

**DECLASSIFIED**

Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

RESTRICTED

~~SECRET~~

Narrative by: Mrs. Leona Jackson, Lt.(jg)  
Navy Nurse  
Capture of Guam by the Japanese. Internment of occupants, nurses, etc. by Japanese. December 9, 1941.

Mrs. Jackson, a Navy nurse, was captured on Guam shortly after the start of the war. She tells a fluent story of her experiences as a Jap prisoner on Guam and later on the mainland of Japan. She describes the sidelights of the Doolittle Tokyo raid which occurred while she was a prisoner. Mrs. Jackson was repatriated on the GRIPSHOLM in June 1942.

Film No: 36  
Recorded: March 31, 1943

Copy No. 1 of two copies.

1011

OFFICE OF NAVAL RECORDS AND LIBRARY

RESTRICTED

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

NARRATIVE BY: MISS LEONA JACKSON, Lieut. (jg),  
NAVY NURSE.

CAPTURE OF GUAM BY THE JAPANESE.

INTERMENT OF OCCUPANTS, NURSES,

ETC. BY JAPANESE.

December 9, 1941.

Copy No.   /   of four copies.

Film No. 36

Recorded: 3/31/43

1012

OFFICE OF NAVAL RECORDS AND LIBRARY



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

This is Leona Jackson, Chief Nurse, United States Navy. This recording is being made March 31st 1943, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Washington, D. C.

For most people in this country the war began with Pearl Harbor, but I was not on Pearl Harbor. It began for me, and for four other members of our corps and the staff of doctors and hospital corpsmen and the rest of the Naval administrative staff on the island, in Guam. We had our own hands full down there. We had just had word of the bombing of Pearl Harbor when the Japanese came over to pay us a call. I might add that their calling cards were a little bit explosive. When they came over I wondered for an instant, I think, if it was the Clipper returning but there hadn't been any Clipper in the day before and as the sound came nearer, I realized that it couldn't be a Clipper, it didn't sound like a PBY which had come sometimes to the island on their way to the Far East, so, the inevitable conclusion was that it must be the Japs. They had come over the island before, photographic mission, reconnaissance, so we weren't particularly surprised at that. Just about that time the Chief Nurse knocked on my door and said that word had just come in that the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor - They'll probably be here next. I remember thinking rather idly, well, why did she say they would be here, they were here. But my only comment was - "So, it had come at last."

I wasn't surprised at the Japanese attack, and I think for many of the people there it didn't come as a surprise. The situation had been tense and the Governor had sent the families from the island several weeks previous to the actual outbreak of war. I think our first reaction was one of relief that we didn't have the women and children there on the island. I was scheduled for afternoon duty and I knew that there wouldn't be any casualties reported into the hospital for a little while so I leisurely finished my shower and got into a uniform. The other nurses were on duty in the hospital, and I realized that somebody was going to have to relieve them in the afternoon. In about an hour, I should say, the casualties had come in. The first objectives of the Japanese raid had been the PENGUIN, which was one of the station ships there, and the Marine barracks, and the Marine post at Sumay. The report came to us that the PENGUIN had been attacked and that the Skipper had scuttled her. A little while later the Skipper himself (Lt. Hanland) was brought in and we knew then that the reports were true, we got the information straight from him. The Marines had brought in some casualties. They were the usual sort of thing which you would find in incidents like this. The radio operator had been injured, skull fracture, I believe, when the Japanese bombed communications. That seems to have been their first objective, communications. That plan of attack was used in order to keep us from getting any information of the attack off the island. I may add that they never did get the communication station. They were able to jam it with their radio which they had located on probably SIAPAN or ROTA but they never did put our communication system mechanically out of order. They rendered it ineffective.

The Japanese raided twice the first day. The first raid consisted of nine planes. I had gone on duty after lunch and was making rounds in the hospital when we heard them come over again. They came low over the hospital attempting to get the communications building, which was not awfully far from our ward. The clatter was terrific but there really wasn't anything to get excited about because there was no place to go. The island was completely and entirely unfortified and so I think most of us just went on with our routine things as they would be done in ordinary circumstances. When we left and took our turns at sleep that night I think each of us

1013



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

wondered if the Japanese would attempt a landing, but dawn came and no Japanese on the island at least as far as we knew, and the day began again and the Japanese began again. This time there were three raids. The last raid of the day the Japanese were strafing as they came over, we never did know whether they were just trying to get the communications or whether they were just plain strafing. There weren't a lot of bullets came into the hospital, I think just two or three, something of that sort landed in the various wards as they came over. There weren't a whole lot of casualties from the second day. The roads were filled during the two days with natives who were making their way from Agana to their ranches in the interior of the island. They had been warned that in event of hostile aircraft action they should leave the settled areas and go into the cover of the palm jungles in the interior.

The actual landing on the island came about 3:30 I think we heard the first shots on the third morning of war. I was awakened from sleep by the sound of shots and walked out of my room onto the Lanai and everything looked so peaceful it seemed very difficult to realize that war had broken out in the Pacific. I listened and things were quiet, I noticed a curtain in the room next door to me move and said to Miss Fogarty - "I wonder if that is a landing party." and she said - "Well, it might be a landing party, or perhaps it is just the sentries firing at looters." So, both of us waited and in about half an hour we heard shots again. This time I said - "Joe, I am quite sure that it's a landing party, and I am going to make rounds in the hospital and see what's going on over there." and she said - "I'll go with you." So, all of us went over to the hospital. The shots came closer and increased in volume as the Japs proceeded toward Agana. We had made our rounds and had come down to the library which was just off the emergency room and which we thought would be the most logical place to get any news or information. The Captain at the hospital had sent a messenger over to the government house asking if he knew anything about a Japanese landing on the island, and the only word was that they had received no word. Evidently, they had received no word because the sentries had been killed by the Japanese as they landed. However, it was quite evident that there was something more than usual afoot. They, that is the Japanese, came into Agana about six o'clock that morning. The first actual word of their landing on the island was brought to us by Bill Hughes who was one of the Public Works foremen. He and his native wife and brother-in-law had been coming in toward Agana from their ranch and they ran into an ambush of Japanese soldiers. At first they had thought that it was a Marine patrol, because of the darkness all uniforms look much alike, but as the Japanese jumped onto the running-board of the car they realized that it was Japanese and not our own Marines, and he had thrown the car into gear and thrown the Japanese off as he accelerated it and had left them shooting at him, but before he got away from them they had bayoneted his native wife and brother-in-law. He himself had been bayoneted, but he had brought them into the hospital for treatment. Then we knew that the Japanese were on the island. The firing ceased about dawn, about six o'clock. I think the most bitter moment in my life came at sunrise when standing in the library door I saw the Rising Sun on the flag pole where the day before the Stars and Stripes had proudly flown.

The Japanese appeared in the hospital compound about 8:30, I think, a few of them had been in during the actual landing but they appeared in force about 8:30. They used the hospital as a headquarters at first, I think they probably thought that if the Americans came over to retaliate they wouldn't fire on the hospital and that that was the reason they used it, to save their own skins. The prisoners, the American officers and men who were stationed on the island, were captured or required to surrender and<sup>as</sup> they did they were brought into the hospital compound. The officers were lodged in the upper section of SOQ and the men downstairs. Conditions were extremely crowded, of course. The only extenuating circumstances were the fact that it was

1014



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

tropic construction, and there was plenty of ventilation. They were retained in the hospital for several days after the Japanese occupied the island. At first things were chaotic. The Japanese definitely didn't have a grasp of the situation, their soldiers ran wild, with all of the attendant ills of the Japanese soldier when he runs wild. The prisoners were moved from the hospital after several days. The officers were put in the KCK hall which which was on the cathedral compound next door to us. The enlisted men and the civilians were put in the cathedral itself. The Churches, I think throughout the island, had been used or were being used as barracks, as were the schools. At the hospital the American nurses remained, the native nurses remained, the Commanding Officer was allowed to designate two doctors and a warrant officer as Administrative Staff. It was quite logical that he would choose the Chief of Medicine who was also the laboratory chief and the chief of surgery. He chose one warrant pharmacist, who had been in the administrative end of it, who could be responsible for the commissary and the dispensation of such food as the Japanese left to us.

The Japanese had taken over by this time all of the hospital except for one ward. Part of the hospital they used as barracks, one ward of it, I think, they used as a ward. But we had nothing to do with those patients, the Japanese did not want us to know the extent of their casualties. From time to time new ones were brought in. From time to time reports were brought to us by natives who managed somehow or other to get word in of sailors who had been brought in and were without clothes or were dripping wet and that sort of thing, so we judged the Japanese were having a little bit of difficulty in some of their landings and that they might be having difficulties quite a distance away from the island and bringing their casualties in here for treatment. The hospital ward which was left to us housed all sorts of patients. It was probably the most amazing ward I'll ever see unless I get back in some active duty. We had war casualties there, and natives, and men and women and children, we even had a Cassearian section for variety. We were able to take excellent care of these people because the Japanese had confined the native nurses to the compound too, and inasmuch as there were about 30 of them, some of them had gone to their homes before the Japanese landing and didn't return, but we still had an adequate force. Several hospital corpsmen had been retained on the compound and the operated the laundry and the galley. The rest of them had been sent over to the Church with the other prisoners.

Life went on this way, and it was extremely uncomfortable. We remained in our quarters but we had no privacy in those quarters. We never knew when or how many people would be stalking through looking things over, picking up what they wanted. About two days after the Japanese occupied the island a big Japanese Navy Captain came in, seated himself in our living room and said - "Have you had any news?" Well, of course, we wouldn't compromise any of the natives who were bringing news to us, so, we said - "No." So, he said - "So sorry to tell you, your fleet all sunk." and we said - "Well, too bad." and let it go at that. The island was full, of course, of Japanese propaganda, Japanese version of the news. However, one rumor became current and seemed to have some foundation, that we were being moved from the island. This rumor was proven true when on Christmas day we were told to inventory all of our personal possessions, pack them. To pack a bag containing only the things that we ourselves could carry. The rest of our things it seems were to be stored for us, so the Japanese said, would be sent to us later if we needed them. We asked what sort of things we should put in this bag, if we needed heavy clothes. Oh! No, we were going south, we wouldn't need any. Just the same each of us took a heavy coat. We had come out and had had the heavy coats while we were crossing.

1015



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

The men were very much more unfortunate than we were. None of them, I think, with the exception of one, either Dr. Moe or Capt. Todd, USMC, had been allowed to return to their quarters to get anything, and the first few days after the Japanese landing their house girls had been able to bring in something in the way of clothing to them. The Japanese had looked things over and anything that they thought might be used in the future they refused to allow the officers and men to have. A few articles of their clothing they did allow them to have, however. But most of them had only the things which they wore on their backs. One officer who finally through some oversight of the Japanese gained permission from one of the petty officialdom to get to his home found that everything of any value had been stripped from it, and the things, the articles of clothing the Japanese couldn't use they had ripped up with a bayonet so that no one else could use them. To all inquiries the Japanese said the houses were sealed, they were under the protection and jurisdiction of the Japanese military, would be held for them. They went over the island and stripped it, they took food, they took equipment, sewing machines from the natives, everything. The local Japanese had proved a very effective fifth column: Mrs. Sawada, Mrs. Dejima, Shinohara, Shimizu, to some extent though I don't know how much. One of the officers later had said to Shimizu, when it became known that the Japanese, a small force of them had landed on one of the remote points of the island about two days before the outbreak of war, and "Well, if you knew they were here, why didn't you tell me?" and Shimizu said - "Well, they were at my ranch and they had my family, what could I do?" So, that is the situation, I don't know what part he played in it. There is no doubt of the part Shinohara, Swada, and Dejima played. Mrs. Sawada was very much in evidence in the hospital and the whole place after they took it over. She came to us and demanded blankets and bed-clothing for the Japanese officers who were quartered at her house. She took a truck and went through the whole of the island. She had been there a long enough that she knew most of the natives. She took what she wanted out of their homes. They took livestock, caribou, cattle, all that sort of thing, loaded it on ships and took it to Japan. Some of it they slaughtered on the island and some of it I think they took alive. Another measure which the Japanese had instituted was control of all of the island's food resources. They had required each storekeeper, it made no difference how minor he was, to list all of his supplies, everything was rigidly controlled by the Japs. I stood in the ward of the hospital and watched the natives stand in the hot sun, and it gets hot in Guam, for hours and hours waiting to get permission to buy even a pound of rice. I don't know that many of them had very much in the way of food by the time we left after the Japanese had stripped them of all the things that they wanted. I understand that the Japanese put in a little more agriculture than the natives had been accustomed to cultivate under our regime there. I imagine that quite a few of them got acquainted with a rice paddy who hadn't known anything about rice paddies before.

One of the incidents which always stands out in my mind was one hot sunny day when I saw the Japanese march all of our prisoners up the hill toward the officer's club. None of us trusted the Japanese, we didn't know what was going to be our ultimate disposition, and I think none of us would have been at all surprised to have been lined up and shot. Only I later learned the Japanese use bayonet for those things rather than a shot, it doesn't waste ammunition. Anyway, they lined up all of the officers and marched them up the hill to the officer's club and after they were up there a while we heard firing. I think we lived almost an eternity in that length of time until we finally saw them winding down the hill again, the officers and men. Later we heard that the Japanese had taken them on maneuvers, in other words, they had taken them up to show off. Our turn came some time later when we were informed that all of the Navy nurses and any of the native nurses, who could be spared from the hospital wards were to report.

1016



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

We reported and assembled in the plaza and watched a review of the Japanese. I tried at that time to determine whether they were running the same equipment around time after time or if they really had that much equipment on the island. At that time one Jap looked just like another to me and I couldn't tell the difference. They had, however, considerable anti air-craft equipment on the island. They had a full troop of cavalry. What in the world they thought they were going to do with cavalry in Guam I don't know, but they had them there. After this review, we were taken up the hill to the officer's club where the Japanese proceeded to demonstrate some of their military tactics, their machine guns and their flame throwers, and their tactics in taking a position, that sort of thing. The idea, of course, being to show off and to let us know their supposed military might, I don't think anybody was awfully impressed, though naturally we didn't make any comment about it. On the way back after a while I was very much struck with the idea that coming down the hill we walked something like a goosetstep and I made the comment to Governor, Capt. Geo. McMillan, USN, that I never expected to learn the goosetstep, but it looked like I would be learning it under the Japanese military. Anyway that was the end of the review.

During the time that we were on the island a number of the officers were repeatedly questioned by the Japanese. I was very much amused at the Governor's attitude. At any time the Japanese questioned him he informed them immediately that he would give them any information they desired about the civil administration on the island, but as for military affairs, as a Naval Officer, international law did not require that he give out any military information and he would not do so. To every question that came up of a military nature he simply answered - "I don't know." One Japanese commander in the Navy, in particular, made himself very obnoxious, and I think that practically every officer who met him hopes that he will get a chance at him some day. Anyway, in the case of the Governor's questioning when he had repeatedly answered - "I don't know." the officer who was interrogating him said - "How can it be that a man who seems to know as little as you say you know can have attained to the position which you hold?" To which the Governor very laconically answered - "I don't know." We were very much amused - I think they got just about as much information out of everybody else in the place.

In one of the sessions of questioning the Japanese held with the Governor of the island, Captain McMillan, the question that came up was "Who is Commander of the Asiatic Fleet?" To which, the Captain answered - "Don't you know? the Navy has an Admiral out there, we think he is pretty good, we've kept him on two years past his retirement age. His name is Hart. If you don't know him I think you will meet him soon." Another question was - "Who is in charge of the Army in the Philippines?" To which, the Governor answered - "I don't know much about the Army. They have a General out there that they are rather fond of. They have kept him on past his retirement age too. His name is MacArthur. He is probably another one of the people you will meet."

Time went on and the rumor which had been circulating that we were leaving became more persistent and on the 9th of January we were moved from our quarters into those with the native nurses and on the 10th of January we were hastily summoned. We knew that something was going on because the night before the doctors and the hospital corpsmen who had been assigned for the maintenance of the hospital were taken over to the Church with the rest of the prisoners so we realized that we were ready for a move. On the 10th we were loaded with our luggage onto the top of a truck and rode down to Piti to the Navy Yard. One instance and one man stand

1017



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

out among the Japanese. At the time the Japanese had landed, when they first came onto the hospital compound one of the Japanese interpreters had come up to our Captain and said to him that he was so sorry that war had come between Japan and the United States: that his home had been in the United States for 18 years, his wife and family were still here; that he had been very well treated; his life in the United States had been happy, but he had gone back to Japan for a visit with his family and because of his dual citizenship had been inducted into the Japanese army before he could get out of the country. That man had done, in everything that he could, to make things smoother, he couldn't do a lot, but I think that he had kept us, in our quarters, from a lot of the unpleasantness that might have come to us; first of all the Japanese would come trailing in at all hours and finally a stop was put to it and a notice was posted on our quarters to the effect that only people who had business there or were of officer rank would be admitted, and I think it was due to this man that we received the very small amount of consideration that we did receive. Anyway, when we were loaded onto this pickup truck sitting on our suitcases on our way to Piti he had come by to inquire if we were all right and, of course, we were. The men were required to march the five miles from Agana to Piti. The patients were taken from the hospital with the exception of two, Blaha, a Chief Yeoman who had had machine gun and bayonet wounds. He had been wounded by a machine gun at the taking of the island when a Japanese commanded him to get up and he said he couldn't the Japanese had stuck a bayonet in his chest. The other patient was Perry, who was manager of the cable station and who had a paralysis due to a bomb fragment in his spine. These were just a couple of examples of the casualties. I, myself, saw the bodies of the American Marines being brought in. I said to the corpsman later who was in the morgue at the time they came in following the invasion - "What wounds were on those bodies?" and he said - "Bayonet wounds." I said - "I thought so." They were bayonet wounds in the back. The men who had surrendered had been required to strip off all of their clothing except shorts, had been searched, evidently had been required to kneel at the feet of the Japanese and had been bayoneted in the back. That was typical. Any of the natives that had gotten in their way had been bayoneted without regard to age, sex or color. And so, the general stay on the island had been chaotic and confused. We didn't know what was coming to us, and we didn't know where we were going.

We were loaded aboard the ARGENTINA MARU. The men were carried in a cargo hold of the ship down below the water line. The patients were put in a twelve man steward's cabin and some of the hospital corpsmen were there. The nurses and the wife of a chief petty officer and her six weeks old baby was the only other white woman remaining on the island, were put in to a four berth stewardess' cabin. The traveling arrangements, of course, were such that two of us had to sleep on the deck each night, but the deck being Japanese Tatami was just about as soft as Japanese mattress on the bunks so nobody objected very much or even thought much about it. The food here during the five days that we were aboard ship was rice, or spaghetti, or something of that sort. The rice was full of weevils. We got in to Japan on the 15. We cast anchor in the morning. We had two slices of bread for breakfast. The heat went off, the crew left the ship, and nothing happened. The day wore on. After nightfall we were taken up on deck and from there were put aboard a barge which nearly upset in the process of loading. The blankets which had been issued for the patients while aboard ship had been taken from them, and they were brought aboard the barge some covered only with sheets.

1018



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

About six feet out from the wall in each of these rooms was a light padding of straw with a straw mattress thrown over it. These were the beds of the hospital patients, in fact, the beds of most of the prisoners during the first days in the prison camp. The patients were put down on the beds and some of the Japanese bustled around getting blankets for them. A Japanese second lieutenant came in and pointed to one section of the room and said - "Patients here." and then he pointed to the other and said - "Nurses here." We sort of stood aghast for a minute and then we said - "No." For a minute we were too stunned to say anything. Then he said - "Yes, Patients here and nurses here." We said - "Well, we don't sleep with our patients, we have a hospital corps detachment who can sleep here without any embarrassment and American nurses don't sleep in the same rooms with their patients and share quarters with them." Well, anyway, after considerable argument the Colonel came in and he said - "Patients here and nurses here." and we said - "No." He stamped his foot and walked out, and we still said - "No." So, the Second Lieutenant left. Five females who jabbered English much faster than he could understand it, though he spoke English, was too much for even a Jap. He came back eventually and directed us to another room which was a little bit off, at least, it had partitions in it, where we could have a little amount of privacy and the hospital corpsmen shared the rooms with the patients. None of the patients were seriously ill, they didn't require skilled nursing care. They had been a month in the hospital in Guam and during that time the ones who were going to die had died, and the others had reached the stage of convalescence where they required dressings and they required help in getting around but they weren't running elevations of temperature and they were not seriously ill. That was our introduction to the Japanese prison camp. The camp was an old Army barracks, unheated, dimly lighted, and dirty. Wings branched off from the central building and the rooms were arranged in succession down the length of the wings, a center corridor running the full length of the wing. Incidentally, the day we landed in Japan there was a high wind and snow, and all of the Americans were very cold. Once ashore the patients, nurses, Mrs. Hillmers and her baby were loaded into ambulances and buses for the ride to the prison camp. The remainder of the prisoners were greeted formally by the Military Commandant, loaded onto the street cars, and came to the camp much later.

Mrs. Hillmers, her baby, and the Bishop and Brother Jesus (both Spanish) were taken to the village inn for lodging. At about 9:30 the rest of the prisoners came to the camp. We had had nothing to eat you remember but two slices of bread since morning. After we had been there a while they brought in a bucket of something hot. We read in the newspapers the next day that it was cabbage soup. We never did know what was supposed to be in it, anyway, it steamed, and some bread. So, we ate the bread and we ate some of the so-called cabbage soup. By this time they had issued some blankets to us. Now, don't get any ideas about these blankets. It sounds wonderful, but they were Japanese staple fiber which has a basis of wood. It has a lot of weight but no particular warmth. I know that all of us put all five blankets on the places that we were sleeping, pulled off our shoes and with all the rest of our clothes crawled under a double thickness of all five blankets, and I know that I shivered until morning, and I think that everybody else did. I have never been so cold in my life. We had two meals the next day, rice and soup. But a volunteer crew of our own people, two officers and a number of enlisted men, agreed to take over the galley which was on the prison camp grounds, after cleaning the place up from the results of it's long neglect they started cooking whatever food the Japanese issued and after that we had three meals a day.



RESTRICTED

~~SECRET~~

Rice was issued twice a day, bread once a day. The rice had wheat germ mixed with it in order to make up the vitamin B1 content which is lost in the polishing of rice. In addition to this, they issued a small quantity of vegetables which in order to go around at all had to be cooked in a large quantity of water and which they designated as soup.

After we had been in the camp for several days, about 10 I think, the civilians among us were moved to Kobe. Mrs. Hillmers and the baby, the Bishop and Brother Jesus, were taken along. After about three weeks of this crowded living condition in the camp the Japanese decided that we ought to have more room and that they would open another barracks. They did this and built up from the floor a platform on which they placed hard packed straw mattresses and these were our beds. They were not a whole lot more comfortable than the floor had been but at least it was more convenient to keep the place in order and to keep it clean. Life settled down pretty much to a routine in the camp there. The Japanese started classes in Japanese and many of the officers and men attended. I think they probably thought they might get back into the fight someday and would use some of the same tactics on the Japs that the Japs had tried to use on us. At any rate, other classes were started too, some of the officers had started classes in mathematics and various things for the men hoping that by teaching them they would be able to qualify for higher rates when they got out of prison camp and it would serve also to keep these things clear in the minds of the men who were teaching so that they wouldn't lose their touch with things. The question of our status as non-combatants had come up and the Japanese had said that even though we were non-combatant, the doctors and nurses and hospital corps, should they be released they would be of service with a combat unit and, therefore, they would not be released but would be retained at the camp. So we were more or less settled down for the duration. The general attitude of the men at the camp was excellent. They never lost their sense of humor, a thing which the Japanese couldn't understand and they watched with considerable suspicion during the early days at the camp because they thought we knew something of a military nature that was going to be sprung as a surprise to them. The men were questioned here, many of the officers, were questioned here at the camp again and their status determined. After they had been there a while, as I say, things had settled down and the classes had started, and the discipline and the morale was good. It more or less settled down on the same lines of discipline that you would find in a Naval establishment anywhere. The five of us, not having any nursing duties since there were no seriously ill patients, devoted ourselves to the business of keeping the existing clothing supply in order. I never knew there were so many buttons until I got to Zentsuji which is the prison camp. Most of the men had come off with not much more than they wore on their backs, and through the Embassy group from Tokyo had been able to send up a few things through the Swiss, it was not anything near an adequate supply of clothing. The attitude of the officers at the camp was good. The Americans had realized, of course, that there was nothing that they could do about it, they were in a bad spot, they were prisoners of war, and so they maintained discipline among themselves and they maintained discipline among the men. They kept their barracks in good order and their dress in good order, and as a result, the Japanese were quite pleased because every time some big wig of their army came to inspect, the General who was commanding the place was commended for the condition of neatness of it and as a result he seemed to feel rather kindly toward the men who were imprisoned there. I didn't see any instances of any brutality at the camp. There might have been some and those things were kept from us, I don't know, I didn't see any.

1020



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

We were very much surprised after having been told by the Japanese that we were military and would be retained there to be told, about the middle of March, that we were being moved to Kobe. We weren't awfully keen on this Kobe move because we didn't know exactly what Kobe held. It was sort of a "Better the evil that you know, than the evil that you know not." At least, we were with our own people at Zentsuji, and we knew what Zentsuji was like. However, we had no choice, I assure you, and found ourselves on the 13th of March in Kobe. The man who met us in Kobe was a Japanese who spoke excellent English. He had spent many years, I think, in the United States, I don't believe he was American born but he certainly was American educated, at least in part. He was working with the Japanese immigration office, and throughout our whole stay at the detention house in Kobe he was considerate of us and went out of his way to do many things that were nice to us. I think that his people too were still in the United States, and he realized that they would receive decent treatment at our hands and was trying in his own way to give us the sort of treatment he felt his own people were getting.

The detention house, the eastern lodge, had been an old hotel which had been frequented by Indians and the manager was an Indian too. India, of course, was not in the war against the Japanese and these people though they were not restricted, at least nominally they were not restricted, there was still some restriction and they were under constant suspicion. The people at the detention house, other than ourselves, were Dutchmen mainly who had been business representatives of various branches in Japan and Japanese territory, and then after we were there sometime ten missionary priests and an American Protestant missionary were added to our community. Late more Allied Nationals came. That all helped considerably because after all they were our own people and the priests having been a long time in Japan were allowed to bring some of their books with them. The conditions of life at the detention house were considerably better than they had been at the camp. There was more variety of food and better food. We had beds to sleep on and there was hot water so that we could have a shower. The hot water was on about two or three hours during the morning, and we could get laundry done and things of that sort during that period. The house was unheated and we sat around in all the clothes we could find to put on most of the time. We got there in winter and it was rather cold. We didn't have the restrictions there, there was much less tension at the eastern lodge than we had had before.

We had, as I said before, books to read. One of the Dutchmen had been allowed to bring a phonograph and some records, which helped. His records were widely selected with quite a range of types of music and it helped a lot. There were a number of people who spoke other languages. Some of us studied languages. We had, of course, our household duties too. We were particularly fortunate, I think, there in having an amah who was a Japanese woman and had been in charge of buying the food during the time the lodge was a hotel, and she seemed to consider it a matter of pride to provide as well as she could for us in order that when we came home we might not be able to say too many adverse things about her country. She felt that we were foreigners within their midst and that they should put a foot foremost. She was very considerate in many instances. Our guard here, the man in charge of the place, had been a Japanese policeman and was probably called back to active service, and then they had some members of the Japanese police. Some of them were cantakerous and some of them were thoughtful, you didn't know exactly when you made a request what response you were going to get. We were permitted during the time we were in Kobe to go shopping on a couple of occasions. The Swiss had come and we were able to get a very limited amount of funds but, at least, we could buy some hose of which we were in desperate need, and we had

1021



RESTRICTED

~~SECRET~~

gotten a few other supplies that we needed on these times when we had gone shopping. On occasions we commented that we didn't get enough exercise, because it was rather a confined place. There was a small plot of ground around this hotel which the earlier internees had converted into a garden. They planted some vegetables and some flowers and so on outthere, and it was green and nice but it was very small. It certainly didn't allow for any degree of exercise, so the Japanese decided that they would let us get some exercise and they took us for long walks in the surrounding territory with a couple of guards and attendants. I think the first walk was something like seven or ten miles. After not having any amount of exercise for a while I can assure you that we all had some stiff sore muscles for a couple of days. Life was reasonably uneventful here, except for one thing. That was Doolittle's raid. One of the priests and I had been in the garden and we heard the planes come over and we hadn't heard any Japanese planes for some time, and so we looked them over pretty carefully and decided between us that they weren't Japanese, they were probably our own. Our suspicions were soon confirmed when one of the planes separated from the others and dropped bombs on the docks in Kobe and then joined the other two on the way over to Osaka. The effect of this raid, whatever it might have been from a military point of view, had quite an effect on Japanese morale because just about two weeks previous to that one of their military spokesman had gotten up and sounded off to the effect that Japan could not be raided by an outside power, and here was an outside power showering them that day with bombs and showing them it could be done. We didn't know that it was General Doolittle until we were on the way home, but whoever it was - the bombing was certainly a welcome visitor as far as we were concerned.

There had been a persistent rumor there was going to be an exchange of prisoners. We had the English version of the Japanese newspapers, the Osaka Mainichi, but, of course, that was a prepared version and was often times very different from the Japanese version. However, some of the people with us had been many years in Japan and they would get the Japanese version from the guards and compare them, so between the two versions and what we knew of the situation we had a reasonably good source of information. I am quite sure that the Japanese didn't realize how much information we actually got out of it, or they wouldn't have allowed us to have the newspapers. Their propaganda is something that is unbelievable. In all the time that I was in Japan they sank our fleet I think a total of six or seven times as reported in their public press. I never saw them actually admit a loss of their own in their press. Occasionally, a plane would fly off into the distance or something of that sort, but they never lost anything, so I was much surprised when I saw Tojo's announcement of their losses the first year of the war. If he announced that loss then they must have had a terrifically greater loss than was announced judging by the general Japanese propaganda attitude.

Finally, it became very definite that there would be an exchange of nationals. The five of us did not expect, however, to be exchanged. We were military personnel, and we had no expectation of coming back. However, a few days before the Swiss had come to us, this same Japanese interpreter had told us confidentially that at least the five of us were going to be exchanged, but that Mrs. Hillmers was not on the list. We couldn't quite understand that, but it seems the Japanese attitude was that inasmuch as her husband was still in Japan she would want to remain there too. Well, anyway, the English woman, who had been many years in Japan and who was interned with us and was more or less responsible for us, finally got things straightened out and Mrs. Hillmers was put on the list. Then the Swiss consul came and notified us officially that we were all on the list to go home. Of all the ironic things, the customs people examined our luggage before

1022



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

we could leave and, by the way, we had had a customs examination at the prison camp, if you please, prisoners of war stripped of everything the Japanese wanted, and the customs officials had given us their OK. Anyway, the same man who examined my luggage at Zentsuji had examined it in Kobe, and since I didn't have anything that he could possibly want anyway, why, we all got through. We went from Kobe - we were taken on a day coach to Yokohama and then we were taken down to Tokyo for breakfast and back to Yokohama when we went aboard the ASAMA MARU. Once aboard we found that we had been assigned very nice quarters. We hadn't expected that we would have them but later on we found out that the American diplomatic corps had had the arranging of quarters on the ship, and that the men had given up their first class accommodations in order that the women passengers of the group might have good accommodations, and Mr. Dooman who was the counsellor of the Embassy laughingly said - "You were the first people that were taken care of, we thought after you had had as many weeks as you had had in Japan that you deserved at least a good place to sleep." Anyway, the State Department in all respects was very helpful to us. We were aboard a couple of days, no, the next day in fact, when we met the Naval Attache from Tokyo, Commander Smith-Hutton, to whom we gave our report, and he was extremely thoughtful to us and many of the things that needed straightening out were straightened out for us by the Naval Attache and the State Department.

The ship moved out into the harbor and we just sat there. Nobody knew what the holdup was, we sort of wondered if we were going back to Japan or if we were going home at all, or were just going to sit in Yokohama Harbor for the duration, and we sort of wondered if the food was going to hold out, or if there were any fish in Yokohama Bay that we might entice onto a line to supplement the food supply. Anyway on the 25 of June we did get underway. We had just about decided that we were going to stay there for the duration. We did not trust the Japanese, and we had an uneasy feeling. Miss Christiansen and myself turned in rather early, and Miss Fogarty who was more of a night owl than we came tearing in and said - "Get awake, you two, we're underway!" Well, it didn't take us long to get the sleep out of our eyes when we had that word, and we rushed to the porthole and looked out and reflected on the waters of Yokohama Bay was the huge cross which marked our ship as the diplomatic one. We faced the sea with a great deal of pleasure, but we weren't sure even yet. We weren't sorry to see the shores of Japan receding. We came home pretty well stripped of everything that we possessed. We were not allowed to bring any American money out with us. The American money that some of the people had been able to take in to Japan, the Japs had offered at a rate of exchange of one for one. We were allowed to bring out a limited amount of yen. However, none of us had any more than that because the only amount of yen that we had been able to get was the very small amount from the Swiss Consul.

We left Yokohama the 25th of June and from there we went on down past Formosa to Hong Kong. There we picked up a group of Americans who had been interned at Stanley, and from Hong Kong we went on to French Indo China. We picked up the diplomatic corps there and a group of other people and went from there on down to Singapore. We anchored off Singapore, not in sight of the island. The Japanese were very sure that we didn't see anything going on. The only people who were allowed ashore were some of the Chileans we were bringing home, because Chile at that time had not broken off relations with the Axis. They went into Singapore, and when they returned they wouldn't talk for days on what they had seen there.

1023



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

From Singapore we went on down through the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra, across the Indian Ocean skirting Madagascar and on up to Laurencio Marques. We found the GRIPSHOLM waiting for us there. We left the ASAMA MARU without any trouble, and once ashore on Africa we felt that we were finally free men and women, but life wasn't quite as simple as we thought it might be; we went aboard the GRIPSHOLM only to find that there was the utmost confusion about cabins. One of the nuns found that she had been quartered with one of the men and that sort of thing. For three days I didn't have any place to sleep nor did many others, and that was the general situation. It seems as though some people, some experts in berthing, had come over to Laurencio Marques to berth us all, and they were just a little bit too expert and the result was confusion and chaos.

We finally sailed after we had been there I think about four days, and once out to sea we finally got shaken down into some sort of quarters. The ship came down around the Cape and up across the South Atlantic to Rio. At Rio we discharged the South American members of our passenger list. It has been an extremely interesting group of people because we had the diplomatic representatives of North and Central and South America there. We had an assortment of missionaries and business people and some of the foreign correspondents. It was an excellent opportunity for practical application of the good neighbor policy. It was my first lengthy contact with any Latin American people and I found it extremely interesting. They were, almost without exception, excellent representatives of their country abroad. Rio is truly a beautiful city, many people have said that it is one of the three most beautiful ports in the world, and I will certainly never argue with them. It is one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen, but I assure you that nothing has ever looked so good to me as the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor.

Once docked, we were home, we were back in the hands of the Navy. Of course, there was the little item about our getting back into the States. While the four of us had been in Guam, I forgot to tell you that all five of us didn't come home, Miss Fogarty, left us at Laurencio Marques, and she was married to Frederick Mann of the State Department and she went on to Brazzaville, but the rest of us came home. We had no passports when we went out to Guam, since that was a part of our own country. So, we wondered if we were going to have to go to Ellis Island while we proved that we were American citizens. However, immigration said they would waive the passports if the State Department would vouch for us, and the State Department said - Well, they knew who we were even if immigration didn't, so we got in. After we docked we had a little session with the FBI and ONI and the Army Intelligence and a few other people and I know that I, and I think most of the rest of them assumed that our report had already been given to the Naval Attache from Tokyo, Commander Smith-Hutton, and that in the event there was anything further we would contact the Office of Naval Intelligence. So, without much ado we got ashore thanks to Commander Smith-Hutton who had engineered it so successfully for us. We were back then in America and glad to be back.

There are a number of things that I observed about the Japanese. I think that they have staked practically everything on this war, and I think they realize it and they realize that if they lose they are lost for a long time. It is going to be a nasty fight, and it is going to be a dirty fight, because they don't fight according to our rules, they make their own as they go along and they aren't pretty. They are not a nice people to be at war with. It is going to take an awful lot, I think we all know. It is just a dirty job that we have to get done.

1024



~~SECRET~~

RESTRICTED

If it isn't done now, I feel like I still have to get back and get a few licks in, but, nevertheless, it was good to be back and to see my people. They had had no word from me until I got to Rio. They had had some messages from the Navy Department to the effect that I was a prisoner as soon as the Red Cross had established it. By the way, the Red Cross representative had called at the camp, but he had not called until the day, the 12th of March I believe, the day we were leaving the camp. We had been there since the 15th of January. He had probably had a little difficulty getting permission from the Japanese to visit. That was the one and only time I saw him. He was a Swiss doctor who had spent 25 years in Japan. When we had come through Laurence Marques I had seen quantities of Red Cross supplies unloaded from the GRIPSHOLM to be re-shipped to Japan and some from the Canadian Red Cross to go to Singapore and Hong Kong. As far as I know the Japanese cleared that which was going to Japan for the American prisoners. They did not clear quite a lot of the stuff, according to my understanding of it, that was to have gone to Singapore and to Hong Kong. For some reason they would not let some of the Canadian stuff go through. Since then we have had word through the Red Cross from some of the people who were there. They have stated that they have received some supplies from the United States.

The military attache who was in Tokyo says that he gets to go in on the first tank that goes into Tokyo. For me, I think, I'll reserve a place on the second - I rate that much anyway.

1025