, stores, artillery, and ammunition from Corregidor had been cached according to a fairly recent and utterly impractical plan to defend all of the Philippines. That decision to distribute supplies from Corregidor followed logically from the change in plans to limit defensive action within Bataan to a later determination to attempt to hold all of Luzon. Only part of the second plan was executed to an appreciable degree, and that was the movement of supplies. This proved to be a very expensive move, because we lost large stores in the early days of the war that we sorely needed during the Bataan campaign.

One by one the units hurriedly moved out of Camp Stotsenburg and made for the front, wherever that was to be found. Confusion and ignorance of facts and places are always the lot of the lower echelons in an army. About all we knew was that we were to go somewhere and get there as soon as possible, even through the maze of delays. For instance, near Mexico a steady stream of cars flowed through our lines and snarled up our operations. I reported the condition to Major Vepsala who replied, "Well, you have rank, find out!" I learned that some local official had signed orders granting to civilians right of way through the advance of the military.

Major Howard led one battalion of artillery and Major Vepsala led the other, but not on the same route of march. I was chaplain tor both battalions; I left with Major Vepsala.

On Christmas Eve at Abucay we met a group of about fifteen military motorcycles serving as an escort for a limousine. Major Vepsala asked me, "Know who that is?" I had not the faintest idea, but I soon learned that MacArthur was heading for the Rock [Corregidor Island], after declaring Manila an open city in order to prevent its total destruction by planes.

On December 10, we received reports of landings at Aparri and Vigan. Those two landings were to the north of our position. The next day a landing at Legaspi put troops southeast of us and almost due east of Corregidor. The invasions would continue until December 24. But once enemy forces operated both to the north and to the south of us they were in a position to begin a pincer movement and exterminate us. There was no question now of defending the whole of Luzon; we were forced into the decision to retreat into Bataan.

On paper the forces facing the invaders were very impressive in numbers. More than one hundred thousand Filipinos were in uniform. But the Philippine Army was scheduled to be completely operative only some five years later when the islands would receive their independence. In the fall of 1941 they had not as yet become soldiers. The US Army had some nineteen thousand Americans and some twelve thousand Philippine Scouts, all of which were thoroughly reliable. The air power had been around a hundred planes in combat condition, one-third of which were bombers; but great or small, the airpower was shattered before there were two sides to the fight. The Navy had established previous instructions for Admiral Hart to get out of Manila Bay and move southward in the event of an attack. Neither MacArthur nor Hart could expect immediate help of any serious dimensions from the States.

On Christmas Day we were still in the town of Mexico, but we expected to be in action almost at any moment. As dawn approached I asked Major Vepsala how much time I had in which to say Mass. "Our orders are," he said, "to be ready to fire at any minute." In a pleasant farmyard that reminded me keenly of the stable of Bethlehem I set up an altar on the birthday of the Prince of Peace to say Mass before I should first hear our guns speak in anger. Sgt. Jose Calugas, who later received the Congressional Medal of Honor, served the Mass. For us there was no fighting that day. However, other units of Philippine Scouts had already encountered the enemy pushing inward from the landings at Aparri and Vigan.

Strategy cried out for time in which to move a cumbersome mass of humanity. They numbered over a hundred thousand composed of disciplined and undisciplined troops of civilian refugees, of diverse equipment for life and for death and they had to be moved along a single two-lane highway into Bataan. We had to get to Bataan if we were to survive a week.

Our 26th Cavalry got into this early and unequal action. While the 88th

waited further orders in Mexico, what was left of the 26th Cavalry came into our camp under the cover of darkness. They did not look much like the snappy outfit that had sallied forth from Fort Stotsenberg. They had suffered heavy losses in men, animals, and equipment. The men were dirty, hungry, and weary; but they were not defeated. Father Zerfas was typical of the outfit: he needed a bath, clean clothes, food, and sleep, but he still had a full store of courage and determination. I offered a fresh uniform to Father Zerfas and proposed that he go with me to a rectory in nearby San Fernando where he could get a shower and a shave. He replied that I myself would soon need the uniform and, further, he did not have the time for a trip to San Fernando. Early the next morning I watched the Commanding Officer of the cavalry board his mount and raise his arm in the traditional cavalry signal to get underway. That morning I admired the horses; some weeks later I helped to eat them. Against the background of bedraggled human beings the magnificent animals calmly and contentedly munched their oats as if all went well in the animal kingdom. The transformation in the appearance of the 26th Cavalry was our first silent but most solemn instruction in the seriousness of the business so close to hand.

Our forces in the north put up a heroic but futile delaying action. Numbers and the initiative gained by long planning and detailed espionage were in the hands of the Japanese. Not until the retreat reached Layoe on the northeastern boundary of Bataan could we assemble a sufficient force to attempt to make a stand of serious dimensions. But the veterans of the long campaign down the Malayan peninsula could not be contained by our small, loosely bound, and unbloodied assemblage of men who had been civilians only a year ago.

Between Camp Stotsenberg and Layoe we had spent a month in the field and in action. We had sufficient ammunition, but our rations were reduced to two meals a day. We did not realize it at the time, but we were still in circumstances of comparative prosperity. But the most important thing that was happening we did not have the leisure or time to observe: the survivors would enter Bataan as first-class fighting men, able and willing to hold their own in open warfare even against great odds.

We moved from Mexico to Layoe Junction where the first effort was to be made to firmly impede the advance of the enemy. As yet the Japanese were north of us, and we waited for them to come to us. We arrived late one afternoon and distributed our batteries in the woods surrounding the highway leading to Ambuccay. As we faced the north it seemed as if we were on some gigantic picnic, but a picnic that was disturbed shortly after breakfast by the distant thunder that rumbled over the horizon.

Major Vepsala ordered me to bivouac the mess trucks. I demonstrated my military skill by placing them in a position that turned out to be in the line of

fire. But for the moment a running board of a truck looked nice and upholstered divan to me, and there I took my ease but only for a few moments. Shells streamed overhead with a high-pitched, piercing shriek. For us the war had really arrived. We had constantly met the unpleasant for the past month, and now we had come to grips with the fatal.

Very soon the enemy had the range of the area in which I was placed, and casualties began to accumulate in the vicinity. Since there was no medical doctor with the battalion I assumed charge of two medical corpsmen whom I found sitting in an open field awaiting a summons. Someone brought word that a battery situated in a nearby ravine had received a direct hit. The corpsmen and I made our way towards the battery amid the explosion or artillery shells. No question about it, I was frightened to the point of trembling.

At the battery in the center position lay a battered scout by the name of Dundine. He was injured most seriously of all with gaping wounds in the head and the abdomen. More shells fell in the neighborhood. Quite prudently the agile leaped for cover, but Dundine could not move and I did not move. Somehow or other my jitters vanished then and there. During the war I was to learn that men frequently act in a strange way when they come close to death. Dundine furnished the first example.

Dundine was the first of many thousands whom I was to see die during the war. He had been badly wounded in the head and stomach by shell fragments. Probably he was beyond surgical assistance when we first saw him. First of all I absolved him and anointed him. We bandaged his wounds as well as we could, but we had no ambulance to move him to the rear, nor any morphine to assuage his pain. As is natural with major wounds there was not much bleeding.

The two corpsmen began to patch up various artillerymen, and Dundine and I began a strange deathwatch that lasted two or three hours. Periodically shells cracked around us, from time to time Dundine screamed in agony, occasionally he asked for water; but for the most part he talked. He told me that when he volunteered for the Scouts he denied that he had a family because he knew that only single men were eligible for the crack outfit. He was a native of San Fernando La Union and he had aspired to a career in politics. Although I could not understand how the man could think or talk, he read to me from a diary that contained what he called a record of "the perfidy of the Japanese."

I left Dundine for a sufficient time to visit the men who were slightly wounded and to call on our other batteries in order to learn if they had suffered any casualties. Then I returned to Dundine and gave him the best I had to offer, the comfort of companionship: no other kind of comfort was available. After some time I asked a favor in return, "Tell me, Dundine, when you see God will you ask Him to be good to me?" As night began to conceal our position an

ambulance arrived and Dundine was taken to a hospital where he died.

We needed another ambulance. A fellow officer located a Philippine Army ambulance loaded with K-rations. We had no jurisdiction over the men and material of the Philippine Army, but in the exigencies of battle the amenities of military courtesy are often disregarded. At pistol point the officer seized the ambulance, dumped out the K-rations, and drove to the spot where the wounded were congregated.

At length, blessed and black nightfall fell suddenly without the preliminary of dusk, as is customary in the tropics. With darkness the guns went to sleep after a busy day. Later on we were to observe that Japanese batteries did not operate during the hours of darkness. We speculated that they could not see well enough to do their job. But at the close of this first day of battle we accepted the quiet as great good fortune. I could then move about the battlefield with at least some illusion or serenity. Our half-tracks were sending machinegun fire towards the enemy lines in a brave display of what really was sheer pretense. A determined charge by Japanese tanks and infantry could have overrun and captured all of us. My first day in battle was completed by a tour in search of the wounded, after which I returned to headquarters where Major Vepsala was awaiting orders to move to some new position. During the day our battery had been out off from supporting units; we had to move before the enemy would become aware of our defenseless position.

We had fought on the threshold of Bataan, but we had not been able to stop the enemy. Now there was nothing for us to do but pass into Bataan as quickly as we could. Our outfit formed along the side of the highway leading to Abucay which is some distance within Bataan. The army resumed the retreat. Defeated troops may be able to retreat in good order, but the movement of individual units may appear to be a compound of hurrying up and then of waiting for their appointed place in line. Our battalion halted on the edge of the highway until three in the morning when orders came to move. Major Vepsala and I occupied the last car of our battalion to leave the field of engagement. As we rolled dismally through the night I reflected that until some twenty hours ago I had only presumed that I knew what it was to be an Army chaplain; now I was really beginning to understand.

A retreat may appear very neatly on the maps at general headquarters, but out in the field it seems that almost everything is being done to confound any purpose, if there ever was one. We were amateurs, for the most part; civilians of yesterday, perhaps corpses later today, but only remote prospects to become soldiers tomorrow. At best, apprentices; in many instances, apprentices indentured against their will. Why the Japanese did not simply descend upon us and suddenly end the whole miserable business I shall never know

until Judgement Day. Perhaps the whole matter should be referred to the guardian angels.

Looking into the night I could see groups of men lolling around as the slow-footed hours of early morning shuffled away. In the distance and out of sight lay many thousands of whose existence I would gain some knowledge only in Bataan, many thousands about whom I would learn only after the records of war were published.

The Japanese looked upon the Philippines as an objective of secondary importance. Their prime interest rested on Malaya, Singapore, and Indonesia. The Japanese planners had such a low estimate of the resistance to be met that they allotted a mere fifty days for the whole campaign; that is, victory day was to arrive around February 15. Actually, resistance held out until June 9, some four months later. Those four months of delay disorganized the Japanese timetable, interrupted the sweep to the south and southeast, disgraced the 14th Army and shelved General Homma for the rest of the war. His next and final public appearance was as a war criminal who ended up before a firing squad because of the Death March. The historical importance of our military operations in the Philippines comes from the heroism and tenacity of half-starved, disease-ridden men who produced this delay. For a time the calculations of the Japanese seemed to be verified so satisfactorily with the capture of Manila that the best division and an air group were dispatched to Java.

On January 9, the Japanese commander, General Homma, unhesitatingly launched an army of some twenty-five thousand soldiers against some fifty thousand of our II Corps. Numbers did not count as much as quality did, and overall the Japanese had the higher quality, although we had some worthwhile skills among the American regulars and the Philippine Scouts. There was never any question but that we had to retreat. What we tried to do was to retreat in an orderly fashion until we could get into Bataan where the terrain was favorable to defense. But from the very beginning the Philippine Army began to dissolve with some members returning to their barrios and some going into the jungle where they rendered great service in the more familiar surroundings of guerrilla warfare.

Chapter II
Defending Bataan

Even without a war going on, beauty and violence go hand in hand in the tropics. I have read that the volcanic mass of the Philippine Islands (which the Spanish called "The Islands of St. Lazarus", and how right they were) is still growing. Scientists measure it every now and then. Luzon rises out of the water giving the impression that it has no beaches whatsoever, just sheer depth.

We were standing under a magnificent canopy of trees that would make you think you were in the most wonderful cathedral in the world. Our backs were towards Corregidor, while we faced Northern Luzon and the forested mountains. On our left was the China Sea, and on our right was Manila, twenty miles away across the bay. Surrounded as we were with the beauty of Bataan, it was only reasonable to lift our minds with the Psalmist and say, “I have lifted up mine eyes to the mountains whence help shall come to me.” We knew by this time that we needed the Lord’s help, badly. I would say that never in my life have I been in such a beautiful place, and yet under such tragic circumstances.

We fought for Bataan because it was the thing ordered; also because we loved it. Our purpose was to hold Manila Bay. If you make a circle out of your right forefinger and thumb, leaving a quarter of an inch space in the opening, you will have a fair idea of Manila Bay. In the middle of the opening imagine a pebble; this is the rock of Corregidor. This rock was the fortress on which the might of America was entrenched. Bataan gave the rock its power, because he who had Bataan eventually had the rock. No boat could possibly pass the rock without the sanction of Bataan. Therefore, their timetable was held up. Had the Japanese taken Bataan, General MacArthur might have had to delay the initial campaign of his return by many years. But Bataan held until April 9, 1942, giving General MacArthur time to get up his defenses in New Guinea.

Inexorable change was upon us, and the time had arrived when men as individuals had to make decisions. The “bastards of Bataan” were about to take their place among the immortals.

Trucks of all natures and descriptions were jostling for positions on the road that led to little Baugio. The road was made wide enough for two trucks to pass each other going in opposite directions, but there were seen three abreast on that road that night. The men who were making history were not pulsating with thrills such as one feels who reads history. Rather, they were tired and weary, not to mention downhearted. It is true that they would have completed their task even to death. Our leaders realized that; but there was a limit to human endurance. It would have been a matter of mere days and then

annihilation.

Very slowly the convoys moved in the dark. Gradually as we approached our bivouac we could hear the roar or trucks backing into position for a final resting place where they were to find new masters in a few hours. We were being humiliated and stripped of our last possession on earth.

I was driving with Lieutenant Dr. Lewis, and his Medical orderly, Sergeant Musney. We had a truck containing all the equipment, medical supplies, sleeping bags, musette bags and my Mass kit. After the sergeant backed the truck and got out the sleeping equipment we went for the last of our emergency supplies.

I opened a can of crackers and a can of beef stew and enjoyed one of the most delicious meals I have ever had. Even though the stew spilled on my hand I licked it off and enjoyed the dirt with it. Since the war began on December 8, 1941, we had been on curtailed rations. As the war went on the rations became even scarcer.

We were once lectured by an officer who originally belonged to the Forestry Department, covering the 87 varieties of trees that were on the islands. He said that if we knew what we were doing we could live indefinitely off the bark of the trees. I knew that some of the men did precisely this, especially when we were fighting in the guerilla war. However, many of them tried to live during these months by eating aquillas, that is, the scaled lizards and monkeys. If there was a cat around, they would eat it too. In fact, I know that many patrols in the Japanese territory were made to take food away from the enemy so that we might exist.

One night, for example, the patrol came in very hungry and the patrol leader asked the mess sergeant if he had food for supper. He said that what the patrol had found was very insufficient, and therefore, they were very hungry. The mess sergeant replied that he had a pretty good meal. Chuck Kallen, who was the leader, took the lid off the pot and decided that he did not care to eat that night. It looked to him like an infant, but it was actually only a monkey.

I remember one day picking up a soldier in Little Baugio Hospital and drove him toward Hermosa where he was to join his infantry outfit. He was sick and just out of the hospital and when he thought of joining his group at the front he just broke down. I don't mean he broke down in the sense that he was afraid, but he just caved in with discouragement about thoughts of what he would have to face in the immediate future. He remarked that the food was insufficient enough at the hospital, but he dreaded the lack of it at the front. All of it was a woeful lack of food, especially in Bataan. I know this because I twice visited at Corregidor.

Sleep came quickly; it did not take long for the spirit was willing. The

ordinance outfit was busy exploding ammunition dumps. A noise like this just lulled men who had heard worse rackets and were probably going to hear worse in the future. If we had not been so tired I suppose we would have been a very sorry group. The racket continued, what with all the ammunition that had to be exploded before the enemy could put it to use against us. One of the essentials of war was the energy to destroy, and here we were laying waste to vast quantities of materials so that the enemy could not use it on us. But this fulmination did not prevent sleep from calling a cessation to all activities. Human nature can endure just so much.

What the men of Bataan had for a future was in the hands of God. I was awakened the next morning by activity in the crackling of a fire. It was the noise of men milling about that caused me to be active. I noticed that the mess orderlies were busy frying the last of the flour into pancakes. I managed to get there in time to get a few pancakes and could have eaten more, but there weren't anymore. Although I realized that this might have been the last meal for some time, there was not anything to be done about it. When you come to the end of the line you are just there, that is all. We were almost thankful for anything and had learned not to worry about the next meal anyway. There was important business presently. Some Zero fighters apparently did not like the looks of our bonfire and took the signs for what they were, namely, the destruction of records and materials. As they came at us, we hit the ground and the fighter unloaded bombs on us, trying to hit the crowds but none of us were hit. Meanwhile the officers were busy destroying gun parts.

True, the decisions that were made at the surrender were binding upon all the men, but there are such little items as mop-up details of the enemy to be considered, and woe to the men caught in the mop-up. The men had to decide when and how they were to step into the doubtful future. It was essentially a problem of individual security. Already the tanks were rumbling on the road, warning the men that the Japs meant business. Once in awhile we could hear the rattle of machine guns indicating the fact that some of our men were being wounded or killed. I knew some of the officers who took a Command car down the road. I supposed that they were going to meet the enemy, which was a very innocent thing, but it proved to be most imprudent because for their pains they were shot and killed.

The only one I knew who actually obtained his objective was Father Stan Reilly of San Francisco, California. He noted that his outfit was being looted. He was with a hospital unit and in order to protect it, he walked until he contacted a Japanese officer who took him to his commanding officer. Thence he told him that he wished his unit to be protected, upon which the Japapese in command gave him a protective guard to prevent the looters from molesting that unit.

This was a blessing because it meant that all of the medications, surgical apparatus, ambulances and equipment were given protective custody, and this particular hospital was able to come in at the beginning of evacuation at O'Donnell and saved many hundreds of those left to die at that prison.

A few of the Scouts were busily getting into civilian garb and dressing up for all the world like local natives. They were from crack units of the Philippine Scouts and were second to none when it came to either offensive or defensive fighting. These men shortly took off into the hills and many of them became famous in guerilla fighting, as was the new President Magsaysay.

I might add that the Philippine Scouts made up a highly trained unit of the regular US Army. All the officers were Americans, but the unit itself was composed of natives. They had a cavalry and infantry outfit, and two artillery outfits. These units were held in reserve during the early fighting of the retreat from Lingayen. They were held in Bataan to await the main party of the troops.

Meanwhile the Philippine Army held a delaying action by permitting the artillery and defenses to be set up along the perimeter of Hermosa. The 26th Calvary which were of the Philippine Scouts received a brutal beating on the retreat from the North. They arrived in Bataan to do more heroic work, but minus much of its complement. It was my good fortune to have been attached to the Field Artillery of the Philippine Scouts all during my stay in the Philippines.

An occasion which gave me so much of a thrill was one day at my command post, I was listening to the Voice of America on the radio and they reported that "Today a 5'3" Philippine Scout came up to a 6-foot American Marine and said, "OK Joe, I take over." He did take over because at that particular time we were having trouble at Aglaloma Point which the Japanese had infiltrated. The Scouts had them cleared out within a few weeks.

These were the famous Philippine Scouts to which I felt so attached. Other than being attached to the Army, I never was so proud of an outfit in my life. You can readily imagine that it was not a very happy scene to be parting with these companions. They were very lovable people and the Filipinos were extremely loyal. A few of them asked me what I thought about them getting into civilian clothes. My own personal opinion was that they would be shot, and I told them so. But they had their own opinions about the matter and I am very happy to have discovered that they were right. This, of course, did not apply to about 50,000 who came into prison.

At any rate, I saw a companion, an American officer, and said, "Let's go, it is about time or they will be coming in to look for us." We could hear the tanks rolling up the road. We were also told to show some kind of white garment as a sign of surrender and that we should hold up our hands. I knew this was

sensible; if you held your hands down there was a possibility that you could pull an automatic out of your pocket and use it. This companion of mine had an automatic strapped on his belt and I suggested that he dispose of it immediately as the mere sight of it might get both of us shot, so he destroyed the mechanism of the gun and threw it into the jungle.

By this time the Japanese columns were moving toward Mariveles. My first encounter with them was when I came up near a tank. An officer was standing in the turret and he pointed to the road toward Manila, in other words backwards from where he was headed. My hands were up in the air and I think I had a white undershirt attached to a stick. Every other American had some kind of garment and was waving it. As soon as I started down the road and those tanks had passed me I put my hands down and I came to what was to be the assembly point.

My particular group of officers from the 88th Field Artillery was gathered together talking and I joined them. I was particularly anxious to find my Mass kit as Sergeant Musney had parked the truck somewhere other than where we had put it the previous night. We found Sergeant Musney and he said the Japanese had already opened my kit and were only interested in the wine (which they took). This of course, was a very important article to me, but Sergeant Musney said he would get my kit for me in a little while. We just drifted to watch the front-line troops move towards Little Baguio.

We watched them and were amazed at the quality and quantity of the men who had captured us. I remember watching one particular boy who could not have been more than sixteen years of age. He was about 5'2" and must have weighed two hundred and fifty pounds; he had thick glasses and looked for all the world like a well-fed coolie. He was carrying a gun carriage on his shoulder, which must have weighed around three hundred pounds, and yet this solid mass of muscle was advancing just as fast as the mules that were carrying the gun barrels and ammunition. No wonder they were clever at jungle fighting when they could command such a mass of men to do their fighting and live on rice and what they found on the land.

Unfortunately I caught the eye of an officer who was in command of the advancing unit. He looked at me as I caught his eye and I quickly looked at the ground for fear of discourtesy, but then when he had moved on to my right about two spaces, I looked at him to size him up. He lashed out with a riding crop which hit me across the front of my forehead and it stung to my teeth. I did nothing but look straight at the ground because I suspected that the officer would have been glad to have used his sword on me. I knew from looking out of the corner of my eye that he was staring at me and waiting for an overt act. I was standing at that moment beside Colonel Ray, my superior. As I was at the

end of the line there was no one on my right, so therefore, I had a clear view of the moving outfit and also of my persecutor. I had learned years ago that Orientals have peculiar notions of Westerners and especially Americans. However, it was quite a shock to me to learn what I should have known: war is war and hatred is not amenable to reason. I realized that it was impolite to stare at anybody, but I was drinking deeply of my future host. I remember telling one of our officers that the Japanese were not bad people, because I had observed some of them when I was a bellhop years before. I liked their characteristics. In fact, despite these few unpleasant examples, I was confirmed in my theory.

Shortly after that, when I had ascertained that the officer had moved on, I told Colonel Ray about the incident. He was standing on my left and was so absorbed in looking over the troops that he had not even noticed the lick that I had received, but his remarks about the incident afterward were quite remarkable, although not fit to print. The essence of his remarks amounted to the fact that the Japanese soldiers were feeling their inferiority and would lash out at anyone who was superior.

Along the sidelines, drifters were beginning to appear. While they seemed good natured, nevertheless, they were blood brothers of looters. They had nothing to exchange; they were mere art collectors, the same that you have in any army. You could call them looters, but since they are poison, let us call them art collectors. One of them came up to me and bade me hold up my hand and relieved me of my Elgin wristwatch and also my fountain pen. After he relieved me of all I had, he went on to the others to relieve them of what they had.

Suddenly some genial Japanese soldiers came along. They were merely good-natured soldiers who wanted the pleasure of talking to Americans, probably five or six in a group. Their purpose as I said was fun. One of them seemed to be the butt of the jokes about his own nose; he had an extra-long nose and they would point to it and say “Americano.” As far as we could determine, his father was an American and had married his mother in Honolulu. He could not speak much English, although I learned many of the Japanese had received instruction in high school in the English language, so that perhaps one-third of the Japanese army could carry on an intelligent conversation in English.

We had a couple of cans of abalone. This was a tough crustaceous fish which we found rather unpleasant. We asked them if they would like something to eat and they said yes, so we opened the can of abalone and gave it to them and the one with the long nose kept saying “Is good.” A debate went on among us Americans as to whether we should tell them about this tough fish. One officer was happy to have the thought that perhaps they would have indigestion. Most

of the Americans were for telling him to take it easy or he would get sick. This abalone is packed in California. Very few know about it, but the Japanese were happy with it and kept saying "sank you."

About this time I was getting very concerned about what Sergeant Musney had developed, and it seems that he had located my Mass kit, for which I was deeply grateful. Before I had left the States, I visited the Military Ordinate in New York and had received a new chalice and vestments, and could have received a much better Mass kit, but my whole life was wrapped up in this one. It was small in size, had a wire for a handle, and was pretty well beaten. In the Philippines I had a new handle put on it, had it all painted up and fixed up nicely by those clever craftsmen they had there. It was almost a new kit and quite to my liking.

The conversation at the time was centered about where (we were going), when (we were going), and how we were going (you know) – just like you would when you were waiting for a parade to come along. Everyone discusses the potentialities of the parade, compares it to other parades and in general, sizes the parade up in the mind's eye.

There was one other thing that was happening at the time and that was that the Americans were taking what supplies were left in the Quartermaster trucks. As I needed a new pair of shoes I decided to forage.

Unfortunately, the only pair around my size fitted very snugly, but I thought either we would be in Manila soon, or it would be a long hard winter. In either case I may as well have taken the shoes that were too small.

I also noticed that the medical supplies were being confiscated, but because I knew little about the use of medications, decided not to touch any of it, as there was danger of getting the wrong medicine. In fact, I am most certain that quinine and sulphur drugs got mixed up in my pack, but as I needed both of them, no harm came from the use of one in place of the other.

It was about Kilometer Post 167 that we assembled. Guarding us was one lone Japanese soldier. He sat in front of us on a chair while we sat in cross-legged fashion in front of him. There we sat and sat, and nothing much came of it.

Our supply officer who was most conscientious and also an excellent provider had taken some canned goods. I do not remember the type, but he passed it around among us officers and we had something to eat, for the last time. My last meal had been in the morning and that, of course, had been pancakes. Due to this generous officer's work, he and his assistant had lugged along enough to give several of us officers something to eat. If memory serves me, we had a five pound can of corn beef hash. The officer, Hix Myers and his assistant, John Morey, had served well during the war and had supplied

consistently good meals of the allotted allowance. In fact, General Headquarters had returned our supply officer and had taken some of our reserve supplies which Myers had diligently sought to protect as a mother hen protects her chicks.

We did have a few choice bottles of olives that we were eating just previous to the feast that Captain Myers produced. The conversation was centered chiefly about a trip to Manila and what this sudden change from activity into captivity would mean for us. There were all kinds of rumors and all kinds of discussions, and as is natural with many minds figuring up things, the ones that came in on the tail end of a discussion letting their natural imagination run wild, would have all kinds of marvelous things in store for us. For example, the rumor that we were going to be transferred to South America and would be repatriated in exchange for prisoners. But then you would have the minds of others, who would produce the fact that Japanese did not recognize their own prisoners as having been captured and, therefore, it was not logical that we would be repatriated. At any rate, in the beginning it was all very thrilling and interesting to guess what the future would produce for us.

Finally we just lay down on the ground and gradually went to sleep. The night previous had been all racket and roar. Now hundreds of men were lying on the ground and there was complete silence. One got used to that. We just made space enough for each other and there was very little fuss. On this particular night the guard let us go for water in small groups.

Came the morning, we just gradually arose out from our positions as the stir of other soldiers made sleep an impossibility. They were still moving troops up to take position on the shoulders of Bataan across from Corregidor to prepare for attack. This afforded a wonderful opportunity for the Japanese, inasmuch as American troops at Corregidor could not afford to fire on our position. Had Corregidor fired they would have hit American prisoners of war. This fact, of course, gave the Japanese ample opportunity to draw up all their reinforcements for a large attack.

By about the sixth day though, our men at Corregidor were compelled to fire. They did hit some of us. One of them was a Colonel who was in the hospital at O'Donnell and in very bad shape.

The day began to get intolerably hot. We were all squirming, but were not allowed to move. Several hundred men sat in that cross-legged fashion unable to move except by permission of the guard and to go to the latrine. Naturally, the men were so nervous from confinement that they went many times. About noontime we were moved about one kilometer across the road and under the trees. We were right over the shoulder of a ravine and were facing San Fernando. We sat in the same fashion as we did across the road, that is, on the

ground with our legs crossed.

This time there was a sergeant in the Japanese Army who ranked very high, and a few Japanese soldiers. Once again, the oriental stoicism was manifest in their treatment of the prisoners. I have never been one to cast any stones at anyone for the simple reason that human nature is the same everywhere, it just varies accidently. This sergeant seemed to ignore what was in front of him. During the day he permitted water details to go down to the creek and bring up the water. The squads were operating all day long. I did not know for a fact how many there were in my group, but I judge there were probably six hundred men.

I had some crystals of chlorine which had been used for water and I also had one little patty of coffee paste. I proceeded to put the coffee paste in the canteen with the water and then I put in it probably a teaspoon of chlorine. Anyone who knows anything about chlorine knows that this is an excessive amount, but I had it in, and I shook it up with the coffee. I can assure you that I had one of the most nauseating drinks that it is possible to concoct. I drank it, but I did not like it, but I figured that it would be better than what I would get later on because the future was very dim.

I noticed that the sergeant when he received his meals would always give some of his food to the men immediately in front of him. This was typical of the Japanese, whether they liked or disliked you, whether they would do it out of charity, or because they did not want to waste the food, nevertheless, he would always share it with someone, at least that is what I saw.

When we remember about such affairs we often wonder how men could stand such situations, but the fact was that even though there was much conversation going on, it served its purpose. I have tried to recall some of the conversation, and whether it is because my memory is bad, or because I actually was unable to recall it at the immediate time, I have never been able to make any sense out of most of the conversation. The men were not feeling well; their minds had dissipated because of sickness, anxiety and what not, and it does not seem to have made much sense, at least any important sense. Conversation served its purpose though, and kept the men occupied even as the medics have taken the minds of the wounded off of their troubles on the battlefield by asking what seem to be routine and silly questions.

The signs of deterioration went back many months as we have mentioned before, because of the diet and insufficient rations. The effect was now taking place. The men were feeling the effects of outraged nature. There were signs of irritation. Some men would lash out at others in angry rebuke for things which would never have happened had they not been sick and panicky. They were not certain as to their future. They were beaten, and hope should have died in

them, but there was one flicker of life remaining, and that hope was in the magic name of Manila.

As the night came on, it came quickly, because there is no twilight in the tropics. The officer in charge still allowed men to fill their canteens, that is, as an organized group of men, say eight in the charge of one guard. Every man, therefore, had a sufficiency of water if nothing else. This was our first day without any food whatsoever, but we did have water. A man can get along without food and only feel the anguish, but water is something altogether different. He simply has to have water and he will do most anything to get it.

I was getting sicker all the time from the contaminated chlorine water that I was drinking. The officers of my regiment were all together as a unit. The officers were the only Americans in the regiment. We had no American troops and I have never seen a more loyal group of men. They shared and shared alike.

Among the officers was Carl Savoie, who was leader of a Philippine Army regiment and in the reorganization, he became a Company Commander in the 88th Field Artillery. He came from Louisiana where I recently came from and was a companion of Whitney Langois, who was a Lieutenant in one of the Batteries. Then there was Major Baer, Major Vepralla, Colonel Ray, Major Batson, Lieutenant Lewis, Lieutenant Morett, and Captain Myers. We slept on the ground again and we were just as jammed in as we were before. My thoughts were as always, loyalty to my men and fond memories.

I used to travel from Eastside to Westside Bataan to see my two outfits of the 88th. Always when I would arrive at one or the other the sun would be setting. Well, the sun sets very fast in the Far East, but when it does set it is one of the most beautiful sights to behold. Always I would be thinking "tomorrow is another day" or "Perhaps." But we knew the impossibility of help. So, there was one thing left: spiritual aid. This came to us and endured throughout. Those who were unfortunate had this aid, but sometimes they were too slow to accept it. Those who did, found it very consoling.

By January 23, eighty thousand troops and twenty-six thousand civilians were trying to make their way into Bataan over one highway of two lanes. Although we knew nothing at the time about the war plans drawn up in times of peace when the actualities of the future could not confound the estimates of military pundits, those war plans provided for only forty-three thousand persons to enter Bataan. Supplies of food and equipment had been gauged for forty-three thousand over a period of six months. That total of stores had been reduced by the transfer of supplies from Bataan to Luzon on the supposition that we should try to hold all of the Philippines. Very early it became evident that we must abandon much territory, and with the loss of territory went the loss of supplies. Plans had been drawn up for the transportation of stockpiles

to Bataan, but plans do not automatically produce vehicles. Bitter recrimination followed upon the failure to get supplies into Bataan, but verbal chastisement did not substitute for foodstuff.

The outcome of the Bataan campaign was already determined before we entered Bataan; the course of the campaign carried only one element of the unexpected – heroic and prolonged defense against irresistible opposition. The Japanese had allotted fifty days for the conquest of Bataan and Corregidor; it took them four months for Bataan alone. In the end, the Americans succumbed to three enemies: starvation, disease and the Japanese, with the least effective of the three being the Japanese.

As I recall the hesitancy of the Japanese from the beginning of hostilities in Luzon, to the capitulation of the starving and diseased remnants of our forces in southern Bataan, I have a strong suspicion that the Japanese labored under a deep-seated fear of us. Everything in the inventory of material assets was in their favor, as we could well observe. But something inside them kept them from using their advantages. Perhaps their own chagrin at themselves had something to do with the way in which they conducted the Death March.

From personal standards and from a military standpoint the action of our military in Bataan was mainly a contest against hunger and infection. We had battle casualties galore, but at the time of surrender we still had almost as many men on Bataan as did the Japanese: seventy-six thousand to eighty-one thousand. However, on the eve of surrender we had only a half a ration of food per man and practically no medicine at all, particularly the quinine that we needed so badly.

The specter of hunger did not so much slowly assemble before us, as it rather mobilized with us. It was recognized on January 5 by a general order that cut rations in half. With the report of supplies on hand and with the tally of the number to be fed the commissary department quickly came to the conclusion that the dairy issue must be reduced without delay. No fresh shipments could be expected; we must stretch our stores as far as they would go.

A soldier in the field requires between thirty-five hundred and four thousand calories of a balanced diet per day. On January 5 we were put on two meals a day, in February we went down to fifteen hundred calories; and by March we received one thousand. A patient confined to bed and following a program for rapid reduction of weight gets one thousand calories each day.

The schedule called for us to receive specified amounts or food, ranging from thirty-five ounces in January down to fifteen ounces in March. Delivery was unpredictable. Sometimes Japanese bombs or shells destroyed trucks and cargo; “very sorry, but no more deliveries today.” Sometimes our own famished troops practiced armed highway robbery and relieved a driver of his

consignment. Sometimes we received double rations, and later we would miss a day or two. Requisitions were made according to roll call, and the quartermaster department did not take the roll call. Frequently I suspected our own Lt. Hicks Meyers of so manipulating our tally that it appeared as if we had been miraculously spared from all casualties; indeed that we had picked up quite a number of recruits along the March. But not all the chicanery and skullduggery in the world could produce the food that we needed.

We did what we could to supplement our rations. Unfortunately, we entered Bataan at a season in the southern hemisphere that corresponds to the fall in the northern hemisphere; which meant that the crops bad been harvested and the fruits were out of season. But even in the most favorable months of the year, the sum total of cultivated and natural products of the peninsula would have produced only a fractional difference in our favor. We augmented our few ounces of meat with haphazard effort that benefited a small number of men in the immediate vicinity. The 26th Cavalry brought two hundred-fifty horses and forty-eight mules into Bataan. The mountainous terrain did not lend itself to cavalry action. At times a shell would wound or kill a horse or mule; we would butcher the animal. Later on we did not wait for the Japanese to start the process.

It may seem strange to speak of our preferences when we were patronizing such a meagre menu, but most of the men considered horsemeat to be tough and tasteless, mule meat to be sweet and appetizing. Calesa pony appealed to our shaggy gourmets, although it was rated as somewhat tough. Carabao, [CA-ra-bao water buffalo] was just meat. Monkeys fled from artillery positions and moved towards the front lines where the infantrymen were on the alert for them. Iguana and pythons were tasty but very scarce.

Unseasoned boiled rice, soggy and unattractive to the American palate, was the main staple of our diet. Rice fills the stomach, but it is not able to nourish the body properly. Our diet was insufficient not only in point of energy but also in point of variety; we were not getting the vitamins that we needed daily. It was only a matter of time until disease would become more dangerous for us than Japanese ammunition.

Soldiers do not survive on cigarettes, but a habitual smoker does get a certain lift from cigarettes. I did not smoke, and consequently I did not experience any inconvenience because of the lack of cigarettes. However, both the officers and enlisted men missed their daily complement of cigarettes. Making an average of cigarettes against the days that we were on Bataan, each man received one cigarette a day. There were no cigarette butts on Bataan. When one man did not finish a cigarette another consumed the butt. The prevailing market price in the field was five dollars for a pack that sold in a canteen during

peacetime for five cents.

Lack of food was exceeded by lack of clothing, shoes, tents and mosquito netting. We were in the tropics, but we were in tropical jungles. The days were torrid, and the nights were chilly, especially to undernourished and malaria-ridden bodies. I had no tent, but I did have a cot. During peacetime I acquired a contraption that covered the cot and provided a frame to support the mosquito netting. But that device was a luxury item: most or the men slept on the ground without any mosquito netting.

Tropical dampness and the acids of perspiration rot clothing with terrifying rapidity. Cogon grass, which is razor sharp, lent a helping hand. Our troops started into Bataan with the scant wardrobe that a soldier can transport in the field. Our commissary did not carry replacements for shoes and clothing, and new gear did not attend us on our arrival. Again, it was a matter of making out with what you had. Shortage of covering, of tents and mosquito netting, of clothing and of footgear, expose an army to the most incapacitating of enemies, disease.

We were moving about in lowlands that abounded with anopheles, the malaria-bearing mosquito. The Japanese occupied higher ground. But when the Japanese descended to our level in order to start the Death March and begin the assault on Corregidor, some twenty-eight thousand men were inactivated by malaria during the single month of April. Adequate supplies of quinine could have given our troops much protection against malaria; quinine could have given great relief to men shaking and trembling with the alternate chills and fever of malaria; but the stockpiles of quinine had not been assembled at Corregidor although the great production area of quinine was in that part of the world. In the early part of the campaign each American soldier daily received five grains of quinine as a prophylactic dose; by the end of February that basic defense against malaria could not be supplied. From the beginning of March the malaria bug had open season on game too debilitated to take normal protective measures. By March, a thousand soldiers were incapacitated every day by malaria, and three-quarters of the troops were debilitated by that same disease.

Malnutrition was the inevitable result of the way of life in Bataan. Symptoms of malnutrition quickly appeared in January with the loss of fifteen to twenty pounds per man. The Americans deteriorated much more rapidly than did the Filipinos because they were commonly of a larger physique and because they were accustomed to a richer diet of greater variety. What was evident to the eye was not as dangerous as what was invisible – the level of vitality was constantly declining. For a short time after breakfast which took place between three and four in the morning, the men would experience an

illusion that they were almost normal again. Within an hour or two they were weary, no matter how light their workload would be. The daily agony put in an appearance around noon when hunger pains set up stomach cramps. Lack of fats, and vitamins A, B and C provided apt preparation for scurvy, beri-beri and dysentery.

Field hospitals were not competent to treat the diseases that followed upon malnutrition; nor were they intended to serve that purpose. Two general hospitals were located near the tip of the peninsula, in the vicinity of Mariveles. Here again provisions had been made on calculations produced in peacetime and repudiated by the actualities of wartime. Each hospital had a capacity to handle one thousand patients. In the closing days of hostilities some additional five hundred men a day qualified for admission to a general hospital. But each general hospital already had three thousand patients.

To get into a general hospital as a patient meant that a soldier was very seriously ill; to be discharged was no proof that the man was well – only that he was not quite as sick as someone waiting for admission. One day I met a young soldier of about twenty years of age as I was visiting some of our outfit at General Hospital #1. He was being discharged and was to report back to his unit at Pilar because there was no room for him at the hospital. Not that anyone thought that he was strong enough for field duty, but as a matter of fact, he would return as strong as most of the men who had not gone to the hospital. I gave the lad a lift on his way back to duty. But I could do little to lift the sagging spirit of a young man overwhelmed with the combined misfortune that almost suffocated him. He was no coward, no goldbrick, just a young man overloaded with the burdens of a soldier's life in Bataan.

The Japanese did not need guns to bring about our surrender; they needed guns only to pen us up within a territory where we could not obtain enough food, clothing and medicine to survive. If the Japanese had not been so dedicated to the execution of a timetable, they could have saved men and ammunition by simply doing guard duty over us until hunger and disease dissolved our power to resist. The heroism of the men on Bataan will never be assessed fairly until it is recognized that they stood up in defiance until they collapsed before three frightful foes: starvation, disease and – the least terrifying of the trio – the Japanese 14th Army. You cannot shoot at hunger and disease; you cannot skewer hunger and disease with a bayonet. But either hunger or disease, to say nothing of the combination of hunger and disease, can slowly bring down the bravest, as was done on Bataan.

Chapter III
The March

Early in the morning of April 9, 1942, an ominous earthquake shook the Philippine Islands.

About three o'clock in the morning, word came of the surrender of Bataan. As if the surrender of Bataan was not enough, nature felt moved from the depths. She shuddered at the future of the magnificent Army of Bataan. This was the sixth month of the war and the defenders were the last bastion in the Far East. The night was a typical tropical night; it was clear and cool. Most nights are like that in the tropics, and also it was the fall of the year.

The following day, orders were to move out on to the road, and we were told the same thing that we were to hear many times in the future, "Yon Mei" ("four men"). We would back around until four men got into a line, and the guards would go back and forth counting the number of men they had because they were going to be responsible to hand over the same number of men to the next guard. We swung along the road at the clip the guard demanded. I had in my left hand my Mass kit, which is a valise and very heavy with its altar stone, etc., and my musette bag on my back. I was feeling very nauseated, and the chlorine taste in my mouth plus the dehydration that I was experiencing due to the sun all conspired to make me a very unhappy individual. Eventually we reached Cabcaben Air Field, the place where the boat from Corregidor landed and took off each day.

I went over to the edge of the airstrip and looked down so that I would not be seen, and opened my valise. This battered old Mass Kit belonged to another chaplain of World War I; it had served me as Chaplain in the CCCs, and then was with me in Tennessee and Louisiana on the CCCs. Later on I had it in the Army in Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Virginia, and the Philippines. It had been my constant companion in Bataan. There were so many wonderful memories attached to it that it was like losing an old friend. I picked the dispensable pieces one by one: my alb, stole, maniple, chasuble and now the case. I took my musette bag and transferred to it the altar stone, small stole, the English-Latin Dominican Missal, chalice and corporal. I left the dispensable articles to slide down the hill in the case, and then I joined the outfit. As I could not carry the Mass Kit I had only one choice and that was to retain the essentials for saying Mass. This was the first stage of misery.

Japanese launches were beginning to assemble. We were taken to the north side of the field on to some level territory where we were lined up closely, and this time with more men than I realized were on the peninsula. Apparently

there were a couple of thousand in my group, and the guards insisted on jamming us in. The purpose was, of course, that they did not have too many guards and they wanted a compact unit, so we lay down once again. It was night again and there was no difficulty in going to sleep.

For men that had not eaten well for two full days and had eaten sparsely for the last six months, they were doing extremely well. It is not easy to keep a military formation with such weakness and still march with ease. All over the road were beginning to appear articles of clothing, which the men were throwing away. By the looks of things hardly a man kept his canteen, because it was an article of weight and in the tropical sun it was really torture. In my shirt pocket I had holy oils, a stole, a "vade mecum," and also an extra pair of glasses, a spoon and a toothbrush. In my musette bag I carried my Mass equipment. I had often heard jokes about men praying to the Lord and saying, "Lord, if you will only pick up my feet, I will put them down." Even putting them down was a task. Thinking was awfully hard, but I had tried to think about our Lord's agony, but that did not stay in my mind. There kept floating back to me things of this life. I kept conjuring up thoughts of copious quantities of ice-cold orange juice. It is a peculiar thing, but all I could see was a great big globe that was similar to the globes that an orange juice company in New York City has. I saw it at the New York World's Fair, and this evidently made an impression on me. As we would move along and as we got more dehydrated I could think of nothing more of any importance, these deleriums just came up in my mind. As we bivouacked at this field and had received no supplies of water, we found there was no water available. This was also the second day without food. I gave my canteen to an officer who told me that there was a puddle nearby that men were drinking out of, and I told him that I would be glad to drink of it. He brought me back my canteen filled, and he warned me that there was a carabao standing in the puddle, which of course meant that it was filthy and muddy. I told him that I was glad to get it, and I was. Like the officer to whom Gunga Din brought the water, I was satisfied, but I will not say that it was the most joyful occasion that I have experienced.

The mind is a vast storehouse, and we never really forget anything although we try to. I remember and find that unless we develop the memory, we find it wanting; nevertheless it absorbs all the details of our lives. I suppose this is the reason that orange juice dispenser was so enticing at this most vital time in my life. I guess this was perhaps the action of a mind similar to that in which they say, "a drowning man sees his whole life come before him." Some people take this statement too literally, and as a consequence scoff at the idea that the past does come before us in extreme emergencies, but the mind does function in extreme emergencies and reveals astonishing things to us. The orange juice,

nevertheless, day in and day out, kept trickling so enticingly in front of me that I could almost feel the ice over which it was trickling. At least a sense of humor came to the rescue because there was not anything that you could do about it.

The next morning we arose as usual, received a few curt orders from the guards and were on our way once again. If my memory serves me clearly we advanced to Lamao, which was approximately the last headquarters we were occupying in Bataan. I recall walking past the ravine where we had spent so much time during the war, where only a month ago we had it nice and neat. As I walked past I noticed that the jungle was once more recovering its own. On our right we could see a sunken freighter in the Bay. It was an English tramp that had been there ever since the war began. I did not know the history of it, except that it was there and that one of the sailors off of it was John Allen, an English lad who lived in London, and a member of the crew.

As we passed these small towns walking along there was a guard placed at each fountain. Now these fountains were put there by the United States Government. They consisted in not more than a four inch pipe, just being driven into the ground from which the water gushed forth in gallons every minute. It had been doing this for years and this is the place that each member of the barrio would come for drinking and bathing purposes. It was the center of the town's activity and they would simply bathe there in the open. Despite the fact that water is one of nature's cheapest things, and at the same time one of nature's essentials and most precious gifts, it was wasted without the efforts of the Americans. A guard with a bayonet on his gun was stationed there to see that we did not drink. Actually what happened was that men would break from the ranks and dash at the guard, and while the guard was busy beating off those Americans, others would get at the fountain and fill their canteens and drink and pass on full canteens to their buddies. Actually the wetting that they would receive was welcome because the wetter you were the more moist the body would be kept, and thereby absorb some of the moisture through the pores of the skin.

At about the time of Lamao we waited for the guards once again and there was a greater breaking up of lines and milling around the town until the new guards were assembled. I sat near the center of the town. There were a few trucks lined up there. It was in the town of Alagan. I was just plain sick and out on my feet, due to the circumstances I have mentioned before. I felt that I had come to the end of the road. I resolved that I would just remain there.

As yet I had no inkling that the Japanese were shooting and killing anyone incapable of marching; although that was the purpose of the march, to legally kill the weaker ones. I made known this fact to the group of officers with whom I was traveling and they tried to argue with me that I should continue. How-

ever, I did not feel able. This really means that I was down and out. My feet were already cut and I was terribly nauseated. I spoke to Dr. Lewis about it, but he told another doctor that I would be shot if he gave me the proper medicine because I would have fallen asleep. After a delay of about 20 or 30 minutes the officers came running back, and Lt. Moret told me that we would be transported to Lamay. This failed to impress me at first, but he kept after me, and Myers joined in with 'carrot' Red Savoie and Lt. Langlois, and I moved towards the building and rejoined the group. There were some trucks that the Japanese were moving to Lamay, I guess, for about 8 miles or so, and they loaded it with all the officers at that point.

I remember distinctly a Japanese officer baiting Brooke Maury, a West Pointer, about General MacArthur. Brooke Maury did not take it from him and received a riding crop over the head and was then thrown off the truck. It was a very fortunate thing that the lift was given at this time, because it was one of the reasons that many survived. In the town of Lamay we all joined ranks again and joined the outfit moving up. It was at this place that a friend of mine, Sgt. Rose, who was a Master Sergeant of the engineers outfit, had a beloved pet, a monkey, who use to warn him of overflying Japanese planes. He used to be about with him and acted almost as a human being. When a plane would fly over, this monkey would jump into a foxhole and would jump up and down until Sgt. Rose jumped in. Then he would turn his face to the wall and put his hands over his eyes while the bombs dropped. Afterwards he would go out and play with everyone again. At this town Sgt. Rose had his pet as usual and the guard leaned down from the bus window, took the pet, and hit Sgt. Rose when he protested.

Once again we were subjected to a shakedown in this town, but then when they would look at my musette bag I would move my hands in a semicircle and they would say, "Oh, Christian" and then wave me aside. They did not wish to touch temple things.

I don't know what day we arrived at Wawa, but this was the town where we were stockaded. We were put into a small square, with probably 3,000 of us huddled in. It was dusty; there were no trees and no buildings. We closed ranks as usual, allowing no surplus space for anyone. As usual we were so tired and knocked out that we went to sleep almost immediately. We were without any food or water, and the next morning the blazing tropical sun held us there, sweating and restless. Water details were permitted and some peasant boys were selling *cicomas* [jícama], some sweet tasting turnips. Red Savoie, who had a little gold and American currency, bought some. I had two of these. Later on in the day each one of us received a handful of rice, which we were still able to assimilate. Boys were stringing around and were discovering items that they

could use. Pieces of canvas are put over sticks and many erected shade for themselves. Pretty soon the heat of the day got so bad that many were passing out. Chaplain Brown came over to me and told me that a quartermaster colonel had just passed away. I went over quickly and anointed him, as he was a Catholic. He was buried that afternoon. The strangest part of it was, although I did not know it at the time, he had $8,000 in gold in his pocket, and he could not buy a cup of water to keep himself alive.

I went to see the commanding officer, a Japanese Lieutenant who appeared to be in his office, and I started to explain that there was a convent building right across the square, and I would like to have the sick transferred to that building. He looked at me in amazement, probably thinking up an answer, but he did not need one, for some fresh corpsman started to explain that the buildings were in use and to stop talking. There was not much use in arguing with the corpsman as my argument was really with the Japanese, but I did invite him to keep big nose out of my business. Anyhow, my interview was ended without any statement from the commanding officer.

It was at this particular stopping place late in the evening, when we were all on the ground that I looked up and saw General Jones coming in with his aide. This was quite unfortunate for him, for I understood at least the general officers were to be given staff cars and accessories. However, the next morning the General was escorted out of the camp and I presumed that he was given a staff car to Tarlac and I did not see him again.

The next day we began the walk which now became even more rugged. We had only one cup of rice and had to steal the water in the face of a possible bayonet wound. The march was forced as usual, about two guards to 100 men and the men still throwing away many of their precious belongings. The large towns that we passed through, such as Belanga and Orion, I do not recall having passed through; it was just a continued part of the forced march. There was one lad in front of me at one point who had printed around his sun helmet the words, “I hate wah, Elanor hates wah, Jimmy hates wah.” What happened to this disillusioned soldier I do not know. Passing through the town of Hermosa, I recall noting the absolute destruction of this once shady, cozy little town.

In the town of Abucay (P.A. Retreat burning) I noted the large church and the cemetery where I had buried many of my Scouts and which Father Secina had used as a general burying ground. As we passed Layac Junction I noted the spot where the Scouts first met the enemy and where every gun in the outfit or in the brigade was hit. There also some of my Scouts were buried. In passing Layac Junction I noticed that one of the last things that had happened when I left the place was the destruction of the steel bridge with its concrete abutments, but now there was a brand new bridge over which we passed. It was

here that the senior ranking American officer obtained permission for the guards to brief us, and he told us that as far as he knew, and if he understood correctly, we were going to proceed a few kilometers and then would be taken to Manila. I believe that he understood correctly, but many of the guards assumed many things the same as the prisoners did not knowing what was in the minds of their superiors.

There was an occasion at Samal in which I stopped to wash my bleeding feet; they were cut with the new shoes that I had taken from the quartermaster tent. I found a dirty old creek just off the road and with my companion of that particular moment, George Armentrout of Salt Lake City, I decided to wash the cuts. As I did so, a guard came around and swung a bamboo club at me. I ducked the club and was putting on my socks when he threw the club on the ground and unslung his rifle. He started to put some bullets in his gun and about this time I was on my feet. The fact is that he could not have hurt me, no matter what he did at the moment; there was an absence of feeling. The only thing in my mind was the fact that I could not commit suicide. An absolute want of feeling came from the abuse that nature had received, and now it was rebelling. At such times there was only one satisfactory solution to the body, and that is to get it over with. This had nothing to do with the conscience or spirit, because feeling is the result of animal action whereas the controlling influence is in the conscience. I walked away from the guard expecting every moment to have a bullet in my back, but he never shot because his orders, as I had observed from the actions of all the guards, was only to shoot or bayonet those on the ground.

Around the town of Samal, I also recall taking my canteen which was full of water as we were near a flowing well, and pouring it on my head. This was not only refreshing, but it also seemed to help the dehydration that was taking place in the tropical sun. One can always do without food and stand it, but water is the irreducible minimum; one just has to have water. I also poured a couple of canteens on the head of my companion at the time. It causes me much amusement later to hear an officer say that I was out of my head and had baptized somebody.

We arrived in San Fernando, which I knew very well, and were huddled into a prison yard. The guards were still very few and we did not know what was to happen to us. At this point I lay on the ground and rested. My feelings at the time were still negative. I did not desire anything, but Father Wilson came along with a couple of eggs and some carabao milk and asked me would I have some. I did and he gave some to some of the others who were sick. It seems that Father Wilson found an opening in the lines one day and drifted into a hut. There he had dinner with the natives and had a good sleep and then found the opportunity to slip back into the lines the next morning, and so he was

refreshed as well as one might be under that slight respite.

Dr. Bleich also did a similar thing, and even went so far as to talk to a Japanese guard and found the line to join. About 2 o'clock in the morning at San Fernando there was some kind of disturbance, perhaps it was someone stealing from the galley, and I who was asleep suddenly found myself about 15 feet away from where I was resting. I looked around after the noise had subsided and remembered distinctly that Father Wilson was calling to me to come back to where I was and yet at this very moment I distinctly recall that I could not reduce my thinking into action. He came over and grabbed me by the arm and led me back to where I had been.

A couple of hours later they loaded us in freight cars destined for northern Luzon. The freight cars were smaller than the American style, and as we were moving into them in the dark of the morning, some of us hesitated so that there would be plenty of room, but the ever present bayonet kept pressing on the men nearest it, and I never saw anybody hesitate once it was in action. We surged into the car and as we got in, there was seemingly no room. I remember hearing some of them say, "stop talking, stop using your energy, you will need all the air you can get." It was a good place for panic, but these soldiers had been in tighter situations. I noted that there were open louvers at the top of the freight cars and I mentioned it to several officers who looked up satisfied. Perhaps 98% of the men squatted on the floor, and it did not look as if there were another inch of space. As they were all beaten down, they were sitting snug. Pretty soon I just wedged myself in with the rest, and in moving freight cars we all equalized ourselves. Major Irons was in one part of the car and I heard him say that we were heading north to Tarlac and that is where we wound up. As they opened the cars at Tarlac a few hours later a group of women of the town gathered and had all kinds of fruits and refreshments. The guards permitted all of us to sit on the ground and wait until these ladies had passed among us. I was at the rear and consequently out of sight of the generous ladies with some of my fellow officers; I received nothing. This failed to disturb me, because I was beyond the point of eating.

Chapter IV
Camp O'Donnell

We marched into Camp O'Donnell[6], which was partially prepared for the Philippine Army. It was up in the hills in a very beautiful spot. Even the camp itself was partly on the hills and partly in the ravines. The main part of the prison was in the ravines. Despite the fact it was one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen, it quickly took on the picture of corruption and disorder. There were no windows or screens, the roofs were of grass, the sides were of swalle and the tops of the roofs were open seven or eight inches where the contractors had never finished them. In fact, in some places the entrances to the building had never been completed so that you would have to jump three or four feet in order to get in. As I walked into the camp it was the only time in my life that I ever really felt a heartache. It really hurt.

When we got into the camp, the commanding officer gave us a warlike speech. He told us that even though America could possibly win the war, which he doubted, we would always be enemies. Only as long as we would subject ourselves to him would we be tolerated. After the introduction we moved over to the edge of the camp and there awaited the word to fall out. When we were falling out, I lay on the ground until the time came when orders were issued for us to go into the barracks. There were five of us in a row on the plain wooden floor. Now wood is not as easy to sleep on as the ground, but that first day it was really heaven to lie down unmolested.

We were filthy from seven days of marching and the accumulation of all the dirt and sweat and grime. Almost immediately there was a borrowing of what contraband equipment a few had sneaked through, mostly razors and scissors. Immediately there began a shaving of faces and heads. This was because there was no water available for sanitary uses. I think there must have been 12,000 men in that camp, and one ordinary tap of water for all those men. This meant that the water for each man was obtained by standing in line for hours to get his share of the water. This meant that one canteen of water was for everything: drinking and cleaning purposes for 24 hours. Sometimes a guard would shut it off so that he could have a shower.

Water for the hospital – already we had hundreds of men in the hospital – was obtained by men going down to the creek, under guard, with big buckets. This water was not for the purpose of cleansing, but merely for the galley, to cook rice. They had an onion for each man the next morning and also some rice. I was unable to eat, and it was a very nauseating process, because I was past the point of starvation, i.e., I had no desire to eat. Dr. Lewis gave me one-half

cup of ammonia washing fluid which I drank with repugnance. This put me in position to eat once again.

We began to get organized after a while, and Father Wilson and Chaplain Donald and I took care of the hospital in which the numbers were mounting by the hour. There was plenty of rice and it was nourishing, but those of us who were unaccustomed to eating rice found it extremely hard to eat. This rice had protein, unlike American polished rice. Even now I have to force myself to eat rice.

The buildings in which we were located were long wooden buildings with tin roofs which were evidently designed for headquarters. They were divided off into small offices. Directly in back of them were small compounds in which the general officers were, for instance, General King, General Brougher and a few more. The wooden building in which my group was placed had a porch facing East to an open field. To the right were the isolated units of buildings which were composed of swalle (which is woven stripped bamboo) and grass roots with no combs, which left an open roof to the sun. These buildings were used as the hospital. Everything in back of what we are describing was considered living quarters. To the right and back were many barracks in which the thousands of officers and soldiers lived. Way back to the right were the parked trucks and even back of that were Japanese headquarters which were on the rise of the hill. There was a little open space in between the garage and general headquarters, not big enough, however, for a parade ground. As soon as all of the units had arrived in from the march they were briefed by the commanding officer, who looked like Chester Conklin, an old-time movie comedian, with glasses.

The anti-aircraft group from New Mexico banded together as did the Air Corps and as the tanks attempted to do. The rest of the soldiers, the 31st Infantry etc., were left more to their own devices. This was not for lack of any human sympathy or charity, but rather it was the natural outcome of a loosely knit organization of the Army. An Army necessarily during fighting needs fluidity, and hence when men are hit it needs replacements and it needs mobility. Therefore, it has not the time for human compassion that the National Guards have. The spirit of these National Guard outfits, the Marine and the Navy are very high because of physical reasons: the Navy, for example, because it is used to compactness onboard ship; the marines because of their smallness in numbers and because of their tradition, are forged into a tremendously loyal outfit. The National Guards almost resolve themselves into family relations, and hence the burning loyalty among them. But the Army, unfortunately, trained to be many places, has the whole countryside to operate upon it. Hence it does not have the same sense of compactness of *esprit de corps* that the other

units have. The officers were ordered to rip their insignias off. The Japanese appointed about 30 soldiers as truck drivers. This meant that the soldiers would be companions of the guards wherever they went. The Japanese soldier likes companions and is very loyal to his “tomodachi” (“friend”). In this way these truck drivers brought a lot of food which they sold at exorbitant rates. Many of the drivers were living extremely well, while others who belonged to the National Guards or other units were bringing back their supplies to their own units. I know for a fact that one day some officers were trying to buy things and one of the truck drivers came along and said, “There are some G.D. officers in line, no more sales.” Naturally this led to much bickering, but so far as I know I never saw an officer say a word to the soldiers. I asked one of the drivers one day to get me some wine from the local padre, as we badly needed wine. He, all smiles and teeth, said he would, and I gave him 25 pesos. When I saw the gentleman later, I did not bother to ask for the money or the wine, as I knew it would have been useless.

Every night the soldiers would gather around and we would say the Rosary. Quite a large crowd gathered. I would say the Rosary right where we were in the hospital. Simultaneously, Father Wilson would be saying the Rosary for the Anti-Aircraft, Father Scecina for the Tanks, Father O'Brien for the Air Corps, and Father Stober helped around in isolated units. The men were getting sicker by the day, and deaths were beginning to increase. Groups of volunteers were beginning to go down to the river and get water which would be used for cooking rice. This was continued all night long.

When the sick would lie on the floor and mess their clothes, all we could do was take their uniforms away from them, which was as least more sanitary. Flies of all sizes covered the men and the food, and molested us in general. There was not a space that you did not bump into them; you could reach out your hand and grab them. The men were sick, and sanitary disinfectants were not available, so we had to tolerate the flies.

I said Mass each morning. If anyone wished to go to communion, I would break the host into small pieces. Always we had many soldiers at Mass, and all of the priests were able to say Mass daily even though we were forbidden to hold assemblies. The guards would come by and look at us and put their guns at attention, take off their hats and bow to the priest; then they would proceed on their various ways.

It was a task to get the food into our mouths and keep the flies from getting all over it. The mosquitos were anopheles, and were giving all of us malaria. So now we had malaria, amoebic dysentery, scurvy and pellagra, with beri-beri to come. There was a crying want for medications and a detail called the “guava detail” was organized with permission from the Japanese to pick guava leaves.

It was a belief among the Filipinos that if you boil these leaves and drink the tea it would help bind the intestines. So the American doctors advanced the theory to the Japanese, who gave permission for the detail to go out of camp and into Tarlac. Because I was a Dominican and had connections with Santo Tomas University, which also had a medical school, I was put on the detail. There were nine American doctors and myself.

The first day we went out and there were about 300 women and a few men waiting. All of them had packages loaded with things for their men and for us. We would pick the leaves first and then, because it was in a secluded place, we would be permitted afterwards to sit around and wait for the detail to move back. Then we would attempt to get the guards permission to accept the things that these ladies would throw at us. I think it was the first time we were in this secluded vale that a young Filipino whom I knew in Mexico in the province of Luzon, and who had attended Santo Tomas greeted me. He was most sympathetic, and had some food to offer such as boiled eggs and some cakes and things like that. Sympathy was written all over their faces and I asked them how the folks were, and we exchanged social pleasantries. They were most sympathetic in asking for the health of many of our officers, and I would report wounded or dead, etc. It was understood that all of this food that we would receive was for the hospital.

The next day we would go to another spot, pick the leaves and then hide the loot in the center of the sack. Evidently the Japanese did not worry about us receiving these things, because we would stand up in front of headquarters for inspection and the commanding officer would come out and receive our salutes and then gently touch the top of each open sack so that he would assure himself that we were carrying leaves. If you understood this correctly you would assume that he was closing his eyes to the possibility of anything being done against orders. We would then take it to the medical adjutant and he would divide up everything and send it to the hospital for the very sick.

Quite often it happened that we did not get what we wanted because of some conscientious guard. I saw a guard one day who was almost in tears when he told us, “I suppose Americano thinks I am no good, but I can only do what my superiors tell me. I am sorry, but I will not let you do it.” We assured him that we appreciated his view, but we were not very happy about it.

About the second day I remember we got into our ravine and we sat down to talk. I met some very important women whose names I now forget, but who came from Manila and had connections with Santo Tomas. I talked right out and described the conditions in the camp, withholding no information. I could easily have been shot for what I said, but my purpose was to arouse the people of Manila to get us some medications and to save the lives of those who

remained. We were able to obtain much food that day and brought it back. The next day Father Rodrigo, a Dominican who was a student with me in Washington, D. C., appeared in person, and talked to me. He was among the hundreds who were there that day and who had followed us. We talked for a little while, naturally not privately, and he told me that Archbishop O'Doherty had come to see me but he was not permitted to talk to me. Then I told him what we needed, medications, food etc., and it was a very joyful meeting. It was also very courageous on his part, because he suspected that he was known, as indeed he was. We later learned that the Secret Service was trailing him. A Catholic Japanese doctor later revealed that he should keep out of the way and not visit me anymore. Obviously the Secret Service knew what we were doing and yet were turning their eyes away.

On one of these days when I was out on detail, during the time I was in charge of the detail, we had a tough *gunso*. We thought we had evaded him that morning, but he came riding a bicycle as we moved up to the spot. The guards asked me where the leaves were and I turned to the Filipino doctor and asked him to point out the leaves in our ravine. He pointed one out to the right and we went on. While we had picked our quota of leaves we returned to the spot and the *gunso* was busy showing off to the ladies present. He grabbed an American corpsman and started to wrestle with him and naturally threw him, after a little struggle. It came to the time when we should have been enjoying some of the food that was brought, when a Filipino doctor asked permission to receive the food. He said that Americans were thieves. I replied that he was wrong. He said "We want some food!" but the *gunso* replied, "No food. Americans are thieves!" We had to sit there while the Filipino received all of the packages, some of which had American names on them.

On our way back the *gunso* happened to be walking beside me and I said to him, "Americano very hungry!" and he replied "Japanese feed Americano." I replied just the same, "Americano very hungry!" At this point we were near a Tienda which is a Filipino store and had lots of Mayon [? Mayan, mayan cichlid] fish and such things for sale. I was loaded with money because the medical adjutant always gave me some to make sure I could buy in the event of insufficient gifts, so I pointed to the Tienda and told the Sergeant that there was lots of Mayon fish, which I believe is a Japanese packed fish, and I said, "See, I have plenty of money." He took me over to the Tienda and the girl smiled at him and was only too glad to comply with the request in which we swept off one entire shelf, probably a case of fish. I made attempts to pay her what was justly right, when the *gunso* insisted upon his own calculations, which happened to be 15 pesos. She was happy to accept 15 pesos and made no dispute about it, but I had the better of the deal. We proceeded to camp for the

inspection, then the fish was approved and distributed to the Medical Adjutant, which was sufficient for the day.

These little tidbits helped to make the food savory for many of the soldiers who were terribly sick, and it went to the very sick whom the doctors decreed should have it. Many of the sick were helped by it. But it was woefully inadequate for the 2,000 in all who were sick. Many of the doctors themselves were sick and we had dentists and even veterinarians doing medical work. There were only a few corpsmen on duty, but the few that we had plus the volunteers were marvelous. To them it was a personal challenge that these men should be sick; there were two particularly outstanding corpsmen. One was a volunteer from the Tanks, and I told him one time that if I ever got back and I could find him, I would be happy to turn in a commendation for him. He was in the filthiest and dirtiest part of the hospital, but I never saw him without a smile or courteous reply. He was about six feet tall and very thin, and had a white scar on his face. I have tried many times to recall his name but have been unable to do so. The part of the hospital where he was, we called St. Peter's Ward, because the boys there had no chance. In fact I have never seen anybody leave there alive. Flies were all over everything, dirt all over the floor; it stank and the men were covered with filth. Truly one could say that pig pens were cleaner than this hospital. At least the rain washed the pig pens once in a while and the sun scoured them, but there was no such thing as water here. For cleaning the floor all that could be done was to throw dirt on the floor and then shovel it up. This of course left heavy grains of dirt or little pebbles which were not conducive to comfort. I am sure that the Simmons Company would never approve of this kind of mattress.

I went in St. Peter's Ward one night and saw a very sick patient. I said "How is everything?" He, with a smile, said, "Wonderful." Then he broke down and told me that he was miserable. I went to Dr. Al Pawliet and gave him some stick candy which I got that day to distribute. Dr. Pawliet was always on the go and extremely kind to these terminal cases. I admired him very much because he had this extreme ward. I do not mean that the other doctors were not alert, for they were.

According to estimation there were 2,000 soldiers lying around on the ground and in the building itself, close together and on the pine floor. As they were very sick they had no control of themselves and would mess the floors. This made it excruciating for the patient because he was rolling in the gravelly dirt all the time. In hospitals, the nurses are most solicitous to see that sheets are smooth on the bed, and they are careful to give alcohol baths to the patient so that no sores will appear. But these soldiers had no water whatsoever and had to content themselves with the gravel they were lying on. Consequent their

hip bones and tail bones were a raw mass of flesh where the gravel had eaten away the sores. The flies that landed on them helped to make matters worse.

There was no such thing as toilet facilities for these men. To the left of this long medical building was a small square cage, and in it were several men. I passed by there one day and caught a corpsman going by at the same time. I stopped him and called his attention to what was going on. One man was on the floor and was doing the motions of a breast stroke swimmer and crying out, "Come on in, men, it is all free and there is plenty of it!" He had dumped over a latrine bucket and thought it was a swimming pool. I asked the corpsman to do something about it. The corpsman turned to me and said with tears in his eyes, "Chaplain, I have cleaned that place several times today and he repeats it every time." There were two others in there and one was a brute, and the other was a Caspar Milquetoast. The brute was up against the screen looking like a wrestler and saying, "I am athirst for blood!" Meanwhile the Caspar would try to back through the screen. Plainly these men had lost their minds.

Every night about 5 o'clock I would begin a check on the entire hospital. At this time I did not bother to look for insignia as to whether they were Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, because in their delirium they would tear their dog-tags off and throw them away. There wasn't much that could be done. We painted their numbers on them with blue merthiolate and gentian violet, but it would not do any good, because when they rolled over they would rub the labels off.

As I came through the north wing of the building I would always find corpsman Sgt. Tosh. I always looked for him because he could point out the survivors and the new arrivals. He was a very gentlemanly soldier, quite solicitous, and he loved his job. There were no rewards for him here, only the love of humanity, and Tosh exemplified this. I would always ask and he knew all the men around. I anointed everybody irrespective of his religion, because we did not know who they were. He would tell me where the new arrivals were, and I would go to them and if they could talk and were Catholic, I would hear their confession, otherwise I anointed them.

The tropical rains were beginning to fall at this time and I had difficulty in identifying the different units. One night for example, an Indian [*sic*, *Native American] was lying on the ground, covered with filth. I naturally concluded that, being Indian[*sic*, *Native American], he had come from the New Mexico National Guard, but then I recalled and spoke out loud, "He could not be a National Guardsman – they take better care of their men!" Sure enough, we found his dog-tag and he belonged to the regular army.

I usually proceeded on into the building and would find the stragglers crawling over mud and into the gullies; the new men were always shouting. Most of the men were incapable of answering me, but if I did identify a new

face I would go to him and anoint him. One night a lad was leaning up against the post and his legs were spread over a dirt mound, and he yelled out, "Hey Father, over here." He pointed to some soldier and I went over and anointed that soldier. This boy looked so well that I did not bother to check him for two nights, but every night it would always be the same story, "Over here Father," and following his directions I would find a new man who had straggled in. The third night I stopped and asked him why he was so interested in pointing out these lads as he did not seem sick himself and as he was not a Catholic. He replied that he loved kids. This to me was a most extraordinary statement because he was only a kid himself, so I asked him what his name was and he said, "My name is Hopkins and I come from Maine." I asked him if he was any relation to the movie star, and he said he thought there was some kind of relationship, so I said, "Is yours one of the ancient families in Maine?" and he replied that they did come over on the Mayflower. I asked him if he went to school and he said he had graduated from the University of Maine and that he taught high school at Farmington, Maine. "Well," I said, "it is so peculiar for an enlisted man at this particular time to have graduated from the University, let alone teach in a high school. How come you did not get a commission?" He replied that his government needed him and there was nothing more that he could think of to do but to enlist in the service of his country. This, mind you, was before the war had started. He was so determined about helping that I asked him if he did not need medications, even though he knew there wasn't much to be had. He replied that he did not need anything, and that he was just doing fine.

The next night I was going through a building that was in the center of all the hospital buildings and was being used for isolation – for diphtheria, we thought. I saw a familiar figure on the floor. In one day he had gone to almost nothing; he was emaciated and had lost his clothing. He remarked to me that they were getting mad at him for messing up the floor, but this, of course, was not his fault, as they were all doing the same thing through lack of control. I said "Have you eaten?" and he replied that he had not eaten for some time. That night the Japanese had given a couple of pigs to the hospital and just at that moment the corpsmen were passing by with the remains of the bucket for supper. I stopped them and took out my canteen cup and got a full dipper of pork and stew for this soldier. Then I raised him in my arms and started to feed him. His reply to the first nourishment he had seen in days was "What did we do to get such good treatment?" I did not say anything for the simple reason words were inadequate. I held him there until I had fed him all of it and he lay down in peace. That was his last meal. I had previously asked Dr. Aragay to give him some medications if he had any and I would dig up some more of what he

had given him. He did keep his promise and I kept my promise, but it was too late.

Captain Melvin Miller of the 24th Field Artillery began to organize the corpsmen about this time and through his operations in the hospital he and I became fast friends. Food was beginning to be a little easier to get around the camps, as it seemed the Japanese supply lines were beginning to catch up. There never was a time when we had an adequate balanced diet, but the fact that you had things other than dry rice helped tremendously.

Captain Miller organized the corpsmen and the new volunteers along military lines and discipline began to appear as it does in hospitals. Water was becoming more free during this month and he had the corpsmen cleaning up with any kind of materials he could find to scrub down the floors and eliminate some of the hazards of living for the poor soldiers. Meals were definitely getting better and once in a while carabao would appear on the menu.

One night I found a lad lying on the floor. His name was Hollahan and he came from Chicago. I knew his background. He was in the Tanks. We became very friendly, and eventually he became quite reconciled with his lot on the filthy floor. I had one thing of interest: to do my job as a priest, and then to see that these kids got out of this hospital. So I started to needle him and after awhile he became quite stubborn. This failed to stop me because my one job was to get him on his feet and out of there, and I could not see any reason why he could not have been taken care of by his buddies. At least he would not have to be among the terribly sick thereby making himself much worse. On the eve of the day when all who were well were going to be transferred to Cabanatuan, I tipped him off to get on that truck and it would take him to new hope. I was to be left with the cadre of other officers to bury the remaining number in the hospital, that is, those who could not possibly make the trip. We were about to get the last ones off and as I was coming through the hospital in the morning I was amazed to find my friend Bill Hollahan was there.

He looked up at me and said, “You are sore, HUH.” I felt awful seeing him there and I just said, “What happened, Bill?” and he replied that just as he was getting on the truck and had his foot over the tail board, he messed his clothes and had to come back. This of course, would not have meant much except that Bill was just about to the point of calling it quits. There were so many that had just that same idea. It was pathetic. Some were broken-hearted and many had amoebic dysentery. All had some tropical disease so that the net result was they did not care to fight. I tried to be as nice as I could possibly be to Bill from that time on because needling him was all over. Now it was a matter of waiting for him to pass out.

Lt. Gaffney and I thought it would be a nice idea, with so much water and

the food so much better, that we would try and bathe some of these men who had not touched water for going on two months. We went in and picked out the worst ones and with ample supplies of water were able to wash them and clean them up. I remember cutting the hair of one man; it hurt pretty badly because the clippers were very dull. He winced and created quite a commotion; nevertheless, we got him clean and relaxed. To my amazement someone told me at noontime that some of the soldiers were watching me and they remarked, "See how those priests take care of Catholics," but the fact was, none of the soldiers whom I had taken care of that morning were Catholic.

About this time the Guava detail of which I was in charge was running towards the end. Besides, I needed some supplies for security, so I went up to headquarters and talked to Captain Olson. I told him I wanted to see the Japanese officer because I wanted an armband to get out to Capas where I could get what I needed. It struck me very funny and I take my hat off to Captain Olson because he did not try to double-talk me for fear of the Japanese; he went right in, delivered my message, and the Japanese said "No."

We were busy burying the dead every day and in two months we buried almost 800. I remember that one of very nicest friends, a man with an Irish name which eludes me, was digging graves. One day I missed him, and found he was so sick that he could not dig. It was just at this time that the whole crowd became sick and there were no graves dug. There was backlog of dead, and all we could do was lay them in back of the hospital near the mess hall. This made it necessary to step over the bodies of the dead to obtain mess. Colonel Ray, my commanding officer, died during this time and so far as I know, he is the only soldier buried in O'Donnell with his uniform on.

One May morning I was surprised to hear the Filipinos, who had tens of thousands in their camp, across the way having a procession. They were singing the hymn to the Blessed Mary – "Bring Flowers of the Fairest". I did not know it at the time, but one of their Priest Chaplains had died and that was his funeral. Shortly after that I visited their camp to see some of the soldiers that I knew and they were indeed, having a very sad time. Things were becoming better in my place so I brought them over some candy and a couple of other things that I could spare, hoping to do my little bit to those who had been so generous with their lands and their abilities. Captain Miller, I, and three enlisted men became very close and so we did what was supposed to have been done for survival: we began to "buddy" – share and share alike. If any one of us received anything, he shared it with the rest; in that way we began to live.

At the end of June a medical unit was moved in on us and this was very wonderful for the sick because those who were left for us to bury now had hope. This medical unit had retained all of its equipment because of the act of

Father Riley in contacting the Japanese High Command. Father McDonald from Brooklyn and Father Riley from San Francisco came in and I was most happy because it was like a reunion after this terrible march in three months of filth and death.

One day I suddenly developed the shakes and I was so hot and jumpy that I suspected malaria. We were living under nets that were furnished us by the Japanese, and probably the net was the size of an 8 x 8 room. In such instances there was not much that the individual could do about keeping the mosquitoes out, because there was so much passing underneath the net all day long. Hence the ends were drawn up all day and the mosquitoes came in and made a happy home for themselves underneath the bulges of the nets and operated on us at such times as we would retire. It was no wonder that most of us had malaria. I fortunately found some quinine and under the guidance of Dr. Bleich, I dosed myself with it and retired. In a few days I was back to normal.

One of the things I noted that made it unfortunate for Americans was that money still talked, even here. One day behind the barbed wire, two soldiers were waiting, and a Filipino came by with a paper sack. He could have had most anything in that sack, but the first soldier said, "How much, Joe?" As he was about to obtain the sack for a couple of pesos, the second soldier said, "Here, Joe," and he handed over ten pesos, sight unseen, for what might be in the sack. It was even that way in the peacetime Army, where the prices would go up naturally with the demand. One of the things sold to us was coconut candy. Now this very delicious; coconut was mixed with melted sugar, and put in flat cakes on top of palm leaves. They sold it in the market, flies and all. The coconut candy undoubtedly had a lot of amoebas in it, because the doctors tried hard to keep us from eating it. However, not a few of them were eating it themselves. It was delicious to men who were used to starving, and it filled up that desire for food. There was a quantity of this after awhile and most of us who could, obtained it and ate it.

Another product in the Philippines that was of very good quantity was peanuts. Most of the time they were delicious, but quite often they would be soggy and moldy. In any shape, they filled a need at this time for a difference in food as most of the food was rice.

At the end, O'Donnell began to furnish a variety of foods. They brought us in carabao and we would probably get the stew juices and 5 or 6 squares of meat about 3 or 4 times a week. This, of course, after the first group had left Cabanatuan. There was a supply of flour, left perhaps in the warehouse at O'Donnell by the Americans in the original Quartermaster dump. So one day the Japanese let us have the whole thing and we began to make hot cakes. We made the hot cakes by an open fireplace that was built by some of the ingenious men, out of

bricks and rocks and pieces of steel. They did a very good job, and there were many pancakes to be had on the days on which the flour was issued. I remember Dr. Greenspan coming with a big bucket and passing it out to anyone who wanted it. At that particular time there was a big issue of sugar, and hot cakes filled the need and gave a tremendous lift to the morale.

Money became loose after a while as organizations were sending in money underground and friends were loaning it to their friends in prison. The Japanese for example were issuing all kinds of Filipino candy in fairly respectable quantities. I do not mean to imply that the vitamins were sufficient nor in the proper proportion for men who were so sick. One day on the detail I encountered a secretary from Santo Tomas who was sent there to bring medicine and food, and he reported that the Japanese had taken a couple of cases of food from him. I was sorry to hear this, as the food and medicine that I received I would always turn over to the medical authorities and never once kept anything that was given to me for myself. One day for example they gave me a box of cigars and I put them in my sack as usual with the foods, and when I returned to camp the medical major insisted that I take the cigars for myself. I distributed most of them and kept the rest for myself.

This particular time they told me when they gave me these things that they were putting their money into these commodities, and that as there was an adequate amount of money floating around now, which seemed to be true. They said I should try and recover the funds for which I had been given the food.

When the day arrived for us to move to Cabanatuan, the Japanese assigned us to groups as we marched to the train. We were a ragged, dirty looking group and we had probably 5 or 6 cars to divide up among 300 men, the remainder of that original group of perhaps 12,000 men. We had left 800 in the cemetery. The last thing we did before we left was to pour a concrete cross to be left in the middle of the cemetery. On this Cross I had inscribed the words “Pro Deo et Patria” (I later saw it in a picture upon my return to the United States). Each officer was assigned a freight car and mine was the very last on its track from Capas to San Fernando to Cabanatuan.

Chapter V
Cabanatuan

As we stopped at a railroad station – where, I do not know – the guard on my car gave me his gun and I had a little fun for awhile with it. Meanwhile, he went to purchase some commodities from the vendors. I don't recall exactly what it was, but I think we had some fruit coconut candy and rice cookies. The men who bought out most of the materials certainly did not satisfy themselves because there was not enough there to satisfy. In fact I did not eat anything at all. Some of the men had no uniforms, and some had old potato sacks tied around them for clothes. It was an uneventful trip until we arrived at Cabanatuan about 6 o'clock at night, where we were immediately sent to the city square.

Many of our friends had gathered there, that is, those who knew we were moving. But in this new camp there was no personal contact such as there had been at O'Donnell. I saw a lady whom I spoke to the very day we left. She did not try to identify anyone of us, but she was trying to contact us, so she could help us.

Now it looked as though hard times had set in again. Cabanatuan is a small city, though it was bigger than Barrio, perhaps three times as large, and was the end of the railroad line to this section. It was in the province of Nueva Ecija and near the Pacific Ocean, but was sufficiently up in the mountains to make it very annoying for any prisoner who wished to attempt escape. It was the first consolidated move of the Japanese to concentrate prisoners in a farming area and have them away from any operations.

We arrived at the prison camp in the dark and were, of course, allowed no lights. We were placed in what was known as Group 3, the highest part of the camp, which had never been used before. We heard that the Corregidor Army had arrived and were established in this camp. My particular group was placed in a barracks that was part kitchen, unlike the regular group barracks, which were composed of swalle and grass roof. Ours was built of wood. The cooking at night caused a lot of light and the fires were kept pretty busy, al thought never allowed to flare. Directly in front of the kitchen and beyond the barbed wire was a big valley and behind the valley, probably; five miles away, the mountain range began. This was the setting for the infamous Huks which have caused so much trouble for the Philippine Government and even killed Senora Quezón.

One night as we were sleeping, the guards arrested all the cooks and locked them up. The reason was that the nervous guards, knowing that there was

activity in the hills, bad attempted to interpret the lights of the torches used to keep the fires alive and the movements of the men in front of the fire as definite sighs of signals to the guerilla, in the hills. It took some persuasion on the part of the American officers to convince the guards that the cooking of the meals had to be done that way, and it was no fault of the cooks that it looked like signals.

The first morning we arrived we immediately had *baugo* (assembly) and had to wait for the guards to check, recheck, and triple check to make sure we were all there. We had breakfast, which was *luguao*, that is boiled rice with nothing in it. Those of us fresh from O'Donnell had a little sugar, which made quite a bit of difference in the rice. In fact, we from O'Donnell had many things that the men who were already in Cabanatuan did not have. While we were pushed around more and had suffered more over the Death March and those horrible few months in O'Donnell, nevertheless we had been able to contact the people and had received some things of value. I immediately contacted Father Wilson and Father O'Brien and gave them what few things I had.

Although the camp was one, it was divided by barbed wire into three parts, but the gates were never closed so we had access. Group 1 consisted of the Navy and Marines. In addition to the Priests from O'Donnell who had arrived the month previously, we now had Father Brown a Franciscan and Father Bauman a Priest from Pittsburg; also Father McManus, the Navy Chaplain from Cleveland, Ohio. Father Dugan, a Jesuit came with some hospital unit as did Father Zerfas from Milwaukee and Father Talbot from Fall River, Massachusetts.

Life in Group 3 was heavenly compared to life in Group 2. For one thing there was a wonderful Commanding Officer whose name was Colonel Saint. He was an engineer and like his name he seemed to be a very saintly man. I worked beside him many times and he was always doing something for the benefit of his men. For example he designed a latrine that would prevent the spreading of dysentery, he made them sanitary and was also able to cut down considerably on the flies. Mosquitoes were prevalent and we were not able to do much about them, but we cut down the amount of malaria.

Dinner and supper always consisted of steamed rice. It was cooked in enormous iron kettles, about four-feet around and three-feet deep. Each galley had four of these enormous kettles and plain stone walls into which the kettles were recessed and underneath which was the fire. As the fire increased, the cooks would throw dippers of water to control the flames so that they would not burn the rice. In the process of cooking it was natural that some rice would get burned, and this was scraped off the bottom of these kettles and was reserved to those whom the doctors had decreed were badly in need of

charcoal for dysentery.

To try and control the dysentery the doctors were giving extraordinary things. There was one officer, not a doctor, who was mixing lamp-black with brewers' yeast to which he added a culture. He would keep this culture going all the time and each morning the men would come in for their share of the concoction. I had amoebic dysentery pretty badly at this time and had run out of sulfa drugs, consequently I was forced to use the home-made remedies that were there. Dr. Bleich was doing heroic work among the sick at this time. Dr McCurdy and Father Brown were active in ferreting out the sick and reporting them for treatment. We were not yet well organized. A man could be sick in the upper bays and could be missing without us knowing it, if he had not previously been "buddied up". I was Adjutant of one Company and consequently knew most of the men in the four barracks that we had.

I said Mass in an open shelter which was formerly used as a latrine. At this particular time, I met an enthusiastic and wonderful sergeant and we decided that we would try and build a permanent chapel. This was Sgt. Rose, Master Sergeant of the Engineers, who was very much interested in the things that I was doing. As he had access to the Japanese side, I suggested that we obtain some materials to build an altar and start a chapel. I got permission from Col. Saint to take this shelter from where it was in the latrine section and move it to the center of the camp near Sanfu Alley. This shelter only consisted of the grass room and four two-by-fours that sank in the ground. It was probably 12-feet long and 8-feet wide, which would make a fair-sized chapel. As I was the only one using it, I said Mass every morning on any kind of table I could find, and soldiers would attend.

We still had supplies, but there was worry about the future, because we were not able to contact the people as we did at O'Donnell. As a matter of fact I never contacted anybody at Cabanatuan except through the underground mail. There was close scrutiny on this camp and the subsequent underground business that went on was entirely under the connivance of a select group of Japanese who were getting well paid for the services. Sgt. Rose began to bring back pieces of wood from the Japanese side and an altar began to be assembled. It even had carvings; he carved a tabernacle on the front panel, the chalice and the host with sunbursts around the host. Instead of being a door, there was a panel that slipped up when I wished to put anything into the Tabernacle. It had steps, and as I had candle sticks it was useful. In front of the altar was a big IHS. We had an altar platform and an altar rail, and it looked very beautiful. He even appropriated paint from the Japanese and when it was painted grey and white it really began to look like a chapel. We obtained some swalle and fenced it in so that we had a maximum amount of privacy and then he managed some more

wood and we made benches and kneelers for the soldiers. This was wonderful because of the tropical rains. When it rains there, it lasts for two or three days at a time and comes down in a deluge. We were well-protected except for the fact that the grass was beginning to get old and drenched and when this happened we would get wet.

The men went out on details; one group, for example, went out for making a moving picture for the Japanese. Another group was unloading freight cars and putting the goods on carts and bringing things back to camp. When rice details would go to Cabanatuan they would be allowed to buy things from Tienda such as peanuts, ani coconut candy. One day this rice detail happened to be near a Little Shrine and they thought it would be rather nice to appropriate the statues that were there, and bring them in for my altar. I believe that Father Wilson who was on the detail was responsible for the idea. At any rate he took St. Dominic, St. Hyacinth, and the Blessed Lady of Lourdes, and passed them down the lines. As the guards would come up, the statues would be going the other way behind the prisoners' backs. In this way the Blessed Mother came to be on top or our Tabernacle and St. Hyacinth and St. Dominic on the right and left sides of the altar steps. With a three-foot sunburst made by Sgt. Rose back of our Blessed Mother, the Chapel really became something beautiful. Father Buttenbruch, SVD, who had a German passport, managed to come into camp with some wine, host and Mass kits. He saw a couple of priests and talked with them, so he was able to get some idea of the needs of the camp.

Meanwhile carts were carrying rice and commodities for the Japanese, and underneath the rice was hidden mail. This mail contained. thousands of letters chiefly from girls in Manila. These girls were organized by the Catholics of Manila to give help and encouragement to the sick and the prisoners. There was a lot of money sent in, in fact hundreds of thousands of pesos which in the majority of cases did not reach the proper sources.

Only once did I receive money for which I promptly signed and sent the note underground to the Catholic priest in Manila that I had received a certain amount. I know that he received the receipt, but I am sure the Good Father had sent much, much more which had never reached its proper destination. We have heard since that there were all kinds of relief drives to assist the priests in their work, but the priest to whom I talked had never heard of any large sums reaching their destination.

Rice was the only food to be had for a long time and the most we got was what we were able to obtain from the commissary. Col. Saint started this commissary by sending out a truck and buying everything that he had money for. He took up a collection from all of the soldiers with their orders for what they could purchase. He bought all of these things, brought them back to camp

and placed them in an empty barracks under guard. Everybody that put in anything got what he put in for, and those who had nothing, shared in the general mess. Those soldiers who were engaged to girls in Manila and who were fortunate enough not to have the underground tampered with, were able to obtain large sums of money. One of these girls, Betsy Wright, use to send in large sums to her sweetheart, Bill Daley of Minneapolis. He would help his friends and even gave her name for other officers who had need of the money. One of them never gave her a cent after the war and another one who is now dead, did not know, but his wife turned this heroic girl over to the F.B.I. for trying to collect a just debt. She, Betsy, never even asked for a percentage but merely wanted back what she put out. She lost several thousands of her own money because of her generosity and kindness.

The hospital area was jammed, and it is my estimation that there must have been four or five thousand men in this area. The worst ward was called Zero Ward and then there were various dropping off points as to serious and less serious. The whole area, which was crummy at the best, was peopled with the worst-looking derelicts of humanity. The chief trouble with most of them was first amoebic dysentery and second beri-beri, and that was broken down into dry and wet beri-beri. The men with wet beri-beri looked swollen and puffed up so that you could not tell where their joints were, nor even see their eyeballs, and they walked like elephants with big stumps. The men with dry beri-beri wert emaciated and suffered from agonizing pains. This type of man would jump if you approached within two or three inches of him, or in fact if you dropped a piece of cloth on his feet he would jump. Walking was very hard for them and they were unable to rest only with great discomfort. They would be up all night long with their feet in cold water trying to relieve the pain.

Father McDonell came into camp towards the end of August, and with him, about 1,000 soldiers and officers. He offered me some emetine. I rejected the offer because I thought that he might develop a need for it himself. But as time went on I had to go back to Father McDonell and request that he give it to me. Meanwhile he had given it to another officer, but he purchased some so that Dr. Bleich would be able to give me the necessary injection for my amoebic dysentery, which the bacteriologist said was of the worst nature. Dr. "Pancho" Saldivar was a group physician and a very excellent one, too. He would come up to our group, and when we would have some peppers he would show us how to make Spanish rice. The morale of the men was picking up, even though they were terribly sick. The only addition to the rice of three times a day, was an occasional onion.

The American supplies of flour, which were commandeered by the Japanese were brought in, and pieces of scrap iron were used to build ovens and we

began to have rolls. They were baked in pieces of tin taken off the roofs of old buildings. The buildings were gradually being weakened by the men ripping pieces off them so that they might build fires to do some cooking with the little supplies that were able to trickle into camp. The men cooked up all kinds of things. If they had the money, sugar was a fairly easy commodity to purchase. They would make coconut candy out of sugar and real cocoanut. While this was woefully inadequate, it nevertheless sufficed to give them for a short space of time a full feeling in the stomach. Group 3 was still getting supplies and Groups 1 and 2 were not able to give much to its personnel. Many reasons were assigned, including those of selfishness from the top, but the fact remains that Group 3 under Col. Saint was fairly well established in justice and equity. The official checks were not made at the morning and evening count of the men. The men were terribly sick, and we were burying as many as 70 and 80 a day.

Men who went on maintenance and burial details for the Japanese were given an extra roll for their labors. These, of course, were legitimate details under Japanese orders. In the month, of September a typhoon came right through camp. I was on burial detail, and I think we had about 70 to bury that day. The grave into which we would place the dead was about six feet deep and six feet square. As we were marching out to the yard we carried the dead on litters composed of two poles and the swalle doors of many huts on top of the

poles. Four bearers would carry the litters and the dead on top of them. As the bodies were stiff, they were also grotesque, because the skin of each body was drawn tight over the bones. They wore no clothes, because these were all taken from the men and boiled and put in the quartermasters' section. We were marching against great odds because the wind was blowing so strongly that it was pushing us backwards. On my way I noticed two barracks blowing down, and the drenching rain coming directly down, soaking us all. I had on an old Army coat that was supposed to be waterproof, but this was no help. Within one minute it was drenched so that it was trickling down my stomach and down my back in cold sheets. Indeed, I learned that day when I had to go to the cemetery not to wear any coat at all and let the rain pelt me, thus I would come back feeling refreshed having had a bath and with no worry about wet clothes. When we arrived at the grave it was half full of water, but all we could do was place the bodies in there, say what prayers deemed allowable, and then return under guard to headquarters.

At this particular time the graveyard was a horrible mess, and the officer in charge of the detail kept reminding the men not to say anything in the main camp about the condition of the place for their brothers. This was sound judgment on his part, because he was afraid of arousing the men who were now pretty desperate. About this time Col. Wilson attempted to do something about the morale of the camp. He did remarkable work telling stories, putting on shows and urging that everyone with talent offer his services. He had some other Colonels with him who did excellent work. Dr. Bleich, in addition to his medical work, began to organize a group comedy team. I remember one of his scenes in which he was talking to a GI and telling the GI (as a comedian) Communist that things would be much better comes the revolution. The GI objected, and the Lieutenant said, "Comes the revolution, you will have ice cream and strawberry shortcake every morning." The GI replied, "But I don't like strawberry shortcake", and the Lieutenant replied, "Comes the revolution, you will *like* strawberry shortcake."

There was a Lieutenant in camp also who had a bugle, and I heard him playing "Dark Town Strutters Ball" one day, and it was a thrilling thing to hear, it really did something to you. Pretty soon he was playing two or three numbers at a unit show somewhere in camp. Gradually instruments began to appear, a violin first, a saxophone and others that eventually wound up into a band. The drums consisted of a barrel, some carabao hide, and sticks made from some two-by-fours from a badly needed place in the building. In fact, shortly after this an order was put out prohibiting anybody from ripping parts off the buildings, because they were getting shaky. It was more important to have the buildings than to have GIs cooking privately all over the place.

At one particular point the Medical Building Headquarters desired to make candy fudge and sell it for the profits of the mess. It was very good candy and there was much money in camp. Money was coming in from two sources; an underground run by the widow of a former soldier and also a group with Betty Wright. Then there were the legitimate trucks that were coming in with Father Buttenbruch. He would bring in Mass supplies for the priests and countless packages for the personnel of the camp. Needless to say a lot of these packages were loaded with notes and money. I was pretty certain that the Japanese were not blind to this and would tolerate it only so far. Father Rodrigo and a Franciscan came into camp legitimately in their habits and brought some food, some cigars and surreptitiously some money. Meanwhile a little jealousy was springing up in the underground and it was only a matter of time until the knaves should have their day.

With the money and the supplies brought in I did as I always did, shared it with my Quan Group and gave some of the priests money because they needed it. Father Brown did likewise.

The hospital section was jammed, and I imagine there must have been 3,000 men in that section. It was divided off among wooden barracks and swalle barracks. All of the swalle barracks had upper and lower sections, and some were divided off into bays. Each barrack had a chief. The food situation was still very precarious. The only supplement to the rice diet was what the commissary made. Those that had money – and by now large sums were coming into the camp – could buy from the commissary. Loan sharks were already on the prowl and were offering Philippine currency for twice as much gold and promissory: in other words for $100.00 American currency you could get $50.00 Philippine currency. Actually Philippine currency was 2 to 1 for American, so you can see the difference. One officer who was terribly sick was asking me whether he should accept the loan or not, and I replied that if he valued his life that much it might be a good deal, although it seemed to me to be very unmoral. Much might be misunderstood about these sums of money and actually there was a tremendous amount of currency being collected in Manila and sent into camp underground.

Being Adjutant and also being interested in seeing as many of the men as possible, I did not stay put, but with the help of the emetine was able to make headway. Nevertheless it seemed that the dysentery was abating, but that remained for the future, because our diet was still almost strictly rice. About this time there was a rearranging of the commissary and we were then receiving less than we had in the past. We could understand that with the large increase in the other two groups this would happen, but why had it not happened in the past with the others as they had the same amount of cash? But

we never received the same amount of commissary. At any rate a junto of officers deposed the camp Commander and a Marine Colonel took over. Things gradually began to smooth out and about this time the flour gave out, so that the special details who were receiving rolls for their work were no longer compensated.

We heard via the underground that Secretary [of State, Cordell] Hull had made a speech in which he told the Japanese that any nation which was big enough to take prisoners was big enough to take care of them. There was a noticeable change inasmuch as the carabao were coming into camp and there was a stockade built for them. Men were assigned to this duty of caring for the carabao and slaughter pens were built. Once a day a slab of meat was put in the various messes giving each man at one meal about ½ ounce of meat and the gravy. It made a considerable difference in the taste.

About this time requests were made for medicine for the men. We knew that the drug companies in Manila had tremendous supplies. The Japanese promised to give us medicine and did so, and so there was a great cheer when the medicine arrived. Among other things there were cases of Lydia Pinkham's Medicine. Since this brew had a large percentage of alcohol, they allotted a bottle to three men for keeping the *bahies* clean. Father Buttenbruch still continued to bring in Mass Kits, wine and hosts and then, of course, on his truck there was the illegitimate mail.

The shows were beginning to pick up and swing, although all of it was volunteer work. The Lieutenant who brought his trumpet into camp was very much in demand for his ability to play "Alexander's Ragtime Band" and a group of other tunes he knew well. Such elementary music was very pleasing to the men. There was a quartet, – one of the men's name was Beacher – used to sing "Alpine Honeymoon." and I think it is a general opinion that it was really wonderful. There were all kinds of comedy skits which were good for the morale, and all of them at this junction were clean.

At Thanksgiving time the mess had planned big meals for the men and in truth they were big. I was in the hospital as a patient at the time and naturally I lost my position as Adjutant. Group 3 was breaking up at the time, the Marines and Navy were taking our group and we were moving down to Group 2.

Fathers O'Brien and Secina came over and with a piece of canvas made me a swing so that I could bunk in the swing rather than be on the bamboo. I have slept on rock piles, on roads, and now a swing. The hammock was sewed at both ends in a loop so that a stout one-inch stick three-feet long could go through. Wires were attached to the uprights which gave the swing stability. Not only did I have amoebic dysentery at that time, but all the kindred diseases: pellagra, scurvy, and beri-beri. Most of the men also had conjunctivitis, so that

we were a sorry looking group.

The only other building beyond mine in the hospital section was Building No. I, which was called Zero Ward. This was the hopeless ward and there were many there who would never come out. All of the hospital section had its own messes and the diet was, of course, limited to rice. But the commissaries were able to produce sugar and candy. This meant a great deal to the men who needed something to sharpen their taste after the bland non-descript *luguao*, and the sugar came in very nicely on this boiled rice. The other two meals consisted of dry rice and at the time one meal had some beef broth with cracked rice forming it as a gravy. The beef broth was the bones of carabao, and a few days a week also there were a few pieces of meat.

I was still able to say Mass even though I was in the dysentery section as Father Riley had a chapel there. The fungus infection was painful and irritating because it was not subject to any of the medicines we had. However, the doctors kept using different dyes and changing the dyes every three or four days, which had a tendency to keep the fungi under control. The hospital area must have held three or four thousand men, all of them subject only to the doctor in charge of the Bahio. The Japanese Perimeter Guard went around the whole camp and back of the hospital faced the North while the camp itself faced the South. There was always plenty of activity for the men because something of necessity was always happening. In fact, in my bahay [stilt house] one day a man died, and no one knew about it for a couple of days. This was because there was no check-up. At this time the latrine was in the center of the hospital section and consisted only of slit trenches, so that there was also much merriment every time in the middle of the night when a yell was heard indicating someone had fallen in.

Thanksgiving was approaching and they planned big things, especially because the carabao were beginning to increase. There was absolutely no difference in the looks of the men, they looked just as gaunt and skelton-like as they ever had. However, they had planned in the messes to give big dinners on that day and in truth they were big for us. When that glorious day arrived the men were talking much as a group of children would talk about Santa Claus coming. Every time they would go visiting their friends, they would talk volumes about things that were happening in their section, although it was only a short distance away, and always they talked about rumors and menus. Every known restaurant in the United States I heard about, each kind of a National dish I heard about, and your mouth watered as you talked about such things. Anyhow, it proved one thing, that self-preservation is one of the big principles of nature.

For Thanksgiving Day they actuallly did give us a quantity of food. There

was a lot of dry rice and then there was a meat gravy, a few pieces or meat, and some kind of baked rice with sugar and tea. It made everyone feel comfortable and happy. We were in the typhoon season, but this day was beautiful and bright, and there was so much to eat that it was a task to get it down. In fact I did not eat all of mine. After the dinner we settled back into routine, the usual talk and playing cards. We had a game we called Acey Ducey, which consisted of a board and some dice, and then some men on the board which would be shuffled around when the dice turned up for the benefit of the one throwing. I believe the Navy brought that game into being.

The men were ingenious with their carvings and did some very good work on chests, checkers and anything else they were interested in. They were not allowed knives, consequently, they found pieces of steel and sharpened them, producing marvelous results. I have even seen the old GI knives of the mess kits made into barber razors, and the men set up chairs in which to shave the more prosperous GIs.

There was always a buzz of excitement in every barracks because when you get so many men together you are bound to have some kind of human carrying-on. The sick were either coming or being discharged and every POW had several cans, preferably with handles on them, that he carried with him at all times. These consisted of old dispensable cans that he washed and polished up and cooked his quan in. Where the quan came from was anyone's guess, but we all had the cans and we all obtained things. Duck eggs came into camp in large quantities through the commissary tor those who could purchase them. There always was plenty of money to exhaust the supplies. For the very sick the commissary had retained part of its proceeds to give the vitamins in the mess.

I had one constant companion in the hospital who was in my old outfit and who always helped me on the Death March to get water or casava. His name was Red Savoie. He was Captain Carl Savoie, DSCSS, and before he came into the 88th Field Artillery he was Regimental Instructor for the Philippine Army. He was a genuine leader, who could really whip the army into shape, like Captain Bill Porter who had a regiment. Red had amoebic dysentery like myself, and whenever we could share anything we would do so. Red was one of the most manly men that I have ever met, unassuming and brave. I had seen him in action when we were fighting when one of his men had been hurt by a bomb. He came to my outfit looking for an ambulance, which we did not have, and under bombing I was with him on the return to his outfit to be of some assistance if possible.

The days in the hospital were long but with so many men around you the time was not heavy on your hands. The discipline was perfect because there was no desire on the part of anyone to get out of line, and, even so, they did not

have enough pep to do so. Occasionally a show would come over from the well side, and we would sing and make up entertainment, for example: "Board a Ship on the Way Home to the States Going State Side." The cool of the tropical night was always pleasant and we were coming to the end of the rainy season. The emetine that I had been taking must have been taking hold because I was transferred back to No. 6 Barrack and away from the very critical zone.

Rumors were the biggest things in the camp's life. Even at O'Donnell before the surrender of Corregidor, the rumors were rife about our going various places, about our menus, about convoys, about guerillas. As a matter of fact anything that the mind could conjecture would be talked about and rumored. For my own part I never liked rumors, and feared about the ultimate disaster to a man's mind or his personality. In going about the hospital I would never concur in a rumor about a convoy or about anything that would be vital to the life of a GI. My practice was to build him up tor the shock that was coming because I realized that it would not do a man any good to build false hopes but rather would hurt him more when he realized that not only was he kidding himself but that others were helping him to kid himself. Once at a meeting I made mention of the fact that officers should not hand out taffy to the men but rather should start to dig a foundation so that the men could really build their morale. Needless to say I was jumped all over because the officer who replied was giving them taffy. He was talking about seven-course dinners and how a big convoy had landed at Corregidor, and he naturally thought that I was making a personal attack on him. But the fact was that it was better not to believe in false rumors because the future would be an awful letdown.

Later on they were drawing pictures, as there was a very fine artist who drew cartoons and pasted them on the boards. I remember one cartoon had a picture of some scarecrow GIs, which is what we were, all sitting together looking at some tanks with the American Flag. They were in the bottom part of the camp, ani the caption was ''Wait until the guys in the upper camp hear *this* rumor." About the month of December there was a very strong rumor that a ship named *Gripsholm* had landed in Manila and was unloading packages of stateside goods. Some believed the story, and so the argument went on for the whole month of December.

Our underground kept bringing in stories about this strange ship and those packages. We could hardly believe that one 10-pound package per man was possible for us. About 10 days before Christmas, American Headquarters must have received official word that the packages were on the way, because they posted notices. Then the carabao carts and the Japanese trucks began to bring in lots and lots of packages. It did look like a good Christmas.

Father Buttenbruch came in with his trucks shortly before Christmas, and

Father McManus, the Navy Chaplain, happened to be the Senior Catholic Chaplain. Fathers Brown, Stober, Carberry and LeFleur had gone to other Islands on a detail. I was sent by the Japanese to see Father Buttenbruch as the first on the list and notified him that the new Senior Chaplain was Father McManus. At this time it was planned that because of my illness we probably could make an official transfer of the Chaplains on routine in Manila. Santo Tomas being my own university, could supply me with what I needed in Manila, and any priest would be cared for until he built himself up and returned to duty in the camp. This later one had many repercussions and the story runs like this: Father Cummins the Maryknoll was a Chaplain in the hospital during the fighting and had done heroic work. It seems that he got connected with his old position in Manila, and was wearing the habit in the street. I never did learn how he did it, but he must have just put on the habit and walked through the lines. At any rate he was helping soldiers in Manila at Nichols Air Field by sending them things. He had asked the Japanese religious superior for permission to say Mass for the soldiers at Nichols Air Field but was bluntly refused, so he came back to his headquarters in Manila. However, when they found out from Father Buttenbruch who told the Dominicans of Santo Tomas that Father Curran was sick and dying, he in turn told the Provincial to report it to the Apostolic Delegate. He reported it to the Japanese High Command in the Philippines. After a week of consideration the Japanese High Command wanted to know how anybody knew that Father Curran was dying, so they arrested Father Cummins as being the possible tale-bearer in the case. When I did see him he told me about it and he said, "So you are the one that caused all of this trouble." We both laughed although I was not the instigator of the plan. He lost his contacts and his wine and his vesper wine. I said, “What is your vesper wine?” and he replied that it was gin to keep Father in good spirits.

Father Buttenbruch came in to camp *3* or 4 days before Christmas and had his truck with him. He sent for me and I talked to him first. While I was waiting for him, the Japanese sent a runner out and notified me that I had permission to enter and talk to him. He asked me how I was feeling and then remarked that he was going to see that I got into Manila. On my way back from this interview I stumbled and fell. This was a sign of future things, I did not realize at the time.

Chapter VI
Camp Life

I was in ecstasy over the fact that Christmas was going to be so wonderful. The rumor came through that we were going to get packages for Christmas. We had been sharing things for such a long time that it was almost unbelievable that each one was going to get a package. Suddenly the packages began to come in on the carabao carts. The eyes of the men were big when they saw these and there was much arguing about what was in each one. Headquarters also posted a list that told what each package contained and there was much speculation and anticipation of receiving this wonderful gift. Even the reading of the list made one's mouth water, it was the first law of nature that was coming to the fore.

My talk with Father Buttenbruch was short in duration and I just mentioned the fact that we had received wine and hosts through him, for which we were very grateful., By this time the holiday was fast approaching and Father Secina was busy making lights for the High Mass Christmas Eve. The Choir was practicing under the direction of a well-trained singer, a GI named Fitzpatrick, and it looked as though it would be very beautiful singing.

Father Secina's Christmas lights consisted of taking Japanese beer bottles, tying a string around the wide part at the top and putting gasoline on the string, then setting the string on fire and dashing the bottle in cold water, which would make a clean break around the whole bottle and we would give either a vase or a glass as you would. These we called vigil lights. Then he took some coconut oil, of which there was plenty, and put it in the light. After this he cut pieces of tin cans, say a one-inch square, punctured with a hole in the center through which he drew a piece of string and then dropped the string in the oil, which floated because the tin kept it floating. Then he would light a match on the top of the string and have continuous light, because the oil would seep up to the light and keep it burning. He must have had two dozen lights strung all over the platform in the assembly area upon which we were to say Mass. He also strung leaves and various colored flowers in long streamers, including Bougainvillea, which is a very beautiful flower that grows luxuriantly in the Philippines. Christmas Eve saw the wreaths and streamers over the front of the platform and along the side. Father had lights at the foot of the platform, in the center, and six wreathes on the altar itself.

All of us heard confessions that night all around the altar and we heard a tremendous number. The choir prelude to the Mass was “O Come All Ye Faithful" am during the Mass they sang "Silent Night.” They sang ''White Christmas"

and other popular numbers, as "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen." The galley had taken some of the bulk that came on the Gripsholm and mixed it with rice, so that night at 11:30 each man got the equivalent of ½ pound of rice baked with dried apricots which made pudding. Then there was a large canteen cup of cocoa with milk and sugar. This shipment came from St. John's Society, New Guinea. The truckloads of packages that Father Buttenbruch had brought in were distributed Christmas Eve.

Captain Lee Stevens was in charge of what was called mail, his title was postmaster and he saw that I got my packages although at this very moment I had not had the pleasure of meeting him. I received one package from Santo Tomas in which there were some shirts, five pairs of different kinds of shoes and a couple pairs of khaki pants. Father McDonald, a New York Priest, preached at the Midnight Mass and he did not hesitate to speak his mind. He was a very courageous man.

There was a full moon. The crowd of men, the quaint coconut lights, the sloping hills in the assembly area, made a thrilling sight, beautiful beyond description. I saw many men break down that night, and they were men in a man's world. The next morning, we had our usual Mass, each one of us had our schedule in each area and it was a happy sight to see all of the men visiting one another, overjoyed about the packages and the excitement of Christmas Day. Ragged GIs of yesterday were now taking on a new look, their eyes had that look about them that at last they were going to make it. Another package was issued on Christmas Day and the results were that each one ate to his own content. There was some mention made among the men that perhaps they should not eat too much as it had always been bruited about that after starvation the stomach cannot stand much food. As far as I know, no one had indigestion and the only incident that happened was that one Marine died: from eating a package of 24 pounds within some twelve hours. We wondered if he forgot to take the food out of the tin, that was a common expression in the camp that day he must have eaten the tin. At any rate as the saying goes, be must have died happy.

It was a pleasing sound to hear visitors to the bahays[7] say "Merry Christmas, Jim or Joe." "Hey, sit down and have a cup of cocoa or a little something extra." Two days previously they were scrounging for food. Today, suddenly, the heavens opened and dropped manna on them.

About this time, I was having trouble walking, as my muscles felt awfully weak. I could not figure out what was wrong. I visited all my friends that day and generally enjoyed Christmas as I had never enjoyed it before.

One morning shortly after Christmas I awakened unable to move. As Dr. Saldivar happened to live in my bahay I asked him if I might go and say Mass.

He said that if I could possibly maneuver I should get up. Gradually using my elbows, and sliding over to some two-by-four reinforcements, I was able to gradually get my back in the air and then slide over to the front of the bahay and my feet would have to drop to the ground. Then by sliding my feet into my clogs, and edging over to some more reinforcements I could brace myself against the two-by-fours and stand on my feet. But Lord help me if I fell, as I could not get up. One of the officers came along with me and assisted me down to the Chapel where I said Mass. I was able to continue saying Mass by clinging to the Altar and by the assistance of my Altar Boy, who was Major Pettit. I did receive Holy Communion by putting my head on the Corporal and sliding the broken host to my mouth. I was unable to close my fingers but by the clumsy use of the entire hands I was able to handle the host and also break it. To give Communion to the GIs I would have to slide the host off of the paten to the tongue of the communicant. This continued for some time and some of the Priests wanted me sent to the hospital again, Father McDonald was for allowing me to do what I wanted to do and that was to stay put in the work area.

We had previously been using dentists and veterinarians as doctors, and one of the most outstanding jobs outside of O'Donnell was done by Dr. McGurdy who was a dentist. He, with Father Braun O.F.M. went around looking for the very sick and trying to help their morale. Shortly before this time, a certain Lieutenant Colonel came in from guerilla warfare and was the light of the camp for awhile with his exploits. He was living in the hills and had been responsible for a raid which destroyed the Air Force at Tagigerou. He had much to explain about this raid. For a brief time, previous to the war he was my Commanding Officer in the 88th Field Artillery, so we got the lowdown about what was going on. He was an old-school Southern gentleman, full of courtesy and thoughtfulness. His one continuous worry was when they were going to shoot him. I don't know whether they did or not, because he evaporated from my sight shortly afterwards.

On one occasion I had burial detail in the camp and I had a particularly obnoxious GI helper who threw the bodies at random when he was burying them. He was absolutely without courtesy or finesse. I remarked to him that that was no way to treat the dead and that he would be there someday himself. His answer was typical. He said, "Throw my body anywhere you want. It's no good to anyone when I am dead," but my guess is that when he did die he would have been singing a different song.

Once when I was coming down the path in camp, I saw a GI busy selling cans of soup. This purchase was made in the hope of making a little profit so that he could get along himself. I happened to have some money and I went looking for

the GI to purchase a can of Campbell's soup. When he saw it was I, the chaplain, he did not take any profit, but reduced the cost immediately. I insisted, because after all I was lucky enough to get the pesos, needless to say he was quite happy, and he also got all of the reward for his generosity.

In the month of January, I had fixed up the little chapel at the end of the camp overlooking the road to Cabantatuan and I said Mass with the assistance of Captain Lee Stevens each morning. It was difficult to say Mass. but what is difficulty in performing the greatest act on earth? I managed to do very well. Twice a day a young GI whose name I recall as Johnnie came to give me a massage. He boasted that he would hurt me in the massage, and I boasted back that he could not hurt me. He kneaded my muscles and with the vitamin shots that were injected into me twice a week I was able to get back into shape very quickly. There was a regular line-up of all of us who had been paralyzed and it was with a sense of humor that we use to laugh at each other's troubles. There was one officer who looked like one of the dwarfs out of Snow White, chiefly because he was so crippled. with paralysis. He was doubled up and it was excruciating for him to put either foot down on the grown, so he would hop to avoid as much pain.as possible which made it look very ludicrous despite the fact that he was in pain. He laughed at it himself and made everybody roar with laughter at his hopping from one foot to the other. As we would line up for the B_1 shots we would unconsciously stiffen the muscles as the doctor would come in with the needle which was about two inches long. When he was ready with the needle in the right hand he would hit us with a blow on the buttock that would nearly knock us over, then naturally we would be off balance and the muscles relaxed. Then, in would come the needle in the poor defenseless muscle.

The Commissary was still bringing in duck eggs and all kinds of things for those who especially needed it, and although the meals were augmented with some proteins from the Australian boxes, yet we needed proteins. The looks of the personnel in camp had changed to such a degree that the men were back to their normal selves. This did not necessarily mean that the men were healthy or back to their pre-captivity status. The fact is that they were looking wonderful with the new diet, but the commissary had a certain Board of Officers who would sit in judgment as to whether a man might purchase more articles, guided by his need for the same. I was one of the ones allowed to purchase on a priority basis because of deficiency.

About the month of March as I began to look very well, I was sent on work detail. Sgt. Rose and myself were quan partners and we did extremely well. When we wanted to bake anything, we made a bacon pan out of the gutters of one of the roofs and he, having access to the Japanese side, would pick up parts

of lumber and tin now and then. One of the nicest meals that we had was a meal in which we got hold of a Japanese pigskin. They had just slaughtered a pig and Sgt. Rose got the skin. All you did with that was to scald the skin and scrape the hair off of it, then we went down to the galley and made a deal with the galley men and they would turn these pigskins into fat and cracklings. I have forgotten what the percentage was, but it was at least 50% for us. This meant that in keeping the grease we could fry our rice everyday and put a little of the cracklings into the rice and finally enjoy life.

When we wanted to bake anything, we dampened the raw rice a little bit and left it in the sun for about ten minutes, which would make it brittle, then we would take a Japanese beer bottle and roll out the rice which would permit us to mix it with sugar and coconut oil and thus we would have a cake. This is the way we did it for St. Patrick's Day. For this feast I had bought some ducks through the commissary.

It seems that there were too many ducks waddling around in camp, so the Camp Commander assigned one man on detail to herd all the ducks together, all of which were marked with a tag on their legs. I had six of them and Sgt. Rose cracked up the rice and sugar for the big feast. That night we had the ducks, cake and San Miguel Gin, which was mixed with tea. Actually, when you got through drinking the tea, you did not know whether you were eating duck or not, but the tea gave life to the party. The Grand Marshall of the Parade was Patty Burns of Yonkers, N. Y., who was a truant officer before he was in the army. Bob Pettit was present and all of the Priests, and Sgt. Rose was the major-domo. It was a grand party and it really celebrated the day with a lift to all the Irish.

I was sent out into the rice paddies to help construct a new paddy. I was not yet able to maneuver very well, and I got into considerable difficulty trying to lift some rocks. Colonel Wilson was in charge of the detail and he saw me and decided that I should be relieved of that job and sent to an easier one. There was no easier one at the time, so he asked a couple of soldiers to help me. It really was one time in my life when I was unable to work.

It was not long after this when I was sent out on another detail. I had no shoes and I was not to be given a pair of shoes despite the fact that I was working. I made a formal request for shoes through channels and was hauled onto the mat for it. The Colonel called me up to his bahay and wanted to know if I thought I was being discriminated against. It was not a case of whether he misunderstood or not, it was just a case of the fact that I needed a pair of shoes. Evidently my request was thrown into the waste basket for I never heard anything more about it.

One day I was assigned to a rock detail. We were building a road and I was

on the same detail. I had a pair of wooden shoes which were kept on the feet by a leather strap from an old pair of shoes and I went out as far as the gate and kicked the wooden shoes off and then went to work on the rock detail, barefooted. Had I kept the shoes on I might have twisted my ankle, barefooted I controlled my health. I came in that night and wrote a letter according to the Army regulations to the Commanding Officer and reminded him that I had sent him a letter through channels for a pair of shoes, but that nothing had come of it and today I was sent on a rock detail. No sooner had the Commanding Officer received the letter than I was searched out by a runner, and the Camp Adjutant took me down to the Quartermaster. I received a new pair of shoes immediately. This was with considerable amusement to me because I got a brand-new pair of shoes right away**.** The Archbishop had sent in thousands of shoes and there were shoes in the Quartermaster, but they did not intend to give me a pair. I found out later that the conversation went something like this: "How in H--- did he get out the gate"?

We began to change areas about this time. The Marines were in Group I, with the Navy moved to Group III, and Group III moved to Group I, while Group II were changed to make a more equitable disposition of troops. I brought all of the equipment with me, but actually being so sick I was unable to function as Group Chaplain. Father Seoena took over. The Chapel was on the very edge of the camp facing the road to Cabanatuan. Anywhere at the edge of the camp you were surrounded by beautiful mountains or beautiful scenery. As the work details kept coming in they would bring red Bougainvillea, which grows wild there. They would plant these outside their bahays and the vines would grow the way you see them over a honeymoon cottage. They would even bring in orchids, and there were orchids growing all over the camp. The simple process was to cut off the limb of the tree and bring in the limb with the orchid which would grow wherever it was planted. They also brought in slips of plants, such as banana trees and papayas, and these things grow fast in the tropics, you would have a fair size garden within a short time. Patches of ground in the camp were allotted to any individual who cared to cultivate it and there were such things growing as okra, corn, sweet potatoes and kindred products of the Philippines.

Meanwhile along came a retreat for the Priests and each one gave a talk on a certain day. We were allowed time off from work by headquarters in order to make this retreat.

For discipline, the Japanese cut off the head of a Filipino and tied it by the ears over the main gate of the camp so that each man going to the farm or going on detail would have to walk under it. It was covered with a multitude of flies all of the time. It was supposed to cause us to think twice before we would do

aeything against regulations.

Fences were redrawn around the area giving the Japanese more room, placing them in the center of the camp between the hospital section and the work section. It was about this time that several colonels decided to escape, but they were caught and beaten. They were taken to the guard house on the Cabanatuan Road and kept there while waiting for orders from Manila. One gloomy day I was standing at the fence at the edge of the camp looking towards the East which would be the United States, and I saw the colonels being put under a tree to be shot. As I was in physical contact, say within a half-mile, I was able to give them absolution before they fell. Quickly they were shot and buried.

One of my very best frierds whom I met as my doctor was Colonel Sitter. It was a peculiar meeting as the Colonel was a psychiatrist and he was sent over to examine me for the results of dry beri-beri. Our first meeting was very humorous. I was just back on my feet and able to operate pretty well when this pleasant medical officer came in to interview me. It was in the hospital section and he walked in the door as I was seated. He introduced himself without formality and I looked at him very sharply with the idea in mind, “What is a psychiatrist doing on my trail?" He remarked that he knew several priests and I thought this was the usual introduction before he got me in his clutches. However, after the conversation in which he instructed me to walk with my head up and not to look at the ground, I was satisfied that what he meant was just what he said, in other words he had no ulterior motives. We became fast friends after he moved into my bahay.

We moved once again and this time I landed in a wooden barracks in which we lived all over the floor. I had a shelter half that was sewed with other pieces of canvas, and we used these by attaching them to 2x4s which made a rather nice bed. In this wooden barracks there was practically no order because we were living in a big square cabin. We had lots of fun because everybody was happy with the situation and each one wanted to make the most of it. One of the officers was Captain Porter. I used to take extreme pleasure in listening to him tell about New Mexico and Mexico, and the events that went on were very funny. Came Commissary day, we usually had some sausage hanging over our heads, or a sack of peanuts, because money was fairly liberal. We would do a lot of kidding about things that went on in camp and relate various stories about the day's events. Capt. Porter, I knew at that time, was a much-decorated officer, as he was head of a Philippine Regiment.

One day the crowd in the next room, which merely had a partition from us (in other words we could stand up and look over the top of the partition) were arguing. It was really very humorous because they were quite serious. But we

POWs had a habit of arguing around, taking everything in and rarely coming to the point. At any rate they were arguing about some metaphysical point and every once in awhile the opposing side would say “Check!” and then slam his band. on the table. While we were laughing we saw a mouse in a basket. I suggested to Capt. Porter "Throw the mouse over on the other side,” which he proceeded to do. The mouse landed on the table in the midst of the heat and arguing and one officer said, “Did you see that?" and the rest of them were oblivious to it, which showed that they were concentrating and evidently good students.

On another occasion Captain Porter was beaten by the Japanese as frequently happened. He came in, as they all did, pretty sore and uncomfortable. The only thing that could be done was to keep him off the farm for a few days. While he was recuperating he decided that he was not going back to the farm, so he planned the bed bug detail. His remedy consisted of some kind of potash he figured out with hot water. While the men were at work on the farm he took the bays out and, of course, there were hundreds of bed bugs in the bays. He would scald them with hot water and leave them in the sun. He did actually eliminate a tremendous amount of bed bugs and a man could get a good night's sleep without being bitten to death.

I was looking at a forlorn looking GI one day and I asked him how everything was. He was just sighing as we all did, so the conversation got around to me asking him how he got into the army. He replied that one day he was standing in front of a recruiting poster and it had a beautiful picture of Manila Bay, so the recruiting Sergeant came up to him and said, "Have you ever seen the sunset on Manila Bay?" and the GI responded, "No I haven’t,” and with that be thought it was a good idea to enlist and see Manila Bay in the sunset. We were then probably a year and a half in the war and he was probably some six months to a year in the Army before the war started, so I said to him, and "Have you ever seen Manila Bay in the sunset?” his response was “No, I never have.”

In the second year, 1943,we had Christmas Mass at which Father Cummins preached in the presence of the assembled camp, and also to two interpreters who were there to observe what he had to say. He was very strong in his talk and pulled no punches. One of the things that he emphasized more than anything else was that he hoped this would be a just war, ended in justice. He was not condemned or stopped so I suppose the interpreters either did not follow or else they were satisfied that he meant no offense. This was the year in which they were about to allow chaplains to go on details. I was very much excited about this as I believed we should have been with the men on all of these details. I told Father Reilly, who was the Senior Chaplain, that I would like to be considered on the detail. One of the Chaplains said to me, "I don't

want to see you in hell or Japan." However, things were getting very rough. We were sent on farm details and only the workers would be allowed extra rations of rice. The friends of the Japanese, that is those who had bawdy houses in Manila to entertain the Japanese and who were now running the underground, were eating regular with extra food simply because of their contacts. Even the extra food that we were allowed for working was insufficient to keep anyone satisfied and we were thereby a very hungry lot once again. The 1943 rations from the United States via the Gripsholm were insufficient to last more than two months, and the produce from the farm that we were working on were being sold outside the camp. Some of the carabao was finding its way to the table of the underground and one day a token of say 30 pounds found its way to the Chaplain's quarters. Father Reilly told me about it and also informed me that he took it to the galley and told them to put it in the mess.

A short time later I was on a detail which was road building. Two of the underground were working near us. Our immediate job was to carry logs to another part of the camp. Some of these logs were 6 and 8 inches thick which made them quite heavy. Most of the detail, in fact all of the detail, were taking the logs as they found them and saying nothing, but the two of the underground decided to kick the logs around until they could find smaller ones. Col. Sitter and I observed this fact and decided to go them one better. We picked out what we considered to be the smallest in the pile. The crowd that knew us started to cheer and the Japanese guard stared at us in amazement, not knowing what the joke was. It ended the search for smaller logs and the boys decided to share and share alike.

There were a lot of priests organized in Manila to help the soldiers make quick recoveries by the assistance of money and notes which would keep up their morale. This was excellent and served its purpose until the beginning of the underground after Father Buttenbruch was rejected from camp. Once, for example, a thousand pesos was sent in to the Senior Priest for distribution among the Padres. Father Buttenbruch had been rejected because, his equipment was loaded with notes from the same element that was now running the underground. This underground charged us 40%, to get that thousand pesos into camp. The officers in the guard-house thought they would take over and I have no doubt they meant well. Father Reilly, the Senior Chaplain, rejected any further operations because of the danger involved not to us but to the people in Manila. He pointed out that things were fairly on the upswing, and that to cause anybody in Manila to mortgage homes or to deprive themselves because of the soldiers would be unjust. Therefore, he wanted it stopped, but this group of officers got in contact with the authorities in Manila and. insisted upon continuing the work even on a greater scale. As a result, there were wholesale

arrests and many of our personnel were worked over by the Japanese to find out what was going on in secret. This did not involve the real underground in camp as they were protected by the Japanese benefactors.

About this time food was getting scarce although we were growing a tremendous amount of vegetables on the farm. We were supplementing our diet with all kinds of greens, some of which we called pig weed. It was a small pretty green plant that grew about seven or eight inches on the ground and the animals used to eat it in the fields. What good it did I don't know, but it supplemented the bulk diet. It is said that the Japanese were selling the vegetables on the open market, but my personal opinion is that they were feeding them to the troops, because they could print all the money they wanted, hence it would be foolish to sell something when they could print the currency.

Once again, we moved. This time I went back to the third group where the Marines were now living. They were transferred back to the first group. I had many of my friends transport the altar and all the appurtenances back to the third group, which I proceeded to make a beautiful chapel once again. This group was near the farm and away from the road and, of course, it brought all Army personnel back to this group again. About the middle of the rainy season the roof began to leak badly. I went to American Headquarters and asked for roofing material. They refused to give it to me as they said they could not get it for themselves.

As I was Peck's Bad Boy with them at the time I asked the Senior Chaplain to find out whether, if I could get it, they would let me alone. He said yes, they would. So, I went to one of my friends and asked him to get the roofing material which he proceeded to do. The next morning a detail of perhaps a hundred POWs threw over enormous stacks of grass with which I proceeded to repair the roof. Then American Headquarters came to me and asked me if they could borrow some of my roofing material which I proceeded graciously to let them have, so everybody was happy.

The reason why I was Peck's Bad Boy was because the Japanese were moving the Perimeter Guard and it came in very close to the chapel. As the guard line meant that you could not approach within ten feet over it at night time, I thought that I would move the chapel, but there was a banana tree right near the entrance that was on the line of one of the staff. As life was dull at this time the staff officer came along and asked me what I was going to do about the banana tree, so I said I would move it. He said, “No you are not!” and I said, "O.K., see the Commanding Officer,” which he proceeded to do. Then the whole staff came over and looked at my project. Meanwhile I enjoyed their company and investigation, then I just went about my own business fixing up the chapel. Pretty soon a runner came to tell me that the Colonel wanted to see me. I

reported, and he had his entire staff present. I saluted and presented myself before the staff. Colonel said, "What is this I hear you are doing around here?"

I replied, "Oh, you mean that little insignificant detail about the chapel?"

"I apologize, I am sorry that has come to your attention," He said, getting very red in the face, because it was a reflection that a small detail should take so much of his time. He said, "You do what you are told; you are to take orders!"

I said, "Yes Sir, but once again I apologize for this insignificant detail occupying so much of your time." He saluted, and I went away, and I haven't any doubt but that he told the other officer to take care of his own affairs and it all amounted to just a little bit of humor.

We had two latrines at the end of the camp, all outside with sanitary devices as Colonel Saint knew how to make them. One of them was for the general group, the other was set up three or four feet off the ground and we called it the Washington Monument. This was for the general staff and a very precious place indeed. One night, or early hour of the morning, one of my friends decided that there was such a beautiful moon that he would ascend the Washington Monument and take care of nature. While he was there, one of the general staff came trailing along, and he looked at the other officer and suspected that he was not a staff officer. My friend said, "Good morning, Colonel."

The Colonel looked at him and said, "Major, who is this speaking?" and the officer replied, "Not Major sir; Captain."

The Colonel was so excited at someone usurping the privileges of a staff officer that he forgot what he came for and went back to headquarters to nurse his wounded pride, meanwhile my friend just sat and enjoyed the moon. The next day he was lectured by the Commanding Officer about keeping the rank and suggested that he apologize. When he went to the Colonel's quarters he unfortunately had his hat on and the Colonel asked him if he had no manners. My friend took his hat off and said, "I am sorry," and then suddenly he thought, "Well, why should I be sorry," so he slapped his hat back on his head, gave it a tap and said, "I don't know why I should be sorry," and the battle was on again. It all goes to prove that a little humor made things very lively.

We always enjoyed the so-called dumping of the apple-carts, especially if someone was too serious to enjoy life. There was one colonel called Carabao Sam that was so serious that the men loved to raise the deuce near his quarters as they were going out to the farm. One day as they were up and being checked out before the gate, they did not like the attitude of this particul.ar officer. Just as the word came to open the gates and proceed with the Japanese guards, 50 or 60 men picked up rocks and mud and threw them at Sam's headquarters. Naturally Sam's rest was broken, and he came out on the porch yelling at the POWs, but there was nothing he could do about it, it was penalty enough going

out to the farm.

Chapter VII
The Hell Ships

In 1944 things were getting tighter. Food was beginning to dwindle, and the three groups were concentrated into more compact units. The bougainvillea that the men had found on details and planted outside their bahays was all in bloom. Many of the vegetables that had been planted were being harvested and taken into town. It is to be assumed that rations were short for the Japanese, too.

Rumors – Ah, that was what we lived on! I remember one time when we were fighting, word spread that the "America" had run the blockade and landed troops at Corregidor. I happened to be at Marivales at the time and saw no signs of ship or men. There were often rumors that men were to be sent to Japan. At last came a rumor that had to be believed.

In June of this year, chaplains were to be taken with the men for the first time. I was happy because I could go with my fellow prisoners. I volunteered, though it was a useless gesture because the decision was in Father Reilly's hands. Fortunately, he picked me.

We were briefed for such information as was known to Americans. Then we were given Japanese army uniforms. The Japanese are a smaller people than we, and the sight was something to behold. Shoes were issued to us, regular G.I. issue. Our shirts were of brown twill in Japanese style, and the pants were knickerbockers tied at the knees by strings. Our legs were bare, as there were customarily puttees to go with this ensemble, and we didn't get any.

In my shirt pockets I had my small ritual, a pair of rosaries, oil stocks, and an extra pair of glasses. My musette bag contained my altar stone which I had carried in the Death March, and a wooden Mass kit that John Baegler, a navy chief, made for me.

Our friends had gathered near the Japanese truck that was to take us off. My best friends were there; Steve Sitter, the neuro-surgeon, and Mark [Mathias?] Zerfas and John McDonald, the latter two priests. Everybody was happy under the circumstances, and we shoved off and said goodbye to Cabanatuan.

On the way to Manila, crowds waved to us, and Father Reilly had the misfortune to show a "V for victory" sign to the crowds. A guard slugged him. He said to me afterwards, "Do you think this will keep me from going to Japan?" and I said I was sure it wouldn't.

We arrived at Bilibid prison and were kept for one night. This is a permanent prison built for lawbreakers. I do not know the classification of the permanent guests who were there, but they were all brother soldiers and

Father Duffy was one of them.

After the usual *luguao* we were assembled, and I met a very good friend, Mr. Haas, who was a Naval officer and an interpreter. If I remember correctly, there was only one line officer, Major Doris. We officers of course walked last in the procession to the boat. As we passed the church of Santo Domingo, I saw a couple of Spanish Dominicans watching us. How could they recognize a brother in those funny-looking clothes? It reminded me of the time St. Francis took a Brother out to preach. They walked and walked and walked, and finally returned. The Brother said, "I thought that we were going to preach!" St. Francis replied ''We did preach, Brother, by our attitude." Well, we ragged scarecrows of Bataan probably didn't preach much religion, but the text was the dignity of man, and a lot of Filipinos saw us.

When we arrived at the wharf, our ship was waiting for its cargo – us. Loading took hours as there were 1,500 of us. I felt that something was wrong, and so there was – all 1,500 were being herded into the forward hold. As the last of us went down the steps into the hold, we were jammed together so that we rubbed one another. I thought I had claustrophobia, but that experience taught me to look up, to keep my head up. I strongly suspected that the Japanese were simply making use of the occasion to take the starch out of us, because I knew that the rear hold was not in use. Both Father Reilly and I had to let our Mass kits go to the bottom of the ship, which meant goodbye for awhile.

When I reached the deck of the ship, Father Reilly was reciting the rosary. It was a pathetic sight, because these men who had been through so much already were obviously about to be subjected to more of the rigors of war.

I had my canteen strapped to my belt, but by now the water was exhausted because of the intense heat. There was no indication that we would receive any more water, and the whole future looked very doubtful anyhow. The *Nessho Maru* was one of the ordinary types of small Japanese freighters, a very good ship from what I could see, and its only cargo was prisoners. About *5* or 6 o'clock at night, the ship pulled out into the harbor and we thought perhaps we were going somewhere, but it was merely pulling away from the dock. At 8 or 9 o'clock I should judge, mess was announced; in other words, there would be some water and rice.

Shortly before this time, the Japanese decided they had taken about enough of the starch out of us, and they transferred some 700 to the rear hold. I was among these. When chow was announced, it was let down in buckets. By then it was completely dark, there were no lights at all, and in my hold there were 700 men milling around. This gave an opportunity to those who wished to aggrandize themselves and who had brass enough to do it. I got into the line

four or five times and each time there would be yelling up front, and the officer shouting "If you don't behave yourselves we will cut this all out. Now get in line!" As a consequence, those of us at the rear of the line in the dark reached nowhere and got nothing. Some hour later I met Father Reilly and told him that I had no supper, so he let me share his water.

I joined a medical group and took a position against the wall. Most preferred the center, as the sunlight came upon them through the open hatches. However, in the night a tropical storm bore down on us, and it poured down upon the men in the center. They started to riot, and to yell that they wanted justice. They berated those of us who had been squashed into the corners and demanded our places.

By the next morning, order was restored, and the rains had stopped. The tropical sun was pouring down upon the ship again. The hatches were open, so blankets or any kind of equipment that had been wet the night before soon dried.

Father Reilly was still trying to organize things. Early in the morning, the latrine lines were running up the ladder to the scuppers where the latrines were, as in all Japanese ships. The line was ragged, and Father Reilly was trying to get order, and had yelled himself hoarse. I went over to one of the lines, chiefly because the presence of an officer might make the men stop fighting and get in line for their turn on the ladder. While I was doing this, Father Reilly told them to stand up and they did so. "Now," he said, "get in right dress and put your hand in front of you, and keep the man away from in front of you!" Then he said, "Now sit down!" and they sat, finding that they had a little more room than they had before. Naturally they didn't stay there very long, but he had pointed out that in order you have more peace than in chaos.

There was one good thing about that ship. When Mr. Haas and I were waiting to walk up the gangplank, I read off the name of the ship, *Nessho Maru* and asked him what it meant. "Bright Morning Star," he said. To me this was a safe-conduct, for the Mother of God has that name in the litany – "Stella Matutina." I know that those not of my faith will ho-hum, but many will understand my feeling. When we were taken at Fort Stotsenburg it was on her feast day, the Immaculate Conception; I knew that she would see us through. Napoleon said once that God was on the side of the heaviest cannons, but sometimes God pushes aside the heavy cannons. As for instance, we lost the battle of Bataan, but we helped to win the war in the Pacific.

The meals on the ship were regular and the water supply adequate. Three times a day the buckets were lowered, and we got rice or barley. When all were supplied with water, Pat Davie would come over for my canteen and give me all that was left.

Strangely enough, I fell fast asleep on the steel hold. There was nothing to cover the steel, but I slept. It reminds me of the Longfellow poem,

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.[8]

The second day I was ordered back to the forward hold. It was just as crowded as the rear one, but with the advantage that there were bunks built in for the Japanese troops. The bunks were two tiers high and built of two-by-fours, with plain boards for surface. I was assigned to an upper berth and found it quite adequate. At least I had room to roll around and it was long enough to stretch out in. Of course, you had to get into it feet first.

We were lucky. One prison ship, we understood, had anchored in the harbor for a month waiting for their convoy. We were only two days in the harbor. On the third day we set off, and cheered loudly as we left.

Talk was incessant. When I would wake up to roll over, I would listen to whatever conversation was nearest, and try to make sense of what was being said. I was rarely able to make any sense out of these endless discourses. Perhaps it was I who was at fault, but also I think that the men were rambling too.

In such close quarters you would expect anger to flare out, but it never did. I saw only one instance of it. There was no panic for food, each waited his turn, acting much as if he were at home.

Major Doris asked me to work up some entertainment for the men. I was happy to comply. We had many of Col. "Zero" Wilson's bandsmen, minus instruments of course, and they were recruited. We had some of the sharpest men on board; Fitzpatrick, who was a singer, and a piano player who could also play a mandolin; fortunately, we did have a mandolin. I got permission from the Japanese to go from hold to hold and give this entertainment at least twice a week. The shows were pretty good. The jokes were the usual thing, clean, but there was one man who insisted on telling filthy stories. I didn't realize at first what he was going to talk about, but to the credit of the men, I heard one man cry out, "For God's sake, can't somebody say something decent?" The obnoxious talker was ruled out. The troop kept practicing all the time, so we had shows every day.

There was no such thing as soap, so we had to wash without it which doesn't get you very far. We discovered a few razors and cleaned up as best we could. Sores began to appear on all the men, which was to be expected because of the filthy conditions. The men also began to have diarrhea, and to show signs of amoebic dysentery. There was a line to the latrine day and night.

Meals consisted chiefly of rice and barley and a thing called "daghorn" which is nothing more than shredded turnips, soaked in salt and then dehydrated. When soaked in water it looked like sauerkraut.

One night there was an alarm. Evidently the American navy hit two of the ships in our convoy, because the sky was red, and they closed the hatches. Strangely enough, this didn't even disturb our sleep – I rolled over on the wooden bunk and fell asleep again.

A few men died at sea in the forward hold. I said Mass on the deck of the ship, looking down into the hold. The wind was pretty strong, nevertheless I finished the Mass. The dead were sewed up in a tarpaulin, and after the final prayers were said they were pushed off into the deep. The Japanese stood around more in curiosity than anything else.

Some of the men got into the hold where we had been ordered to dump our gear, and they made a real mess of it. They opened everything on top of the pile and were digging deeper when they were caught. Our possessions were few, but men do accumulate things as they go along. Packages from home brought things, they found things in camp – especially food. I myself had three pounds of beans. I suggested to Major Doris that we confiscate everything found and send it up to the galley, and this we did. We had the results for supper, and it was very good.

Fortunately, I discovered my English Dominican Missal, which I had carried on the Death March; it was in among the contents of the luggage. There was nothing of any interest to anyone in my musette bag, so they threw it aside. Having recovered my missal and chalice, I could say Mass in the hold of the ship. Here I was surrounded by smelly bodies and yet it was a wonderful thing to be able to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass amidst all the confusion and misery. This is one time in addition to the times we said the rosary that the men were silent. For twenty-four hours a day they seemed to babble, there was nothing else to do but talk. But I had been given permission by the Japanese to go on deck to say the rosary, where I would swing my legs over the hold and lead the prayers. It was the only time in the day that we really had any quiet.

During the hassle over the looting in the hold, when we were trying to find all my things, we discovered our good fortune in having another Mass kit on board. The Military Ordinariate sees that these Mass kits are put in strategic places, and this one got on our ship. I could now say Mass in the hold, and the men were very courteous. I might say that neither Father Reilly nor myself had wine or hosts, and this deficiency was met when we opened the new Mass kit.

The outstanding feature of this interlude was the harmony that existed among the many personalities. This was due to discipline. Major Doris was a National Guard officer, but the men respected him just as they did the regular

officers. It was discipline that brought us through the war, and discipline saw us through the awful deprivations of that voyage.

Even though I am a priest who has taken a vow of poverty, I had never known such deprivation as this, when I had nothing at all but what was in my shirt pockets and the unbeautiful clothes I wore. But do you know, it was a relief to have nothing; no car to worry about having a “flat,” no clothes to be pressed, no rush to keep an appointment. Just a vagabond life. It was definitely not fun, but it was a valuable piece of education.

One of our personnel was known to be a deviate. One night I was talking to a friend when this character said, "Good evening, Father.” I was distracted at the time and not quick on the response. When I turned to look at him, he had a very hurt expression. I felt sorry for the oversight on my part. He was exemplary on the ship. This poor unfortunate was a real man when the test came.

I always carried two pairs of glasses, one in use and the other in my shirt pocket. One night in the forward hold I took my glasses off and accidently pushed them into the hatch opening – goodbye, glasses. I was grateful that I had the others.

I have slept on roads, on a rock pile, the steel deck, the pine flooring. But sleep always came, and the cares of today became history; there is always tomorrow.

Once I was called over to Dr. Vernon’s corner. A guard wanted to look into my new Mass kit. I opened it, and he attempted to grab the chalice. I objected strenuously. He drew back and gave me the once-over. The chalice had been consecrated and I was not about to let him touch it. I said a few un-clerical words and marched back to those with whom I had been talking.

No matter where I have been, I have had the good fortune to have loyal friends. One such was on the boat; Pat Davie. He and I were very close. We were destined to be in the same camp in Japan and to continue our friendship. It shows how adversity places new values in men. Pat, as young as he was, was very solid and mature. These men whom I had the honor to serve were mostly regular army men. The others were National Guardsmen; they all loved their country and understood discipline. I was very proud to be associated with such a group. Each man knew his place and, like the good soldier he was, kept it with pride.

After some time, we arrived in Formosa. There we were allowed on deck while they were refueling and taking on water. Having read so much about Formosa I was glad to see it, but there were no people on the wharf, or any lights. Anyway, it was God's *terra firma*.

The same day we left again, and pulled out into the China Sea. On August 4th, St. Dominic's Day, we reached Moji,[9] a port on the inland sea with a big

customs house. We were all ordered on deck. There were about fifty technicians with their instruments. They were to take a feces exam of all on board. This, of course, was to save face. Many of us had amoebic dysentery,

That being finished, we gathered up what was left of our equipment. I found my musette bag with the necessities for saying Mass. We were divided off into groups, and Father Reilly was separated from me.

Chapter VIII
Taibata, Japan

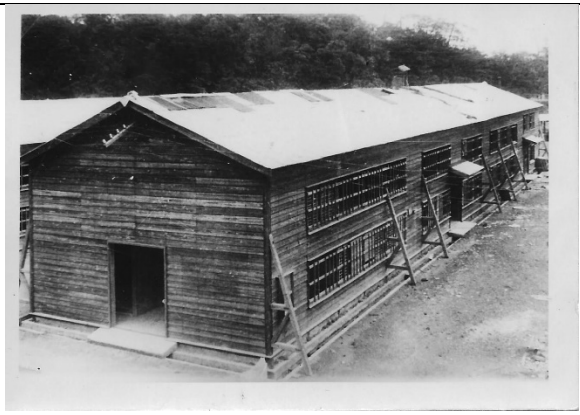
The next morning, we got down to the dock at Moji and were lined up according to numbers, and there were separations made. Evidently, they had us all numbered so that we could be sent to different places. Some were going to Nagasaki and some to the Kyushu Islands, as we found out afterwards. After an interminable wait, my group was taken to the center of the city where we sat down in front of the railroad station. While we were seated there, the curious among the civilians came along and looked us over. One man growled as if he were going to attack us, which of course he did not, but the rest of the people passed us by, not even bothering to give us a good look.

Pretty soon we heard singing and we saw about two hundred little girls, I should judge about the age of six or seven, all with brooms on their shoulders, swinging gaily down the street. They were led by a girl I judged to be about fourteen years old. When they got to a spot in the city square she gave the order to halt, and they all took the brooms off their shoulders and began to sweep the street.

After another wait, we were taken to a streetcar track where we were lined up. The interpreter told me that the commanding officer had said fifty to a car. Pretty soon, along came a streetcar with blinds drawn, and we were piled in and taken to our new home in Taibata, where the Yawata Steel Works were. As we got off the streetcar we could see the camp wall enclosed by a high fence. On the right of it was a six or seven story plant, with six smoke stacks. One of the soldiers said ''Look at that bomb bait!" I was so interested in the fact that we were at last going to get some fresh air, and not be smelling the same old stinky things all the time, that I was happy. Fresh air, and the freedom to push out our arms and not touch any body!

We arrived in the camp about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Dinner was over, but much to our amazement the Commanding Officer had rice and soy beans and hot tea served to us. This was a pleasure we had not anticipated, because we had gone without so many meals. But we were under a new regime now, we were workers and we would be fed.

The men who lived in the camp were out at work, so we didn't know who our companions were to be. The camp could have a quota of 1,200, but until our arrival it held only seven or eight hundred. There were three barracks left for us to take, the ones nearest to the fence or the railroad tracks.



We were permitted to rest considerably for two or three days, *yesimie,* they called it. A photographer was sent up from the plant to take our pictures. We were all posed in groups of about twenty, some stood up in the back and some sat in the front. The idea was to take the whole group so that later they might cut out the individual pictures, which is precisely what they did. Numbers were placed in front of our chests and we looked like first-class convicts. We were emaciated, our heads were shaven, skin had broken loose so that we were covered with blue merthiolate which have us a thoroughly sinister look. We all laughed at this, but nevertheless it was true that we looked terrible.

I have never seen a tougher group of men in my life that were there in that camp. The men in the 4th barracks were from the Air Force and the Marines.

These men seemed absolutely fearless, and would plan anything that was necessary for their comfort or freedom. They seemed to be singled out most of the time for brutalities from the Japanese.

That first night there were a lot of friendships made, and a lot of going around and meeting old friends, identifying new ones, and generally having recreation. Generally, we were not supposed to mingle.

Orders came fast and furious out of headquarters, so as barracks chief I had to quickly learn some Japanese, to which I am not adapted.

One day a soldier had his glasses broken. He was one who went on the flat cars to the plant every day, about seven miles. The flat cars were open of course, and they had to pass under some bridges. On one particular bridge they were passing this day there were a lot of Japanese boys, and they were yelling the name of prisoner and threw some rocks. One rock happened to hit this prisoner right on his glasses and smashed them, so when he came back he had no glasses. Well, I went to the interpreter and reported this, and he had the man taken to the oculist in Moji and there his glasses were repaired, and some assistance was given to the sight of the soldier. Unfortunately, in this affair I happened to get hold of a sheet of paper and went into headquarters and typed a formal request the same as we do in our own army. This incensed the interpreter who asked me what was the idea, and I told him that I was just being formal, that was all. I rather suspect that he thought that I was making a record, which could be used against them, but I explained to him that there was no intention of mine to do anything other than proper, I just wanted to cooperate so that as he would have a record. He said "Well, don't do this again!" and I said, I wouldn't.

On another occasion the interpreter unbeknown to me came into barracks where I was seated in section and called the barracks to order. He said, ''You have great respect for your Chaplain, for you leader. Don't you. think it is about time that you do everything that is possible to cooperate in order that everything be taken care of in a proper manner?" They all said aye, and he spoke about the disorder of things and, therefore, that it would be much better for everybody concerned if they would cooperate with the barracks chief. I was quite amazed at this and got quite a bang out of it, because it was unknown to me entirely, and the fact that he had talked to the men directly was quite a surprise.

On another occasion there was a shakedown of the barracks, and the Major was in front on inspection. A soldier came up and asked me what to do about a saw. He handed me a saw and I looked at it and I said, “That is dynamite!" Quickly the interpreter turned to me and he said "Dynamite, where?" I said, "Oh that is just an American expression, this was a saw and we were declaring

it and we did not want it to be considered a contraband, and he laughed and said oh, and went away.

While out with the detail one day in front of the tunnel I was told by the Major to dig some trenches in order that the water would flow off and not gather around in pools, and I said, "Hi." But the men I had with me were terribly sick and I was not going to impose any such burden on them, I let them off quickly. The second day he came out and noticed that the work was not done, and he told me pleasantly to dig the trenches and I once again said, "Hi," but once again I had such a crew of sick men that I did not dare impose upon them, so I let the work go. The third day he came out and took one look at it and he went into a rage, and he hit his thigh with a rod he was carrying and asked the interpreter to interpret to me his commands, he said do you understand what the Major wants, and I said, "Hi," and he said this time I want to see it done, and so I said, "Hi." He said do you understand now, and I said yes, so then I went out with a shovel and started to dig myself and he caught me and rebuked me and told me that officers were not supposed to do that kind of work, nevertheless he did not molest me, and he allowed me to continue.

We officers were not allowed at the plant; our particular jobs were in camp, with the Doctors, two Chaplains and an American Line Officer. The Doctors, of course, took their turns at the dispensary and on what they called *shuban* – roughly equivalent to the officer of the day. It was a matter of checking the men out to the plant, and checking attendance morning and night, also of going around at 6:30 and 10:00 o'clock in the morning and at 3:00 and 6:00 in the afternoon with a stick of light for their cigarettes.

Smoking was permitted only four times a day. It was my job to get the light down at the boiler room and go to each barracks door with it. Usually before I got there, some of them had a lighter, which was worked out ingeniously. We all had little medical copper kits in our belts in which were emergency band aids. When the bandages were used up, the little kits were easily put into the pocket. The men would take bits of burnt cloth, not entirely burnt but sufficiently so, and would put them into the kit. Then they would take a piece of flint and a piece of steel and would open their kit so that the sparks from the steel and the flint would fly in and impregnate the cloth; this gave sufficient of a spark to light a cigarette. Almost every man in camp had one, though of course they were illegal.

Quite often the Japanese Major would come along, very upset because someone was found smoking. He always wanted a token to save face, so somebody would have to surrender his box, although everybody knew there were plenty more of them in camp.

The men were given little *bento*[10] boxes, made of quarter inch wood and

probably six inches square with a cover on them, and in this the rice was packed which they took to the factory with them for the midday meal. The morning meals consisted chiefly of rice and soy beans, which were very nutritious. We all liked it because the soy beans were mixed with soy sauce – *miso paste*, we called it. *Miso paste* was a combination of sugar and soy sauce and was delicious. It greatly improved the taste of rice. The noon meal had no gravy nor liquid; it usually consisted of plain rice and maybe two or three pieces of *jicon*[11]*;* this was a large radish that grows in Japan. It was soaked in salt, and interned to give us as much salt as possible without actually giving us any. The hot tea was not what you find in the dark American tea, but if you go into a Chinese restaurant you will find pale amber tea which was much the same.

Salt was a very rare thing in Japan although they were entirely surrounded by the seas they could have dehydrated. Nevertheless, it was a highly taxable commodity. And so, radishes were grown in between the buildings and potatoes were planted. They were fertilized, of course, by human matter, which helped to spread the dysentery that was so rampant. One day one of the officers was caught eating some of the potatoes out of the ground which was naturally quite dangerous for his own health. He was discovered by the Japanese and severely beaten for it. As a matter of fact, Father McDonnell in the Philippines was severely beaten and kicked because he ate a radish right out of the ground. Of course, when men get terribly hungry there is only one thing that they know to do and that is to replenish the hunger with available food.

It was not advisable to drink cold water at all, because it was filled with amoebae, and that was of course dynamite for anybody who had a tendency to amoebic dysentery, which we all did. The thing to do was to drink the hot tea, and as most of us had canteens, we would put tea in them and save it to drink during the day. Every time the hot tea came out of the galley, at breakfast and supper and at 10:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M., we would empty out the cold tea and refill with hot. We drank a lot of it, but it was very necessary because of the danger of amoebic dysentery.

The dispensary was always filled with patients, men who had terribly ugly sores or something like that. These patients would be wrapped in cloths that had been boiled many, many times, and there were no bandages ever thrown away. The dispensary was the best place in the camp as the straw mats were built into what was something like a bed; they were on legs anyhow, and they were about standard height of beds, and the patients in this hospital were given better treatment in that they were allowed to rest and recuperate, and most of the men needed rest badly. The hospital was at the farthest end of the camp and no one was allowed to visit there as that was frowned upon by the

authorities. I was permitted to go there. One guard didn't like me. and he saw me there one day. He threw me out of the place and almost did it bodily. Because I was defying him, and he told me to get out in a very discourteous manner. It was not until I became an inmate there myself for a little while that I led the routine and began to go in there to say Mass.

Any man who was at the factory and received. any kind of injuries could apply to the hospital. such as it was. However, that did not mean that he was free from work; it meant that he was free to stay in and receive medical attention and then to do the camp work, policing [sic] up camp itself. This was a particular odious task that was put on me as officer of the day, and as I was permanent officer most of the time, I had to see that the camp was policed up. As a matter of fact, they called me the Camp Superintendent, and the guards sometimes would go out of their way to molest me. I got into the habit of always carrying a monkey wrench or a saw or something around with me in order to divert the attention of the guards from the fact that I was idle. We never could sit down during the daytime, we were always on our feet and we were always busy, at least had the semblance of doing something, this satisfied. the guards and satisfied the camp authorities.

When finally, I obtained permission to say Mass I would say it out in the open in between the barracks. As a matter of fact, one picture was taken by a guard, a Cadet Officer, which has been printed in many newspapers here in the United States. It was taken between two barracks and in front of the infirmary

showing myself and a group of the boys who had gathered around for Mass.

Major Rechitechi was a stern man, but a just one, as I found out. He was the camp commander. He called me “Bogashi” which is a vulgar name for "pastor of the flock.” Every night when the men came in from work, he would be after me for some infraction of the rule that the men caused. He had an interpreter who was mean and contemptible; I avoided him.

In the barracks of 150 men there would also be three charcoal burners, a lower and an upper tier of bunks, and the bedding of straw mats, which pleased the bedbugs. We had slate roofs, of such cheap construction that they broke simply from vibration during bombings. We were issued green cloth uniforms which were lined with a lighter cloth. Our blankets varied from coarse and heavy to warm and light; some of them were army blankets.

Once a Jap guard caught a man smoking during an air raid. He sent for me and asked ''Why is this man smoking?" I said, “We Americans believe that cigarettes are good for your nerves, and thus you can do *tok-san-shigato* (much work)." He said "Oh!" and went off.

We were paid originally either in cookies or in cigarettes. It depended on what you chose. I chose cigarettes and they were issued with regularity. Then they reneged on the cookies. One day one of my men came to me and demanded that I go to the Japanese and ask for cigarettes. I did exactly that, and to my surprise they gave him what he asked for. Then the whole camp lined up, and there was much slapping of faces. I never found out why they would give the request to one and beat up the others.

I asked Major Rechitechi if he would give me permission to write a letter about saying Mass: I wanted to write to the Apostolic Delegate in Tokyo. He said no. He said the same thing to my requests to write to Nagasaki and Osaka, adding "I know how far those letters go, and you are not going to write any letters anywhere.” My whole desire in getting permission to say Mass was to prevent profanation of the hosts. But he still said no.

Christmas was drawing near, and the thing was now to decorate the camp. Major Rechitechi told us that we could go out and gather some trees. The trees were all great big things, Japanese pines, but we climbed and sawed off the branches and took them in so that each of the ten barracks could have Christmas Trees. The Japanese offered some rations, extra cookies I think it was**,** to the barracks that was the best decorated, so everybody went to it. In my own barracks I recommended that the only thing that they could do was bring in a lot of steel, steel ships which were gaily colored and might lend some beauty to the tress that we had, but we were muchly surprised when the barracks five, the old timers brought an all kinds of trees, brought in more trees

than we ever dreamed were around the place, they must have had their Japanese friends working for them too, because they had a very pretty barracks, and it was entirely decorated in fir, in fact so pretty that we all went down there to see it. They naturally won the prize.

Christmas Midnight Mass was permitted by the Japanese. I celebrated the Midnight Mass in barracks five where it was so pretty, and the altar was decorated with leaves. I was hoarding hosts and I broke them into small, small pieces and I don't know how many went to Holy Communion that morning. It was a very large percentage of the camp. The Major came around at noontime to see what everybody had for lunch. I think we had extra rations that day too, at least we had a very comfortable meal. It was almost as happy a Christmas as you could have even in the United States. Almost. The Major made a speech that morning: he said that he was sorry from the depth of his heart that we were not able to be home with our loved ones that day, but he said that was the fortunes of war that went to the one that had the most supplies and the most men at the best time.

Almost every night we were subjected to air raids. About nine o'clock we were supposed to lie down and go to sleep, and inevitably within the half hour "moaning Minnie" would blare out the air-raid warning, and we would have to pack up and go into the tunnel. This was dug into a hill which was composed or small pebbles, and I was always afraid of it; if the bombs were dropped within a thousand yards of us, the sand and pebbles would collapse. It was hard enough to dig, nevertheless it was not a stable shelter. One detail of men worked there all day, digging out new caverns so that more men could be accommodated. The first shelter was made of bamboo with rocks and dirt thrown on top. When it rained, of course, the whole place was a soggy mess, and we were fortunate in not having to use it too many times after a rainstorm.

The tunnel had its own special discomforts. There were 1,200 men in it, with no room for moving around. If they bad to go to the latrine they would have to step over and on one another, and as a consequence the men's patience wore very thin. The ironic thing was that we were all so dehydrated we would drink a lot of tea, and then during the air raids, the tea would wish to find its exit. That meant that there was a continual coming and going, which its accompanying growls from men being stepped on. There were of course no lights, and it was physically impossible to get out without poking someone in a sore spot. Psychologically it was as tough we were all penned together in a dungeon and had no way out.

There was one officer who was awfully nice man and liked to talk about America. He asked me one day is it true that the Japanese cherry trees that had been planted in Washington, D.C., is it true that the Americans ripped them up?

And I explained that it would not be possible that the .Americans would be so shortsighted, so ignorant as to do such a thing that to rest assured that the trees were still there. It seemed to satisfy him.

As the Americans advanced to Guam, Wake and Okinawa the air raids continued throughout the day. We could see them flying at very great heights by their vapor trails which they left in the sky. About all the comment we got out of it was the fact that we continued working out in the open and the Japanese would look up and remark *B-Ni-Qu* which means B-29. One day one of the passing 29's unloaded a gas tank which dropped right in the middle of the plant and sunk into the ground, naturally it was dropped from about 40,000 feet. I suppose it was an emergency supply that he was carrying but he unloaded it right on us.

The Japanese were very peculiar people regarding pain or suffering. One day in the plant one of the Japanese was unfortunate enough to get caught under a freight train and he had his leg cut off, and while he was writhing in agony on the ground the rest of the Japanese were laughing. Now I do not suppose that they were insensible to pain, but the Orientals treat pain with stoicism, they don't appreciate it the same as we do, I suppose in that sense they were just as much excited as we were.

One of the jobs that I had as officer of the day was to count the rolls that came into camp. Each man was given two rolls a day, they were little buns, but they were mighty tasty, they were made, naturally, out of rice flour and they were steamed, not baked, which accounted for some of the dysentery trouble that broke out with us, because the baking would have eliminated some of the sogginess of the rolls. They were quite a premium; one of my jobs was to count them every night and to see that each barracks got the proper amounts of rolls for its personnel, and there were hardly ever any extra. They were carried into camp on a motorcycle, and the motor cycle had a little truck at the rear in which all of these rolls were contained.

One day during an inspection of my barracks, everything was covered up and looking ship-shape, and I was confident that everything was all right. We saluted the Major and his staff and he went on down the line. Suddenly, word came for me to appear at the end of the barracks, where the latrines and sinks were. I went, to find that a Japanese uniform had been found there. Someone had obvious stolen it. To the Major's surprise, I blew my top. I said that any man who would do that was a chicken, he wasn't fit to wear the uniform of the United States Army; I said about everything I could possibly say. Instead of getting beaten, as I expected, I stood by in surprise while the Major laughed uproariously.

One night one of my men reported. the loss of a uniform. This could be a

serious thing because you could be accused of selling it at the factory. The man who had lost it was a very honest man and I did not want to have him beaten and thrown in the guard house. So I reported it myself. This, apparently, was what the Warrant Officer wanted. He ordered a shakedown of all the barracks, and we were out in the yard for at least three hours (until he got tired himself) but they did not find the uniform.

One of the American officers advised me against doing anything like that again, and I said, "Whenever a man comes to me for help, he will get it!"

Thieves were our worst problem and they always got us into trouble. One night, for example, a soldier went on duty ten minutes late and came off ten minutes early. There was an issue of cigarettes at this time, and it soon became apparent t 30 or 40 cigarettes were missing, I called the sergeants together and asked them if they thought I should punish this man, who had been under suspicion before. They agreed that I should, so I put him on *shimbong,* which means fire watch. This occurred in the early hours of the morning, and it was a punishment. The next day he reported me to the Japanese authorities for punishing him, so they called me to headquarters and asked me what right I had to punish my man. The commanding officer assured me that I had no right to punish anyone, the Japanese were the only ones who could do that. Then he called the man over to him and hauled off and gave him a slap in the face. The man went around the building and the storage corporal was laying for him with a club. Later he admitted he had taken the cigarettes and that he had tried to throw the blame on me with the Japanese.

My first sergeant asked me if I would discontinue the discipline of the barracks and I said no, because I was thinking of the majority and trying to control it so that the majority of the men would have a decent living; it was bad enough as it was. Sometimes the men would trade their rice for parched soybeans, which were very hard to digest but were very enticing because they tasted like salted peanuts. You would get only a tiny box of them for a full meal of rice, and the men who did this got weaker from the poor nourishment. So I cracked down on that. I had what I called a training table, and any man that the Doctor reported to me as having malnutrition was put at this table. We watched them carefully so that they could not trade off their rice.

The crowded conditions in the barracks was such at that time you would see what looked like a pool of blood crossing the floor, this was nothing more than bed bugs. Bed bugs and lice were the chief things that the men had to contend with in this camp.

When the men would die a group of four would be detailed to haul the body off to the crematory and brought back in a glass burial pottery, and we had a special room for them in the camp, it was in fact a very clean room and was the

only' clean room that was in the camp. There were probably 250 bodies in there, in 250 urns.

I had some friends among the English soldiers. One of them, Jack Blake, had a brother who was a priest in my own Order. The British we had there were from Singapore.

We also had a barracks of Indians from Calcutta and Goa. The Goa Indians were Catholics and strangely enough I was able to hear their confessions. The Dutch barracks contained men from the East Indies, and their leader was a brilliant surgeon, Doctor Jacque Balde. One night we had a bit of comic relief when, in my duty as officer of the day, I was making the rounds with a friendly guard we called "Dami Dami." Dr. Balde was a very high-strung man, and he got confused with the count-off (this had to be done in Japanese) and Dami asked him to repeat the count. He only got more confused. Dami turned to me and said, "Dumb Dutch!" It was funny, but the brilliant doctor was reduced to embarrassment.

We also had two barracks of sailors off submarines, the Grenadier and (I think) the Shark. In with them were some marines from Guam.

There was one occasion connected with my duties as superintendent of the camp, when after a detail had returned to the barracks, a pretty efficient guard discovered one of the shovels lying out in the open. He, therefore, called me to the guardhouse and with a steel reinforcing rod he began a slight tattoo on my head. He kept asking me what I meant by committing sabotage, that it was a very important thing that the Japanese government pursue its policy of saving materials, but here I went and lost a shovel, so he continued with the tattoo. He also hit Dr. Gordon over the head for the same reason, because he was officer of the day at that particular time. But very soon the storage corporal Sergeant Cauasaki, came along and was very much incensed to see the thing that was happening, he corrected the guard and spoke to him quite at length about it in Japanese and we were told to go back to our barracks. Later on, I received a message from the American Interpreter, Mr. Haas, in which I was told that I had better not say anything or else Sergeant Cauasaki would treat me a little rougher. Needless to say, we were very happy to get away with it that easy, and so there was nothing more to be done about it.

I would not go to the Commanding Officer about the matter, that was one policy I never pursued. I would give information to him in one way or another, but I would never report a thing like that because it would mean they would just lay for me the next day.

On another occasion we were issued some rubber soled carpet slippers; only officers were given these slippers. They were of a cheap rubber material, as a matter of fact I wanted them cracked right over the sole so that water

would get into them very easily. I did not realize that they were intended to be used only in the barracks, and so being called to the guardhouse I was present with a pair of these shoes on my feet. The storage corporal looked down at me and he said, "Hah!" and then he picked up a pickaxe handle and let me have one right over the head. Needless to say, it didn't feel good, and I wasn't very well disposed towards the sergeant, but there wasn't anything that I was going to do about it, so we let the matter drop. On another occasion I was hit on the head with a bamboo club. One day much to my surprise early in the morning, it was reported to me that one of my men had broken into, of all places, the Japanese mess, and had taken away some of the condiments that were there, such as soy sauce and some other things. Upon investigation I found it was true, that he had taken an associate with him and they had divided the loot. It was a humorous thing in a way, because this soldier was a peculiar sort of a lad and you never knew what he was going to do. On one occasion I remember he was in my place, and while he was talking to me he was looking around. The doctor noted particularly that his eyes were cast on the shelves where we had our equipment. He remarked to me that the boy was casing the joint. I was always a little bit suspicious, wondering what he was going to do. On this particular occasion he broke into the Japanese mess and took the things that would be discovered, without a doubt. We were waiting for the storm to break, and suddenly the Japanese authorities came over to take him and his associate. There was nothing much that I could do about the matter because he had committed the offense and I was powerless to intercede.

They were taken down to the end of the camp where they were placed in the lineup. When I arrived finally on the scene they were hitting both of them over the head with a bamboo club. When I arrived the Japanese sergeant gave me the club in my hand and told me to hit them, and I refused. They were begging me to hit them, because they feared that I would increase the wrath of the Japanese by refusing to do so. So I picked up the club and just lightly tapped them on the head and he yelled out almost in tears for me to hit him real hard because there was an element of danger. The Japanese could get mad at such an attitude of an officer and proceed to beat them real hard. I was confident that I was able to argue the sergeant out of the matter, and I turned to him and told him that these two were mentally very sick and that, therefore, they were not responsible for their actions. It is a peculiar thing, while the Japanese do not have much respect for the old or for the sick, nevertheless they do for the mentally deficient, they have the greatest respect for them, and will do anything they can to avert injury to them.

About February, the survivors of the S.S. *Oryoko Maru* arrived in camp. There were perhaps 200 of them. This was the ship in which 1,500 American

officers were killed by mistake by our own bombers. It was a cold day when they arrived, and they were thinly clad and. covered with brown spots where they had lain in animal manure. The ship had been a horse cargo ship, and they were all crowded into the hold and denied food and water. If it wasn't a miracle, it was at least a tribute to how much human nature can stand that they had even survived. When they arrived, the first thing our men did was to obtain blankets for them and give them whatever clothing they were not wearing themselves. They were, fortunately, put into a barracks where they had heat and special chow. Nevertheless, there hung about these poor fellows an air of brutality; I have seen that when an officer was addressing them he would become enraged at them, apparently just at the sight of them. What the psychology of this was I could not determine, unless it was that these men were victims of their own brutality and their presence brought the fact home to them. They were unable to work, which was another possible reason why the guards had no respect for them. I. went among them and heard the confessions of the few Catholics, and did what little I could do.

One night while I was hearing a confession the Japanese Commanding Officer came over and tried to listen to the conversation. I pushed him away, and again the officer and his interpreter came up close. I explained to the Major that we were not discussing anything derogatory to his command, and he laughed and walked away.

One night while I was visiting Colonel Wilson, Colonel Trapnell and a few more, a guard came by and nobody stood at attention. Pretty soon he came back and took the names of those who were there. That night I learned that these officers were in the guard-house to be punished, so I went to Mr. Haas and asked if he would come and interpret for me. I went up to the guard-house and found the two Colonels and four Dutch soldiers standing at attention. The guard was Dami Dami, so I asked him in the name of charity would he let them go, because they were good officers and meant no offense. He paid no attention, and Mr. Haas said they were to be thrown into the tank; a freezing place at best, and when they came up for air they would be clubbed over the head. As a final gesture I asked if' the responsibility of these officers could be placed entirely on my shoulders. Much to my amazement, Dami Dami said "Because it is you, I will turn them over to you, and you will assume responsibility. In the future you will be responsible for what these officers do." I thanked him very much and went my way. Later that night I was annoyed to be awakened by a guard, but strangely enough he only wanted to give me three balls of rice. Instead of calling me to the guard house to raise trouble with me, he only wanted to give me some food – I suppose because I had stood up for the officers.

One barracks was made up of civilians who worked on an airfield and did

construction work. I had many friends among them. In fact, they sent a committee to me asking that I represent them at any trial. This never came off. One of these men was a trader; these people would get indigestible nuts from sailors on the ships and would trade a soldier his food for a handful. He told me that one of my men owed him and he wanted me to take any food away from my men.

Sergeant Houskie was my First Sergeant and a wonderful man he was. He could lick anyone in camp and was as gentle as **a** father. Houskie and I would get wind of a trading deal and stop it; together we watched the training table. One of the traders threatened me one day but he made no trade. None of these characters dared to cross Houskie. It made no difference who was in trouble, Houskie was the first one to come to their aid.

Once Houskie was caught gambling, a thing I didn't mind. The Japanese ordered him removed as First Sergeant. After a few days his replacement came to me to ask to be relieved of the job. I thought immediately that I would get Houskie back again. He agreed, but of course dared not to appear in the line-up.

Every evening the chow would be issued early. I would hurry to eat mine for soon the cry of "Bogashi!" would ring out. That was a call for me. The details would be entering, and the accused of the day would be first. I had to stand there and listen to the accuser, a guard, and then try to think up an answer. Many of the accusations were infantile and I cannot remember them. But one was outstanding. That was the case of Sutherland, who was in barracks.

When I saw him he was a beaten mess. I went to the guard-house and talked to him and he said he felt awful, but he intended to beat the foreman who had been mean to him.

I went to the hospital and asked the doctor for help. He said "Oh! bad American!" I replied that he was not bad, and that I would appreciate anything he could do for him. He gave me food and blankets. Headquarters refused to see me, so I returned to the barracks and asked the men about Sutherland. They told me he had been quite upset that morning. I learned with pleasure that Doctor Ogami was taking care of him.

The next night we heard the cry, "Bogaski!" and I was on my way. After we lined up in front of Major Rechitechi and his interpreter began. He said, "I can shoot this man; he violated international law. What are you going to do about it?"

I replied, "Major-san, you can do just that according to international law, but you would be doing an injustice. This man is one of the best in my barracks. He has now been 36 months in the war, on the Death March, starved, beaten by guards, and he is sick. He meant no disrespect to His Royal Highness or the

Imperial Army, but was just fighting." Apparently, the Major was satisfied, for he dismissed us and kept Sutherland two days more in the guardhouse. The men were extremely well pleased, and I was happy that it had all turned out well.

The holidays were coming, and we were in high spirits. They fed the men almost 1,400 grams of rice a day, while we in the camp got 900, and I got 700. Around Christmas I was asked to send a message. I told the U.S. that the boys were well, and the holidays made them happy.

One time, a hundred officers who had survived from a torpedoed ship came in. They were assigned to barracks next to mine. Our men were most charitable to them; they gave them some of their hard-earned clothes and other items. As I was the protector of the barracks I saw to it that no food was passed out. It happened anyway, of course. One evening as I was passing from the hospital to the front of my barracks, there was an officer getting a mess dish of rice from one of my men, and right behind me was a Japanese officer. All I said was, "Nice work, Major!"

When the new shipment of survivors was built up, they were to be taken to Manchuria. To my amazement, the Major tried to get rid of me this time, because I was up at the guardhouse too often. But Headquarters scratched his assignment and I continued where I was.

Captain Porter was one of the officers on the ill-fated ship. He was always cheerful and casual. I have since seen him on his ranch in New Mexico. In camp we called him "Buster." We met frequently but I had nothing to offer him but friendship.

I mentioned previously that the interpreter was a very mean individual. However, after a few months in Tabata, he was transferred to another post and Mr. O. Yee came. He was a very honest and intelligent officer. When I reported about Sutherland, it was O. Yee who did the work. He was entirely trustworthy and one on whom I could always rely.

During this year I met wonderful friends. Among them were Doctor "Bill" Miller, Dr. Jerry Greenspahn and Dr. Charles Armstrong. The latter was in the sick bay when we arrived, but after many months he returned to my barracks.

Tabata was the only prison where I neglected to say daily Mass. My supplies were very insecure; I did not trust all the guards. True, I had friends among them, but the friends were not always at hand. I was always needling headquarters about supplies, and one day Major Rechitechi came in himself with a small bottle of wine. My fellow officers laughed at the size of it. Later on, I heard that headquarters had raisins from the U.S., so I asked for three boxes. I filled my canteen cup with them and poured water up to the level and left them for 18 hours. Then I got a clean handkerchief and poured the whole thing

into it and squeezed it. This way, I obtained a little liquid. After two days fermentation I siphoned off the wine, which was very strong and good.

As I went through the hospital I met those who suffered from extreme malnutrition. Once, while talking to a Major from West Point, I came upon information about my best friend, Father Zerfas from Milwaukee. The Major and Father were both on the bombed boat. A bomb explosion blew Father Zerfas' leg off. The Major crawled over to him and said, "Can I get a priest for you?" and Father replied. "I am ready to die." This is the way we all should be, but in this world with so many distractions, it is extremely hard. Father and I had been very close in prison; he used to tell me of his experiences hunting and camping with his Father. I admired him very much.

I failed in my attempt to get into town until one day I struck upon the idea of new glasses. This time I met with no opposition, and was sent to a hospital some street-car distance from camp. I was under the custody of a mean little guard we called "Snuffy". When the doctor took me to read the Japanese eye charts, all I could answer was "Hi!" when I recognized a letter. The women and children were highly entertained. When I got the glasses, they were so thick I could hardly see through them. However, I had had my trip. Snuffy demanded five yen and I paid him.

I had two or three good friends among the Japanese officers. One was Lt. Kusuno. He and I used to walk around the camp when the commanding officer was not present. Another was a tough guard whom the men feared; yet he would help me clear the men when they were accused. One day he caught a man wearing some new apparel. The truth was, he wanted the clothes himself. So he beat the man severely. When I got wind of it I went to the guardhouse and asked for the man. He gave him over to me on condition that I would give him up again next morning at 7:00. This I promised to do, and we went back to the barracks. I asked for barbital tablets and got some from the men who had a supply. Then I told them I was going to give one to the wanted prisoner, and say that I could not produce him. It worked very well.

Fitzpatrick, the cheerful Irishman from Wisconsin with the beautiful voice, was still with me. He was in Major Doris' barracks, but he used to stop in now and again to see me.

The tension was rising. One day a young officer stopped me in camp and said, "All Americans are cowards!" and waited for a fight. I said nothing, and after a while he went away. We had no underground in Japan as we had in the Philippines. What news we got was through the Japanese press, and it was always accurate. It was the unprinted news we worried about and hoped for.

One day our men at the steel works picked up leaflets that had been dropped by plane. They said "The United States does not want to destroy

innocent people. Get out." One of the soldiers said to me, "Where are we going?" I replied, "Look around you and take your choice."

The one piece of news that no one needed to spell out for us was that we were the target. Not the ragged Americans that the returning army did not know were there, but those five great smokestacks and what they represented. There was bitter irony in reflecting that after three years of torment we would be killed by American bombs.

Chapter IX
War's End

Time was running out for the Japanese now; we were being bombed continuously. Every single night and often during the day we would have to go to the tunnel. The Japanese decided to put an end to all this, so they refused to allow us to go to the tunnel and we stayed out all day. We could see the B-29s coming in from all points of the compass. We knew by word of mouth just exactly where our armies were; we knew they were on Okinawa, we knew they had taken the Philippines, we knew about Wake and Guam. We also knew that we were now number one on the priority list – the biggest steel works in Japan. It was nothing but a bad joke as far as we were concerned, because there was nothing we could do about it. We had the hills on one side of us, and the ocean and the inland sea on the other. There was quite simply no place to go.

Plus, the danger from our own bombers there was the Japanese threat. They would not be happy if we escaped; as a matter of fact, they would probably have us killed for fear of their own secret police. We could do nothing but wait, which we had been doing for several years.

The day finally came when the warning sirens sounded, and we were all hustled off to the shelters on the hill. The weather was socked in again, the sky was a thick overcast, but we had warning from our own forces that this was it. We heard the great plane prowling overhead, searching for its target. It seemed a long time before it droned away.

The next day we learned in the Japanese press that Hiroshima had got the atom bomb. The one that was meant for us.

We knew they would try again, and now we knew what it was the bomber carried. It came on another overcast day like the first, and at the alarm we all ran to the tunnel. For 55 minutes we heard the plane, sweeping in above the clouds, looking for the target. They hovered looking for a hole in the ceiling until their time margin was up, and flew away, and this time Nagasaki got the bomb. Why had we been saved twice?

I often use it now as a sermon text – man proposes but God disposes. There we were at the Yawata steel works when twice the mightiest nation on earth set out to destroy the works – and twice the hand of God kept them from doing it.

People say, "What about Nagasaki and Hiroshima?" It is true they suffered, and many of them were of my own Faith. A spokesman for the city, a Catholic, said, "A heavy burden has been placed upon us, and we are bowing our heads to God's holy will. We shall take up our cross."

Within a few days after the atom bombs missed us, the planes came back in

better weather and dropped Lucite bombs on us. Lucites were from 12" to 18" long, octagonal in shape, and could burn through steel. A good many of them were defective, but a few were highly effective. We had only two casualties, one a boy whose head was blown off by a direct hit. The other was a boy whose arm was blown off, but he survived and, the last I knew, was home and healthy except for the arm. The town of Moji was completely destroyed and burned.

After the bombing of the works, activity became intense. Men would be sent to various buildings, only to be immediately sent back. There was no real attempt to work. We were allowed to bathe in the dirty stream beside the power plant. One of the prisoners said to me, "What do you think is going to happen?" I said that the absence of plane activity over us and the fact that there was no work indicated that the nations must be sitting down for an agreement. Some time later he came to me and said, "You hit it on the head!".

Ironically, the damage to the steel works was minimal, and only held up work for a short time. The steel works were ten miles long, and there were thousands of ships tied up at the wharves at the side. It was spread out so far that nothing short of an atomic bomb would have knocked it out completely. Such a hit – had it ever been made – would undoubtedly have destroyed not only the town of Moji but also the coal mines adjacent to it where the Dutch boys were working. The population around there was probably 100,000. Such a hit would also have destroyed the railroad line.

We were kept in the barracks from August 4, to August 15, on which day we discovered that all of the Japanese were very much upset. Early that morning we were taking our time as usual and orders came to get ready to go to the plant. The mess was late, and we still paid no attention to time. However, when the hour arrived that the men should assemble for work we were delaying and paying no attention to it. The Major called all the barracks leaders to a meeting on the road in the center of the camp. We paid very little attention to this meeting, but we assembled. Mr. Haas, the American interpreter, was right beside the Major and he was interpreting as we went along. The most important question was why had we not gotten the men out on time? Nobody seemed to know, so I volunteered the usual $64.00 answer. I said that mess was late, hence we could not very well obey orders. In reply, the Major hauled off and struck Mr. Haas in the face. It was really amusing though to see Mr. Haas turn with his eyes wide open, shrug his shoulders and throw his arms out in response to me as much as to say, well what now.

But this was not the end of the incident. I was absent from the barracks when a runner came calling all barracks chiefs to the galley for a meeting. Much to my amazement after the meeting was over I learned about the incident. Sgt. Houski reported that he had attended in my name, and because I had made the

statement about the mess being late that they hit him. I expressed my regrets and said that he should have looked for me. He replied that he did not think it was very important and anyhow, inasmuch as I had treated the barracks all right he was willing that he should have received the punishment. We finally got things moving although late, and as it eventuated it was just a move to make the men get to the plant. They had no intention of making them work that day, but it was simply a disciplinary act, and the Japanese authorities were quite wrathful.

During the morning the Japanese were all grouped at one time around the radio, and at one point they all bowed deeply. We found out later that this was when the Emperor was speaking, and that he was telling them Japan had surrendered.

They did not tell us this, but we figured it out from the various signs. There were several ships sunk in the inland sea; there had been the heavy bombing, and the great activity of the Japanese. When the men returned from the plant around noontime they were immediately ordered to the rear of the barracks away from the road. As the men came in they all had one question, “What’s up?” and my answer was always the same – "This looks like it.”

It was hard to keep the men from going on the road or out of the barracks, but it being so near the end I was determined that no one get hurt now. As the afternoon wore on, things began to loosen up and the authorities were easier to get along with. The atmosphere seemed to be charged with optimism. Still the normal routine of the camp was maintained through the 15th. We had a Japanese newspaper which Mr. Haas translated; it definitely told us of the surrender.

The Dutch sailors went so far as to put on their uniforms. They, the Indians, the English – and the marines – had. been able to salvage their footlockers, but the soldiers from Bataan had lost everything except what they had in their pockets.

It wasn't a prudent thing to do, since the Japanese still had bullets and we had nothing. It was m:y personal opinion that the Japanese would be goaded into an assault. However, the Dutch boys took off the uniforms and they calmed down.

I was disturbed about the action of our own men. There was a group of them, with a few English, who were fighting the guards at the end of the camp and trying to get to town. We could not blame them tor wanting to get loose, but to endanger the lives of others to satisfy their own desires was another thing. Mr. Haas and I went down to that end of camp to see what could be done. A group of marines had stolen a 300-pound sack of sugar, hauled it over three 12-foot fences, and then proceeded to divide it up. I went down to their

barracks and demanded a cut for the whole camp. They argued that they had hauled it a long distance, and had gone through a lot of trouble to get it. I said yes, I understood. that, but I also knew that the whole camp would share the blame, so therefore they had better share the sugar. They agreed, and asked me if it would be all right to give the whole thing to the hospital, and I agreed to that.

Shortly after this, Major Doris asked me if I would take on the duties of Mess Officer, and I said that provided I was in full control, and subject to nobody, I would.

Shortly after I had been given authority in the galley in addition to my other duties, I began to operate. In the evening when we had a check- up and the count off, I chose to go with Mr. Haas and the officer of the day to visit the two barracks that I considered the toughest there. I made an explanation to the men that was something like this; "I have just been appointed mess officer. I am taking this position because I consider it a position of importance to you men. Now there is one thing that we want to get straight before we begin, and that is that someone has to run the galley, two heads cannot run it. Therefore, I am going to be solely responsible for what goes on in the galley. My only interest is that I want each and every man to get back to the United States. I want every man to get on that ship, the ship that takes us out of here. I don't want one or two men missing because somebody has gotten out of line, but I want *every single man* on that ship. That is the reason I tell you today that I am going to run the mess to the best of my ability for all of you. Therefore, if anyone gets out of line I don't care whether he be Army, Navy, Marine, or Civilian, there is such a thing as the 97th Article of War, and I will pull it, so help me, if anyone tries to obstruct, or to do things for his own benefit to the detriment of the group as a whole. I expect your cooperation because I want to do, and am doing, my best, and I want you to be behind me, because I am doing it for you."

As I had anticipated there was no trouble, the men. got behind me 100%. There was one suggestion that came from somebody after a couple of days that there wasn't enough rice. I had already used all of the available supplies in the galley and told the cooks to be very liberal with whatever they had, and then we started to run trucks down to the cold storage plant. The Japanese had left one army truck which we were using, and this would go to the cold storage plant once a day and pick up what supplies it could. We got some cold fish. While some of the men were going through the hospital they discovered some cases of cigarettes that the Japanese had held out, in addition to many medical supplies. One soldier had the idea of carrying packs of cigarettes, which I thought was excellent. He would go to the Japanese in question whenever he had to transact business, and would say “Presento!” Well, a package of

cigarettes was a tremendous thing in Japan in those days, and the men would be amazed and very receptive to anything that he could do. One of them offered his services, but all we were interested in was the cold storage at that time. He opened up the cold storage and gave us what we needed.

Things were becoming very tense, and we heard nothing from our own forces. Some men were going down to Moji, and were taking train rides, in fact one soldier stood out on the main line of the tracks and flagged down a train and got on the train and went for a ride to Tokyo. At any rate they were traveling around, and we learned that our government was dropping supplies by air. As yet nothing had reached us, so I was very solicitous about the situation because the food was adequate, but it wasn't the type of food that we expected for the Americans to eat. The salmon that we had in the galley was running short though we had plenty of sugar and rice, but nothing else except the cold fish we would bring from the plant.

I heard there was an airlift drop in the hills, and of all places it was dropped on a Japanese army camp. I was concerned about a truck to go to the plant and get whatever we could, and I heard that there was a truck over at the power plant, which was about 500 yards away across the bridge. I took two drivers with me and went over to see the superintendent who was working on an International truck. There were two trucks there, and one of them had a wheel off. I mentioned the fact that I would like to borrow a truck and he suggested that I take the truck that had the wheel off. I said no, as a matter of fact I would take his driver and borrow his truck. He seemed to answer yes, so we went off with his driver, returned to camp and picked up men in order to haul supplies which we anticipated were in the hills. On the way up to this position to the Japanese camp and beyond through the town of Moji and up in the hills, I picked up a Kempi policeman. He was about s:ix feet tall, a very rugged type, and could speak English well. We told him what we wanted, and he gladly jumped on the truck and went with us up into the hills. After we arrived at the main part of the camp, the Japanese sentry came and the Kempi policeman told him what we wanted. Within a few minutes there was a scurrying about the camp and I could see all kinds of cans thrown on the ground, Planters Peanuts and other commodities that were delectable to any race no matter who it might be. I said nothing about it but observed. the fact that we had struck oil at last. Pretty soon there was a stream of Japanese returning from the hills with cases on their shoulders. These cases of course contained what we were looking for, and we were able to load up the International truck so that the springs were down touching each other.

The Japanese Commander lined up his troops just before I left and of course, since I was the senior member of the party, and the only officer present, he told

his interpreter who spoke rather broken English, to tell me that he wished to cooperate with the Allied Forces and he was trying to make me understand that he was cooperating in every way, shape and manner to make things right. I reciprocated by saying "Yes, I appreciated the Commander's efforts and thanked him for his services, and wished him well".

On the way back through the town of Moji I stopped to let the Kempi policeman off, having given him an armful of goods such as things for his children and some cigarettes, and he was as thankful as we were to him for his services.

When we got into camp with the truck loaded down as it was, the soldiers were surprised and pleased, and they were laughing among themselves because of late I had been pulling things out or the hat so to speak, had been able to find food here and there and things were working very well in the galley. They were a wonderful. group of men in the galley and they did everything possible to help each other. As a matter of fact, all during the imprisonment the American soldiers did everything possible to be kind. I took this truck to the galley to unload so that I would be able to have American food for them in the morning.

My next problem was about the truck. I did not wish to return it because we needed it, and as a matter of fact I saw no reason why we should return it to the Japanese. I went to the authorities and mentioned the fact that I had a truck, and nobody seemed to hear what I was saying. I had a problem and I didn't know what to do about it. I finally told the driver after the truck was unloaded to hide it in back of the galley so that nobody could see it. Pretty soon the superintendent of the power plant came over and he started to plead for his truck, and I kept out of sight because I figured we needed the truck more that they did. He had a corporal who was a cadet officer, who was very kind to me during the imprisonment, and he sent him because he was a friend of mine to ask me for the truck. The Cadet Officer was terribly embarrassed, and I was still more embarrassed, because I did not wish to offend an old friend. Nevertheless, this was a time of emergency and I needed something for the American troops and I was going to maintain my position to the best of my ability. So he argued and went around seeing various officers, and none of them paid any attention so things were left very much in my favor.

I came to the conclusion there was only one thing to do and that was to sit down at the typewriter and write out an order confiscating the truck which I figured I had a right to do. Early in the fighting on Bataan one time, I noted that there were a lot of cars infiltrating through our position when we were up in Mexico. I had complained about it at the time. Knowing that a Chaplain had no authority I just remained negative, but finally I spoke to the Adjutant about it

and he said ''Well, you are an officer of the United States Army, you handle it the way you see fit!" So I put a road block up, I threw my car across the main highway and stopped every car coming (including one in which was General Weaver, who took it with a great sense of amusement). The thing was, I did create the road block and I did use authority to help the forces the best I could. So in this instance I remembered that I had that authority and I used it for the benefit of our government and so I wrote out the order saying that "I hereby confiscate this truck in the name of the United Forces and at the end of our duration we would revert the truck back to its proper authority." To my amazement it was entirely satisfactory, because the Japanese were happy to receive this note and they went away, and I never had any more trouble.

So now I had two trucks. I took the truck and used it for hauling vegetables and fresh foods from the cold storage plant. Meanwhile some of our men including Mr. Haas went to meet our American Army. He wanted to tell them where we were, because it was fairly certain they did not know we were at the power plant. We saw them fly over; in fact they dipped their wings when they flew over us one day to let us know they were up there, and we fully recognized that it was some of our friends who had notified the authorities that we were in a position they didn't know about.

The airlift came in very shortly afterwards, with big B-29s. We marked the beaches; we put POW on the beach in great big letters so that they were dropping the foods. The beach was a hotbed of disease for the simple reason that there were no sewerage systems there. Everything was thrown into the creeks and the little streams of water.

The first day the airlift came into us and dropped the food, one of the cases went right through the galley storehouse. It was very very fortunate because there were two men who had set up their hammocks in there and were sleeping in the place and it missed them both. A case of peaches went through the power plant and hit a Japanese in the head. In one other instance, on of these great parachutes attached to the lift fouled on an electric wire, and, a little Japanese boy went to pull it and he was electrocuted. But the food was dropped and lots of the cases were smashed. I had a laugh one day when the men started pouring into the galley with cases of stuff all broken up. One boy had spaghetti and macaroni all over his face and head, one of the cases had smashed open right near him and spotted him all over but he was laughing and said, "Here it is, we have got it! where do you want it, Chaplain?" So I put everything into the steam kettles for supper.

I had one of the doctors come down to see what I was doing and examine the contents of the food because, as I said, it had been dropped on the beach, but the doctor agreed that as long as the steam, the high pressure was on, it

was perfectly proper to use the food the way we were doing. So into the steam kettle all together went such things as a ham, chicken, spam, soup, tomato soup, chicken soup, ox-tail soup, pea soup and anything else that happened to be there. Plus, these we put in soy sauce, which made it very sweet and gave it a base like Worchester sauce, and spiced it up so that it made a delicious meal. For dessert we had oranges, grapefruit, grapefruit juice and chocolate and cookies. Everything that got smashed was thrown in together and this made a delicious pudding.

One day one of the prisoners came up to me and said in a joking manner, "Chaplain, can I borrow one of your trucks this morning?" and I said ''What for? ''Well," he said, we found a warehouse full of beer last night and I would like to hijack it."I considered this a little irregular and I turned my back on it. However, he obtained the truck and pretty soon everybody in camp had beer. The trucks were used Ford trucks which were employed each morning to carry ice into the camp in order to cool the beer for the men.

Eventually the Captain of the MP's wanted a car and he obtained. one, so there were four cars in camp, all told, all rolling and ready to handle any emergencies that we needed. One day I took the car, and took four doctors to Moji. We went on to the airfield and there was an Air Force Lieutenant who had lost one eye in the fighting in the Philippines. We went to a beautiful. little American Hotel, Japanese style, which had running water and beautiful beds in private rooms. We visited there, and we engaged a room, although the room that I engaged I never used.

There was an English officer waiting to see soldiers passing through and he didn't seem to be very generous with his rations, so the American Officer there told him that he should give them out, after all, the soldiers were hungry and needed it. We went out to the airfield, where we saw all the Japanese planes lined up. Suddenly an American plane came in, on official business of reconnaissance. I went into one of the Japanese planes on the field and took a clock off of one of the dashboards and another part just for a souvenir as everybody was doing.

There was a lot of looting going on and it was necessary to guard the gasoline. The only thing I could think of was that we should take over all of the equipage and all the gasoline at the Steel Works. I therefore took one of the men, a Marine, who was familiar with the plant, and took him to see some of the Japanese officials. Actually, the Marine did all of the talking for me, he went to the authorities and told them that I had the authority to seize all of the equipage but there was to be no difficulty about the matter, it was merely a matter of protection. They agreed and by a written order I seized all of the gasoline and equipage at the Steel Works.

I took the car back with me to camp. It was a good move to make, because we had difficulty the next day, one of the men came to me and told me that a Dutch soldier had seized a car on the streets of Moji and taken the car with him. There was nothing I could do about it but have a showdown. I went and I told the man that he should take my car and go over to the Dutch camp and demand the return of the car. It was not a personal matter with me, it was a matter in which we were trying to protect all our best interests. To arbitrarily seize a car on the street was in my estimation quite out of order. So the man, Sejack, took my car and went with the chauffeur and to my amazement not only did he bring back the car with him but he also brought back the Captain and the Adjutant of the Dutch camp. They started to apologize to me for having taken the car, and I was most embarrassed because I had not intended that they would be apprehended, I would merely demand the return of the car, because it was legitimate business.

The first meal we fed the men as much as they wanted, and everybody was happy, However, I did get a delegation from the Indians. Garnie, with a delegation of four or five, came down and asked me if I was sure there wasn't any pork in the meat, and I said, ''Even a little bit of pork?" and he said "No, none at all." Well, I thought for a minute and I said, ''Well, it is safer for you to send your own men down to the galley and I will let you have whatever you want, and you can cook your own meals." We had probably 12 steam kettles, but in addition to that we had four or five kettles that were operated by coal. I gave them all of the coal kettles so that they could make their own meals and select what they wanted. They took the curry powder which we had used so often but it was the first time I had ever seen curry used properly. The Indian cooks proceeded to make a base out of peanut oil and curry powder and fried it first, then gradually added everything that they had to it and they made one or the most delicious meals I have ever tasted.

Major Doris, Mr. Haas and I decided that we would go to a movie and so we walked up to the Tabata and went into a Japanese movie. They would not take any money at all, so we just sat ourselves down in wooden seats and witnessed a typical Japanese movie. We did not understand the picture, but it was very thrilling to sit among the Japanese and enjoy a picture that I am sure they must have liked. It was a very down to earth picture about their own home life and the costumes were typical of what we saw around us.

One day Dr. Miller and I decided to go to Moji to see the other camp with Dr. Greenspahn. We hopped a train at Tabata which refused to take money for our tickets and we went down and visited the English camp in which there were a majority of English, but a lot of Americans. We stayed there until late in the afternoon and unfortunately, we found that the next train left at 11 o'clock at

night, which brought us in about one or two o'clock in the morning. So we had to wind our way over those dark streets in Tabata to get back to the camp at that early hour of the morning.

Our time was coming when we should retire; the processing team had been in and was prepared to have us embark. They had made arrangements with the railroad to come to our siding, from which we would all leave at a certain given date. The night in which we were to leave the men were very high, they were having a good time and I paid very little attention to it. One of the soldiers had tied a rope in the center of the barracks and was swinging back and forth. The thing was they were playing a game. They would swing the men on the rope and he would put his feet through a window. Well, two or three windows went out like that and they were having a grand old time when suddenly the Captain of this processing team came in and evidently he had not been used to troops and he said “Men, men, you are going to upset everything that General McArthur had ever done here, so take it easy! “ Just as soon as he finished that, “crash!" Out went another window.

I figured that the best thing to do was to go out and talk to them ourselves, and so I said "At ease, at ease. If anyone smashes a window in that train tonight, so help me I will slap them in the clink and throw the key away!" The ringleader in that group made me laugh when he said, "By God he will do it!” It was the funniest thing out of a serious situation that I have ever seen.

Came the day, I used the two trucks and four automobiles to take the sick out of the hospital, and lined them up on the train. I also had made arrangements to return the ashes of our dead. I had been using the house in which they were contained for myself as it was the only place that was free of bedbugs. That night as we left we had the wounded on the train, and all the sick. It was quite a job to lift them up the hill, but we did so. It was with a feeling that you were accomplishing something wonderful to get on that train.

Soon I reported that all the prisoners were on board and all the sick were loaded, and the boxes containing the ashes of the dead were on the train. I looked up and saw one of men coming through, covered from head to foot with mud. He was soaking wet and weaving a little bit, so I said to him, "Well, what happened?"

''Well,” he said, "sir, I just fell through the bridge.” He had been waiting four years to go home and suddenly on a spree he misses the bridge and falls through! It struck me as very funny. No sooner had I turned away from him then in came the stretcher with another man laid out cold. He fell through the bridge also. It was quite a night. The next day we landed in Nagasaki and went through the town which the atomic bomb had destroyed, and it was a sight to behold. We were met there by Americans and given some hot coffee and

donuts. Meanwhile I had to find somebody to deliver the cases of ashes to the proper authorities, as this was the end of journey as far as delivering some of the goods was concerned.

One day I went to Moji and took a train for Honshu. I arrived the night before the camp was leaving. There I heard confessions and said Mass the next morning. They hadn't seen a priest for four years. Another day I went to Kukura where I immediately went to an American style hotel. An officer asked for the loan of the car and I drove with him out to the airfield. My chauffeur was asleep in the room, so I drove. On the way I drove too close to an army truck and scraped the guards on the right side. My passengers were amazed and not a little excited. The Air Force officer insisted on driving back from the airfield. I laughed and said I shouldn't think they would be bothered by such trifles. (My driving improved rapidly).

Our airlift brought us shoes and clothes. I was interested enough in a new shirt and trousers, also a fatigue cap; but as for shoes, I had woven slippers which I liked very much. My feet were so used to wooden clogs that I enjoyed every moment with them on.

There was a Catholic chapel at Tabata. I visited it after some of the men – Fitzpatrick among them – found it. They asked me to help, and the day the Padre returned from the concentration camp I was there with a bag of rice and some other commodities. I greeted him and spoke to him in Latin, but he ignored it and turned to Jack Blake, who interpreted his thanks. One American said, "Gee, Father, I always wanted to hear two priests speak Latin!"

I replied that I did speak it, but he ignored me. The French are peculiar about their language – if you do not speak it, you are simply out of circulation. My brother, who speaks French quite well though he is very modest about it, told me that he was in Canada one time and he met several priests. He spoke to all of them but one of them did not answer. His companion asked the priest why he hadn't replied, and was told, "Because he didn't speak French!" Anyway, I gave this man all my Japanese money, which he told me would be used to build a chapel. I suspect he was a very holy priest.

One day some American and English soldiers were walking down the road when they came upon some Sisters returning from imprisonment. They were tired and hungry, yet one English soldier asked them for a spoon and sat down before them and ate. The rest of the group dug into their bags and offered the Sisters whatever they had, and they accepted with thanks.

My good friend Houskie had a bad accident and missed all the fun. He was sent home on a hospital ship.

After passing Nagasaki, we pulled into a wharf where there was an English aircraft carrier. The men put up some objection, but it was short-lived. We

arrived in Okinawa next day.

Many had been taken off by the time my turn came, but when it did, there were two priests (chaplains) waiting for me. I wish I could remember their names. But anyhow, they took me in tow and it was really a treat. The first night there, we heard that Cardinal Spellman was in Naha. We took a jeep, and on the way heard shots being fired – I suppose there were Japanese who hadn't heard that the war was over.

The Cardinal was very cordial. He was dressed in fatigues, and looked very tired. I said, “I hate to impose on you, busy as you are.”

He replied, “If you could spend 42 months in prison, I can at least spend 45 minutes with you." He noticed that I was wearing cotton slippers and offered me a pair of his shoes. I replied that the warehouse was full of shoes, but I didn't want any. The Cardinal invited me to see him in New York and I thanked him.

Bob Shea was the First Sergeant of the outfit there, and he came from the same town that I now called home. He saw that I was not overlooked in anything, in fact, when I was put in a jeep the next morning, destination Manila, and arrived at a bomber converted to transport, orders suddenly came through cancelling our flight. It was Bob's doing. One of the bombers full of ex-POW's had fallen into the China Sea and all were lost. So we waited, and returned to camp.

Arriving in Manila was like getting home. We were processed by doctors and staff. I took a trip over to Santo Tomas University and saw many of the professors. Manila had changed; Americans were good spenders and prices had gone way up.

Just when my old friend Air Corps Colonel Francis Mathews came looking for me to fly me home, I had decided to go and get a pair of shoes. So I came back on a transport with most of my old crowd.

We hit a typhoon a day out and had a rough time. When we approached Honolulu it was announced that only a few would be given permission to land. I remarked to Charley Armstrong and Bill Miller that I would get off. Charley said, “How?” I replied that I needed supplies. With that they both laughed and recalled Rechitechi bringing me in a bottle of wine, a thing they never dreamed would happen. I got off.

The Chancellor of the Diocese was there waiting for all ships, and he took me around the city. I was a shabby-looking soldier as I went into the Naval Officers' Club. I came out with a case of beer and a bottle of Kentucky's best, which I gave away to men I knew.

As the Ordinariate always puts Mass kits on all ships, I was able to say Mass every day. This was a real pleasure.

Pretty soon we reached San Francisco and home. One or the officers did as

he promised, he kissed the wharf when he got off.

At this writing I am inspired by Job:

> "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,
> but now my eyes see thee;
> Therefore, I despise myself
> and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5)

Luzon Based on map of The Philippines Prepared by the National Geographic Society
March, 1945

ENDNOTES

[1] https://www.revolvy.com/page/QF-2.95%252Dinch-Mountain-Gun

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/23rd_Field_Artillery_Regiment_(United_States)

[3] From Melville Jacoby, TIME'S correspondent in beleaguered Bataan, comes this first report on how American soldiers in World War II are reacting to religion, under fire, and what the chaplains are doing at the front... Other news of the chaplains with General MacArthur:"Another Catholic chaplain, Father Matthias Zerfas of Fond du Lac, Wis., has not shaved since the war started, now sports a heavy black beard. His corps commander has cited him for valor." *Time*,1942 .

[4] "Catholic Chaplain John A. Wilson had a narrow squeak when, riding the same road, he saw men waving their arms and stopped his car, jumping out. Wilson hit a ditch, saw dive-bombers a few seconds later score nearly a direct hit, demolishing his car." *Time*,1942

[5] "Father Duffy, World War I chaplain of the famed Fighting 69th, has a namesake in Bataan, Father John E. Duffy of Toledo, who received the decoration of the Purple Heart for "singularly meritorious action" when slightly wounded in action on New Year's Day. He celebrates Mass at the front on an altar of ammunition boxes." *Time*,1942

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_O%27Donnell

[7] Curran uses "bahai" for bahay, a traditional Filipino hut on stilts.

[8] Longfellow, *The Day is Done.*

[9] Moji Ward, Kitakyushu, Fukuoka, Japan

[10] The auhor refers to "binto" boxes. The word is *bento*.

[11] "Jicon," probably, singkama, for jicama.