

## HENRY GRADY STANLEY

Prisoner of War-April 9, 1942 to September 14, 1945

March 15, 1941	Enlisted at Savanna Air Base Savannah, Georgia 27 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Group- 454 ORD
November 15, 1941	Arrived in the Philippine Islands
April 9, 1942	Bataan Fell 10,000 Americans Surrender to The Japanese. Death March began. Marched about 90 miles.
April 17, 1942	Arrived at Camp O'Donnell
May 12, 1942	Arrived at Clark Field
August, 1944	Left Philippine islands for Japan Aboard a "Hell ship"
September 9, 1944	Arrived in Hanawa, Japan
August 14, 1945	War ended
September 13, 1945	Left Hanawa, Japan on a train
November 9, 1945	Home- McRae, Georgia
June 13, 1946	Discharge



During the last thirty-two years, as wife of Grady Stanley, I have heard many wartime stories from him and some of his Army buddies. Realizing that each one of these ex-prisoners of war has a story to tell, I decided to write his own story. I tried to write as if it were him talking, using his own words to describe places and events.

So together we dedicate this book to our children – Steve, Cindy, Gary and Daryl, that they might have an orderly written account of that portion of their dad’s life.

Jo Ann Stanley - 1983

Garland, Texas

# HENRY G. STANLEY

P.O.W. - 291

Prisoner of the Japanese for 42 months

April 9, 1942 – September 14, 1945

March 15, 1941	Enlisted at Savannah Air Base Savannah, Georgia 27 <sup>TH</sup> Bomb Group – 454 ORD
November 1, 1941	Left San Francisco aboard <u>The President Coolidge</u>
November 6, 1941	Arrived in Hawaii
November 20, 1941	Arrived in the Philippine Islands
December 7, 1941	Pearl Harbor bombed
December 24, 1941	Injured in a bomb raid Behind both knees
April 9, 1942	Bataan fell – 10,000 Americans Surrendered to the Japanese on Bataan. Death March began. Marched ninety miles without adequate food or water. March from Mariveles to San Fernando. Traveled by railroad to Capas, and Walked from Capas to Camp O'Donnell.

April 17, 1942	Arrived at Camp O'Donnell
May 12, 1942	Arrived at Clark Field
August, 25, 1942	Left Philippine Islands for Japan Aboard "Hell Ships" Possibly the <u>Noto Maru</u>
September 9, 1942	Arrived at Hanawa, Japan Prison Camp #6B
August 14, 1945	War ended – Stopped working at The Yama (copper mine)
August 16, 1945	Learned of the Armistice
August 20, 1945	Nip Lt. Osaka announced the Armistice at 9:30 a.m.
August 22, 1945	The Japanese issued Red Cross Articles that they had kept stored all winter. These articles would have prevented much sickness during the Six months of snow and cold weather. Thirty-nine feet of snow fell from November 10, 1944 to May 15 <sup>th</sup> 1945. Snow fell for forty-two consecutive days During December and January.
August 27, 1945	First food dropped from dive bombers.
September 13, 1945	Left Hanawa, Japan on a train at midnight.

September 14, 1945	Arrived in Sagaguama at 9:00 A.M. Boarded a hospital ship and received A physical examination on the ship <u>Garrard.</u>
September 16, 1945	Arrived in Yokohama
September 17, 1945	Left Yokohama
September 25, 1945	Arrived in Manila, Philippines; Went through processing.
October 8, 1945	Boarded the <u>Cliff Fontaine</u>
October 9, 1945	Sailed for Frisco
October 28, 1945	Arrived in Seattle, Washington; Transferred to Madigan Hospital In Ft. Lewis, Washington.
November 1, 1945	Left Ft. Lewis by railroad
November 5, 1945	Arrived in Augusta, Georgia.
November 8, 1945	Received furlough
November 9, 1945	Home, McRae, Georgia
February 6, 1945	Furlough ended.
June 13, 1946	Discharged

### Enlisted – March 15, 1941

In 1941, times were pretty rough for a country boy, and \$21 a month was pretty big, so I entered the Army Air Force on March 15, 1941 at Savannah Air Base in Savannah, Georgia.

We did not receive much training, did a little marching, Guard duty and some rifle training. I was in the 27<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Attached to the 454 Ordnance. We left Savannah Air Base On a troop train for San Francisco, California.

### Left San Francisco – November 1, 1941

I left San Francisco for over seas duty on the ship **President Coolidge**. It was a honey. That ship was more plush than anything I had ever seen. Would you believe I was put on guard duty right out of Frisco Bay? (They say these are about as rough waters as you will find.) My duty was to sit at the foot of the steps and not let officers go in where the enlisted men were. The boat got to rocking and did I ever get sick. As soon as I got on top and got some fresh air, I was fine and had no more trouble with it on the way over. We arrived in Hawaii on November 6, 1941 at 7:00 A.M., and sailed again at around 4:00 P.M.

### Arrived in Philippine Islands- November 20, 1941 (Thursday)

I did not realize how near to war the United States was: maybe some of the older fellows knew. But most of the younger men had no idea what was going on.

We located about eight miles out of the city of Manila in tents. We were to be moved in about fifteen days to an air base somewhere on the island. There was a river about two hundred yards back of the camp. I would go down there in the afternoon and watch Filipinos wash clothes and plow with their water buffalo. We were paid our wages in pesos (112). My salary was \$56 a month. (A Coca Cola cost 2 ½ cents American money.)

We were issued a .45 gun and did a little more range shooting. It was mostly business as usual – getting shots and a little guard duty there at Fort McKinley.

My mother had a letter from me when I stopped over in Hawaii dated November 6, 1941. She had another letter when I got to the Philippine Islands dated November 22, 1941.

Around November 27, 1941 I had my first signs of malaria. I was sick with high fever and chills. They gave me quinine and I just stayed in bed for while.

### Pearl Harbor bombed – December 7, 1941

I was in downtown Manila watching the movie Sergeant York. They broke into the movie, saying the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor and telling all military personnel to report back to the base. When I came out of the movie, Manila was wild. They had a lot of Japanese over there, and you did not know who was pro and who was con. I finally got in a cab, and that was almost as scared as I ever had been in my life riding in that cab. That Filipino cab driver drove like a wild maniac, but I got back to the base.

My reaction to all this was “We will surely have the Japs whipped in thirty days.” Uncle Sam was prepared to handle anything, and certainly could put the Japs back in their place. I had classed the Japanese as inferior to the Americans, uneducated, with horn-rimmed glasses and buck teeth, short and talking fast and fiery. When we got back to camp, our colonel gave us an order. “Get your shovels and dig yourself a foxhole.” I thought “Well. That old colonel is crazy.” We all got shovels and went to work. By the time that hole was dug, here come the bombs. Boy, I thought to myself, “That old colonel was a pretty sharp old cookie.” This took place on the day as the Pearl Harbor bombing, as best as I can recall.

They had just rung the bell to eat and I heard the first bombs fall. They sounded pretty close. Man, did we hit the foxholes in a hurry. Good thing too, because they tore up the camp pretty bad. But not a man was lost. They hit Clark Field at the same time. That’s where all our planes were and we were headed for Clark field.

### Moving out from Manila

Just as soon as we could pack up and get out, we had orders to move out. The Japs were hitting all over, so we had to move on down in Bataan. As best as I can remember, it was that same night.

My company was driving without lights at night on roads we had never been on. It was really a mess. We had several wrecks. Our job was transporting ammunition and bombs. We pulled out of Manila with sixteen to eighteen loaded trucks and trailers. The Japs were hitting all around us.

My mother received a telegram from me on January 2, 1942. That was dated December 29, 1941, which said "am okey." I really didn't think it would get through. They were pushing us, and I ran into a telegraph place in the small town of Balanga and sent the wire to my mother.

My mother received a letter dated February 11, 1942. I could not tell her much because it would have been censored.

We marched around, but mainly backed up heading into Bataan. We had undergone several Japanese air attacks, but we still thought Uncle Sam was coming with help soon. We knew the Japs had torn the Navy apart, but help would soon come for us.

Near the end of December, 1941 we had moved back into the Bataan Peninsula. Bataan was heavily wooded, and parts of it were swampy. Some parts had hilly areas. Our camp would be set back in the thick woods. There were lots of banana trees and monkeys. The bananas helped the food situation. We would pull them off the trees green and stick them under some leaves to ripen.

Somewhere around the twenty-fourth of December, I was in a raid. I hit the hole and when I did it was just in time. I got hit behind both knees (probably shrapnel). They were rough cuts. There was a little clinic, and they put some iodine on it and bandaged it up. I could still walk.

We all had malaria, and they had already begun to cut rations. Each day or so there was less food.

We were in the Air Force, but now we were in the infantry because there weren't any planes to load. Most of the time we were on guard duty. We stored all the bombs and trucks about a mile from the camp. A lot of this time we were on the waterfront; it was a beautiful place and some of it was even like parks. We would go down and stand guard duty. We were on twelve hours and off twelve hours.



Close to a small town, the Filipinos had an airfield. It looked just like plain old hayfield of several hundred acres. They had three or four planes stuck back in the woods. When they needed the airfield, just in a snap everything would be moved aside for the planes and it would become an airfield.

In this same little town, five of best buddies were killed. I drove into town for some ice and food, and when I came back the Japs had hit. My buddies had gone for cover under a bridge. The Japs popped a bomb right on that bridge and killed all five of them. Had I not gone for the ice, I would have been right there with them.

They issued us some canned food, and we started to cook rice; That was the first we knew about rice. I believe it was around the last of January that we started eating the Calvary horses. We were getting plenty of food, for what was to come. We thought we were really hurting. We tried to supplement our diets by eating anything we could find. If we ate a monkey, we would chew on it all night. There were lizards that looked like turtles- they were about twelve inches long and six inches wide; they were good eating. In that part of Bataan, we had bananas and coconuts as our main fruit. Later on, we started to cook some weeds that some of the men from the other companies said were good to eat. Some of the Filipino scouts helped us out on that.

I had malaria pretty often, but mostly kept working. Quinine and Atabrine were in short supply. I would have chills and fever of 103 to 104 often.

Corregidor was a small island sitting behind us. They would come in there at night with barges and bring 155 millimeters for the Filipino scouts and American artillery. Our primary job was to stand guard duty over them and load them at night.

The Filipinos and Japs all looked the same to us, and sure enough, several times there was a Jap right in there with the Filipinos. We had some Filipino scouts attached to our company. On one occasion just before dark, we were standing in a chow line and some Filipinos were talking. But this Jap slipped up and started speaking a little Japanese. The Filipinos shot him right there in the chow line with a .45. I was about fifty to seventy-five feet away.

We were subjected to constant attacks from air raids and artillery. All night long we could hear those 155's-pom-pom-pom-pom.

We were sitting in the heavy woods. Four or five small dive bombers would come over. Then there would be these small planes just large enough for one man. We called them "Photo Joe." They would fly around and we could see those old slanted eyes. We had orders not to shoot at them because it would give away our position. They were taking pictures. They would fly around and in about twenty-four hours, here would come the bombers dropping all those bombs. Every time we went for the foxhole, we would feel like that was the hole the Jap would land the bomb in. Sometimes in the daytime, I would change holes four or five times. I'd get this hole for a while and then I would think the Jap was going to hit there, so I moved around a lot.

We kept moving further back into the peninsula. I can remember we moved back three or four miles on day, and a bulletin was tacked on a tree from headquarters in Washington saying "The heroes of Bataan are holding on."

Our morale was pretty low at this time, we were hungry and sick and there was no help from Uncle Sam. We began to wonder – maybe the Japs were a lot stronger than we thought. At first, we thought we could whip them in no time flat. But we were so hungry and they kept pushing and pushing us back. Where was our strong Uncle Sam?

Sometime in February of March, President Roosevelt made a radio speech to the nation. He said that there was no way to get help to us. Up until the time, they kept telling us that supplies and reinforcement would come. Morale was way down after the speech.

Rations were cut and cut. We had a little rice with some canned milk. Maybe a spoonful of canned meat. Maybe a piece of bread. All total- not enough for one good meal. My weight dropped to around 110 pounds; my normal weight was 140 pounds.

During this period, Genera MacArthur came in for quite a bit of criticism. It was rumored that when MacArthur left Corregidor on the submarine, that he took some of his personal belongings out instead of getting some of the nurses out. Eighty-two nurses were captured on Corregidor. In spite of some of the charges against him, I have never denied that he was great general.

General Wainwright was well thought of by his men. He was taken prisoner on Bataan. I do know that when Wainwright came up on the front lines, he would come up with just one or two guys on his jeep and one jeep behind him with a submachine gun. Well, if "Mac"

Came, he had a convoy a mile long.

We were backed up as far as we could go on Bataan – on the water's edge. Corregidor was off in the distance about four or five miles. It appeared to be a fortress. Some of the men tried swimming to Corregidor. I thought that they might wend us to Corregidor instead of letting the Japs capture us. Of course, there wasn't enough space for the men they already had.

The night before we surrendered, there were Japs all around us and we could hear the sounds of the bombs. Corregidor was sitting behind us and the Japs were coming in on us. The Americans were penned in between. There were no front lines. The Japs were shelling over us towards Corregidor and the big guns on Corregidor were shelling over us towards the Japs. A lot of it was falling in between and killing our men. That was a miserable night- shelling all night. It was like raindrops and you didn't know how in the world you were going to keep one of them from getting you.

We had moved all of our equipment right up on the end of the peninsula, all of the trucks we had left. The sergeants told us to take our .45's and blow the engines apart so the Japs couldn't use them. We did that and later we saw the trucks come right by us on the Death March. (These were the same darn trucks we thought we had blown the motors apart with our guns.) So I found out right then that those Japs knew how to get the engines going. Undoubtedly, those .45's weren't strong enough to go in the blocks.

It felt like you were on a boat and the boat just went out from under you in the middle of the ocean. I felt that the world had come to an end. At the same time, it was a relief to surrender because we were so hungry, sick and tired. We didn't know what was in store for us. We thought the Japs would pen us up, but at least feed us. Yet we felt like whipped dogs. We were still under the illusion that the war was going to be a very short one and we would be home before too long.

### Surrender – April 9, 1942

I guess it was about daylight. We had already heard that General Wainwright was going to meet the Japanese to make surrender terms, and we knew that we were going to surrender or get killed. We had backed up right to the water as far as we could go. We were sitting on top of a mountain overlooking the town of Mariveles, Bataan.

The Japs were flying around us. I was afraid that one of them would just say, "Well, let's get rid of a few of them right now." So we ate what food we had. No matter how short you were, you kind of saved a little food for the next meal. So they dished out all the food the company had. It wasn't enough for a decent meal. We sat there on that mountain and ate until about daylight.

They told us to go down in small groups of seven or eight men, holding white flags as we walked down to the road to surrender. The Japanese were all around us. I had on a pair Air Corps coveralls and they didn't make me pull them off. It was a wonder they didn't, because every Jap that got close would search me. They did let me keep my canteen at this time. I lost my high school ring here. A Japanese said he wanted it, and I made like I couldn't get it off. He gave me a sign that he would take my finger and all. So I gave him the ring. (Earlier, I had traded my watch for some food.) The first time I got roughed up and slapped around was when I started for a drink of water. It was terribly hot we were so thirsty. I believe the Japs were harder on the big Americans. I was little fellow. They liked to pick on the big Americans because it made them look a lot stronger when they beat up the big ones.

The Voice of Bataan, a broadcast from Corregidor – April 9, 1942

Written by Defender Salvador P. Lopez

Read by Defender Norman Reyes

"BATAAN HAS FALLEN". The Philippine-American troops on this war-ravaged and blood-stained peninsula have laid down their arms. With heads, bloody and unbowed, they have yielded to the superior force and numbers of the enemy.

The world will long remember the epic struggle that Filipino and American soldiers put up in these jungle fastnesses and along the rugged coast of Bataan.

They have stood uncomplaining under the constant and grueling fire of the enemy for more than three months. Besieged on land and blockaded by sea, cut off from all sources of help in the Philippines and in America, these intrepid fighters have done all that human endurance could bear.

For what sustained them through all these months of incessant battle was a force that was more than merely physical.

It was the force of an unconquerable faith – something in the heart and soul that physical hardship and adversity could not destroy!  
It was the thought of freedom and dignity, the pride in these most priceless of all human prerogatives.

The adversary, in the pride of his power and triumph, will credit our troops with nothing less than the courage and fortitude that his own troops have shown. All the world will testify the almost superhuman endurance with which they stood up until the last in the face of overwhelming odds.

But the decision had to come. Men fighting under the banner of unshakeable faith are made of something more than flesh, but they are not made of impervious steel. The flesh must yield at last, endurance melts away, and the end of the battle must come.

Bataan has fallen, but the spirit that made it stand - a beacon to all the liberty-loving peoples of the world cannot fail.

### Death March

I started at Mariveles at the tip end of Bataan and continued walking up to San Fernando a distance, I am told, of about ninety miles. On the way we went through some small towns, which I really don't remember the names. But some of them probably were Cabcaben, Orion, Balanga, Orani and Lubao.

The first day on the march we were really thirsty. One thing that kept me going was that the Japs had missed a little bottle of iodine that I had hidden in my coveralls I was wearing. I would very carefully put a drop in the water that I drank. They would not let us get water. All the water in the ditches was bloody with dead carabao, Japanese and Americans. It certainly was not fit to drink, but I would get some in the cup my canteen and put a little iodine in it and drink it. That's what kept me from losing my head and getting a drink of water and getting killed for it.

Our first night was spent in a small building with a concrete floor which looked like a warehouse. We all slept on the floor. There were approximately two to three hundred of us there. They didn't give us anything to eat; I was so tired that I just fell on the floor and slept.

The next morning they got us up and started us rolling. I remember walking along with the bay on the right; we stopped on the edge of a park or field on the left. The men had begun to drop out – dying fast. Some of the Japs came through swinging their rifles and

some of them were mad because you didn't have a watch or ring to give them. Some would beat the devil out of a big American or run a bayonet into him for no reason at all.

I believe that on the second night we got first issue of food. I really don't remember what it was. I don't remember any water being given to us. I believe I was still getting it from the ditches and putting the iodine in it. That night we slept on the ground real close together; there weren't any building this time. The next morning there were men lying all around who couldn't get up. They just died there on spot. We moved on without burying the dead.

We stopped somewhere on the way. I was on the right side of the road. There was a little Filipino shack on the left. I saw a Jap take a Filipino woman and child back in the woods and come back with a bloody bayonet. I don't know why he killed them. I heard the woman scream; I didn't hear the kid. I guess he killed the kid first.

All along the road we marcher there were good artesian wells. You would be so thirsty and your tongue would be so dry that you would almost give your life for a sip of water. The Japs were standing around and some of the Americans would lose control and urn up to get a drink from the artesian well; the Japs would stab them. We had men lying around those wells; at almost every well you would see dead Americans. The iodine seemed to save my life. You have all that high fever with malaria and your old tongue gets so dry that you feel like you just have to get a drink of water no matter what. Some of the boys lost control – those Japs were cold-blooded human beings. I got water from little streams along the road. I would go along with that canteen – maybe a little old bridge, maybe ten feet long – just a little stream of dirty water. They wouldn't let you stroll off to the side. You had to stay on the road. All along this road there would be dead Americans and Filipinos; the water was bloody. I would pick up a canteen as we went along and pick me up a little water when a Jap wasn't looking, and put my iodine in it.

The Japanese guards were afraid to be compassionate. They were afraid of their own men and would be sticking out their own necks. Every once in a while some Filipino civilians would try to help and get killed doing so. We were meeting convoys of Japanese troops going down into the peninsula for the assault on Corregidor. The road was narrow and dangerous. They would just as soon run you down as not or hit you with a bayonet or knock you around.

So, you would have to fall in the ditch or really get out of the way. Generally speaking, each man had to look out for himself.

We had a first sergeant named McGuire – he was a cracker-jack man. He tried to look after his men. Of course, he couldn't, but I give a lot of credit to a sergeant like that. I got slapped across the head while walking along, but was not hit with a bayonet. Every once in a while, two or three Japs would just come along and start swinging and hit everything they passed.

The march finally ended at San Fernando which was a railroad center. We were put on boxcars for the trip to Capas – just like a bunch of pigs. They packed us in like sardines; they pushed us in and pushed the door shut. We could hardly breathe. It was a bugger. They gave us nothing to eat or drink. (And hot –man, oh man.) As we went through the towns, sometimes the Filipinos would try to help. The Americans would put out their hands and get pieces of food from the Filipinos. I was stuck in the middle. It was so dirty; it was just like a bunch of pigs. A lot of us already had dysentery. Your bowel movements were right in your pants. Your clothing stuck to you just like animals. You would not believe the stick it caused. Some prisoners died on this trip. We were packed in so tight, they would just keep standing, because there was no place to fall. This train ride was about three hours. I think some guards opened the doors of some of the boxcars for air, but mine was shut. At this time, I don't believe I had dysentery. The Filipinos put out a little candy that was made out of brown sugar. They say that stuff was full of the dysentery bug.

I was told that out of my company of 181 men, 55 lost their lives on the march.

After the train ride from San Fernando to Capas, we got off and walked another eight miles to Camp O'Donnell. That eight miles was a bugger. We were so worn out, hungry and thirsty. It was dusty and dry-like walking through a desert. I really don't remember too much about this eight miles. I remember pulling into Camp O'Donnell and how disheartened I was. I thought "I'll be confined to a camp where I can bathe and get decent food and live like human being." But that was all dreaming- for that was not to be.

## Camp O'Donnell- April 17, 1942

The camp consisted of old, open grass huts. They were something like you would see on islands for hurricanes to blow through. I believe the Filipino Army trained here sometime back. The Japs may have hit the camp, because it looked as if it had been hit by raids. When I arrived here there were already quite a few Americans. The camp had a barbed wire fence around it. They only had two or three water spigots for the entire camp of thousands of men. I believe one was used by the Japs. The water would barely drip. You would stand in line hours to get water and then it may run out. You would stand in line for hours, but you were just as well off there as anywhere else. It didn't make any difference because there was nothing else to do. Hunger is bad, but no water is worse than anything. It was so hot. Your tongue is dry and your mouth feels like it is stuffed with dry leaves. When you get thirsty, real thirsty, real thirsty, nothing else matters.

When we arrived at Camp O'Donnell, General King called us all together. They gave him a loudspeaker. Most of us that could walk and move around formed in one area. He told us what the Japanese expected of us. If we tried to escape, they would shoot. The food would be limited because the Japanese didn't have the supplies to give us. He told us exactly what we were supposed to do. We had to bury our own and if we were told to do something and did not obey, we would be shot immediately. General King was talking through an interpreter.

The hut I slept in just had a roof. I slept on the ground. I remember going to bed lying by a buddy named Courtney. I woke up the next morning and he was dead.

I was mainly on the burial detail here. I could not guess at the numbers. We dug holes as big as a room. Then we just dumped them into the pit and covered them up. Most of the time the dog tags were pulled off. I believe General King gave orders for the officers to get our full names and numbers here. That was the first time to do this.

My mother did not know if I was dead or alive. She received a letter in May, 1942 stating that I was missing in action. It wasn't until June 16, 1943, on her birthday, that the government notified her I was a prisoner of war. Later, I was allowed to send short messages to her occasionally. She sent several packages, but I remember getting only one; it had been robbed of some of the contents. I received a few



letters. I also tried to get a message to family in Milan, Georgia saying "Sorry to hear Grooms died." My mother did understand that Grooms had died on the Death March.

The Japs were so in human. Many times the Japanese would tell a man to get up. If he couldn't get up, he would be kicked and hit around. Sometimes shots rang out and someone else was shot. Once they made a twin brother watch his brother get shot. One twin escaped and got caught. Somehow the Japs found out that he had a twin brother.

I never thought seriously about escape. Where would I go? I couldn't speak Japanese and I didn't know anything about the island.

Malaria was bad by now. I worried that I might lose control and do something foolish when I had high fever. That malaria was something else. One minute you were freezing with chills. Then your temperature jumped up and your body ached all over. There was no medical help at Camp O'Donnell. At least, I did not receive any medical help or quinine here.

We received about a half of a small bowl of rice a day or sometimes twice a day. It was called lugao- it was like a mush of rice and water. It was like soup or cereal. We received a small portion of greens and vegetables maybe once or twice a week, but no meat. We all had beriberi; and wet beriberi. The ones that had dry beriberi drew up like arthritis and ached constantly. In the wet beriberi, you could take your finger and push on the skin and the hole just stayed there because there was so much fluid. I had the dry beriberi more than the wet beriberi.

At O'Donnell, there were no bathing facilities. There was river on one side near the edge of the camp. Sometimes they would let the men to down and dive in or let them walk through it. But I never did get to go down there. I never had a bath the whole time at Camp O'Donnell. As a matter of fact, I had not had a bath since before I was captured.

Our sanitary facilities were just old pits that we dug. Flies were all over the place. Dysentery was really bad. Many were too weak to walk to the latrines. You could walk through the barracks and see guys too weak to stand. Some had on shorts, some wore coveralls and some had on nothing. They were like a bunch of animals.

Then, finally on May 12, 1942 (not long after Corregidor fell), I moved to Clark Field. The Japanese told the Americans that they

wanted so many to go on a detail. I thought to myself, “Well, I don’t see how in the world it can be any worse than this. I ‘m gong to volunteer.” They lined us up. I was in pretty good shape, so they let me get on the truck.

### Clark Field – May 12 1942

By this time, Clark field was in a mess. I believe the runways were dirt. There were about three or four hangars at that time and they all had bomb holes in them. There were about eight barracks and a couple of smaller buildings. They were fenced off for us. It really looked good to us. There were water hydrants all over the place- man, oh man, just plain old drinking water. I knew I had made a good move.

The barracks were grass-like huts, with wooden floors. They were open and not boxed in completely. At the top, an open place was left for hurricanes. When the hurricanes would hit, that old building would just sit there and dance, but it would stand. These buildings looked good to us. We didn’t have bunks or racks at first. The Japanese finally let us bring in some things we found while we were on work detail- like an old GI cot. In about six to eight weeks, we all had some sort of pad or bed. We brought in old blankets or old mattress ticking or some straw – anything we happened to find to get us off the floor. Eventually, our living quarters were like heaven in comparison o Camp O’Donnell. The Japs did not issue anything. We scavenged it and brought it in from our work details.

I still had my coveralls. By then I had cut off the top and legs because it was so hot. I believe the Japanese issued a pair of shorts at Clark Field soon after arrival.

At Clark Field the harassment pretty well stopped. They didn’t mess with you inside the camp. Every once in awhile we’d get a troublemaker who just wanted to show off. Many times we would go for days with out anyone coming through except to walk through and inspect and see of anyone was making something he wasn’t supposed to. Sometimes we would go off on work details of five or six men to clean up a garage or do some sort of work. We might get a guard that would want to show off and would really stomp us. Then, the next time the guard might be curious and would sit you down and want to talk. We began to speak a little Japanese by this time. So conditions at Clark Field were a lot better.

At Clark Field the Japanese issued so much rice to the Americans, and we did our own cooking. Then we scavenged for food. I had dysentery so bad by this time. I found some cheese that really helped. The Japanese had us cleaning up a kitchen and I found a wooden box with a hunk of cheese in it. The Japs let me bring it out. It was caked all around and I guess you could smell it all the way to Manila. So I had something to do a little trading with. Oh, we were professional traders. I didn't smoke, but I might go out on a detail and find a cigarette. I could trade it for something to eat. You couldn't trade cigarettes for a bowl of rice in front of you, but you could trade it for tomorrow's bowl of rice. But most of those fellows didn't make it. You just couldn't trade your food for cigarettes. Some of the guys had no willpower.

One time I found a half gallon of syrup and another guy found some flour. We got together and made some pancakes. Every once in a while, the Japanese gave us one side of a pig for the whole camp of two to three hundred men. So it would make the soup pretty watery. We had salt here at Clark Field. There was a Calvary base nearby, so we used the blocks of salt from the horses.

All the prisoners were scavengers – everything you found, you saved. One guy even made a guitar, one made model airplanes. They had all sorts of odds and ends they saved. We made wooden shoes out of Filipino wood. They would have just a strap across for a toe. To get some extra rice to cook, we would fill the inside of the shoe with rice when we were out on a work detail.

We made shorts out of old GI mattress covers. Our spare time was spent resting and dreaming of food. We would dream up menus and what we would send each other when we got home. I would send a gallon of Georgia syrup to a boy in Oregon, and he would send me some salmon. Oh, we must have had a thousand recipes for rice. It's a funny thing – you would know a man, work by a man and sleep by him for six months, but you wouldn't know if he was married or had any children. All you would talk about was food. Just as soon as the war was over and you got a bellyful, every one of us started talking about families and where we lived. But, when you're hungry, that's it.

I remember a boy from Kentucky named Sadler. He would come through the barracks – he could hardly walk because he was so weak. (Corn beef was nicknamed "Corn Willy" and Betty Grable was really popular than as a pinup girl.) Sadler would yell "What would you

rather have, a can of Corn ‘Willy’ or Betty Grable?’” And they’d all yell back “To hell with Betty Grable!” Food was it. I mean food... when you are hungry, nothing else matters. Nothing.

Some of our workdays weren’t to long. Then on the other days they worked the devil out of you and then got you up at night to do something. I can remember working on that airfield all day long filling up holes after a big rain in the hot, hot and coming in to our bowl of rice. About the time we laid down, the Japs hollered at us, made us line up, and marched us into this little town to unload gas all night. The Japs shipped gas in from Manila to this little town near Clark Field and we would go there to unload it all night long. I don’t see how two of us picked up their sixty gallon drums of gas.

Sometimes we worked seven days a week. This was according to who the Jap commander was at the time. There for a while, our officer talked him into letting us have Sundays off, or what we considered Sunday. Some of the guys made calendars and we tried to keep up with the days of the month. Of course, if the Japs had a holiday, we had the day off, whenever and whatever they were.

Most of our work was cutting grass around the runways and filling holes. The last year we were building “revetments.” You see, there were hills around Clark Field and they would give us each a pick and shovel to dig into this hard rock on the edge of the hills. It would be dug out to hide airplanes back in there. It was called a “revetment.” I guess we put more hours on that than anything else. We did flunky type work – hauled gas and bombs, cut grass and cleaned outhouses. This type of work would not have been so bad if we had more food. But they seemed to want you to keep moving. Fortunately, I was short and I could just squat for hours and hours with a sickle and cut grass around the runways. When you raised up, you had to be on guard because they’d get after you. This was really hard on some of the taller boys. On April Fools Day of 1943, I remember cutting grass near one of the hangers. First, let me tell you that the Japanese got some of our gas when they took the Philippines. They were famous for trying to make the gas go further. So they sent it to Manila to make it weaker. Anyway, A Japanese got into a dive bomber and he couldn’t get the thing going good. He started down the runway and about the time he raised up off the ground, it conked out on him. He got five of their own planes that morning. He tore them up

good. We had to stop laughing because the guards worked us over. Six airplanes were destroyed that day – oh, man!

Some of the camps were divided into ten man death squads, If one man escaped, the other nine would be shot. As best as I can remember, we had only one guy to escape from Clark Field. He had married a Filipino girl before the war and he knew the Philippine Islands. When this one guy escaped, the next morning we counted off and came up with one man short. They counted three or four times until they realized that he was really missing. They counted off by the barracks. Each of us had a number. My number was 291. They made us stay in one spot in the hot sun all day. I mean, we didn't move. We expected them to line up one group and shoot at any time.

Punishment at Clark Field was more or less dependent on the Japanese in charge of the camp. So at times, it was not so bad, but other times were pretty bad. We had all the guards nicknamed. There was this sergeant that had taken an American GI shoe and cut everything off except the toe and one strap, leaving the soles and heel. Just to be mean, he would take off one shoe, grab hold of the toe and hit you with the heavy, hard GI shoe heel. Sometimes they would make you do so many pushups till you'd fall. Then they'd jab you in the back with a bayonet to try and make you do more.

Baseball was about the only activity we had. The Japs loved baseball. Every once in a while, the Japanese made us play baseball with them. We had this boy from the Pittsburg Pirates named LaRue. This old boy was good with the ball. The Japs couldn't hit off of him. So all we had to do was go out and sit out there. Fortunately, this American was so good at pitching. We couldn't run around the bases or hit or catch those flies if the Japs hit them because we were so weak. The Japanese were pretty good sports. If an American threw a Japanese out running for a base, and that Jap got mad and slugged the baseman who threw him out, the Japanese in charge would go over and knock the devil out of the Jap.

At this point we really didn't know what was going on with the war. We would pickup some bits of information. They would tell us of some big battle they had won. The next time they would tell us about the big battle; it would be an island closer to us. So we knew that Uncle Sam was heading our way.

I remember Red Cross packages getting to us only one time at Clark Field. They had been robbed. They had a can of powdered milk, cheese and half a dozen canned goods. I mostly remember the powdered milk; it was called klim. The Japanese didn't know much about powdered milk so I guess that's why we got it. We would make it last as long as we could. Instead of using one teaspoon to a glass of water, we would use one-half teaspoon.

By this time, my body was just skin and bones. Our skin was almost like the itch; it was raw and had big blisters. My mouth and gums were bleeding. It would get better if we had some extra food from someplace. It would give you a temporary boost for a few days. I was bothered with aching bones because of beriberi. I spent many a night at the water troughs. I crawled up in there and laid down and turned the water hydrant on my legs.

We all had malaria. The Japs did not issue any medicine. It is a miracle that we didn't really get into a lot of trouble by taking medicine we found. We would find medicines in cabinets and not mark and take them. I got hold of some quinine by finding it on some of the work details and stealing it from the Japs. The rainy season brought on more malaria. I worked all day long in the rain only in shorts. The temperature was warm, with the lowest temperature in the fifties.

I remember getting hit with a bayonet by a Japanese guard that cut my arm. The Japanese used grass to start their fires in the kettles at the kitchen. This Japanese kitchen was behind our camp and we would walk from the airport or hangars to our camp. When we got through each day, they would pile this dry grass up and make each one of us pick up some. I got hold of a load and it wasn't as much as the Jap wanted me to carry. I reached down to get some more and it fell off. I couldn't carry as much as he wanted me to. He got fiery and swung the bayonet and hit me on the arm. It didn't get sewed up because there wasn't a way to sew it up.

The only way you could get out of work details was to be unable to stand. We'd line up for work and this Jap sergeant would go along with a pair of white gloves. If he couldn't feel your temperature through the gloves, then you went to work.

Somewhere around August of 1944, Uncle Sam's Navy was heading our way. No planes or bombings had taken place, but by then we could understand a little Japanese, and we overheard the

conversations about certain battles. They were taking place on some of the islands and getting closer to us. We were wanting to stay on Philippine Islands in hope of being recaptured, but we learned we would be going to Japan. They trucked us down to Manila for a short while. I believe they put us in Bilibid Prison for a few nights. They got all of our serial numbers and Japanese Prisoner of War numbers and marched us down to a dock.

### Hell Ship Ride – August, 1944

I really don't know the name of the freighter they put us on. All I know is that it was pretty good sized convoy (maybe five ships). I have been told that there were around one thousand of us down in each hole. All I know is that we were packed in like sardines. This ship ride made the Death March look like a picnic. They died like flies. I believe that we got one ration of food a day. We were so stuffed in, all you would do is just sit in on one position. We were so thick that we couldn't move. They had a little place to urinate, but you couldn't get over there. We where too thick. I was fortunate because I was close to the hatch – the only place air could get in. I was on the burial detail. They were dying fast in this hot hole from suffocation and heat. I was on the burial detail and it rained upon the top deck, so I got some water that way and got cooled off. We didn't go very far before one of the ships had trouble and we sat in Manila Bay for two or three days. I guess we were a little out of the Manila Bay. We were far enough from the actual shore because we just dumped the bodies overboard.

Sometimes a couple of Japanese would come down to bring the food. An American officer, more or less in charge, might go over with a couple of men and get it. They tried to pass it around and most of the time it got through. If one man got another man's ration, he would get the whole gang on him. In other words, if you were way in the back of the ship and you passed your mess kit to the front, chances were you would still get the rice by the time it came back. We got to be more like animals before we got to Japan. Water was the main concern. Some men even drank their own urine. I didn't store any water, I just got a little up on top deck when I threw the dead in the ocean.

This trip lasted about seventeen days. We were zigzagging all over that ocean. They were trying to miss the American submarines. We were on the unmarked freighter, so the Americans did not know that they were loaded with American prisoners of war. So they were

continually firing at us. Large numbers of our convoy were sunk by the American Navy, not knowing that the ships were loaded with prisoners of war.

I believe we pulled into Japan at Yokohama. We had been in the hole of the ship so long and our skin was raw. They stripped us and ran us up on the top deck, and took that big water hose and ran that salty water on us. It was just like pouring gasoline on us, but by golly, it cured the heat. Then when we docked, they gave us a pair of pants. We went through this big railroad station and they told us what gate to go in and what gate to go out. I could have walked right out and gone anywhere in that city, because there weren't any guards at this time. How much good would that have done? An American over there wearing a pair of prisoner's clothing didn't have a chance of escape.

We got on a narrow gauge train and went about two hundred miles north of Tokyo, to Hanawa. The ride was a beautiful ride. It was like going through the Rockies in Colorado; it was beautiful country.

#### Arrived at Camp Hanawa – September 9, 1944

At Hanawa they issued us a pair of green cotton quilted pants and top. We ate, slept and worked in that thing.

The camp was run by the Army, but the civilians would come down each day and take us to work and stay with us all day. The Army didn't leave the camp.

Our barracks were wooden buildings with small windows at the top. The walls were not insulated; it was a barn-like structure with dirt floors. It was double-decked and made out of woven straw with a small ladder to get up to the top part. They gave us one blanket. We slept in the quilted suit and we all slept close together. The snow was so high you could hardly see the buildings. They provided us with a little coal, but that wouldn't keep it warm during the day, let alone at night.

Our bathing facility was one building that had a little storage shed and a little kitchen for the Japanese. It had a place in it like a little pool possibly eight by six and probably four and one-half feet deep. The Japanese would heat it up for themselves and all take baths. I don't know how often they did this, but every once in a while, they would let us take baths in this hole. There might be fifty who bathed in the same hole of water. Nobody much cared. It was so cold over there.



Our medical facilities here consisted of a doctor, but he had very little medicine – maybe a few aspirin tablets, a little Atabrine and a little bandage. The doctor, Dan Golendernwk, was from Tyler, Texas. By this time we were so very thin and the weather was so terribly cold and we were so hungry.

We worked in a copper mine in one of their Triple Diamond Mines. It was out of Hanawa. We walked several miles to the mine to work. This mine was a huge one. It had floor levels, just like a big building except it was real crude. Most of the main levels and main leadways had electric lights, but we worked up in these little cut-off places from the main level.

They gave us little old lights called carbide lanterns. It was very damp – most of the time you would work with water dripping on you. They gave us a quota of rock to get out each day. At night, the Japanese would drill holes in the floor up above you and put dynamite in and blast it. The next day we would come and the rock would fall out of this chute onto the ground. We would load it from the ground onto these little old cars which would hold about half a pickup truck. Boy, was it rough work! It was heavy work for us because we didn't have much food to give us strength. It was a long way back to camp when the day's work was done. We also used picks and shovels. The Japanese took care of all the blasting. Sometimes, we'd come back along where we had been the day before, and we'd see where there was a small cave-in.

Our food was rice, a little carrot soup and a little green and turnips. I remember one Japanese holiday when we didn't have to work, and I got on a detail. About six of us pulled a sled about half a day a little old town back in mountains. We could hardly walk in the snow because it was so deep. They had a little place made of wood underneath the snow to store carrots and turnips. They grew carrots over there as big as baseball bats. We pulled this stuff back to our camp. They gave us a little of that food. I don't remember ever getting any meat at Camp Hanawa.

I remember once as I was going to the bathroom in the middle the night, I passed a shed. There was a turnip sticking through a crack. I reached for the turnip and when I did, a Jap guard saw me. He made me stand at attention barefooted in the snow for quite sometime. I was saved by the ringing of the phone in the guardhouse. I suppose the Jap didn't want me to hear his conversation. (I think it was his girlfriend.)

So he dismissed me it was just in time because a few more minutes and I would have had a very bad frostbitten foot. One of my toes still shows signs of that night. I was nothing but skin and bones by this time and the snow was so cold.

I remember one old guy that really had the nerve. He was on a detail that worked on trucks. He would get this sugar alcohol and get drunk. He went by one morning while the Japanese flag was being raised. He made fun of the Japanese flag. It's a wonder that they kill him. Anybody else would have been killed, but they did beat the devil out of him.

We really didn't know how the war was progressing. Sometimes they would tell us how many planes we lost, etc. I tell you one thing when they dropped the atomic bomb, we knew something had happened. I was in the copper mine working. The Japanese used the pipes to send messages by hammering on the paper. Man! When they dropped that atomic bomb, you should have heard those hammers knocking on the pipes. We knew Uncle Sam had hit the Japs hard. We didn't know what had happened. On the way back to camp that afternoon, the women and kids threw rocks at us. We felt good because we knew Uncle Sam had hit the real hard.

#### Learning of the Armistice – August 16, 1945

We finally learned what had happened because we had begun to pick up a little Japanese by this time. We lined up one morning to go to work and they told us to go back and rest. Well, buddy, that was very, very unusual. They didn't bother us all day. Then the next day, the same thing happened. Our food was the same. On the third day, they lined us up and told us to sit down. I guess it was about nine-thirty in the morning. Then the Japanese officer in charge and an American officer came out. The Japanese got on a little stand and gave us this speech. He told us that the war was over, and that now we are friends, and that we would be going back to our homes. He never really said the Japanese had been defeated. He said that we had made peace terms.

Statement of Japanese Company Commander Nip Lt. Osaka –  
“Freedom” August 20, 1945

On Monday, August 20, 1945, at nine-thirty in the morning, Lt. Osaka, Japanese First Lieutenant, commanding Officer of Prisoner of War Camp # 6B in Hanawa, Japan, made this statement. Some words may seem strange because it was spoken in broken English.

Peace, peace comes to the world again. It is a great pleasure for me to say nothing of you to announce for all of you to know Japanese Empire acknowledged the terms of the suspension of hostilities given by the American government. Even though these two nations do not still reach the best agreements of a truce.

As a friend from now, I am going to do my best in the future for the convenience of your own life in this camp because of having been able to get friendly relations between them and also the American government. Therefore I hope that you will keep as comfortable daily life by the orders of your officers from today. While you are staying here. All of you will surely get much gladness in returning to your own home, and loving country. At the same time, one of my wishes is this, our health and happiness calls upon your life henceforth and there grow up happier and better by the honor of your country. In order to guard your life I have been endeavoring my best therefore you will please cooperate with m every way more than usual. I hope. I enclose the statement in letting you know that peace has already come.

Freedom

Freedom at last. Someone had made an American flag. So we raised the American flag over the camp. There wasn't a dry eye among the whole camp. They were tears of joy to see Old Glory flying again. The guards went outside to keep the civilians from coming into the camp.

The Japanese issued Red Cross articles – August 22, 1945

I wrote the following statement in a book I made:  
“Japanese issued following Red Cross articles that they had kept stored all winter. These articles would have prevented much sickness during the six months of snow and cold weather. These articles would have prevented many case of frozen hands, feet and ears, pneumonia,

influenza, beriberi, diarrhea, dysentery, malnutrition, tuberculosis, and many skin diseases –that were caused from lack of food and medicine and clothing.”

#### First food dropped from dive bombers – August 27, 1945

The American planes came over and dropped a note saying, “If you want food, put one sheet on the roof, if you want medicines, put two sheets on the roof, if you want clothing, put three sheets on the roof.” They made the Japanese give us sheets and we put one sheet, two sheets and three sheets on the roof. We needed all three. On August 27, 1945, planes came over and dropped supplies. A funny thing happened, we had three or four guys taking a bath in the hole of water, and they started dropping this food at us. The parachute didn’t open on one sixty gallon drum. It came right through the roof right smack in that pool of water. There must have been ten thousand chocolate bars dropped right in that pool of water. Dive bombers came over real low and dropped chocolate bars, peaches, meat and cigarettes. Man, oh man, we gathered up that stuff and carried it into the camp. At one o’clock or two o’clock in the morning, guys would be eating chocolate bars. They ate constantly. As a matter of fact, it made lots of them sick.

We were instructed to stay in camp. The Japanese were told to bring us a radio, and we kept in contact. We couldn’t talk to them, but they call out of Tokyo and told us what to do. American rescue teams never came. We came out on our own.

#### Left Hanawa, Japan – September 13, 1945

We left Hanawa on a train at midnight. The Japanese stayed away from us. In fact, when we went to Hanawa to get on that train, I don’t believe I saw a Japanese in the whole town. They didn’t know what we were going to do. The same Jap that beat the mud out of you the before the was over, would get down and kneel to you just like a wet dog. Japanese personality is different from ours.

### Arrived in Sagaguama – September 14, 1945

We arrived in Sagaguama at nine o'clock in the morning. We boarded a hospital ship named Garrard. That's when the Americans couldn't make our guys throw away their old belongings. They had old shoes, canned goods, old clothing and old souvenirs, recipes and old barracks bags full of junk that you would just want to burn. Boy, they were not about to part with their things – they had done without for so long. The American Prisoners of War wanted to make sure the war was really over. American nurses took one look at us and cried. I had already gained some weight by the time I got to the hospital ship. I weighed about seventy-five pounds when the war was over. Some of the boys were put in hospital beds more or less in intensive care. They checked over the rest of us and tried to put us on a special diet. They found it didn't work too well. The men wanted all kinds of food. We would drink milk shakes at three o'clock in morning. From what I hear, MacArthur issued special orders to treat us like king, and buddy, they did! We ate constantly.

### Arrived in Manila – September 25, 1945

We arrived in Manila on September 25, 1945. We went through some processing here. They pulled me into a tent for some sort of psychological testing. They asked about any Americans that had turned against other Americans. I'm sure some of us told the same story, because there were a few Americans that had been collaborators, that would do anything for himself, no matter how much it the other Americans. I was awarded the Purple Heart here.

I don't believe we could have made another winter, if the war had not ended when it did. We were about at the end our rope. If we had stayed in the Philippines, I could have held out a lot longer. The weather was so cold and we were so thin in Japan.

On October 2, 1945 my mother received word from the State Department that I was returned to military control. It also included a message "Have been freed Mother will see you soon. Love Henry G." It further stated that my condition was good.

On October 8, 1945 my mother received notice that I would be in Seattle, Washington on October 25, 1945.

## Home

We were to fly back to the States when a big storm hit. We got on a ship name Cliff Fontaine on October 8, 1945. We had our bellies full and now we wanted to get home. Would you believe a little boat ran into our ship and we had to stay another twenty-four hours in Manila bay? We were really getting disgusted. We arrived in Seattle, Washington. I went to Madigan Hospital in Ft. Lewis, Washington on October 28, 1945. I was allowed a phone call, so I called my brother Les in Dallas, Texas. My mother lived in the country and had no phone. My brother sent a telegram to Mother saying I would be home in about fifteen days and my health was fine.

On November 1, 1945 I left Ft. Lewis for Augusta, Georgia on a passenger train with hospital cars. We laid in beds and looked out at the beautiful American countryside. We were treated like kings with nurses, corpsmen and porters to wait on us.

We arrived at Oliver General Hospital in Augusta, Georgia on November 5, 1945. I was put in the hospital there for more testing. I was assigned to this hospital for six months. I had to report back every so often.

Our group arrived at this hospital that night and they were trying to get us checked in. We were not allowed to meet or see our family yet. A nurse told me to “look over there” and my mother was sitting nearby. I saw my mother for the first time in four years. She did not know what to expect – was I really okay or not?

On November 9, 1945 I rode a bus to McRae, Georgia for home. I was welcomed home by a flock of friends and relatives. A few days later, my hometown folks of Milan, Georgia gave a “Thanksgiving Party” for me.

By this time, I had gained weight very fast and looked good but did not feel good. I probably weighed about 150 pounds. I was still being treated for malnutrition, malaria and dysentery. I received my discharge on June 13, 1946.



I think one of the key points in my survival was the way I was born and raised. I was a country boy: my father died the year I was born. I worked hard on the farm from the time I was a little boy, right on up until I went in the Army. In fact, a good portion of these fellows that got back were small town boys, country boys, that were in good physical condition in the beginning. You had to continually keep in mind that you were going to come back. You could not lose faith. The ones that gave up didn't make it home.

For three and a half years, I was beaten, starved and forced to live in animal like conditions. I truly believe for that reason, I am more thankful for all my blessings. I'm especially thankful for good food, good water, and nice clean beds and oh, to be really free.

Time heals a lot of wounds and I have really come a long way since 1945. I really don't mind talking about my experiences. As a matter of fact, talking about it has probably helped me. But, don't ask me to completely forget either.

My faith tells me that it was not just luck that brought me home My God wanted me home.

Henry G. Stanley



Photo # SC 211872 Gen. MacArthur signs Japanese surrender instrument





