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Narrative by: Lieutenant Commander Lawrence Savadkin, USNR  
USS TANG  
and  
USS MAYRANT

8. The tragic loss of the submarine TANG by one of its own torpedoes, is recounted here by one of the nine survivors. Lieutenant Commander Savadkin was engineering officer of the submarine. He describes his rescue by a Jap D E and his prison camp experiences. He also tells of an earlier war experience on the destroyer MAYRANT off Palermo and the heroism of Lieutenant Franklin D Roosevelt, jr. USNR

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347

# CONFIDENTIAL

Narrative by: Lieutenant Commander Lawrence Savadkin, USNR  
USS TANG  
and  
USS MAYRANT

Lieutenant Commander Savadkin:

My name is Lieutenant Commander Lawrence Savadkin. I was formerly the engineering officer on the USS TANG, a submarine in the Pacific Fleet. I rode the TANG on her fourth and fifth War Patrols.

The Fourth War Patrol began on July 31st, 1944. We left from Midway Island for the Empire waters. Our patrol area was off the south coast of the Island of Honshu, Japan. After arriving in our area we sighted our first target which was a tanker, and fired three torpedoes at it. None of them hit. The torpedoes were very disappointing because they did not appear to function properly.

Again, some time later, we sighted another target and again we fired. The torpedoes hit, although we were unable to observe the results. In each case, in view of the fact that we were using steam-driven torpedoes and the water was calm and shallow, we were heavily depth charged by the Japanese escort vessels. No damage of any serious nature was done to the TANG, but we certainly were mighty frightened on several occasions. After a while, it became evident that depth-charges were not to be feared as much as many people had originally thought and it was actually a comfort in some respects to hear them exploding, knowing then that they weren't going to hurt us.

A rather humorous aspect of these depth-charge attacks was the fact that all of our attacks on this patrol were carried out in shallow water. This was because the Japanese ships hugged the coast, thinking that submarines would fear to come in as close as was necessary. In order to evade the escorting vessels when they began to hunt us down, our skipper, Commander O'Kane, would put the stern of the submarine to the escort and head for deeper water as soon as he possibly could. As we progressed out to sea and toward deeper water, it was necessary to take soundings with our fathometer to determine just how deep we could safely go. Our executive officer at that time, Lieutenant Commander Murray B. Frazee, would stand by the fathometer and pray for a Jap depth charge to explode and

during the time that the water was disturbed by the depth charge making the Japanese sound gear inoperative, he would operate our fathometer and find out what the depth was.

After our first two attacks on this patrol, we sighted a Japanese patrol yacht, a very small craft, and decided to engage her on the surface. This was my first experience with the so-called "battle surface". We got all the ammunition broken out and all the men standing by in the gun access trunk, sounded the surface alarm and came up. I think many of us were wondering what was going to happen. Nothing did, we manned the guns successfully and began firing at the patrol yacht. I have to give the people on that yacht credit. Instead of running, they headed right in for us with their machine gun blazing. This necessitated our turning around and running out of their machine gun range. Commander O'Kane did not feel that the target was worth taking the risk of having any of our men hurt by its machine gun fire. We succeeded in making eight hits on the patrol yacht and completely smashing her upper works.

#### HAD TROUBLE WITH TORPEDOES

Later on, we came across a medium freighter and all of these ships were hugging the coast, and at the time, we were within less than a half a mile of the Japanese coast in very shallow water. We fired two torpedoes at this freighter and neither of them hit. One missed and the other didn't even run. We began to get quite discouraged with these torpedoes and one night while patrolling in very close to the coast, dodging all the Japanese fishing boats, there seemed to be hundreds of them there every night, we saw a patrol vessel which we recognized had previously given us a working over. We were quite angry with him, to say the least.

Commander O'Kane decided, in view of the fact the patrol vessel was sitting still in the water and apparently at anchor, he'd find out just what was happening with the torpedoes. We took a position up with a favorable target angle for firing at him and fired one torpedo from the stern. It missed. We fired another one from the stern and it missed. They seemed to be running erratically. The Captain then swung the ship around and fired one from the bow. It missed. Having decided which way they were missing, he off-set the next one, fired it and it hit. I was in the conning tower during this time and we heard the explosion, it was a terrific noise and I wanted to see what happened when a vessel was torpedoed.

I asked the Captain permission to come to the bridge and he said, "Permission is granted. Come on up", and I got there fully 45 seconds after the explosion was heard and as I reached the bridge and looked skyward, for some unknown reason, there was still glowing bits of debris coming down from the heavens. That was all that was

left of our target. There was a blotch of smoke on the surface, no evidence of any solid mass there at all and these bits of glowing debris falling from the sky.

After getting our revenge on that particular patrol vessel, we ran on out into deeper water and beyond the immediate danger of air detection and overhauled the rest of the torpedoes we had aboard. After giving them a working over in an effort to insure their proper operation, we came back in and discovered a deisel tanker proceeding along the beach and we fired three torpedoes at her, our last three, and got two hits and sank the tanker. Unfortunately, I was not personally able to observe any of these sinkings, there being a limited amount of time available for glancing around before we took to evading the Japanese escort vessels.

We returned to Pearl Harbor from this patrol, coming back at full power all the way. It was a notably short patrol, lasting about 31 days. We enjoyed ourselves very much on the return trip having steak and ice cream every night for dinner.

The fifth war patrol of the TANG began leaving Pearl Harbor toward the end of September 1944. Our patrol area in this case was Formosa Straits, operating between the northern tip of Formosa and the Pescadores Islands in the Straits. We traveled from Pearl Harbor to Midway at a very high speed, averaging  $21\frac{1}{2}$  knots all the way, and refueled and took on additional provisions at Midway before leaving for our area.

The trip to our area was quite eventful, running into a real full-fledged typhoon on the way. The typhoon seemed to creep up on us and before we realized it, the seas were running very high over the bridge. It was necessary to secure the bridge watch, seal up the boat and operate from the conning tower. Even there, the waves broke over the fully raised periscope while we were surfaced. We did not want to submerge because the ship was rolling so badly that we felt if, with the additional loss of stability created by flooding our tanks, we should roll and the tanks flood unevenly, we might capsize. Therefore, we continued on the surface, headed out of the typhoon and eventually reached calmer waters.

Upon reaching our patrol area, we immediately ran into a patrol boat. We successfully avoided the patrol, however, and began looking the territory over. Our first contact was a very heavily laden freighter steaming north through Taiwan Straits. We tracked him for a while and came on in after convincing ourselves that we were perfectly correct as to his speed and course and we fired three torpedoes at him, two of them hitting him and sinking him almost immediately. All that was left when the smoke cleared away was a lot of debris in the water. This attack was made while we were surfaced.

#### PLANNED ATTACK AT DINNER

Later the same day, we found another ship coming up the Straits.

He was zigzagging and as the seas had begun to rise, was not making very good speed. The ship was an unloaded freighter. He was sitting very high out of the water, his screws churning up considerable foam and he was having considerable difficulty making headway into the seas. We trailed him submerged waiting until dark so that we could make a surface attack. We prefer to make surface attacks at night because we have more speed at our command for maneuvering around and also we have much more time to run away from the locality and avoid any patrols that might come down looking for us.

We tracked this fellow all day long, planning our strategy as the time passed. It made us feel sort of odd to sit down to a very sumptuous dinner, planning this fellow's doom immediately after we had finished. We felt that we could work better on a full stomach and postponed engaging him until after dinner. Shortly before we surfaced and just before it got dark, we took several pictures of the ship through the periscope with our camera. As soon as it was dark enough, we surfaced, ran up ahead of the ship. It was very dark that night, so we were able to lie off his track about 500 yards with our stern to him and fire one torpedo as he came by. The torpedo found its mark, blew the ship up and it sunk almost immediately.

We had no trouble with any patrols at that time and when the ship blew up, considerable anti-aircraft fire was noted from the beach. Evidently the Japanese thought he had been bombed. They never seemed to suspect that there was a submarine operating there. However, our luck was not to be that good later on because we were continually hounded by patrol vessels. I believe they were finally convinced that there was a submarine running around in the Straits and they did their best to find us. After the first two sinkings, both in the same day, one at dawn and the other later on at night, we ran into a rather dull time, I think a period of almost two weeks, at least more than a week elapsed before we sighted our next target and this was a heartbreaker.

After having taken a terrific grubbing on our fourth patrol as a result of Jap escort vessels coming down the wake left by steam-driven torpedoes, the commanding officer, Commander O'Kane decided to take all electric fish on this run. These do not leave a wake and, therefore, we thought would be safer. However, they do not travel through the water as rapidly as steam-driven torpedoes. This next target that we saw was a very lovely Japanese KATORI class cruiser, with two destroyers escorting her, and she was making 19 knots according to our tracking dope. However, we had to close her from the stern and were unable to get in a shot. She began to zigzag quite erratically and due to the fact that the Mark 18 torpedo runs so slowly, she would have been on another leg of her zigzag plan before the torpedo would reach her from the point where we fired. We chased the ship for a great many hours that night, waiting for a

break. We made the tubes ready on five different occasions in hopes of getting a shot in, but each time our luck seemed to run out and she zigged the way we didn't expect her to.

Finally, just when we were deciding it ought to be time to dive because dawn was not far off, the cruiser illuminated us with a searchlight.. I have never seen men come tumbling down the hatch from the bridge so fast in my whole life and we could even see the reflection of the light on the boat in the conning tower. We dove, and at the time were making full power and it was like going down in an express elevator in some large building. Our stomachs came down along with us a little bit later on. Fortunately, Mel Enos, our diving officer, kept excellent control of the boat and we did not run into any difficulties. We were not bothered either by the destroyers escorting the cruiser because evidently they feared there was another submarine around and would not leave the screening operation they were carrying on, on either side of the cruiser. Having cursed ourselves for not having a steam-driven fish aboard, we just figured it was one of those breaks that you get, and continued back on up the Straits looking for more shipping.

#### GOT SO CLOSE YOU COULDN'T MISS

I believe it was the night following that we discovered a convoy of several ships very heavily escorted. Commander O'Kane decided to track them for a while and see what they were doing and then he turned the conning of the ship over to Frank Springer, our Executive Officer. Frank had one idea in mind, the only way to get ships is to get in so close that you can't miss when you shoot at them, and he put the ship in such a position, conning it by observing the position of our enemy on the radar, that when Commander O'Kane was finally able to see the targets visually, and this attack was being carried on, on the surface at night, he was in such a position that all the ships seemed to be lined up, one after another, with their sterns and bows overlapping and he made a very quick setup and fired torpedoes left and right and we scored several hits. If the torpedoes missed the nearer ships, they went on and hit the projecting portions of the ships in columns that were farther away. Inside of ten minutes we had hit several of the ships. It was an extremely quick engagement and we were able to get away without having any harm done to us.

Theten minutes of action while attacking that particular convoy was so concentrated that we decided to take the next night off and relax and rest for awhile. There were plenty of targets in the Straits, evidently because our fleet operations to the south on Leyte and our carrier attacks on Formosa at the same time were driving the Japs out and they were either running north away from it all, or some were coming south with reinforcements and additional supplies for the people who were down there. Most of the ships that we saw were very heavily laden.

One thrilling incident in the attack that I just mentioned, incidentally, was the fact that Frank, having placed the submarine right in the midst of the convoy, also placed us in a position for one of the ships to get an idea into his head to ram us. Two ships, as a matter of fact, had the same idea, one on either side of us, and as they both swung to ram us, we managed to get inside of their turning circle and escape and the two ships collided with one another. Taking advantage of their confusion, Commander O'Kane fired torpedoes from our stern tubes, hitting both of them and sinking both of them.

As I say, we took a rest on the next night and the night following that we found another convoy. It was the biggest convoy that I, and I believe most of the other people in the submarine, had seen. As a matter of fact, the radar operator, when he picked it up, thought it was land. There were pips all over the screen, almost a solid line of pips across the screen. There wasn't supposed to be any land there, so we tracked this apparent land target and found it to be quite a large convoy. Again with Captain's and Frank's usual aggressiveness, they went right on into the midst of the ships so that they couldn't miss and so that there were innumerable possibilities for quick setups and we began firing torpedoes all over the place and scoring hits everywhere.

I might mention here, that we scored twenty-two hits out of twenty-four torpedoes fired, which is a pretty good record, and I believe it was due to the fact that the Commander closed all the targets so closely that he couldn't miss, no matter what happened. We crippled one ship in this last convoy and with two torpedoes left aboard, decided to come back and finish him off. It was here that we ran into trouble.

We closed the ship, set up our problem and fired both torpedoes, one after the other. The first torpedo, the twenty-third torpedo, ran true and hot and hit the ship and sank it. The second torpedo breached the water, turned to the left and ran in a tight circle and before the Commander could fishtail out of its way, he started to maneuver, the torpedo struck us aft, we believe in the after torpedo room, and exploded. The ship sank almost immediately, going down by the stern. The stern rested on the bottom and the bow remained floating out of the water as the depth at that point was about 180 feet. The people on the bridge were left standing there treading water, the ship just dropped out from underneath them.

I was in the after end of the conning tower, operating the torpedo data computer. No one was able to close the hatch to the bridge, a sufficient time just didn't exist. Water rushed through the hatch with terrific force, knocking down practically everybody in the conning tower, just sweeping them off their feet, tangling them all up and making it impossible for them to do anything to help themselves. I was fortunate in being the farthest from the hatch and by

the time the water reached me its initial force had been broken by the people and equipment between the hatch and myself. When the conning tower flooded, I found myself breathing air out of a little bubble of trapped air toward the top of the periscope well against the overhead in the indentation there.

I realized that my position there was no good because the air wouldn't last forever. I didn't exactly know where I was so I took a deep breath and ducked under water and tried to feel around and locate myself. I popped up into another air bubble in the forward end of the conning tower just forward of where the hatch from the bridge enters the conning tower and its forward bulkhead. Here I was surprised again that I was able to breathe, I felt around and my hand fell on the engine-room order-telegraph. I recognized what I was hanging onto by its feel and the fact that I was able to spin the knob and feel it click over to the different ordering positions. I knew that the hatch was open because that's where the water came pouring in, so I took another breath and ducked up through the hatch, expecting to go to the surface. Instead of that, I popped up into another air bubble formed under the forward cowling of the bridge. There, again, I paused, took a breath, ducked under the cowling and came to the surface.

The people who were in the boat, those who were forward of the after engine room managed to keep from being flooded immediately. The boys in the forward engine room secured the after door in time to keep the rest of the boat from becoming flooded. The after compartments were evidently all flooded immediately. Due to the angle the boat was at, they couldn't maneuver very well inside, so one of the boys, I believe it was Decker, pulled the vents manually on the forward tanks, venting the air from those tanks and permitting the entire submarine to come down to a level position on the floor of the ocean.

The boys then destroyed the confidential and secret publications, they destroyed the radar equipment and radio equipment by battering it with rifle butts and attempted in every way to make salvage operations of this valuable gear by the Japanese impossible. They then went into the forward torpedo room, rigged the escape trunk and several parites attempted to escape. Several of the people, five I believe, reached the surface successfully and were able to remain afloat until picked up by the Japanese destroyer escort which was also picking up survivors from the ships that we had torpedoed.

Those of us who got into the water immediately after the accident stayed there for approximately eight hours, just swimming around rather aimlessly because the tides and currents in the Straits at the part where we were sunk are very tricky and swift. We were not able to make progress in any given direction for any great length of time.



## PICKED UP BY JAP DE

Approximately at 10 o'clock on October 25th, 1944, the same day which the TANG was sunk, the Japanese destroyer escort sighted those of us who had remained afloat throughout the night and came over and picked us up. We had all been separated in the water due to the fact that we had left the submarine at different times and also due to the fact that the currents and tides in the water seemed to treat us each a little differently and move us away from one another. The Japanese destroyer escort put a whale boat over the side and manned it and rowed out to each of us, hauled us into the whale boat, rowed back to the destroyer escort, and transferred us to that vessel.

As soon as we came aboard the destroyer escort, we were trussed up like a chicken. They fastened our arms down to our sides with a piece of marline and sat us down on the deck. Then they asked us our name, our rank and the name of the vessel from which we had come. Failure to answer the questions brought severe socks on the jaw, to be perfectly blunt about it, they just hauled off and whacked us, and we decided it wouldn't hurt too much to tell them our name and what ship we were from. They also wanted to know what job we had aboard. We balked at this and they didn't press the point too much.

Nine of us were rescued: three officers, Captain O'Kane; the torpedo officer, Lieutenant Flanagan; myself, the engineering officer, Savadkin; and six enlisted men; the Chief Boatswain mate, Libold; the radar technician first class, Caverly; motor machinist's mate, Decker; motor machinist's mate, DeSilva; torpedoman, Trukke; torpedoman, Narowanski.

We were imprisoned on the Japanese destroyer escort for three days. The DE spent the entire day on which we were picked up searching the area in which we had been sunk, for survivors of the vessels which we had sunk. They did not pick up any more people after they got us. I do not know how many of their own people they picked up but there were quite a few aboard the Japanese DE.

This was our first opportunity to see what happens to people when they have been torpedoed. Apparently, most of the engineering personnel of the ships that we torpedoed who were rescued had been burned quite severely. They were all bandaged and were covered with some sort of salve. They did not like us very much and kicked us and slapped us, ground some cigarette butts out on Commander O'Kane's neck and treated him rather badly, realizing that he was the commanding officer of the submarine. We were kept in the Japanese bathroom on the Destroyer escort. It was a very small chamber, the size of which did not permit all six of us to sit down on the deck at the same time. Some had to stand while others stretched out and slept. The room was right next to the galley and was extremely hot and uncomfortable. The Japanese destroyer escort took us south to a port

which we believe was Takao, on the southern tip of Formosa.

#### IMPRISONED IN WAREHOUSE

There, we were taken ashore and imprisoned for the night in an old warehouse. The following day we were taken from the warehouse, paraded through the town and put aboard a railroad train and taken north on the Island of Formosa to what we believed was Kirun. During this time, we were handcuffed and a lanyard fastened to the handcuff and made secure to the belt of a guard. Each one of us had a guard assigned to us. The train ride was very interesting, we were able to see Formosa. We had a real Cook's tour of it. We watched their primitive agricultural methods, hand-powered water wheels for irrigational purposes, thatched garments for shedding rain, the weather was very bad, and we also noted that all the people, civilians, school children and everyone seemed to be in some sort of a uniform. They all wore leggings of some type and a uniform hat.

At Kirun we were put in what we called the Kirun Klink. It was the city jail and the Kirun Klink was quite a place. The cells are like the cages you see in the zoo, the floor of the cell being raised above the floor of the corridor that leads between the cells. There are bars in the front of the cell running from ceiling to deck. They were wooden bars about four inches in diameter, there was a very small door in the forward portion of the cell through which we entered and left it. The door was very narrow and small and you had to stoop down and double up to get in and out of it. The head was nothing more than a recess in the wall and a slit in the deck.

They put three of us in each cell and brought us food three times a day. Our food consisted of what appeared to be a standard Japanese army field ration, I think it corresponded something to our C ration. It was composed of a couple of balls of rice pressed together in the shape of a baseball and a few vegetables, mostly cucumbers, and sometimes a few small fish. They reminded me of shiners that we use for bait when we go fishing in this country. The entire package was done up in a material that resembled a corn husk. I think it might have been a corn husk. It certainly appeared to be, and they gave us two little bamboo chopsticks which were wrapped up in paper, very similar to the way we wrap straws in our drug stores that we drink sodas with. After three days in the Kirun Klink, during which we had nothing to do but sit around and kill time and tell each other sea stories, we were taken out and separated.

A convoy left from Formosa for Japan. It seemed to consist of a cruiser and several destroyers escorting her. Our skipper, Lieutenant Flanagan, and myself were each put aboard a different Japanese destroyer and the six enlisted men in our crew were put in the hold of the cruiser. I understand that they slept on a pile of bags

of sugar which were being transported up in the cruiser.

Commander O'Kane's, Lieutenant Flanagan's, and my treatment all seemed to be similar. We were able to compare notes after we rejoined one another again. We were taken and kept in the officers' country aboard the Japanese destroyer. We were all bathed and issued clean clothing. I lived in the wardroom. They gave me several blankets and a pillow and told me that I could sleep there on the transom. They posted two guards in the wardroom with me, armed with bayonets and they sat on chairs there all day and all night relieving one another and just watched me. We attempted conversation sometimes.

The doctor on the Japanese destroyer was charged with taking care of me and he gave me an English-Japanese dictionary and he had a Japanese-English dictionary and he also had a slight command of our language, enough so that we were able to make ourselves understood. I noted that their officers behaved aboard the destroyer very much the same as ours do. I spent two and a half years aboard the USS MAYRANT, one of our own destroyers, and found the comparison very interesting and the similarity very great. I was not supposed to know what type of a ship I was on, having been blind-folded before being taken aboard, but I don't think they took into consideration the fact that they had a very large and excellent photograph of the ship framed on the wardroom bulkhead.

I ate with Japanese officers on that ship. We had three meals a day and I ate the same food that they did. However, they provided me with a plate and a set of silverware, a regular knife, fork and spoon inscribed with the Japanese naval emblem. The officers used chopsticks, each had his own set of very beautifully-formed chopsticks and kept in a highly polished and extremely well decorated personal case, something like a toothbrush kit.

When we arrived in a port in southern Japan, we think it was Kobe (and it took us four day and three nights to go up there), we were taken from the Japanese ships and again reunited at a Japanese Naval Training Station there. An indication of the way the Japs treated us might be given here. It was raining, October, cold, and we had come up from the south. We had very little clothing and it was all light clothing and we were sitting in a waiting room at the Naval Training Station, waiting for a bus to come and take us to the railroad station. We were very cold and wet, it had been raining and we were all shivering, extremely miserable.

A Japanese Admiral came in and looked us over. He went over to Leibold, our Chief Boatswain's Mate, and said, "Are you cold?" and Leibold said, "Yes, I'm cold." The Admiral said, "Are your feet cold?" Leibold said, "Yes, my feet are cold" and the Admiral said, "Why of course they're cold, you haven't got any shoes on." And

that was as far as it went. We thought for a while they might give us some shoes, but they didn't do that.

They put us on a train in Kobe and we rode for 24 hours north and I believe slightly east and arrived at Ofuna. During the time that we were in the train, again we each had a personal guard and there was an officer in command of the group. We were not handcuffed, however, but we were kept in a private coach, not very comfortable.

At Ofuna we were taken from the railroad station and marched to the Ofuna Naval Interrogation Camp. This is a Japanese prison camp, non-registered, and it was run and administered from the Yokosuka Naval Station. Upon arrival at the camp we were made to wash our feet, they being very dirty from walking around barefoot through the mud. We were given fresh clothing, a tooth brush, some tooth powder and a towel. It was nothing but an overgrown handkerchief, same sort of material--not very good material as a matter of fact.

We were each put in a different cell. The cells were actually rooms about five by six, by maybe eight feet high. They were covered with a tatami mat on the floor. There was a stack of blankets in each one and we were given from five to seven blankets to sleep under throughout the winter, depending on the number of prisoners in the camp. As more prisoners came in, they took blankets away from us to provide them with blankets. We were given a hot meal immediately on arrival in the camp--by a hot meal, I mean a hot bowl of rice and some soup, and we turned in; it was evening.

#### INTERROGATED DAILY AT OFUNA

The following day, an American prisoner came over to our building, there were three buildings in the camp and we were in the newcomers building, No. 1 building, and he explained to us the camp routine. He spoke in the presence of a Jap guard. We became familiar with the routine, quickly learned that being polite to our guards was very essential. We had to greet them every morning with the proper salutation and had to bow to them and treat them with great respect. This saved us considerable unhappiness. If you got out of line, you usually were slapped around a little bit.

We were interrogated daily at Ofuna at the beginning, the interrogating officers, or interrogation officers, being all graduates of American Universities. One of them we know was a graduate of the University of Southern California, another one was a graduate of Columbia and one had even been an associate professor of American History at the University of Rhode Island. They were wearing excellent American clothing and some of them had books of matches from Hot Springs, where I believe they had been interned after the war started before being sent back to Japan. They sympathized with us

very much, but all they did was offer us their sympathies, they did nothing to improve our living conditions there which were none too good.

As time passed on the interrogations became less frequent and their nature incidentally was technical, all about the machinery of the ship, the radar, the radio gear, the engineering department, communications. I believe that we all successfully kept information to ourselves and gave them a lot of nonsense. They seemed to realize it but were perfectly content to fill reams and reams of paper up with information, much of which they must have known was entirely erroneous.

We were moved from the beginners' building at Ofuna into the No. 2 building where we were permitted a little more liberty and finally after a number of months into No. 3 building, where we were given even more liberties, that is to say, we were first allowed to talk to one another, that being forbidden during the period of intense interrogation, and then later we were given the privilege of talking to some of the other people in the camp and finally, perhaps the most wonderful privilege was that of reading the books that were in the camp. There had been some merchantmen interned there at the beginning of the war and they removed libraries from the merchant ships to the camp and there were several interesting books to be read.

We were not required to work other than doing work essential for the camp such as a daily sweep down and swab down of the decks and the rest of our time we spent just talking about food which was foremost in our minds and wondering how long it would be before the war was over. We got tired of telling one another our experiences in the war and gradually, by common consent, that was never even discussed.

After nine months in Ofuna I was transferred to Camp Omori which is on an island midway between Tokyo and Yokohama. Camp Omori was a registered prison camp. However, when we arrived there, we were considered in a special category. We were not registered as prisoners of war, we did not enjoy the few privileges that the recognized prisoners of war were given, such as reading and having sick call and also being able to fraternize with the rest of their fellow prisoners throughout the entire camp. We were kept in a separate building.

We spent one month at Camp Omori and the war ended. During the time that we were there, however, we were made to work. We were put to work digging an air raid shelter. The work was rather strenuous, we were rather weak, but I think that the Americans are

probably the best gold bricks in the world. We were able to make it look as though we were really putting it out, but actually we did not strain ourselves too much.

On August the 15th, 1945, we were suddenly returned to the camp from the particular jobs that we were working at. That night, instead of observing the usual black-out precautions, the Japanese burned all the camp records in the compound and we realized then that hostilities had ceased. The following day, those of us in the special prisoner category were permitted to have sick call, we were issued better clothing, and our food ration was upped. Things began to improve steadily from August 15th, until the time that we were liberated. I do not recall the exact date but not long afterwards, planes from baby carriers off shore flew over the camp, spotted us and it was very touching.

We painted, "We want food" on the roofs of the buildings and those fellows flying over who first discovered us just emptied their pockets of everything they had and threw it down into the camp--- opened packages of cigarettes and lunch wrapped in paper that the crew had been carrying probably to eat themselves when they got hungry and we enjoyed it very much. There was not enough to go around, so each night we held a drawing and the people with the lucky numbers got prizes.

Gradually conditions improved. Planes began to drop us a daily newspaper in the morning. They dropped C and K rations for us. They dropped food, clothing and toilet articles and the B-29s came over and dropped enough supplies each day for 516 men. These supplies were in 55 gallon drums. We had to take to the air raid shelters when they came down. It was the first time that we had to take to the air raid shelters.

We established our own military police organization in the camp, Major Gregory Boyington, USMC being at the head of it at that time and the Military Police were given the job of rounding up all the supplies dropped, taking them to the proper places and seeing that they were properly distributed. Hungry men will probably steal any bit of food that they can lay their hands on and it was necessary to regulate things.

#### ATE FIFTEEN FRIED EGGS

On August 29th, ships anchored off the island -- we were able to see them. Some Higgins boats came ashore and Commander Stassen visited the camp. He told us that we would leave after the peace treaty or the surrender treaty had been signed. However, he was accompanied by a very senior Naval medical officer and after they conducted an inspection of the camp, they arrived at the conclusion

that the place was no fit place for us to live in and told us that we would leave immediately.

Before very late that night, the night of August 29th, they had all of the 516 prisoners from Omori Camp safely aboard the hospital ship BENEVOLENCE. There we were given a quick delousing, we were all full of vermin. We were given clean clothing, a quick medical screening and sent down to the chow hall. They had ham and eggs, ice cream, pie and milk. I personally accounted for 15 fried eggs, about a quarter of a pound of ham and I don't know how much milk and ice cream. I got sick a few hours afterwards. I think all of us did the same thing, and it is my opinion that the doctors felt that they could handle an upset stomach, and the effect on our morale would far offset the effect of our upset stomachs after we were all finished with it.

We were transferred from the hospital ship to various ships standing by to make room for other prisoners who were being liberated and I believe it was on September 3rd, I was taken from the USS OZARK to an airfield nearby and put aboard a NATS C-54 plane. Sixty-four of us made two NATS planes, 32 men were put in each plane, that happened to come up there at the time and heard that there were prisoners up there. The planes were not sent up to take us back, that mechanism had not been put into operation yet, but the pilots through some sort of scuttlebutt had heard that there were prisoners on the ships and they agreed to take back as many as they could handle.

They flew us right from Tokyo to Guam. At Guam we spent two nights at the Naval Base Hospital there and then flew back to Pearl, stopping at Kwajalein for fueling. At Pearl, we were taken to the Aiea Hospital, kept there overnight and we were screened each time we came to a hospital to see if we had any severe illnesses. After one night at Pearl we were put aboard planes and flown to the Oak Knoll Hospital in Oakland, California. There they wrote up a new medical history on each prisoner and as quickly as they possibly could, transferred us to a hospital nearest our leave address. We were granted survivors' or rehabilitation leave from those hospitals. I returned from leave shortly and have been sent down here to Washington on temporary duty to wind up the affairs of the TANG.

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Having arrived in Licata, Sicily with a convoy of Liberty ships about five days after the initial landings in the Sicilian Invasion, the USS MAYRANT was shortly detached from that duty and sent north to Palermo. We were with DesDiv 16 and escorted a group of mine-sweeps and SC boats to Palermo. The task of these boats was to clear

the harbor of mines and other navigational dangers, so that heavier ships could begin to bring supplies into Palermo.

The destroyers set up an anti-submarine screen about ten miles off the coast and paralleling the coast and as we were patrolling our area on July 26th, 1943, three JU88 German bombers came in on us from behind the mountains. We were unable to pick them up on the radar until they came into view as they cleared the beach line. In the few seconds it took them to fly that ten miles we were unable to get the entire ship to general quarters, although our Condition 3 watch crew in the guns were already firing at the planes as they came in on us.

The planes dropped a number of bombs which straddled our vessel, one of them landing approximately amidships opposite the forward engine room on the port side about five feet from the vessel. The bomb exploded a few feet beneath the surface of the water and blew in that side of the ship. Several large holes were pierced into the side of the ship and the forward engine room and the after fire room were completely flooded almost immediately. Parts of machinery, torn loose by the shock of the explosion, tore through the bulkheads at the after end of the forward engine room and the forward end of the after fire room, permitting water to enter all four engineering spaces.

The flooding was brought under control by excellent damage control work on the part of the First Lieutenant and other officers on the vessel and the USS STRIVE, one of the minesweeps, came alongside the MAYRANT, passed over submersible pumps, ran a cable across to provide us with electric power, the MAYRANT having lost all steam and electric power in the explosion, and began to tow the vessel into Palermo. I was wounded, being blown out of the forward engine room, and was transferred from the MAYRANT to the USS WAINWRIGHT, our flagship. The MAYRANT was towed in and tied alongside a dock in Palermo Harbor. When I rejoined the ship I found repair and salvage work well underway.

Commodore Sullivan, in charge of Naval salvage, had arrived in Palermo a day or two after the MAYRANT had been towed in and his divers, in conjunction with our own crew, did an excellent job of putting in temporary patches.

Palermo was subjected to nightly air raids shortly after our arrival there. Junkers would fly down from Naples and air fields in Italy almost every night and drop high explosive bombs on our shipping and the harbor installations. We instituted a program whereby 50% of our crew would remain aboard the vessel and 50% of the crew would live ashore. We alternated each day's duty.

On one particular night, Lieutenant Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., USNR, our executive officer, had the duty in lieu of the commanding officer who rated that night ashore and the ship was subjected to a



## CONFIDENTIAL

particularly severe bombing attack. I believe that the Germans had our ship spotted in their reconnaissance photographs because there were streams of water continually being discharged over our sides by the pumps cleaning out our engineering spaces of the water. These streams of water are quite white in color and are easily seen in contrast with the dark surrounding vessels and the surface of the water which was very dirty and dark.

The planes straddled the ship with bombs, several of them falling along the dock and side, others falling forward and aft of the vessel. We replied, along with all the other vessels in the harbor, with anti-aircraft fire, being able to use only our 40 mm and 20 mm automatic weapons, the 5-inch being inoperative due to the weakened condition of the vessel structurely. The STRIVE which was still tied alongside of us accidentally trained one of her guns on our bridge and fired a round of 40 mm through our bridge bulwark.

This hit one of our boys on the bridge, a look-out, his name was Kameratta, (?) and completely severed his leg, I don't remember which one, from his body. The boy dropped to the deck and Lieutenant Roosevelt in charge of the action and on the bridge, noticed him fall, immediately rushed to his assistance, applied a tourniquet and sent a messenger to attempt to get a doctor to come to the ship and take proper care of Kameratta. Word came back that the doctor was unable to come to our ship. He was aboard the salvage ship and was just deluged with cases being brought to him from other portions of the port.

Lieutenant Roosevelt, who is very powerfully built, took it upon himself to hoist Kameratta to his shoulders and make a very precarious passage from the MAYRANT to the salvage ship. It necessitated climbing down almost vertical temporary ladders, across weakened structures with unsure footing and all the meanwhile, of course, being exposed to the shrapnel and debris being tossed about by the falling bombs. The attack was still going on and was just, as a matter of fact, reaching its peak when Lieutenant Roosevelt had safely delivered Kameratta to the doctor and according to the doctor the boy would have died from lack of blood if Lieutenant Roosevelt had not acted so promptly and bound the leg with a tourniquet.

Lieutenant Roosevelt returned to the MAYRANT and carried on as commanding officer until the air raid was over and he was relieved the following morning by Commander E. Walker, our skipper.

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