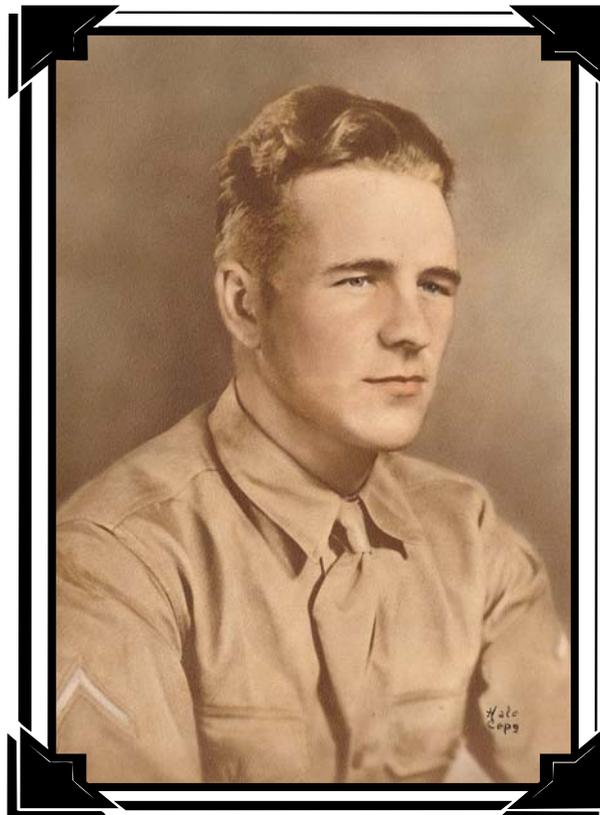


# CORREGIDOR - MY STORY



BY RICHARD T. WINTER

This is my story as I remember it and is accurate as to what I experienced. Other writers may write about what happened and their experiences may be similar to mine, but most of the events that are described on the following pages were only experienced by me. Everyone will have a different way of expressing their story. This story is mine.

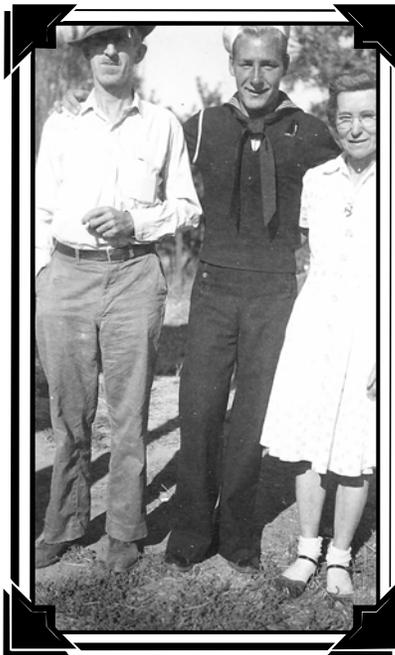


*This is a draft of a book that I have been working on for several years. The final version will be available by summer 2007. The completed edition will include many more photographs and documents that have not been included in this draft edition. Please contact me if you would like a copy of the final edition.*

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## BEGINNINGS

I was born at Fort Dodge, Iowa, on the day of November 21, 1918. My father's name was Theodore Lee Winter. He was born at Boone, Iowa on the day of April 30, 1883. My father died of cancer in 1927. His father and my grandmother were married April 11, 1891. Oddly enough, they both died young and left good sized families to be supported by my grandmother Winter – a total of eight children she raised by herself. In the case of my father, he left me, my brother Theodore, and four sisters for my mother to raise. One of my father's younger brothers, William Christopher Winter, started taking care of my mother and our family. My stepfather, commonly called Uncle Bill, took it upon himself to provide for our family and they eventually married. At the time of the marriage he was a boss on a project paving the roads of Iowa. He made a lot of money. In spite of this he decided to move us to the far northern part of Minnesota where he wanted to have a dairy farm. This turned out to be a bad decision as it coincided with the start of the Great Depression that started in the late 1920's and lasted into the 1930's.



*My father, William Christopher Winter (L), my brother, Theodore Lee Winter (C) and my mother, Florence Ann Winter (R).*

We moved to the coldest place in America - Roseau, Minnesota. We soon found out that your work never stopped and that the return on your work kept you in a constant state of poverty. I moved thirty miles away to Roseau to go to high school. I stayed with my father's only sister. I lived in a four-room house along with my aunt and her husband, their eleven children, another cousin and my grandmother, Luella Winter. You can see that it was a big crowd! I had skipped 8<sup>th</sup> grade by taking the test in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and passing. I went straight to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and entered the freshman class. I found a large library there and as I was in the library more than I was in class, I do not think that I would have passed my classes if I had not found the game of basketball. I studied just enough to get a fair passing grade. I graduated with a diploma in the spring of 1938 and immediately started looking for a job.



*My senior year - Roseau High School - Basketball Team (back row, second from right.)*

My first job was on a dairy farm and this entailed long hours of work. You had to be there every day and there were no days off. Work started every morning at 4:00 a.m. We had to clean out the stalls and haul away the waste, put fresh feed to the cattle and lay out fresh straw on the floor. We milked the cows, separated the cream from the milk into large cans and readied the milk for shipment to a creamery. The creamery was called the *Land O' Lakes Creamery*. Between these chores we worked in the fields for a good eight hours. The day finished at 10:00 p.m. in the evening. For this, a hired man was paid \$40.00 per month in the summer and \$15.00 in the winter. Although this included three good meals per day and a place to sleep, there was hardly enough money for replacing clothing or having spending money for even a beer or two.

I soon found this work very wearing both mentally and physically. I started looking for a different type of work. My home town of Roseau, Minnesota, was a very small town. The work available was in the five or six retail stores and they paid very little. My best friend had joined the CCC's - Civilian Conservation Corps. He ended up in the State of Washington in the area of the town of Mount Vernon, where he was staying with an elderly couple. I decided to take what little money I had and bought a ticket to Glasgow, Montana on the famous passenger train called *The Empire Builder*. There, I visited a relative for a couple of days. While there I hung out at a local billiard hall. I got to talking with a man by the name of Addington. After learning that I was headed for Washington, he wanted to go along with me. I didn't know him, but we decided to go together.

I was a green country boy so a lot of scenes and things were very new to me. We hitchhiked and rode trains in what was called "*blind baggage riding*". There was a small space next to the engine where you could hang on and ride. The train traveled very fast. Between riding the train and using our thumbs, we arrived in Helena, Montana one morning. Parked beside the street was a truck with a man at the driver's seat. I asked the man where he was going and he told me Spokane, Washington. When I asked for a ride he said, "*Sure!*" - as soon as his helper came back. Well, we took off north to Spokane and on the way we saw some of the most fantastic mountains and forests I had ever seen. We

stopped at Wallace, Idaho, for breakfast. This was a small town surrounded by steep mountains that seemed to go on forever. Our next scenic wonder was Coeur D'Alene, Idaho with a beautiful lake in the middle of town. From there, we continued to Spokane, Washington, arriving there about 2:00 p.m.

We walked into the downtown area which was not very large. As we walked down the street, a voice rang out, "*Hey, Addie, where have you been?*" That was how I found out that Addie had been all over the west. After eating lunch at a café that consisted of the largest T-bone steak I had ever seen, we continued our walk to the edge of town. There, as we waited beside the road, a man gave us a ride to the junction of a cross road to Grand Coulee Dam which was currently under construction. We stood beside the road with the sun going down and our money gone. After a while we wondered if we would ever get a ride before darkness arrived. Luckily, a pickup stopped and picked us up. We learned that the driver's name was C. C. Bishop and he worked on the Grand Coulee Dam project and that he made \$11.00 a day. He also was looking for workers to dig a basement under his house. He said that he would give us each \$4.00 a day with meals and a place to sleep. Of course we took him up on his offer. His house was situated near an area called Grand Coulee.

Grand Coulee, Washington was situated on the edge of a wilderness area, which included a lot of cliffs that were made thousands of years ago when one of the world's largest glaciers lakes broke loose and the waters of the glacial lake plunged down the mountains. Bishop owned a gas station and a house. We went to work digging a basement under his house. This was not easy to do as the material was all rocks and clay dirt. While we were there we went with the Bishops to the site of Grand Coulee Dam. It was quite a sight and we enjoyed it very much. After working about three weeks and earning some money, I decided that I would like to continue my trip through the state of Washington.

We informed Bishop that we were going to continue our trip west. He wanted Addington to

work longer but Addington decided that he would rather leave with me. So, Addington and I said goodbye and walked down the road. We arrived in Seattle a couple of days later. The time was mid afternoon. As we were hungry, we started to look for a café. Addington finally found a café he liked and it was Chinese. That was all right with me until the food was served. I had never eaten Chinese food before, or for that matter, even seen a Chinese person. I was unable to eat food that I couldn't identify, so I ended up eating the rice from both servings. Addington ate the rest. After dinner we walked around awhile and finally decided to look for a hotel to stay in for the night.

Addington didn't like any of the many hotels, which puzzled me a bit. Then we came to an upstairs hotel with a red light on above the entrance. The entrance was up a flight of stairs and you had to ring a bell to get in. We went up the stairs and were greeted by a woman who informed us that a girl would be with us soon. This was a house of "*ill fame*". Sure enough, a woman came up to me and started to get familiar with me. In my mind, I looked at her in astonishment seeing diseases and all sorts of things. Well, I couldn't take advantage of her offers so Addington went off with her. When he came back he asked why I refused her and I said I didn't want to spend the money. We found an ordinary hotel for the night. I awoke early in the morning and as Addington slept, I went into the street for a walk and to look around the town. The scenery was like most other towns of its size.

I decided that I would like a cup of coffee. As I was about to cross the street, a man accosted me and asked if I could tell him the time of day. I told him and he asked where I was from, but before I could tell him, he said, "*I'll bet you are from Minnesota*", and when he heard that I was, he said, "*So am I !.*" He said this called for a drink and he led me into a tavern and after sitting down, he ordered two glasses of beer. As we sat there, he pulled out a deck of cards and, after shuffling them, he dealt me five cards and five for himself. I looked at mine and found that I had four aces and a king. Now, as I had never played poker, I thought that I had a good hand. He bet me a dollar that his were better. Before we could proceed, an old friend of his came in and sat down. When he found out what we were doing, he said he wanted five cards. He looked at his hand and said that he would

bet \$5.00. Then they asked me if I would want to call the bet and I said okay. This conversation raised a lot of misgivings in my mind. Then, the first man said he was raising the bet \$10.00. I only had about \$20.00 and this would have left me with less than \$5.00. When I said that I couldn't call that, the first man put a \$100.00 dollar bill on the table and said that if I couldn't call that, the money was his. This made me so mad that I started grabbing money off the table. When they objected, I took off my coat, bent on exchanging a few fists. The bartender came over to find out what the fuss was about. He invited the two men to leave the bar and never come back. Well, I left the bar, but they still got about five or six dollars out of me.

When I got back to the hotel and told Addington about this, he laughed and laughed at me. I found out that I was getting an education in a hurry. After a couple of days we were again running out of money, so we walked out of town and proceeded to hitch a ride. As we walked down the road, Addington suddenly bent over and picked up a \$5.00 bill that was lying on the grass. With that, we stopped in the next town and had lunch. After this we got a ride to Mount Vernon, Washington. We left our luggage in a billiard hall and agreed to meet later in the evening after I found my friend, George.

I walked out onto the street and the first person I saw was my friend, George. He was very surprised to see me. When I told him about my companion, Addington, he said we would talk about that when he met him later in the day. From there, George and I drove out to the town of Sedro Wooley, where I met the people he was renting from. I found out that George owned a Ford truck and he was hauling eight foot logs off Old Baldy Mountain to be delivered to a saw mill. There, a skilled craftsman would hand cut shakes which were similar to shingles. We got to meet some of the workers. Later in the evening, we went back to the billiard hall to meet my friend, Addington. There I found that Addington had picked up his suitcase and had left. I never saw him again and never had an idea of where he had gone. The next day George and I drove the truck up Old Baldy Mountain and went to work loading eight foot logs. We were doing very well - making money and spending it too. It was great while it lasted but it didn't last long.

One day we were coming down the mountain when the road caved in and dumped us upside down. We were not injured but it took us about three days to get the truck back on the road and to haul it to Mount Vernon. We had broken a piston in the engine. We parked in a space in front of an auto junk yard and after buying a used piston we had no tools to repair the truck. At first, the owner would not lend us tools to make the repair, but, after a couple of days he called us in and said that he was tired of seeing our truck sitting there and he would lend us the tools. Well, we got it repaired and it ran pretty good. Then another problem cropped up. Our tires wore out and had to be replaced. Because of this, we couldn't make payments on the truck, so the bank sent a man out and he drove off with the truck.

George got a job with a competitor. I found a job on a dairy farm but I didn't last long there as I quit. I found another job with a man named Judd Green. He was a *gypo* logger. *Gypo* was a name for a man that was trying to run a logging business on very little money. He had a contract with a land owner to hire a crew and cut a forest of large fir and pine trees. The timber to be logged was on Whidbey Island. To get there, we had to drive over a bridge called Deception Pass Bridge. This pass was a wonderland of forests and raging water below.

## LOGGING ON WHIDBEY ISLAND

We got together a crew of *lumberjacks*, so called for forest workers. He hired a high wire rigger to put together a spar tree. A spar tree was a tree that was rigged to work as a crane to lift and drag the logs out of the forest, lift them off the ground, drive a truck under them and drop the load onto the truck. An area of the forest was selected to be logged off. This was in a pie shape. Cables were run out in to the logged area and ran in a triangle. These trees were 200 feet high and about 8 to 10 feet in diameter.

Judd Green had the loggers start to fall the trees and cut them up in lengths that could be trucked to a saw mill. All this was done to get some money to pay the loggers and the numerous bills he owed. We selected an area to fall the trees and went to work. First, he had to rig a spar tree which would serve to drag in the logs, then stack them up in a pile and lift up onto a truck. The rigger started to rig the spar tree. He was a young man but he knew his job. He first attached a heavy belt around his waist. To the belt was attached a rope line, an axe, a small saw and an assortment of pulleys and short cables. He wore shoes with large spikes on the sides and he wrapped his belt around the tree and proceeded climbing up the tree, chopping or sawing limbs as he came upon them. When he got to the top he notched the tree and proceeded to saw the top off. When the tree top fell, it caused the tree to sway back and forth. While it was still swaying, he unbuckled his belt and got up on the top and sat there to roll a cigarette and calmly smoked it. A cable was hooked to the rope and was used to haul up a large pulley which the cable was then run through and fastened to cables that ran out in a triangle that allowed them to pull logs into the spar tree. There, they were lifted up in a bundle of logs and a truck was driven under them.

Things were looking good until the load was placed on the truck. When that happened, the truck sank in the soft sand and we were stuck. In those days there were no four or eight wheeled drive trucks. As time was of essence and we had no solution to the problem, Judd called me over and said, "*Let's go into Mount Vernon and have lunch*". As we drove along,

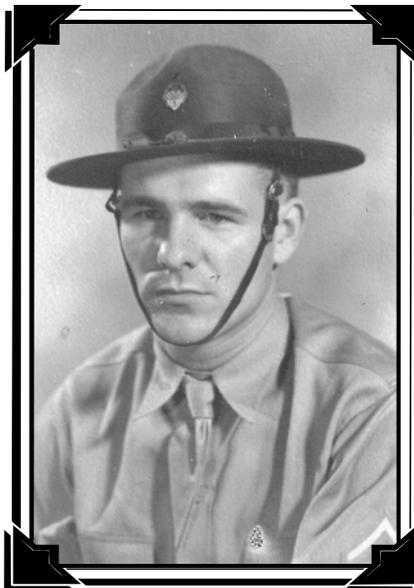
he told me that he could not continue the work as he was depending on getting some logs into the mill to get money to pay the workers. When we got to town, we went into a café and had lunch. I asked him if he had any money at all and he said no, that he was broke. I asked him if he would write a check to me so I could get it cashed. He said sure and that is what we did. I don't know if he ever got the logging job done or not, as I never saw him again.

I worked for the owner of the forest cutting fire wood from a giant fallen fir tree. It was at least 200 feet long and 12 feet in diameter. I cut this tree up using a motor saw that ran a long saw blade that rotated back and forth. While the saw was cutting a 20" width, I used a 15 pound wedge-shaped axe to split it up. It took me about three weeks to finish that chore. When I finished with it, I went back to Mount Vernon to look up George.

George was out of work too, so we both decided to go into Seattle and look for work. When we got there, we found that work was very scarce. As we walked around we saw many sailors, soldiers and marines. This gave us the idea of joining up with one of them and going as far as we could go overseas.

## JOINING THE U.S. ARMY

We decided to try the U.S. Army, so we found the Army recruiting station. When we applied, the medical man said that I was physically fit but that George had a skip in his heart beat and they would not pass him. They said that this was not dangerous but the service couldn't accept him at this time. He encouraged me to go ahead and, with some misgivings, I did. I said goodbye to him, not knowing it would be six years and a lot of luck before I saw him again.



*P.F.C. Richard T. Winter*

As soon as he left, the medics gave me a series of shots for various ailments that I might run across. The next morning I awoke to find that both arms were too sore to bend or move without a lot of pain. Well, the Army had a cure for that. The Mess Sergeant gave me and another man a job of scrubbing by hand the very large dining room. It didn't take long to work out all the pain. When I finished the chore, I called the Sergeant over to pass the job. He looked at it and said it was a fine job, and then he yelled out, "*Do it again!*"

I found that the new soldiers had no manners or consideration for anyone. When we sat down at the table to eat, I found everyone dumped all of the contents of the closest bowl onto his plate and that was all there was. My first meal consisted of 2 slices of bread. Luckily, we didn't stay at Fort Lotten very long. We were handed \$4.00 in cash and loaded onto a passenger rail car headed for San Francisco. The least expensive meal cost \$5.00 so whenever the train stopped, most of us got off and bought sandwiches and soda. Some of the men bought beer. In about 24 hours, we arrived in Oakland, California.

## FORT McDOWELL

We went by a small harbor boat across the bay where we landed at Fort McDowell on Angel Island, California. I found out that there were about eight hundred men waiting for transportation to various places around the world. As men were coming and going every day, the personnel changed. Those going to the Orient were not leaving right away. As we were not leaving until June 28<sup>th</sup>, we had a lot of time as this was the middle of April.

They assigned the men that had the most time left before their departure to special jobs. Mine was to go over to San Francisco every day on a harbor boat. We went to a casual military restaurant at the Presidio for lunch every day. This was very fortunate for us as the food at Angel Island was all steam cooked and not very tasty. By contrast, at the restaurant, we were served roast turkey, roast beef, steak and numerous other tasty foods. As part of the job we stopped at Alcatraz Island to pick up clean laundry and drop off soiled laundry. One day I stepped foot on Alcatraz island dock to release the laundry. There was a Tower on the dock with a guard with a machine gun on duty. Two prisoners were unloading the laundry. One of them spoke to me in a low voice. He said, "*Are you in the Army?*" and when I said I was he said so was he and laughed.

I worked at this for more than a month until I decided to get leave and visit relatives in Sacramento, California. When I got back to Fort McDowell, I found that I had lost my job. I was just another man waiting to go overseas. That wasn't good as I was put on K.P. Luckily I only served one shift. The day started at 2:00 a.m. and lasted until 2:00 a.m. the next morning. My job was to take scalding hot dishes from a traveling belt and stack them. The food serving started at about 6:00 a.m.. A man was breaking eggs and putting them into a barrel. Apparently he saw a bad egg, so he informed the mess sergeant and asked him to look at one of the eggs. The sergeant retorted, "*Throw it in the barrel with the rest of them*". I also was put on a quarry detail, shoveling gravel into a wheelbarrow and dumping in another place. Luckily, the time to leave was fast approaching and I was spared from

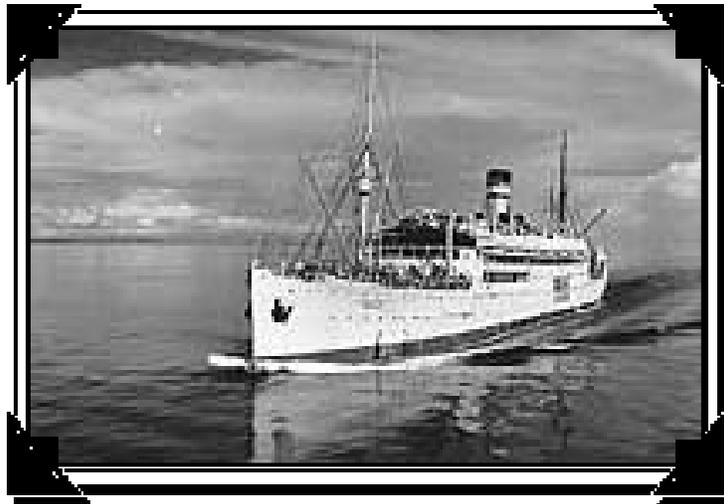
further work.



*More than 300,000 soldiers were shipped through Fort McDowell on their way to the Pacific Theater of Operation.*

## SAILING TO THE PHILLIPINES

The day was June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1940. The weather was very windy and as we approached the dock we could see a large liner. The *U.S. Grant* was a German ship that was taken in 1919 as war booty. It had two screws to drive it. It took us from 7:00 a.m. until noon to fully load. The gang plank rocked up and down at a great rate making it hard to load. The decks, latrines, ship rails and every other place you could imagine were covered with men heaving up the contents of their stomachs. The spew covered everything. I think that everyone was seasick but me. It didn't affect me, but I felt somewhat sick from the sights and smells. We quickly left the sight of the American shores of behind.



*U.S. Grant (U.S. Army Transport, 1919-1941)*

The water was rough for three days or so and then the sailing was smooth. We traveled about five days at twenty plus knots per hour, and the only event that took place was during the evening movie one night. The boat suddenly stopped and turned around and reversed directions. After that, we proceeded on the way. We heard unconfirmed rumors that someone had fallen off the ship. Whether that was true or not was never announced.

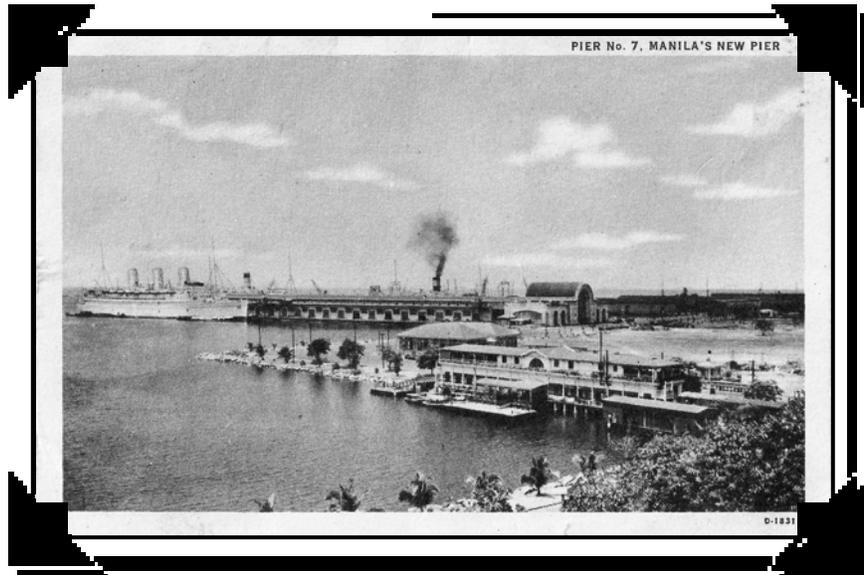
We finally arrived in the port of Honolulu, Hawaii in the midst of Navy Day. The streets were full of sailors and marines. They were everywhere - at the YMCA, outdoor barber shops manned by young native ladies, in bars, and in restaurants both sober and drunk. I got a pass to town but I only had enough money to send a card to my mother. I walked around looking at everything until evening. Before we sailed the Military Police brought a man aboard named Williams. He had been fighting and it took more than two MPs to subdue him.

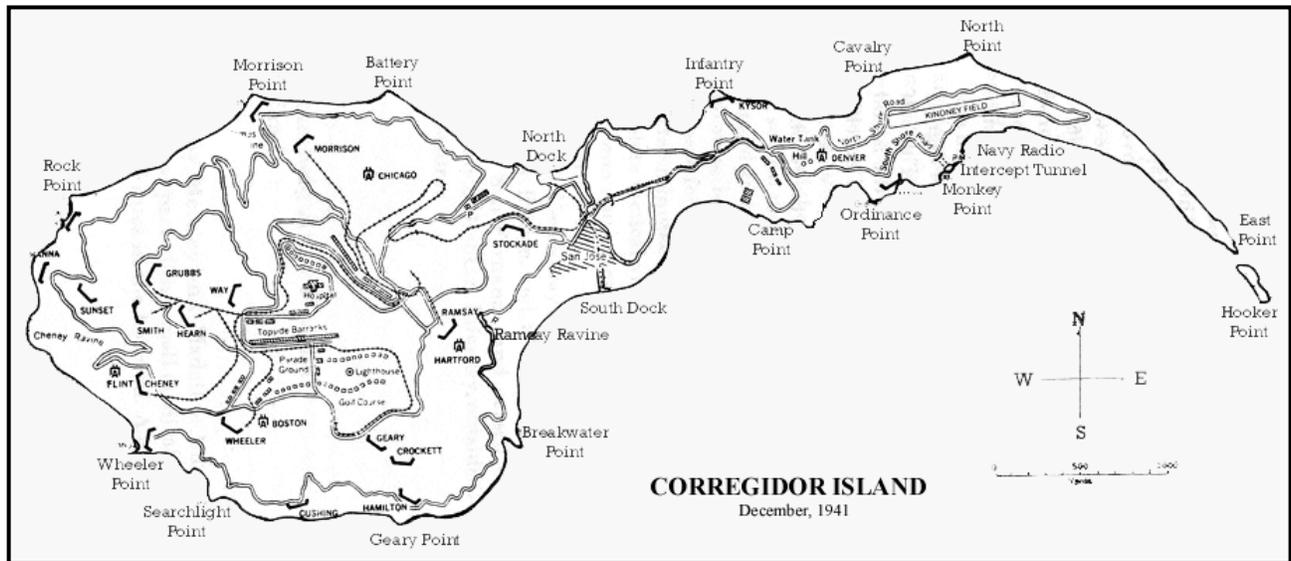
When I returned to the ship, we sailed out bound for Guam Island. On the 10<sup>th</sup> day, we passed a fortified Japanese island called *Tinian* that was so close that we could see the fortifications and the big guns. I was very nervous as I had heard about the Japanese guns firing on U.S. boats in China. However, nothing happened. Shortly after, we anchored in Guam harbor. No one was allowed to leave the boat. A small boat came out with a crate which was transferred to the *U.S. Grant*. A sailor came up the ladder. We asked about the crate and why no one was allowed to leave the ship. He said the reason was that there were no venereal diseases on the island. A good reason I guess.

## CORREGIDOR

We sailed on for another five days and finally arrived in the port of *Manila*. We were unloaded on a large dock and taken ashore. There, we were split into groups. Some stayed in *Manila* and joined the 31<sup>st</sup> infantry. The rest went by harbor boat to *Corregidor* Island and some were assigned to A Battery 59<sup>th</sup> Artillery. As we landed at the dock, we were split up into groups where some went to the middle area of the island. This was called *Middleside*, where they were assigned to the 60<sup>th</sup> Antiaircraft batteries. The rest marched up the hill to Topside. There were three levels on the island. The Bottomside included the boat dock, a native area which had some small stores and native homes. The Middleside had most of the 60<sup>th</sup> antiaircraft barracks and guns. There was also a large basketball court. The rest of us went to Topside where the 59<sup>th</sup> barracks were located along with the big guns. Along with the barracks, Topside also had the Officer's Country, a light house, water tank, movie theater, and artillery range. Besides these, there also was a parade ground, tavern and a store. As we walked up the hill, a group of men in an upper story kept yelling out words saying we would be sorry.

*Manila's Pier #7  
Manila Bay, P.I.*





Corregidor was an island shaped like a tadpole. It was an Army Fort – Ft. Mills, roasting in the tropical sun and humidity. The commanding officer was Major General George F. Moore. His aide was Major Burton Brown. Battery A was commanded by Captain Frederick Garlish. Corregidor was like no other army base. We wore tailor made uniforms provided by the Army from individual clothing allowances. First off, we were issued our uniforms. We had a lot of clothing because half of them were in the laundry at any one time. We had 15 dress shirts, 15 dress trousers and 15 neck ties. We had the same number of *fatigue* clothing - fatigue meaning *work* clothing. This amounted to more than thirty pieces of clothing, stockings and underwear. We were paid \$21.00 per month and out of this our monthly expenses were taken. This included \$2.00 to a house boy who made up our beds and took care of cleaning our room. Our laundry cost \$4.00 per month. A person was usually in debt each month for movie tickets and other expenses. On our arrival, we were bedded down in a large room on cots. The next day, we started our recruit training. Assigned to do this job were three men: Sergeant Leab, Corporal Sutherland and Corporal George Williamson. Most of the men had been in the C.C.C.'s and had quite a bit of military training so that it was easy for them, but, for ones like me, the training was not easy. Personally, I ended up being on the awkward squad with extra training. For three weeks we marched back and forth in the hot and humid tropical sun, sweating by the gallons. I went to Corporal Sutherland and pleaded my case and he passed me.



*Topside Barracks – Ft. Mills (Corregidor)*

While in training, we were told that any one of us was eligible for advancement to a higher grade. Like a lot of things, this was not true. You had to have had previous service in order to take the necessary tests. As a recruit, you could only take the second grade test. One of the previous service men was given a task of assembling a water cooled machine gun. He couldn't get it together, so an officer in charge asked me if I could help him. I said I could. I showed him how to do the job and he became a Corporal and I remained a Private.

We were put to work doing chores such as pulling weeds in front of the guns and standing guard on the gun emplacements and buildings. We worked about four days a week, so we were not overworked. The food in Battery A was not very well prepared - we had a mess sergeant who was a beginner so the food was not plentiful or very tasty either. I played a lot of basketball and we had games with the other gun batteries. Our team was undefeated in spite of a shortage of experienced players. I was one of only eight or ten men that spent a lot of time swimming in the ocean. We did a lot of swimming with goggles and found

beautiful seashells. One day I was in the water by myself for a couple of hours and when I started in to shore, I suddenly realized that I wasn't making any headway toward shore. I solved that problem by swimming as hard as I could on an incoming wave and just held my own on the outgoing wave. I finally made it to the shore in an exhausted condition.

It wasn't long before things started to change. The First Sergeant told me to report to Corporal Innis, who was in charge of the regimental band. Now, I had no talent in music and no ear for it either. I told him that I had no talent in that direction and that I had a so called "tin ear" and that I could not do it. This made him very angry and he ordered me to report at once to the practice area. Innis said he didn't care whether I practiced or not. So, instead of practicing, I laid around the area and did nothing at all. Then one day, the sergeant called me into the office and told me I would have to beat the big bass drum in the parade that day. When I reminded him about my tin ear, he really got angry. He kicked me off the band at once. That put me on his list, so soon after I was told to try out for duty with the MP's. The first Sergeant of the MP's was a friend of mine and he told me if I would stick with him, he would advance me to a Corporal within three months. The food was better but I didn't like the rules, such as when I caught an officer out with a nurse or with his necktie not off I had to turn him in to his boss. For this, I had to go to a meeting with an officer and had no one to back me up.

Well, back to Battery A. It wasn't long before I was transferred to Headquarters battery as a coast observer. There were 18 men in the observers' detachment as follows: Sergeant George Dixon, Corporals Emil Isaak and Eugene Madden, plus fifteen men with ratings of Private First Class (PFC). They were: Thomas Honeycutt, William Harrigan, George Bender, Erskin Dillard, Allen Jenkins, Howard Grogan, John Johnson, Wayne Leonard, Ross Lewellen, Paul Marshall, John Herbert Peterson, William Hogge, James Cooper, Lewis Adams, and me, Richard Winter. This duty promoted me to a rating PFC with a raise in pay. It also had very short working hours. A person started off working five nights of six hours with three days off, followed by four nights with two days off. All in all, it was a very good schedule. I could do anything that I wanted with the time off. I could go swimming or

play basketball with the Philippine Scouts. Or, I could even go to *Manila* if I could get a pass and had enough money. Of course, I didn't get enough money to pay for a trip to town, so, the only way that it could happen was to win money playing poker.



*Corregidor Theatre, Topside Ft. Mills  
I watched the last showing of the last film shown at the theatre, "Gone With the Wind".*

We lived in a house just off the parade grounds and some slept there when off duty. I did it differently. A number of us spent a lot of time on the south beach or walking or running on the roads around the island. When you had a morning shift, you usually tried to get some sleep. This was difficult as the band practiced outside the window.

About this time, we found out that we were getting a new commander, Colonel Paul Bunker. As a group sat around and talked about this new development, our temporary mess sergeant, Dobey Clark, spoke up. He said if it was true that the Colonel was coming to *Corregidor*, you could kiss him goodbye. Dobey was not his real name. It was a custom to call anyone with more than one hitch in the Orient to be called Dobey. When Colonel

Bunker attended a parade, he had to be introduced to the regiment. He walked down the rows of troops, talking to some, and when he spotted Dobey Clark, he called over the Captain and asked what the man's job was. The Captain said he was the acting mess sergeant of Headquarters Battery. To our amazement, he told the Captain to relieve Clark from duty and send him back to the States. No one had any idea what that was all about. After this, Colonel Rutherford made a speech to the regiment. He said that some men considered duty on *Corregidor* tough but they would look back on *Corregidor* as being a paradise compared to what might come. Later events proved how right he was.



*Corregidor Hospital – Ft. Mills*

## RUMORS OF WAR

As time went by, a lot was heard about when, if ever, a war was going to start. In my duty station, I had a short wave radio. On this radio, I could get news and programs from all over the world. I could listen to San Francisco, BBC in London, Moscow, missionaries in South America and the Dutch East Indies. As the war progressed, the Japanese forces were landing in the Islands of Dutch East Indies. One station that I listened to a lot was in *Batavia*. There was a very good musical program there that I listened to. They played music nonstop all night. One night, the music stopped and a man's voice came on, speaking to listeners to tell them goodbye. He said the Japanese were coming down the street, so he was wishing us good luck and goodbye. I never heard the station again.

Over the radio, I heard speeches by Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and from William C. Winter in San Francisco speaking news about the progress of the war in Europe. I enjoyed listening to Kate Smith singing the song she was popular with, "God Bless America ". As the war was progressing fast, there were rumors about the Japanese and where they were. Rumor had it that the Japanese fleet had left Japan and it could be headed our way. As summer passed, we were moved to Gun Battery Wheeler for rations. We pitched a tent beside the gun battery and were fed from the battery kitchen. The island was mostly locked down and no one could go on leave. I say "no one", but I managed to get off the island.

I was down at the docks and as a boat for *Manila* was leaving I got an idea to see if I could get a pass to *Manila*. I went up to the Officers Quarters and went to Col. Rutherford's office. He gave me a three day pass. So I went down to the dock and asked the Captain of a tug boat where he was going. He said across the bay to *Cabcaban* with a barge. I asked him for a ride and he said OK. I landed at *Cabcaban* in short order. *Cabcaban* was a village where all of the houses were on stilts and pigs and chickens lived underneath. There I talked to a soldier who was guarding some anti-aircraft guns. He told me that he

though the war had started. Because he had been guarding this station for over eight hours straight, with no relief, he thought that something was up.

I learned that the road from *Manila* was full of trucks going in to *Bataan*. After several hours, a bus arrived and I obtained a ride to the County seat of *Balanga, Bataan*. *Balanga* was a small village with a park and a church at one end. That night I stayed in the home of a Chinese man who had a wonderful bed. I couldn't find anything to eat as the restaurant was swarming with flies. The next morning I got a ride on a small bus that was called the *Pambusco* Bus. The seats were so small that that it rubbed my knees and back. I didn't know at the time, but this trip would be only three days before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After several hours of travel, I arrived at the outskirts of *Manila*. As the bus neared town, we came to an intersection of a road going north. We were delayed there due to a lot of traffic going north. The highway was full of cars, buses, trucks and private cars, all loaded with Philippine men in uniform. The traffic was headed to the seaport of *Lingayan*. When I got out of the bus in *Manila*, I accosted a uniformed soldier and asked him where these men were going, and he replied they were headed to *Lingayan* on maneuvers. I think these men arrived at *Lingayan* about the same time as the Japanese. These men were reserve soldiers of the Philippine army. I had been in *Manila* earlier and saw these troops training using shovel handles for guns, so I wondered if all of them were armed. As I was pretty sure that we were not long from war, I felt sorry for them. To this day, I don't know if they were fully armed or not. I only had a two day pass and since the two days were up, I only had time for a couple of drinks at the Navy Club before I had to go back to *Corregidor*. That night, I went back to duty in one of our observers' stations. I pulled the 6:00 PM to midnight shift and sacked out on a cot in the station. My partner in the station woke me up about daylight and told me that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I was amazed and didn't believe him, so I went back to the barracks and turned on the *Manila* radio station. The news was true.

# Honolulu Star-Bulletin 1<sup>st</sup> EXTRA

Eveing Bulletin, Inc., 1941, No. 11218  
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# WAR!

(Associated Press by Transpacific Telephone)

**SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 7.—**President Roosevelt announced this morning that Japanese planes had attacked Manila and Pearl Harbor.

# OAHU BOMBED BY JAPANESE PLANES

## WAR

Now, as the war was on, we went to battle stations. From my station on the coast cliffs, I could see a lot of vessels of all types coming into the sea lanes to *Manila*. It didn't take long for flights of Japanese airplanes to arrive. Bombing occurred in the distance the same day. By December 10<sup>th</sup> or so we heard that the Japanese were landing troops at the port of Aparri. The navel base at *Cavite* was attacked and many personnel were killed, or so we heard. Around the 18<sup>th</sup> of December the inter-land Steamer *Corregidor*, that was loaded with refugees trying to make a run to the southern seaport of *Sebu*, hit a mine right in front of our station. It sank in a very short time, within 10 minutes or so. I had seen this boat in *Manila* and as far as I could see, it had no bulkheads. Within seconds, there were only small circles in the sea to show where the boat sank. No one knew why the Captain of the ship tried to leave the harbor without a harbor pilot.

When the first Japanese airplane came to the island, I was by myself in one of the barracks, playing pool at a billiard table. When the bombs began to fall, I first got under the pool table and then I went into the restroom. Not finding any safe place, I just hung around there until the raid was over. When I came out of the barrack after the bombing, the first person I saw was General MacArthur. He was walking around the parade grounds. I ignored him as his first order was there was to be no saluting and no insignia of rank or any other identification. Two men out of the 18 in our unit were killed by the bombing. Bombs fell on the water tower and the water ran down the drain which ran across the parade grounds and flushed a number of men out of the parade ground's drains.

General McArthur and staff, plus the government of the Philippines had arrived on *Corregidor*. The 4<sup>th</sup> regiment Marines from *Shanghai* had arrived after running a gauntlet all the way from China. In the last part of December, *Corregidor* was attacked by nearly one hundred Japanese planes, thirteen that were shot down. A number of our men were killed and there was widespread damage to installations on the island. As a result of so many

Japanese planes being shot down on this first raid, the Japanese flew at altitudes out of range for a long time. All extra men, such as the Marines, Navy and anyone without a job were assigned as infantry troops in case of an invasion on the beaches. As January came, we were bombed nearly every day with more and more damage to all of the island facilities, ammunition dumps, water pipes, communication, roads and buildings. Our rations were reduced to one half about this time. The bombings went on for longer and longer amounts of time. At my observers' station, there was nothing to do as there were no ships on the water. The Japanese radio stations were filled with propaganda, with Japanese announcers urging us to surrender. I guess that the guns on *Corregidor* had shot down one hundred or more planes by the time we surrendered.

I had a notion to visit the 4<sup>th</sup> Marines who were camped out at the middle level of the island. Among the Marines was a high school friend, Ronald Gilbertson, so I walked down there and found him. The Marines were very downhearted. They had spent several days dodging Japanese forces on the way to *Manila*. They were camped out in tents and had not been assigned to any type of jobs. After relaying our experiences, the Japanese started flying over again and dropping bombs, so I started back to topside. The bombing became very heavy, so I ran into the most westerly barrack for shelter. As I looked around the room that I had taken shelter in, I saw that it was loaded with a large amount of boxes labeled TNT. This worried me, so when the flight passed, I ran out of there. As I ran out of the building, another flight approached, so I dived into a ditch just as I saw a bomb hit the barracks I had just left. I went over to the building the next day. There was nothing left of the building but the concrete floor.

A day or two later a car drove up and a Major got out. He came up to me and asked me where we went when the bombs came down. I told him that we stayed in our little observation building. He said that was not enough and that we were to dig some fox holes. He got shovels and picks from his car truck and put us to work. This was very difficult as the ground was all rocks. We had just begun digging when the air alarm went off. This caused him to jump in his car and take off in a cloud of dust. Well, we went into our little

building while the bombs dropped all around. After the raid, we went out and found that the bombs had fallen right on the site, and in fact, *into* my new foxhole. The men asked me if we should continue to dig. I said that I was not going to continue as the Major was too scared to come back - and he never did. This was the only Officer to visit us during the early part of the war. In a field nearby were two Corporals who were based in a machine gun foxhole. In the past I had asked them if they would like to join us in our little building during raids and they insisted that they were safer in the holes. After this latest raid I went out to see how they were and found that their emplacements had been destroyed and they were not in sight. Of course we thought that they might have been killed. As for us, we had taken shelter in our small building. While we talked about the two Corporals having maybe taken a direct hit, they showed up. I asked them what happened and they told me that during the bombing they both got the feeling that their fox hole was very dangerous. This caused them to vacate their position.

We slept at the big gun position in a powder storage room. One night, on the way back to my sleeping quarters, someone fired a bullet past my ears. I dived into a ditch and crawled down the ditch as a second bullet flew by - a lesson in making tracks on my hands and knees. There was not a sound around me. So I got up and returned to the big gun position. When I got there I met a friend who had shown up. I told him about my experience. His name was Gordon Alton. He told me that the Japanese were already on *Corregidor*. Gordon was an egocentric person. When I saw him this time, he was loaded down with arms. He had a 30 caliber Springfield rifle, an African Elephant two-barrel rifle, some hand grenades and a lot of ammunition. Before he left, I gave him a mouth organ that he asked for. I mention this as the mouth organ will surface again, later in the story.

The bombing continued with more damage every day. From my station I could see action on the other nearby islands. I could see bombs bouncing off of Fort Drum. Fort Drum was a small island in south *Manila* Bay. A concrete shaped battleship was built on it and I guess that the big guns were not damaged but that everything else on the deck was wiped out. From my position I could see the shelling of Fort Frank and several other islands. One

night there was a big explosion on the island of Fort Frank. This was caused when a large shell from the Japanese army landed in the powder room and it blew up with a spectacular night scene. As time went on there was more and more shelling and the use of larger and larger shells.

Around this time our rations were cut in half again. It was now about one third of our normal food allowance. I heard that food reserves were down to such a little left that we would run out by the middle of June. The shelling continued with the Japanese firing their largest shells yet. I met a man who was a volunteer with the same name as me, but with an "s" on the end - in other words, Richard *Winters*. He had, with other men, gone by boat to the south *Luzon* coast and spotted the locations of Japanese artillery batteries with good results. This, however, didn't last long as they were driven back to *Corregidor*. This action was in the last of February. I heard that the President of the Philippines and his Vice President, along with some others of their group were taken by submarine to Australia.

One night I was pulling the early shift in our lookout station. At midnight I finished my shift. As I mentioned earlier, General Macarthur and almost all of the personal from *Manila* had arrived on *Corregidor*. In the last days of December, *Corregidor* was subjected to heavy bombing. I could see an exodus of many ships leaving the harbor. There was a lot of damage everywhere. In the month of January we were hit by bombers which were, at times, bombing heavily and other times lightly bombing. After the first heavy bombing of *Corregidor* by the Japanese airplanes, it was only bombed from high elevations as they lost too many planes at lower heights. By the end of January only planes above 30,000 feet bombed.

In the start of February I heard that a submarine had delivered some anti-aircraft fuses that allowed our gunners to reach as high as 30,000 feet, placing the Japanese bombers in danger and forcing them to fly even higher. One night I saw tracer fire flying into *Bataan* from the sea from and than return tracer shots from the lines in *Bataan* followed by firing

from all directions. I learned that Japanese had landed back of the lines and advanced inland using weapons put in caves by Japanese fishing boats. This Japanese incursion was repulsed by an army of Sailors, Army Cooks, Marines and just about anyone that was idle. Then I heard that one of my recruit trainers, George Williams, was killed in *Bataan*. He had been commissioned as a First Lt. and was serving in *Bataan*, leading soldiers with the Philippine Army.

The Japanese, after firing for several days at Battery Geary, finally penetrated the powder magazine and created a monster explosion that blew guns hundreds of feet from their positions. I was at *Malinta Tunnel* when that happened and the concussion lifted the helmet right off my head. It was April 1<sup>st</sup> and I had been transferred to *Malinta Tunnel* as an official infantryman waiting for the Japanese landing attempt on *Corregidor*.

During all this firing of guns at us, my good friend Weston Carol never took shelter in *Malinta Tunnel*. There was a platform outside the west entrance of the tunnel. There he pitched his tent on the platform and there he stayed through bombing and shelling. He worked at night delivering supplies to various gun positions. I talked to some men that manned a 50 caliber machine gun unit. Their commander was a young Lieutenant who was panicked by the war. According to his men, he took up living in a dugout that he dug into the hillside. At first he stayed in his hideout during bombing but then started living in it. Finally he tried to get his men to bring his meals to him in the cave. When that happened their Sergeant reported him to Malinta Tunnel headquarters which resulted in him being released from duty and put under arrest. His job was given to the First Sergeant. During all this time, my friend Weston Carol lived in his tent at the west entrance to Malinta tunnel. He worked at night and slept during daylight hours in his tent. A friend stayed in the tent with him. His friend was killed there in an air raid.



*The sun sets on Corregidor*

## THE FALL OF BATAAN

April 9<sup>th</sup> *Bataan* fell and every thing changed. Men were coming to *Corregidor* from *Bataan*. They came by hanging onto anything that floated and some swam. One of my good friends, William Lane, swam the whole way. He had been in charge of a group of Philippine Army men. He told me that if there was any action of any kind that many of the Filipino men dropped their rifles and ran. My friend Lane spent a lot of time running them down and driving them back to the battle lines. I met many men that escaped from *Bataan* that I knew. One was a man called "Machine Gun" Williams, the same man I met in Hawaii who had the run in with the MPs. He had been a guard at a federal prison in the states. According to the story, he had been trapped in a machine pit when the battle lines moved back and was left by himself with a machine in a gun dugout. I was told by a witness that the battle lines fell back and when the lines were pushed back to him he was shooting anything - friend or enemy. He had killed more than thirty Japanese and was nearly crazy and was shooting at anyone who was near him. He seemed to be his usual nutty self so I couldn't swear that he was sane or crazy. After talking for a while with Lane he decided to go up to the Topside of the island and visit some of his friends there. He left with a ride on a motorcycle. I never saw him again.

Soon after he left I got tired of hanging at the west tunnel so I went around the barricades to enter the tunnel. I walked through the barricade when two shells landed just a foot or so from my protecting entrance. At once men were running into the tunnel entrance with stretchers laden with wounded. Two men came running into the tunnel with a stretcher bearing a man who had lost his head. I stopped them and told them about their man. A Filipino ran by with his arm hanging by a shred of skin yelling for a medic as blood spurted from his wounded arm. As you could see, there was utter chaos all around. I think about thirty men were killed.

During this bombing my friend Carroll was still hanging out in his tent. Later on there was a

shelling of that area and Carroll was asleep in his tent. One of the men told me that Carroll was out in the bombing with a water bucket putting out a fire on his tent. I went out and asked him to take shelter in *Malinta Tunnel*. He refused, saying that he was tired from working all night and needed some sleep. He was a true fatalist and said that it wouldn't make any difference where he was when his time came. I went out after the bombing raid was over and he was asleep on his cot.

I went back into the tunnel and as I stood there General MacArthur's wife and child came out into the tunnel. There was a lot of artillery going on outside the east tunnel entrance. MacArthur walked out of the tunnel and stood there in the flying shrapnel and got out his pipe, tamped the tobacco and after looking at all the men laying in apparent fear in ditches and dugouts, lit up his pipe and strolled through the flying shrapnel and walked out of sight. As I stood there, the little son of MacArthur ran out into the flying shrapnel and down the road. A soldier ran out and rescued him and his Filipino nurses took him away.

General MacArthur's wife liked to talk to the service men. I talked to her several times. She was interested in everything that went on. On or about March 11<sup>th</sup>, the General and his family, along with some other personal left *Corregidor* for Australia. They boarded some small PT boats and arrived safely in Australia. Earlier I had found out that they were leaving in a conversation I had with a young Master Sergeant. When he heard us talking about MacArthur leaving he said that he was still there, but *when* MacArthur left, the Sergeant said that since he was MacArthur's enlisted man secretary, that he would go too.

## CORREGIDOR – THE LAST DAYS

By this time there were hundreds of guns firing on *Corregidor*. The last days were upon us. I was assigned with a group of four hundred men to stand in reserve and wait for the Japanese landing on *Corregidor*. As night approached on this last night, I started to worry about the fact that my only weapon was a 45 caliber automatic pistol. Now I had never fired this weapon, so I could see myself being confronted by an enemy with a bayonet and not knowing if I could shoot him before he got me with a bayonet thrust. We were now all lined up at the tunnel exit waiting to go out and meet the enemy so I told an officer about this and he said that he couldn't help me. After that, I went to the tunnel exit and threw my pistol out into the night. Then I went to an officer and told him that I was unarmed but that I could get a rifle from my friend, Sergeant Farmer of the MPs. He said okay, so I found the Sergeant and he gave me a Springfield rifle and some ammunition. By this time, the men were exiting out in the night which was a hell on earth. Shells of all sorts were roaring. The noise was like nothing a person had ever heard. As my hunt for a weapon caused me to be in the end of the line, a young officer came by as I was stepping out of the tunnel and ordered the last two men to wait in the tunnel for him and he would be back. Well, I and another man waited there for some time but he never came back. We finally sat down against the tunnel wall and went to sleep.

## MAY 6<sup>TH</sup> – THE FALL OF CORREGIDOR

When I awoke the war was over in the tunnel area. I was just in time to help Major General George Moore burn money and destroy weapons. The General told us not to keep any of the money as the Japanese were rumored to be killing Prisoners with money found on them. I later regretted not keeping several thousands of it as no one ever searched me. I figured that if I had a lot of money I could have at least bought food with it.

Eventually some Japanese soldiers entered the tunnel. They drove us out the west entrance where we stood around and listened to the battle still going on farther west of us. There were rumors that Colonel Bunker and the men under him were still fighting. You could hear firing going on and a lot of yelling in Japanese. As we stood there, a man walked up with a Browning machine gun. He stood there and a man walked up and asked if he was going to use the gun. He said no, so the man asked him if he could have it and he said yes. Then the man said that we were going to be Prisoners of the Japanese and he was not going that route. He walked off towards where the battle was still going on. We heard him fire the gun and a lot of firing back. I figured later that he was just as apt to die under the life of a Japanese Prisoner as to have committed suicide in battle.

We spent some time outside the tunnel entrance when suddenly General Wainwright appeared with four Japanese soldiers who had rifles at his back and were followed by a Japanese soldier with a pistol. They ran him into the tunnel and I never saw him again. I found out later that he had been over to *Bataan* to talk to the commanding Japanese General. He was told to go back to *Corregidor* and surrender to the Officer in charge there.

A couple of hundred of us hung around near the west entry to the tunnel for several days. One time a car drove up, driven by a friend of my who was Colonel Bunker's driver. The door opened and Colonel Bunker got out. He was dressed in a dress uniform with his sword

at his side. A Japanese soldier rushed over and tried to take his sword away from him. He gave the soldier a forceful shove causing him to stagger back. Then the Colonel went into the tunnel. I never saw him again either.

A small platform was built and an American Marine Major got up on the platform. He said that he had been in the U. S. Embassy in Tokyo and could understand the Japanese language so they had him give us the following message. The Japanese said we were to know that the highest ranking of our Officers ranked lower than their lowest ranking soldier and that we were not Prisoners of war but *guests* of the Emperor and lucky to be alive. We must have hung around at the west entrance for three or four days. There was no food but there was water.

Finally they marched us around the south side of *Malinta Hill*. As we walked we came to a battle field covered with several hundreds American bodies. They were black as coal from the tropical sun. There was a man with no head sitting upright at a machine gun. Other bodies were strewn across the ground. It was at this time that I had thoughts that these were the four hundred men that went out into the dark battle field from *Malinta Tunnel*. I then realized then how lucky I was that I never made it out to this Hell on earth. I felt bad that I had never killed an enemy and at the same time good that I never was slain myself.

They marched us to the nearby Philippine Scout barracks. There, by the sea, we spent nearly three weeks with no food. At first there no water but someone found an underground well. The water was found by the Filipino men. They had found a bucket and lowered it down and as the water came up, they leaped onto the bucket in mass and spilled all of the water. After watching this for a while, some of the American men took the bucket away from them and established some order in things. I joined with three soldiers in building a fire and boiling the water. Every one that drank the unboiled water came down with dysentery. So many people died there that we called it *Death Valley*. Some men found food in abandoned gun emplacements, although I and my friends found only some

dried navy beans. These we cooked for 3 days and finally ate them when they were as hard as rocks.

One of the first things I did was to try to find my friend Weston Carrol. At first I heard that he was killed in a cave-in in a tunnel. I didn't believe that as I knew that he would never go into a tunnel. I had just about given him up for dead when he came walking by. He told me what had happened to him and a friend. They were in a machine gun pit on the beach when the Japanese barges full of Japanese troops came ashore. They were surrounded by Japanese who made it to land. They were fired on by the Japanese, and every friend or enemy was fired on by the big guns in *Bataan*. It finally became too much for them so they retreated from the beach. He was so tired that he went into a side tunnel to sleep. A shell landed outside and caved in the entry, leaving him trapped. He felt around in the dark and found a pick. He could hear voices so he hit the wall with the pick and finally broke out into a side tunnel.

A tale that I had heard was about a Sergeant who, before he was killed, was said to spend his time in a trench shooting Japanese in the belly button. Well I was put to work carrying wounded Japanese soldiers down to the docks. Low and behold every one that I carried by stretcher had a band-aid on his belly button. These men had been lying in the hot sun with these wounds and I considered them living dead. It was May 6<sup>th</sup> when we surrendered, but wasn't until May 27<sup>th</sup> that we were taken away from *Corregidor*. We spent this time living on the sand with no food amidst indescribable filth and dirt. Dysentery was killing scores of men. The name we gave it – *Death Valley* – was a good fit.

I think that it was May 27<sup>th</sup> before we left the island. The day before some of us was put to work carrying cans of food from the tunnels and putting them aboard a docked ship. I didn't do anything except break open several cans of peaches and eat them. We were marched aboard the ship and I had eaten so many peaches that I heaved up over board and passed out and I didn't wake up until the next morning. All I had left was a blanket, a mess kit,

canteen, a pair of shoes and a pair of cut off pants. We were taken to *Manila*. We were off loaded in the water which came up to my nose. I didn't see anyone drown but I didn't know how the men that were shorter than I was would make out.

We came out of the water on Dewey Boulevard and were reassembled there and marched down the road. There were many Filipino people gathered beside the road. At first some of them tried to give us gifts of food but the Japanese men drove us to the *Bilibed Prison*. There we were put in cells and given a single rice ball - the first food furnished by the Japanese in at least three weeks. I don't know how long we stayed but I think that it was two or three days. One day we were put into railroad box cars, packed like sardines and started our journey to a new prison.

## CABANATUAN PRISON

After a night in a school yard and after being rained on during the night we marched east to *Cabanatuan* prison. This walk was about twelve miles and the walk took most of the day. There were thousands of men already there. The camp at that time had a single strand of barbed wire around it. It was very loosely guarded with a single guard in front and a small shed on the road in front. I had heard that the mountains to the south, about thirty miles away, were uninhabited. I started to think about heading out at sundown and I knew that I could run it in one night. I didn't get to do that as I was sent on a work party where I had some soup furnished by the Japanese. This gave me dysentery. It caused me to go to the so called "bathroom" eleven times in one hour the next day. From that day forward I was left so weak that I could not walk and talk at the same time for the rest of the war.

In the camp we were fed three times a day. As we ate the morning meal before daylight and the evening one in the dark of the evening, we couldn't see what we were eating. The food consisted of rice with some sort of green tube like vegetable and the rice had more plump worms than rice. All you could do was to not look at the rice at noon and eat it in the dark when you couldn't see what your food was like. My friend Winston Carrol was with me at *Cabanatuan*. Like most men we had no money so we couldn't get anything extra in food and had to exist on the wormy rice and the soup of weeds.

In this camp many men were dying each day. The sick and dying stayed in a tent with no medicine and no doctors. Our bathrooms consisted of some wooden seats and worst of all, the urinals were pits about 20 feet long, 8 feet wide and who knows how deep as they were overflowing with yellow urine. One night I saved a man's life. I approached the pit at night and as I neared it I heard a splash and a hand came out of the yellow water. At that time I wasn't very strong, but I grasped the hand and easily pulled him out. He ran for a shower fixture and I never got his name. I have often wondered if he survived his ordeal.

I had heard that the guns on Fort Drum had killed a relative of one of the Japanese generals. What happened in *Cabanatuan* No. 3 lends some truth to that. The Japanese selected three Americans that I heard were from Fort Drum. Then they accused them of trying to escape and tortured them all night and into the next morning and ordered everyone in camp to report to where they were held. The torturing had left them in very bad shape. The order was everyone in camp was required to attend the scene when they were killed. Some men seemed to want to witness this crime as they were running in haste towards that terrible scene. I stayed in the barracks. As the men ran by they told me that I would suffer for not obeying the Japanese orders. I had decided that I was not going to witness this murder scene. Passing men warned me that I might get in trouble for that. Well, I stayed in the barracks and nothing came of it.

Time was slow and endless. There was very little to do. There was one barrack that had civilians captured in *Manila* and refugees from China. They had some money so were able to buy extra food. This food was brought into camp by American truck drivers who worked for the Japanese Army. There was an army man that was the tallest man I had ever heard of. He was so big he required more food so the civilians gave him extra food.

As time went on, the rumor was that some men were leaving for parts unknown. The rumor was true. On October 7<sup>th</sup> a group of about one thousand men were gathered up in the afternoon and we prepared to leave. We walked in the rain for several hours to the town of *Cabanatuan* where we spent the night. In the morning we boarded box cars and left for *Manila*. In *Manila* we were marched to the docks to board an old freighter ship. As we staggered up the gang plank we were handed three small loaves of bread. These I ate immediately, thinking that maybe that was our rations for each day. No surprise this was for three days. I stumbled up the plank and then down into the depths of the ship. The date was October 8<sup>th</sup>.

*Tottori Maru*  
Manila to Korea, Japan Oct 1944



*The Hellship **Tottori Maru** was built in Glasgow, Scotland in 1913 - 1914. This 6,057 Gross Ton ships was 423 feet long, 56 feet in breadth and capable of speeds of 10 knots.*

## THE GOOD SHIP “TOTTORI MARU”

They kept us below decks for three days and nights before finally taking off the hatch covers. On the 4<sup>th</sup> day they gave us some bags of tasteless cookies. That was our food for almost a month. When I used the outhouse on the main deck I found that no one cared if I just stayed up there so that was what I did. Most of the men stayed below decks. Why, I don't know. There were about thirty men who stayed on the deck. One group consisted of about ten men led by an American Officer. He had a section roped off for his group. One day he went around and collected money which he said would be repaid with extra food that would come aboard from an island ahead.

About the third day at sea I was standing on the deck and suddenly I saw what I thought was a Torpedo cutting through the water headed for right where I was standing. I started running around trying to find something I could hang on to. I couldn't find a thing so I went down the ladder and told the men there that we would be sinking very quickly. No one seemed interested so I went back on the deck. Nothing happened. I learned that the two torpedoes that came at the ship missed. One went around each end of the ship. Up until then I thought that we were in a small convoy but when the Japanese begin dumping explosives off the end of their ship, every ship begin taking off in all directions dropping depth charges everywhere. Nothing further happened and we proceeded, zigzagging on our way.

About the fifth day I suddenly saw land on the left and a breakwater wall on the right. The boat made a left turn and we proceeded through a notch in the wall into a harbor. The harbor was Taitung, Taiwan. It was quite large with harbor boats with their flags flying. In the distant there was a large factory that was covered with yellow dust and which also seemed to cover a lot of the surrounding area. The *Tottori Maru* docked at a pier. Almost immediately a crane lifted a net with fruit onto the ship right into the roped off area where the American Officers area was. The net was unloaded, but instead of the men that

purchased the supplies from the American getting what they had paid for, the American Officer announced that anyone wanting any of the fruits and vegetables would have to buy them again. I couldn't imagine what power that man had over the Japanese. There was an American Colonel on board who said that he was the highest ranking Chaplin from *Corregidor*. I asked him if he would take the American Officer that had the merchandise brought aboard and at least put him under arrest, so that he could be prosecuted at some future date. But he said that he was a Chaplin and it was not his job.

We stayed in the harbor for a couple of days before setting sail again. The boat anchored next to an island that had an airport. A storm came up so the boat stayed there for about three days. The rest room facility was an outdoor toilet and as the wind was howling, all the waste was blown back onto the ship. The large window in front of the Captains seat was plastered with - you guessed it - shit. The ship turned around and went back to the seaport and we reentered the dock again. As we were dirty they let us get off the boat and turned on some large hoses so that we got washed off.

After all this we set sail again. We seemed to be wandering around off the coast of China, small islands everywhere. Many Chinese *junks* and *sampans* were everywhere. About the 28<sup>th</sup> day of our journey we came into a seaport, *Pusan*, Korea. All but a few men were offloaded and marched away. There I can say that I set foot in Asia as I helped carry a dead American off the boat. Again we set sail. This time the boat did not zigzag but sailed at a high speed that shook the boat. I think the men that got off the boat in *Pusan* left all their bed bugs in the boat. I shared part of my blanket with a man named Tannihill. He had no blanket. The problem was that he slept the night through. I would go to sleep and then wake up with bed bugs driving me crazy so I would sleep outside the blanket until I no longer stand the cold. It went that way all night.

## THE INLAND SEA AND JAPAN

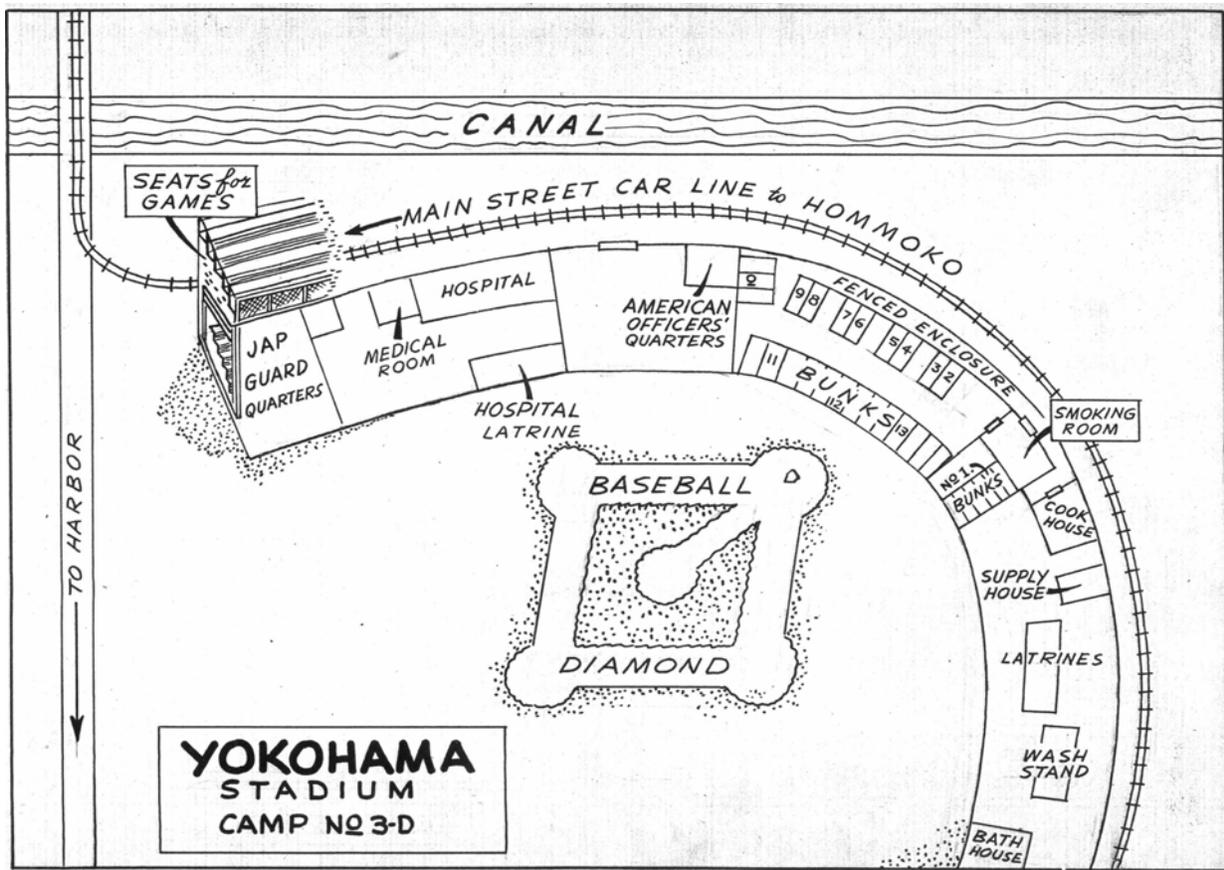
In the morning we entered Japan's Inland Sea. The inland sea was a scenic wonderland. It was surrounded by small islands, small towns and under other circumstances would have seemed very attractive. We arrived in the port of *Osaka*. Some of us were put on a passenger coach and departed to the north. On the train we were given a box lunch. This was the first and last good food we were to have in Japan. The lunch contained rice, some vegetables and a piece of fish. The train sped in a northerly direction with the sight of *Mt. Fuji* in view. At noon we came to *Yokohama* where we were walked down the street to a stadium. This was to be our home for almost three years.



*Yokohama Stadium*

# YOKAHAMA - STADIUM CAMP N3

There were about two hundred of us that entered the Stadium through a large double door which led to an entry with doors on the right and left. There was a sign that read "Room for Smokie", an introduction to Japanese writing. There were very few men in the large room. There were double deck platforms in rows. Blankets and belongings were scattered around on the platforms. Most of the men were apparently still at work.



Yokohama Stadium

It wasn't long before men began to fill the room. I learned that there were more than three hundred men there. They were mostly from Hong Kong, China. There were also men from *Wake Island* who were mostly civilians who worked on the island; six of them were from Canada. These men were led by Captain Leonard Birchall. Captain Birchall and his crew had left Britain in November 1942 and arrived in India a week later. There, the Captain flew with them looking for Japanese Naval forces. They found them and arrived in Japan in time for Christmas. One man was an American Doctor by the name of Nelson Kauffman, but in my memory, the only medical person to do any doctoring was Captain Birchall. There was no medicine furnished by the Japanese. The only medicine was furnished by the British men and they traded clothing for what little medicine we got.

Most of the men from China had bags of clothing and it appeared that they hadn't been in many battles. In contrast, I had a pair of shoes, a sawed-off pair of pants, a canteen, a mess kit, a spoon and my blanket. Most of them appeared in good condition. In contrast, I had lost a lot of weight and had dysentery. We had Beriberi, malnutrition, scurvy and were very weak. The men from *Wake Island* were in poor condition and some were wounded. It didn't make any difference as they were expected to work. I was still not strong enough to walk and talk at the same time. When the men came back from working they were allowed to take a bath in a small hot tub. If you didn't get a bath early, the water was very dirty, but it was better than nothing. At least on a cold day you could get warmed up. The food was white rice and various soups. At first the various work places furnished small lunches, but as time went by, these became smaller and then nonexistent.

The head man was an officer by the name of Gunsho Heishi. There was a man known as the *slapper* who you knew was charge of discipline. The first morning there we went out in the playing field for roll call. There, we lined up in rows. Gunsho Heishi gave each of us numbers in Japanese. Mine was *NI HOCU NANA JU SON. NO.273*. We were told that we would get our number only once and were required to remember it.

The first job that I went on was at a boat launching area on a beach. I didn't last long on that as I was working with an air drill and I got it all tangled up. Then I was sent to a brickyard where all sorts of bricks were made. I started to have pain in my feet and it became so painful that I couldn't get any sleep. About twenty of the Americans had this problem. We were unable to work and stayed up day and night. If you took a hold of your feet they would stop hurting, but the minute you went to sleep and relaxed, your feet started hurting again. One of the British men was named Charles Lister. He was the only one that felt sorry for us victims with foot problems. Quite often he would bring me a cigarette butt or a small bit of food. In a prison camp you could not usually voice a complaint to anyone. The answer was always the same. *"Don't tell me your problems; I've got plenty of them myself"*. The diet of white rice was to blame for this. Eventually, they replaced the rice with millet and barley and our foot problems started going away, but that would not happen for some time. In the mean time, my feet painfully progressed from to bad to worse, but I was sent to the Brick yard to work. The workers led the Japanese on a merry chase. They did their best to sabotage materials and work. The Japanese employed some extra strong men to make one sort of brick that required a lot of work. The British men, instead of stacking them up to dry, rushed them to the kilns in a half frozen state. This caused about 30,000 bricks to warp and ruined the whole batch. This ruined about three weeks of work.

I was trying to work at the brick factory but one morning my feet swelled up so bad that I couldn't get my shoes on. One good thing was when my feet swelled up they quit hurting. I was put in a hospital section and could no longer work. About then they discontinued out rice diet and gave us barley and millet to eat. The new diet had vitamin B in it and all the men with Beriberi started to have an improvement in our health. While I was in the hospital section, the fore mentioned Charles Lister would bring me something to take my mind off of my illness. Some of the men that we didn't expect to live started to improve by the day. Some of them even went back to work. That included my friends Guy Magee and Donald Taylor who had been wounded in the Battle of Wake Island, leaving them with crippling injuries to their legs and causing them to limp.

My illnesses were not over as I and several other men came down with scurvy that caused sores to break out on ones legs and arms. Mine were on my hands and my arms. The British were able to trade clothing for some medicine. Captain Birchall got me a vitamin C shot every two weeks. The sores would go away for a few days and then reappear. About this time we each got one half of a Red Cross package and in mine was the only package of *Old Gold* cigarettes in camp. As there were a few yen coins around the camp, I was able to trade the *Old Golds* for a package of *Chesterfields* and ten yen. With the ten yen I bought three shots of vitamin C. Along with the improvement in our diet and the three shots of vitamin C, I never had that trouble with scurvy again. Along with me, John Woodard, Ray Young, Emanuel Spoon and Garth Ruggles were discharged from the hospital ward and made it back to work.

When I went back to work, I worked for several months with a Japanese man drilling holes in steel plates and girders. When the Japanese workers laid out plans and diagrams for work, holes didn't always match, so were spending a lot of time repairing holes. I and a Japanese man sometimes drilled over two thousand holes in one day. At this rate the American drills were used up rapidly. When we had to use the Japanese drills, it took twice as long to drill a hole. After this I worked with a crew of Americans at odd jobs. One day I was under a dry docked ship reaming holes and some eighteen particles of hot steel flew into my right eye and seven in my left. I could barely see. I went to Captain Birchall with my problem. He kept me off work for three days while he doctored me. I had to hold my eye still while he scraped the steel off. I had a hard time holding my eyes still while he probed around them. He succeeded in getting it all out and I never had any ill effects.

At this time, I joined two other Americans at a job which was called "*rigging cranes*". We worked in the shops mainly moving steel plates and girders around the shops. This was dangerous work as the crane operator was very careless. You had to stay alert as he didn't always bring the loads up evenly. The other men were James Stalvey and Leonard Krohn, commonly called "*Rocky*". By this time we had found out that the Japanese civilians would do almost anything to get along with us. We found that if they had trouble with us

they might be relieved from their job and maybe shipped out to the army. We became masters of avoiding work. We were picking up odds and ends of scrap steel and putting them into large steel bins. On this particular day they assigned five other Americans to work with us. Rocky was working so slow that he was only picking up one piece of steel an hour. Well, our five helpers started working at a fast pace so I told Rocky. He went over and asked why they were working so fast and they answered that if they didn't work and keep busy, the Japanese would punish them. Rocky said, "*Who would you like to punish you? The Japanese or me?*" He then said that when he got back in the U.S. pay line, he wanted to look the cashier in the eye instead of turning his back to him. Well that slowed the work way down. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a Japanese worker run around the corner and out of sight. I told Rocky this and he said we had better speed up because the *slapper* was on his way. Well, sure enough, the *slapper* arrived. By this time every man but one was working. The *slapper* ran over to him and knocked him down and jumped up and down on him. When he complained about this treatment we told him he had to use his head. They soon took the extra men off to some other job.

They kept the three of us on the scrap picking chore, but as slow as we worked, it took us about five days to fill the scrap bin. Our latest orders were to get a small rail car and use its crane to load the bin on a flat car and take it to a scrap pile and dump it. Before we could do that the quitting horn went off and we were through for the day. We came back the next day and the steam engine was broke down. We hung around the engine for over a week and if anyone asked what we were doing we just told them we were waiting for the crane to be fixed. As it was in December we kept the engine supplied with coal and kept warm. Finally we started off with the crane but the quitting horn blew for the day. During the night it snowed about a foot or more and the track was too slippery to pull the load. It took three days for the snow to melt and we could finally dump the load of scrap. We rushed back to the shops and started to load up again, but were taken off of that job for good. It had taken us about three weeks to dump the one load of scrap.



*Osana Dock Co. - Christmas in Yokohama Stadium's "Smokie Room" - 1943*

As we walked to work every day, we walked through streets where a lot of people lived. Along these streets there were loud speakers blaring out the news. There was a lot of news about the *BOEING B NE JUKU*. In English that was about the Boeing B-29 Bomber. As the Japanese people never got any news it was all on the loud speakers. When I was sick the last time, a Tokyo Times papers was brought into camp. I got to read it several times. The paper never said anything about the Japanese reverses but you could read between the lines. A paper would say that their planes based in *Truc* would bomb an American base in *Rabal*. A later paper would say that an American base in *Truc* would bomb a Japanese base farther north. By this you could deduce that the Japanese were falling back closer to Japan. All of this was a sign that the Japanese were slowly but surely losing ground. One day the lights went off and everybody rushed outside. There, high in the sky was a tiny dot. It was a Boeing B-29. Some American shell casings rained down on the ship yard. This was the first American made item I had seen in a long time. This was in the fall of 1944.

I have to tell you about a British man named Williams who worked with other English men on a crew of ship painters. One day a Japanese Navy ship was docked at the pier. Well, Williams got in the Japanese dinner line and got a good meal. The next day he tried it again but they wouldn't let him. He roamed around the ship and one day the cook on the ship gave him the keys to the cold storage area. He never returned them and he found a cold storage room full of canned peaches. The painting crew ate it all up in nothing flat. The next day the Japanese police had everyone in the dock lined up at attention while they yelled and ranted and tried to find the perpetrators. They never asked any of the P.O.W.s about the missing food.

We had fires under the docked ships, burning axe and shovel handles for warmth. The men that worked with the torches spent their time heating the steel walls to keep warm. Two of the British men that worked with the torches were among a group of men waiting for a load of torch gas to be delivered to the ship yard. The gas came in tanks by horse cart. When the cart arrived there were not enough tanks for everyone. The smaller of the British men got in an argument with two Korean men and got in a pushing and shoving fight over them. The three of them went behind a building and almost at once the smallish British named Knobby Clark came running out with two Japanese Soldiers with bayonets attached and was run into a building. The lunch alarm went off so we went in to eat a small noon lunch. Shortly they brought Knobby into the room. They displayed a Japanese man that Knobby had beaten up. His nose was bent over to one side and the interpreter told us the other man was in the hospital. Knobby was sent up to *Tokyo* to a civilian prison. When he came back he told us that they threw him in a cell, broke out the windows and took away his blanket. He said that he would have starved to death, but the guards had never had a white man in the prison and even though he only got a ball of rice a day he got by as the guards slipped him food on the sly. Another case that was very similar was a man that hit a Japanese civilian with a scoop shovel. His fate was similar.

One day there was an uproar. The Japanese passed a paper around that they wanted us to sign. To wit, it said that we promised not to try to escape (as if we wouldn't stand out

from the Japanese people). Well, the British wouldn't sign it. Almost at once a truckload of Japanese soldiers arrived in the room. Then the British said that they wouldn't sign a document unless they would rewrite the document, and only then would they sign it. So the paper was changed in the way it was written. It said that in the event of an escape they could be punished by death. We all signed the paper and the British had their pay books collected and they all signed them. Later the pay books were collected by the British Officers and the page was stripped out of the pay books.

There was heavy snow falling one day. I was sent with a Japanese cook with a two wheel cart to a large warehouse to get food. When we entered we saw that the place was completely empty. There was no food. A number of men with carts were running around the empty warehouse to no avail. As you see, food was very scarce. Some of the British that worked in the peanut factory were stealing peanut oil and other men in the ship yard were using it on their food which was heated on forges. The Japanese put a stop to that as the workers were complaining about it.

Shortly after that, about one hundred fifty of us were moved to a stockade camp in the foot hills south of town. This camp was surrounded by a wooden fence and contained our living quarters and a separate building for the Japanese army. Our doctor Kaufman left and Captain Birchall went to some other camp. This was a very cold winter with lots of snow. I had gotten a G.I. overcoat in a drawing. Thank God for that. My shoes were British Tennis shoes with holes in the bottoms. The snow came down for several days causing me to come back to camp with wet clothing. When I went to sleep at night I slept naked with every thing on top. This was not unusual as I never got warm anyway.

After the first of the year, American planes, B-29s, Grumman strafers and U.S. dive bombers visited us. The village below us was destroyed by personnel bombs. One day in January a burning B-29 flew over our barracks. It dropped off a life raft and some other pieces in the middle of the space inside the yard. It crashed on a hillside close by. There

were no damage to our enclosure but it was close. There was a two story barracks for Korean workers. One day our Doctor was taken over to the Koreans' building. There was a lot of activity going on there. When the Doctor came back he said that he had to kill an ox and condemn the meat as not fit to eat. The ox was wrapped in a blanket and buried in the yard. That night under the light of Coleman lanterns they dug it up again. I learned that the men had the government declare that the meat was not fit to eat. I also heard that that the veterinarian got half the meat. I never knew if our good doctor got any of it.

As the weeks passed we could see much of the bombing going on around us. We never went to work but just hung around the barracks. One day the Japanese ordered everyone in camp to go to work including those that were sick. We decided to refuse to go to work under those conditions. Almost immediately the barracks was full of armed guards. They bodily kicked every one out. After this demonstration the Japanese kept the sick in camp. On a Thursday in April we heard that President Roosevelt had passed away and an unknown man, Harry S. Truman was president. This event made a lot of the Japanese happy. The sky was full of American planes. May 12th 1945 we boarded a train. The train windows were covered over so we never saw the damage to *Tokyo* as we passed by. We arrived in a town called *Kamaishi*. The men there were all called *Indonesians*. They were a mixture of Dutch natives and Dutchmen and one black man. These men all bowed to the Guards and made a big effort to appease them. (That changed when we arrived in *Yokohama*. No one saluted the Japanese guards. The British men cursed them to their face.)

In *Kamaishi* we had a lot of trouble as we new arrivals neglected to salute the guards. In fact, we ignored them. Also the food situation changed. Food became scarcer. *Kamaishi* was not only a steel mill town but a fishing and fish products town. There had been no bombing or military action in that area, but it didn't take long for the food shortage to hit. The highest ranking Prisoner was a British Captain. He was always looking for extra food. He began bringing buckets of blood which was used in soup. He said that the blood came from a slaughter house. I didn't think much about that until I got a fang of a dog in my

soup. Then I realized that there were no cattle raised in Japan. I am sure no one stopped eating the soup.

Here I worked at a saw mill on the north side of the area. Other men worked at the steel mill. This mill was the first Bessemer method steel mill in Japan. As my job had some heavy work such as lifting heavy logs, I worked with Rocky and sometimes, when lifting a heavy object, my feet were glued to the floor. In these cases I couldn't move my feet at all. The civilian bosses would kick me in effort to make me work harder, all to no avail. We struggled along in deteriorating eating conditions.

I awoke on the morning of July 15<sup>th</sup> and went to work as usual. This was a day we had waited for. American Battleships appeared on the horizon and began a three hour bombardment with sixteen caliber navel guns, dive bombers and Grumman fighter planes strafing everywhere. During this bombardment, I and everyone with me hid out under a pile of lumber. When the bombardment eased we came out to a changed scene. The steel mill was wrecked and the town was destroyed. During the attack if I could have gotten a hold of any sort of boat I would have tried to get out to the Fleet. After this there were American planes roaming around strafing and dropping small bombs. We went back to our barracks and found that some of the compound had been destroyed. During the attack there were a lot of casualties among us Prisoners. One of our men had his leg shot out at the shank of the leg. We didn't have any medical equipment but some men endeavored to saw off the jagged bone with only a hand saw so that he could be fitted with some sort of device to save his life. During this ordeal the man's screams rang out through the camp. The man succumbed to shock and lost his life.

Up the hill from the camp there was a tunnel with a track out of it that was used to dump slag over a cliff in to the ocean. Over one thousand Japanese and thirty-five Javanese were in the tunnel. A shell landed at the seaward exit. When I got up there were more than 700 Japanese stacked in a long row about four men high. Each man had a wooden

piece attached to his toe with writing on it. There were nearly twenty-five Dutchmen also killed. The attack eased up for a few days before the fleet came back on the morning of August 10<sup>th</sup>. This time our barracks went up in a fire that burnt so fast that several men were killed as it burnt in seconds. I think that that the weapon *napalm* was used.

We were moved to a bombed metal warehouse and we hung around trying to dig out water pipes in the bomb crater. Here, strafing planes came by dropping small bombs. One time I was in a small dugout and a small plane dropped some small bombs. As the American planes flew by, an anti-aircraft shell took a round bite of the middle of a wing, but it continued to fly and disappeared out to sea. Another American plane was strafing near by and it approached my dug out. I got up and ran up a hill and arrived at a potato patch that was watered with human waste. I and several other men proceeded to dig the crop of potatoes, rub them off and eat them. These potatoes never made me sick in spite of the human fertilizer. I guess that I had already had every germ and was immune to them. We stayed in these bombed out buildings for several days.

As the days passed I witnessed American planes flying through flocks of birds. One day I was leaning up against the wall with another man and planes were overhead. I heard a bang on the roof and saw something coming through the roof. I dived out a window and but there was no explosion as I ran away from the building. I walked around for an hour or so and even came upon a stone monastery. No one was in it but it was a beautiful building. When I got back to the bombed building I found that the man I had been talking to had been hit on the head and killed. He was still sitting up against the wall. I didn't know his name but he could have been one of the last Prisoners killed in Japan.

After this we were moved to a small town about fifteen miles farther from the sea. We were lodged in a school house. One thing we had in plenty was hungry flies. By this time I had become allergic to flies and fleas so I really suffered. The Japanese guards had disappeared except for the Japanese Commander. As there was no longer a camp, there

was no food. I think that we ate up everything that moved or was planted in the whole area. We ate all of the chickens and geese in the area. We ate all of the gardens and all of the food that the local civilians had. One day the Japanese Officer came out of his office and announced that the war was over and Japan had lost. He went back into his office and two men followed him in. One came out wearing his shoes and the other had his sword.

In the next day or two a few small planes flew over and dropped some candy bars and other small items. One of my friends took off up the mountain following a cable line that supported some small cars on the wire. I think his name was Eugene Stahl. The American and British Officers forbid us from leaving the camp until arriving troops arrived. They said that if we did, we would be arrested when help came. I obeyed them but I should have taken off. Rocky and some of his friends took off to the seaport of *Kamaishi* on their own. Later, Rocky told me that they went down to get a ride on the train. He said that if they were hungry they took the food from the Japanese and if they wanted a cigarette they also took it from the Japanese. Most of us stayed and waited.

Soon larger planes came over and unloaded all sorts of food in barrels. A lot of it broke loose and became a danger to anyone below. Finally we went back to the seaport at *Kamaishi* and in a day or two some ships showed up in the harbor. One of them was a Hospital. I remember that it had the name of *Mercy*. From there we were loaded onto a destroyer which was built to carry commandos on raids. When the Sailors were issued ice cream we couldn't buy any. No one offered any to us. The next morning we were back in the dock at *Osano*. We were off loaded and boarded a larger ship. There were more than six hundred of us besides the four hundred crewmen. This ship was called a *landing ship, tanks*. It had only carried smaller landing craft when in action. The food facilities were only large enough for four hundred men at a time. At first, we lined up in the morning and found that we were to get only two meals a day. The ships crew separated us in to four groups. The way it worked out was, if your group was in the morning group that when you finished with the meal you got into the line for the evening meal, so that you stood in line all day. And after two days we had only hard tack and coffee to eat. Finally, after three days at

sea, the ship ran out of food. I think it was on the 6<sup>th</sup> day that we arrived back at *Manila* harbor.

On the ship were some men that were in the same camp in Japan that Gordon Alton was in. This is the same man that I gave a mouth organ too. They told me that Alton had been operated on for a broken appendix and was given only a few hours to live. That evening he was expected to have only a few hours left. As they were standing near the door of his room and discussing the situation they heard a mouth organ playing the song “*You Are My Sunshine*” and they looked into the room where Alton was sitting up in bed playing the song.

Before any of us could go ashore they let a series of crewmen go first. These men had not been ashore for a year or so. The first group went in the shore boat with a new bunch of Sailors. When that boat came back to the ship they carried almost all of the first crew who were very drunk. That went on for some time before they took us ashore. When ashore we were put in trucks and driven to a replacement camp. There we were split up groups of sixteen men and assigned to tents. We got lots of food, in fact too much. I would eat as much as I could hold at one time. Too much made me sick and I would go out into the nearby woods and heave it all up. Then I would go back and eat some more. This eating binge went on for about three days.

Not long after I arrived there I ran into Gordon Alton and I asked him about his playing of the mouth organ. He said it was true and he said when he heard his friends talking about his pending death he decided that he would play them a song before he left. All we did in that camp was eat and eat. I got tired of that so I went hitching around the area. A Filipino boy shined my shoes and when I gave him a dollar he spit on it threw it away. I traveled by thumbing rides to the town of *Batangas* and back. I went to *Manila* and looked around. In one area I found three modern high rise buildings and the former site of a very upscale shopping center. Two of the high rise buildings were tilted over into each other. The other

was flat on the ground. In the dock area there was a large area devoted to supplies. This had a high fence around it and was heavenly guarded. This area must have been two or three miles long, a city block wide and stacked twenty five or thirty feet high.

I ran into many men I knew. One asked if I wanted a jeep to drive around in. He said that our former Platoon Sergeant was now a one star General and he would give me a Jeep. I refused as you had to have a pass to drive around the country. I visited a prison camp full of Japanese and Korean Prisoners. They were guarded by Philippine Scouts. As I had worked with many of them, I stayed a while talking to them. I remarked to one of my friends about the fact that the gates were open and no one seemed to be watching the Prisoners. My Filipino friend remarked that after the first day none of them attempted to escape. He also told me that the Japanese and Korean prisoners killed each other at night and then buried them in the prison.

While I was at the replacement I lived with twelve other Americans. One day one of them told us that he had found his old Filipino girl friend and that he had reenlisted to stay there. In the next several days a few other men made the same decision. Then a general order came out that every man had to go back to the States first. I ate so much that I gained the most pounds that I had ever weighted and had to get bigger clothing. I met many of my old friends such as Weston Carrol, my old buddy that had spent his prison life in *Manchuria*. As time went by all of my friends were shipped out and though I corresponded with many of them I gradually lost touch with most of them. Some old friends had disappeared and some had been killed. Finally the day came to leave for home. This was in November of 1945. I sailed out on a Dutch ship manned by Muslims. Almost all of us were at least Corporals and higher ranked. There were no privates so the Officers aboard had to appeal for volunteers to work on the boat. I couldn't wait to get back and sail under the Golden Gate Bridge.

The trip back was slow and time dragged. We passed an Island which appeared on the

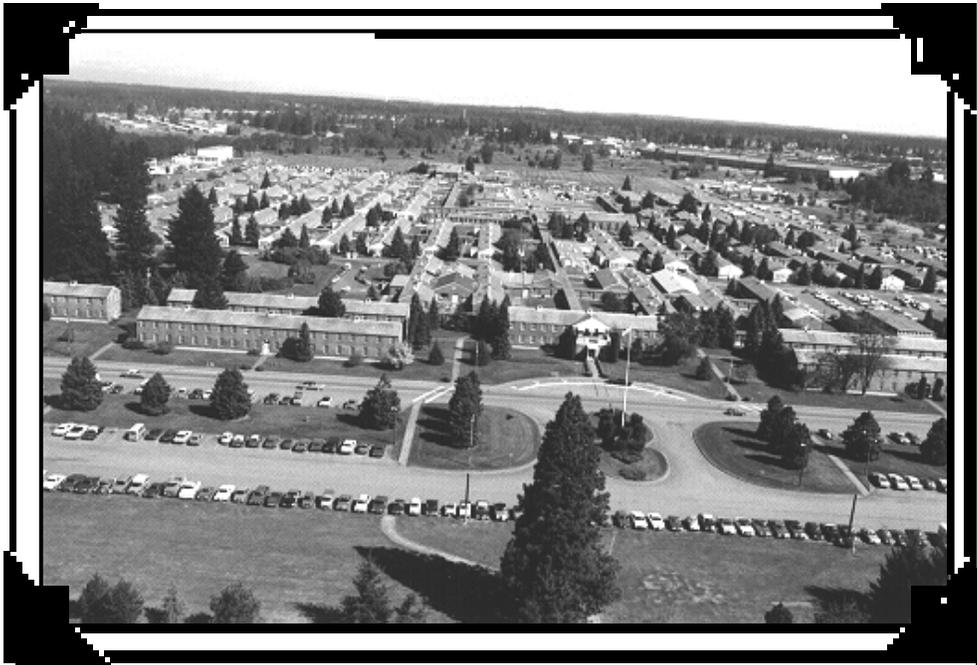
horizon as a sky full of masts. At first the weather was warm and the bed I slept in was back in a corner which very hot. I slept on the deck for ten or more days or until the temperature became cold. Then I had to sleep on my corner bed where I couldn't get a breath of air. Every morning I staggered up the broad ladder and fell on the deck and gasped to get my breath. Then I was disappointed when I learned that we were not going to San Francisco. We were landing back where I started from - Seattle Washington. On about the 20<sup>th</sup> day we were close to Seattle. A small boat met us at sea and delivered some fruit and frozen milk. I think that I drank at least five quarts in a few minutes. The boat docked and I was disappointed that there was hardly a person there to greet us. No bands or parades or any celebration of any kind.

When we landed we were loaded on buses and transported to Fort Lewis In a section reserved for hospital patients. The nurses took away our clothing and gave us some hospital clothing. Of course I wanted to get a pass so I asked a nurse where I could get one. She said that I was too late to get a pass but if I wanted I could just leave in my Hospital uniform. So I and another man walked out of the gate and held out our thumbs to a limousine with a driver and an elderly lady. They stopped and invited us in the back seat with the lady. She told us that they would take us wherever we wanted so we went to the closest town. We split up there and the first place I went into was the closest Pub and ordered a beer. Before I knew it I was offered free beer from all sides. I went from there to an army navy store and bought a uniform. I caught a bus to Seattle and went to some of my old hangouts. All of the city was the same as when I left. I went into a restaurant and ordered a meal. All of the time in the prison camps I remembered a meal of pork chops so I proceeded to order them. I ate three complete meals of pork chops. I was full but happy. Evening was approaching so I went to the bus station. The line to the Hospital had a long line so I got on a bus with no passengers. The driver told me that the bus went to Fort Lewis. I went to sleep and when the bus stopped I got out but I didn't recognize the area. It was very chilly and I didn't know where I was. Finally a Jeep with an NCO and a private came along. They stopped and the VCO asked me what I was doing and I told him that I didn't know where my barracks were. He asked where I had been and I said "*Seattle*". He said let me see your pass and when I told him I didn't have one, he told the private that I

was a former Prisoner Of War and he couldn't touch me. He said to get in the jeep and we will find your barracks. He said words such as, *he couldn't do anything to a person of my status* and we soon found the right barracks. We only stayed there three days and we were due to go by train to Los Angeles, California. The next day we boarded a sleeper car and we were on our way. On the sleeper car I had a four foot bed with a picture window. This was luxury of the highest order. The trip took about a day and a half was the best train ride ever had and time really flew by.

## ARRIVAL IN LOS ANGELES

Once in Los Angeles, we went by bus to Madigan General Hospital which was rows of single floor buildings. I was assigned to a wing and a bed. You had to put in for a pass to go to town. I found that you could walk or drive out and no one bothered with you. I ran into a friend from *Corregidor* by the name of George Damgaard. He already had a car so we roamed all over L.A.



*Madigan Army Medical Center -  
Built in 1944 as a temporary hospital for the wounded.*

I finally went up to Riverside, California and visited my Aunt Esther. She had a younger cousin still at home. The third night I awoke with extreme pains in my side. My aunt called the Airbase and an ambulance came out and picked me up. I had extreme appendicitis. Within an hour I was operated on and my appendix was removed. They wouldn't let me out of the bed for fourteen days. In the meanwhile, along with other men, we were entertained by the nurses. They were a jolly lot. Every night they all came in kissed us good night.

One of them had a boyfriend but when she got orders to go back east for discharge she became very excited. I asked her about her local boyfriend she said forget about him she was going home. At the end of the fifteen days the nurses informed me that I could get dressed and get my discharge from the hospital. I hopped out of the bed and fell on my face. I had been in bed too long but I soon got my feet under me and left for Madigan Hospital. When I got there the date was close to Christmas, but when I tried to get a pass they told me that I had not passed my many medical tests and I wouldn't get home by December 25<sup>th</sup>. When I objected I made a mistake. A Doctor told me that if I could get myself signed off by evening I could leave on a medical, ninety day pass. He handed me my many papers for various Doctors and I got them all signed and got ready to leave. I found out later when I had some problems left over from my Prisoner experiences that I had no record of anything wrong.

I got a plane to Sacramento, Calif. My mother lived In North Sacramento so I arrived home in the afternoon. There, I found the war was Hell for the people at home too. When my mother came to the door the first thing she said to me was bad news. My only brother, five years younger than me, had died in the invasion of *Tarawa* in the South Pacific. This tragedy affected her for the rest of her life. I couldn't imagine the strain of having two sons missing in action and later to find that one was dead and the other was confined in a Prison Camp in far-off Japan.

## PROLOGUE TO THE FUTURE

As I got to thinking about my future I realized that I was far behind time. Thinking about it, I couldn't find a clue about what I wanted to do with my future. I drifted about in several short term jobs and finally found out I had a talent for the sales world. I was helped by my past in all of my endeavors, as I found that whenever I became discouraged about the difficulties in life, I resorted back to my past. I found out that when the going got tough, I could remember my experiences in the Japanese prison camps and see that my life now was easy and that I could take courage from that and press forward with my task at hand.



*San Diego P.O.W.s in Honolulu, Hawaii, April 2006. My son Ted and I enjoy good food and good friends at a luau. (Second and third in from the right.)*