

THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY

BY GEOFFREY MARSTON

MEMOIR OF A PRISONER OF WAR

HONG KONG 1941/1945

THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY

BY GEOFFREY MARSTON



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HONG KONG VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA



NORTH POINT CAMP, PHOTOGRAPHED IN 1945. The area is now covered with high rise apartments.

DEATHS AT NORTH POINT POW CAMP - FROM DECEMBER 30, 1941, TO SEPTEMBER 26, 1942.

The Royal Rifles of Canada lost eight men during this period. The Winnipeg Grenadiers lost ten, their Commanding Officer, Lieut-Colonel Sutcliffe being the first prisoner to die of sickness and disease in the camp. The supporting units lost four. Twenty-two Canadians in all died of sickness and disease during the nine month period of captivity.

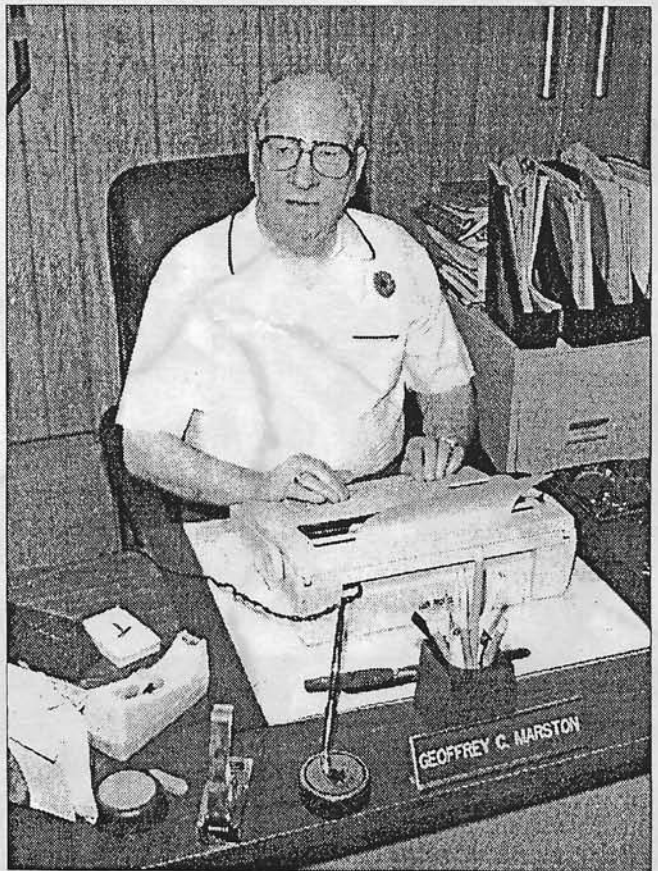
Above material loaned by: Lieut-Colonel E.E. Denison, E.D.



Geoffrey Marston of Oshawa arrived in Hong Kong with the Royal Rifles of Canada in 1941. On Christmas Day of that year, Hong Kong crumbled under the onslaught of 60,000 Japanese combat troops. Mr. Marston was among those taken to a prisoner of War camp in Niigata, Japan. When the camp was liberated by American troops in August, 1945, Mr. Marston weighed just 92 pounds.

After the war, he returned to Oshawa and raised a family, working at GM. But, he reports, he still suffers terrifying nightmares of his years as a prisoner of war. He writes short stories recounting his experiences and two of his pieces appear here.

Commemoration Canadians in Hong Kong



Top, author Geoffrey Marston as a young, enlisted man in the 1940s and today, in his Oshawa home, where he writes short stories about his years in a Japanese prisoner of war camp.

A BIOGRAPHY

Geoffrey C. Marston enlisted in the Midland Regiment at Bowmanville, Ontario on August 9, 1940. After much training, he was one of the first to volunteer to join the Royal Rifles of Canada (A Quebec Unit) for immediate overseas duty. They met their sister unit, the Winnipeg Grenadiers, and a brigade headquarters with two nursing sisters in Vancouver and boarded the S.S. "Awatea". They landed in the British colony of Hong Kong on November 16, 1941 to reinforce the defenceless British garrison against the Japanese.

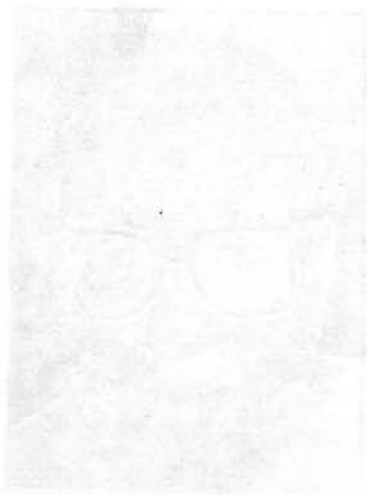
They fought in battles such as Mount Parker, Palm Villa, and Sugar Loaf Hill. Finally, though, Hong Kong fell to the Japanese on Christmas Day, 1941, and they were forced to surrender. But before they laid down their arms, Geoffrey and two comrades crawled into an empty pillbox and shared a 'Christmas Supper' of a can of bully beef and two hardtack biscuits.

Geoffrey was kept in Hong Kong as a POW until August 1943 and was then transferred to Niigata, Japan, where he was held until the Japanese surrendered in September, 1945. When he arrived in Hong Kong in 1941 he weighed 155 pounds; when he was liberated in Niigata he weighed 92 pounds.

After he returned to civilian life he married and raised a family. He worked for General Motors of Canada for twenty-nine years but was forced to take an early retirement due to illness dating back to the POW camps.

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

Commemoration
Canadians
in Hong Kong



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

JK

As a 24-year-old signaller with the Royal Rifles of Canada, all I knew was that just three weeks after Pearl Harbour, the Battle of Hong Kong was over. We had an out-gunned garrison, and had been ordered to surrender by the victorious Japanese troops. We had been driven back by the enemy who just kept coming at us time and time again. Finally, we dug in on a point of land and that's when we got word that we had to surrender. But just before we laid down our arms, two comrades and myself crawled into an empty pillbox to share a "Christmas Supper" ... a can of bully beef and two hard-tack biscuits. On that Christmas however, all I wanted to do was to survive, but also found that survival was going to be hard ... very, very hard.

When the surrender came, the Japanese troops stormed into St. Stephen's hospital close to where we were dug in and bayoneted the wounded in their beds and raped and murdered the nurses. ... And that was only the beginning.

The fighting in Hong Kong, the years-long starvation diets, the forced-labor duties in mills, mines and shipbuilding yards, and the continual beatings by guards took a heavy toll.

When we were liberated by American troops in Niigata, Japan, August of 1945, I weighed 92 pounds. When we arrived in Hong Kong four years before, I was a fit 155.

When I returned to Oshawa and resumed civilian life, I married Jean, and together we raised a family that now includes two grandchildren. I was hired by General Motors of Canada, but after 29 years, I was forced to take early retirement from illness dating back from the POW camps. I still suffer terrifying nightmares of those long years of living hell.



Geoffrey C. Marston



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—Geoffrey C. Marston.

From the Desk of
GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

Apology not enough: Hong Kong vet

Compensation sought over 1941 Japanese sneak attack

By John Goodwin
Oshawa Times staff

The official apology by Japan for atrocities committed against Canadian troops captured during the Second World War comes as no great surprise to Hong Kong veteran Geoffrey Marston of Oshawa.

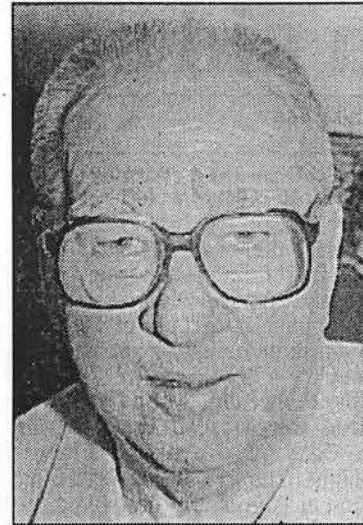
But like other surviving veterans of the Battle for Hong Kong and four years of brutal slave-labor captivity, the apology for him is just not good enough.

"We were pretty sure an apology would come during the prime minister's trip to Japan, but we think he should have asked for compensation as well," said Marston, who is a charter member of the 700-strong Hong Kong Veterans' Association of Canada.

But he feels that under the circumstances, Japan will eventually agree to the \$4-billion claim filed with the United Nations Human Rights Commission by the War Amputations of Canada on behalf of 200,000 former Allied prisoners of war in the 1941-45 Pacific War.

"They can afford it, Germany has, and voluntarily too," he said.

If he's right, the 700 Hong Kong survivors in Canada, including five here in Oshawa, (and 300 widows of deceased Hong Kong veter-



THEN AND NOW — Geoffrey Marston (left) as he was before the fall of Hong Kong, and today (right), as a senior citizen.

ans) will each receive \$20,000.

And if the claim is not satisfied, Marston says they will urge a boycott of imported cars from Japan. However, he thinks the lucrative Canadian market precludes any refusal by Tokyo to pay restitution for the agony that really began 50 years ago on Christmas Day.

Marston, then a 24-year-old signalman with the Royal Rifles of Canada, was among nearly 2,000 ill-trained Canadians who arrived in the British Crown colony just three weeks before the Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

"We were with the Winnipeg Grenadiers and none of us even knew how to fire our machine guns." Then he laughed. "Imagine, they thought two untrained Canadian battalions would help deter Japan."

But laughter 50 years ago stopped when thousands of Japanese troops overwhelmed the 15,000-man British garrison in three weeks of savage fighting that ended in surrender.

Just over 300 Canadian troops were killed at Hong Kong, which for Canada was the first major action of the war.

Marston and his comrades were herded into camps in Hong Kong and then were transferred to Japan where they lived in forced-labor camps. Marston's job in a steel mill lasted 12 hours a day, all on a daily starvation diet of potatoes and rice.

"We were all beaten and I remember once I had both eyes closed from blows," he said. "And when the guards knocked you down, they often urinated on you afterwards."

Forty-four months of inhumane captivity ended for Marston and his surviving comrades (254 died in the camps) when Japan surrendered after the atomic bomb air raids on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945.

When he arrived in Hong Kong, Marston had weighed a trim 155 pounds. When he was freed by American troops four years later, he tipped the scales at 92 pounds.

After the war, he joined General Motors of Canada, married Jeanne, and they raised two children. In 1971 he took early retirement in part from illness dating from the PoW camps.

"I still have nightmares about the camps," he said.

Marston remembers the extra \$1,000 (\$1 per day) he received from the compensation deal worked out when the peace treaties were signed in 1952. "But that was peanuts because we understand some of the money was kept back by the government at the time."

As for the \$20,000 which could come his way, Marston is reflective. "I lost a lot of friends in the fighting and in the camps, so nothing can ever really repay us for what happened."

He said if he gets the \$20,000, he would offer some to his children and grandchildren, then bank the rest as a retirement nest egg.

But even with an extra \$20,000, he has no desire to return to Japan, where many of his comrades lie in a Commonwealth War Veterans Cemetery, victims of the agony that began on Christmas Day, 1941.

SOME OF THE BATTLES I WAS ENGAGED IN AT HONG KONG

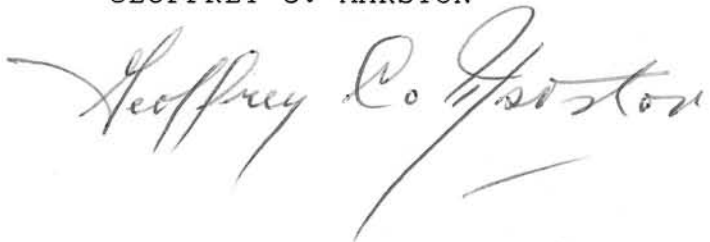
On November 16th, we disembarked at Kowloon and our two battalions marched the two-mile route to Shamshuipo Military Barracks at the northern limits of the city. However, within a week, we were moved to positions on Hong Kong Island as the Japanese were swiftly advancing toward the British Colony.

With the Royal Rifles of Canada manning the south-eastern part of the island, myself and seven others were assigned to the British Signal Headquarters at Tai Tam Gap. Our jobs were to man phones and switchboard operations. We were also affiliated with China Command. Several times we were fired upon by Chinese fifth-columnists with one narrowly missing my head by only a fraction of an inch. I was very fortunate.

On the 18th of December, the Japanese successfully landed at Lye Mun Passage only a mile from Tai Tam, thus no time was lost in blowing up a nearby bridge, and our quarters, so the Japanese couldn't gain vital information.

Before leaving, we took our trusty old rifles and filled our pockets with grenades and fled for the hills, not knowing where we were.

GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

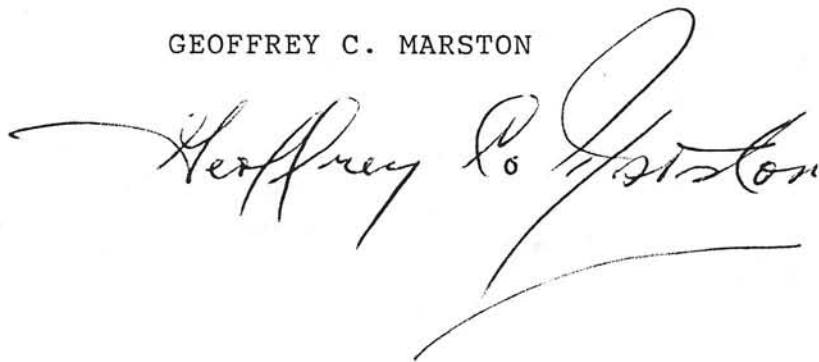



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August 9, 1940, I enlisted in the Midland Regiment at Bowmanville Ontario, training there until we were posted to Ottawa Ontario, January 2nd, 1941. While there, I was assigned to the signal platoon where I graduated as a qualified signaller. Three months later, we left Ottawa for Saint John, N.B. for coastal defence duties. In the latter part of September 1941, the regiment left for Niagara-On-The-Lake Ontario. Three weeks after arriving there, Lieutenant-Colonel John Gamey urgently requested 52 volunteers to reinforce the Royal Rifles of Canada (A Quebec unit) and to join them in Toronto for immediate overseas duties. I was one of the first to volunteer.

Travelling by train, we arrived Vancouver B.C. October 26th, and with our sister unit the Winnipeg Grenadiers and a brigade headquarters with two nursing sisters (Totalling 1,975) boarded the S.S. AWATEA, landing at Hong Kong, November 16, 1941, to reinforce the defenseless British garrison.

GEOFFREY C. MARSTON



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THE FRAGMENT

Volume 152, Spring 1987

The Hong Kong Issue: Update



On June 19, 1986, we forwarded a "Notice of Intent" to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, concerning our claim for compensation from the government of Japan for Canadian Hong Kong veterans. The notice describes the general nature of our claim, which will document the "gross violation of human rights" suffered by Canadian Servicemen incarcerated by the Japanese following the fall of Hong Kong in 1941.



HONG KONG VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

"THE HONG KONG VETERAN"

*Together they fought with glowing pride . . .
In defence of freedom for all mankind.*

*In having grown weary . . .
And now old and gray . . .
They still feel the anguish of that sad yesterday.*

*The ordeals that they suffered,
And as slaves they endured,
Hence Japan should remunerate . . .
In place of mere words.*

*Thus with the passing of years . . .
And now there are few . . .
Remember the Vets of Hong Kong . . .
Before each day is through.*

— Geoffrey C. Marston

The War Amputations of Canada



H. Clifford Chadderton, OC, SBSJ, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
The War Amputations of Canada



Honours Bestowed on Chief Executive

Mr. H.C. Chadderton, OC, SBSJ, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
The War Amputations of Canada

THE FRAGMENT

Volume 155, Spring 1988



The War Amputations of Canada

A Prayer for Peace

*In this day and age our future is cast —
So why not look forward and forget a surly past,
As we are of God's creatures no matter what breed . . .
Unto he, no barriers of race, color or creed.*

*Yet, with thoughts of the present that later could bring —
Will a flower ever bloom with the coming of Spring?
Will a dawn still appear that will bring a new day?
Thus, will there be a morrow . . . Let us hope, let us pray.*

*As the fate of the earth bring anguish and fear,
Let strife between nations be solved in the near —
Then a bright note of sunshine, hence eternal peace . . .
Into a world of unhappiness that will suddenly cease.*

—Geoffrey C. Marston

I dedicate this poem to my good friend Cliff Chadderton whom I greatly respect with pride and loyalty. He represents for all a symbol of love, freedom and justice. May the good Lord bless him always!



FRONT COVER: H. Clifford Chadderton was elevated to Officer of the Order of Canada by Governor General Jeanne Sauvé on November 12, 1986.



"THE HORRENDOUS YEARS"

By
G MARSTON

After the surrender of Hong Kong, our two Canadian battalions (The Royal Rifles and the Winnipeg Grenadiers) and other survivors were marched to the breaking point to reach the Japanese prison camps at North Point and Shamshuipo. Then began a nightmarish existence during which we gained first hand experience of debilitating diseases such as: wet an dry beri beri, pellegra, malaria, many forms of parasitic infestation, and the terrible diptheria epidemic which claimed the lives of 500 prisoners alone.

Our captors didn't believe in the Geneva Convention. The Japanese treated both officers and men with the same cold hatred. We were forced to subsist on 700 calories a day. Those unable to work had their rations cut even further. Beatings by guards and Japanese civilians were frequent and increased in intensity when the Japanese saw they were losing the war. Men were soon reduced to human skeletons and by the time we were eventually freed in 1945 most of us were below 100 pounds in body weight.

The winters in Niigata Japan were harsh and cruel, yet no heat was supplied for the ugly deteriorating huts we lived in. Each man was issued three blankets, and to keep warm we would double up. We would put one blanket on the hard wooden flooring, leave our clothes on, and put the other five blankets over the top of us. Many times during the nights each of us would be awakened by a sharp slap on the face from a guard for no apparant reason. He would then roar with laughter and walk away.

Rats in the huts were so numerous we could feel them running across our coverings during the nights. To avoid being bitten we would tuck the blankets tightly around ourselves. The rats, the cold, the hunger and the beatings were some of the major indignities suffered by us. The washup stalls were outside and in the winter the water in these were frozen solid. Many weeks on end, we wouldn't even see a bar of soap. Lice thrived inside our clothing and became unbearable.

With the hunger being so great and intense the men were cutting food ads out of old magazines and reading them over and over again. Many of the men treasured the reading material and often traded them like rare postage stamps. Breakfast consisted of one small potato with a cup of hot green tea. Dinner was a small bowl of rice covered with potato tops and supper was the same. Deaths in these camps were frequent among the Canadians, British and Americans.

In view of today's international relationships and the relative comfort in which we live, it is hard to visualize such things happening. Canadians have heard about them but seldom from those who lived through those four horrendous years.



Geoffrey C. Marston

HONG KONG

On Christmas Day 1941, Hong Kong, the "Gibraltar of the Orient", crumbled under the massive onslaught of 60,000 crack Japanese invasion troops.

The British Commonwealth units along with two Canadian battalions, The Royal Rifles and the Winnipeg Grenadiers, vigorously fought side by side to defend the Crown Colony.

For eighteen days without rest and very little nourishment, the heavily outnumbered soldiers surpassed all expectations, winning lasting honor on the field of battle before being marched off to spend four horrendous years in Japanese Prisoner-of-War camps.

The Battle of Hong Kong was one of the very tragic events in history, and the courage of the men who survived that battle and the subsequent captivity is an inspiration to all free nations of the world.

Lest we forget!!

1992





HONG KONG

On Christmas Day 1941, Hong Kong crumbled under the massive onslaught of 60,000 crack Japanese combat troops.

The Royal Rifles of Canada and the Winnipeg Grenadiers, ill-equipped and inadequately trained, fought for eighteen days without rest and very little nourishment as the heavily outnumbered Canadians surpassed all expectations, winning lasting honor on the field of battle.

But for the Canadians who survived, it was still far from over. If they had been ill-prepared for battle, they were less prepared for the terrible years of imprisonment ahead.

Canadian losses in battle were: Killed in action, 23 officers and 267 men. Wounded, 28 officers, 465 men. In the Prisoner-of-War camps, four officers died and so did 260 other ranks. Another four men were shot without trial.

Of the 1,975 who left Vancouver on HMS Awatea and HMCS Prince Robert ... 558 never came back.

Today, there are less than ⁴⁰⁰600 survivors. A horrendous toll to pay for a war that they had no chance of winning.

The Battle of Hong Kong was one of the very tragic events in Canadian history, and the courage of the men who survived that battle and the subsequent captivity is an inspiration to all Canadians.

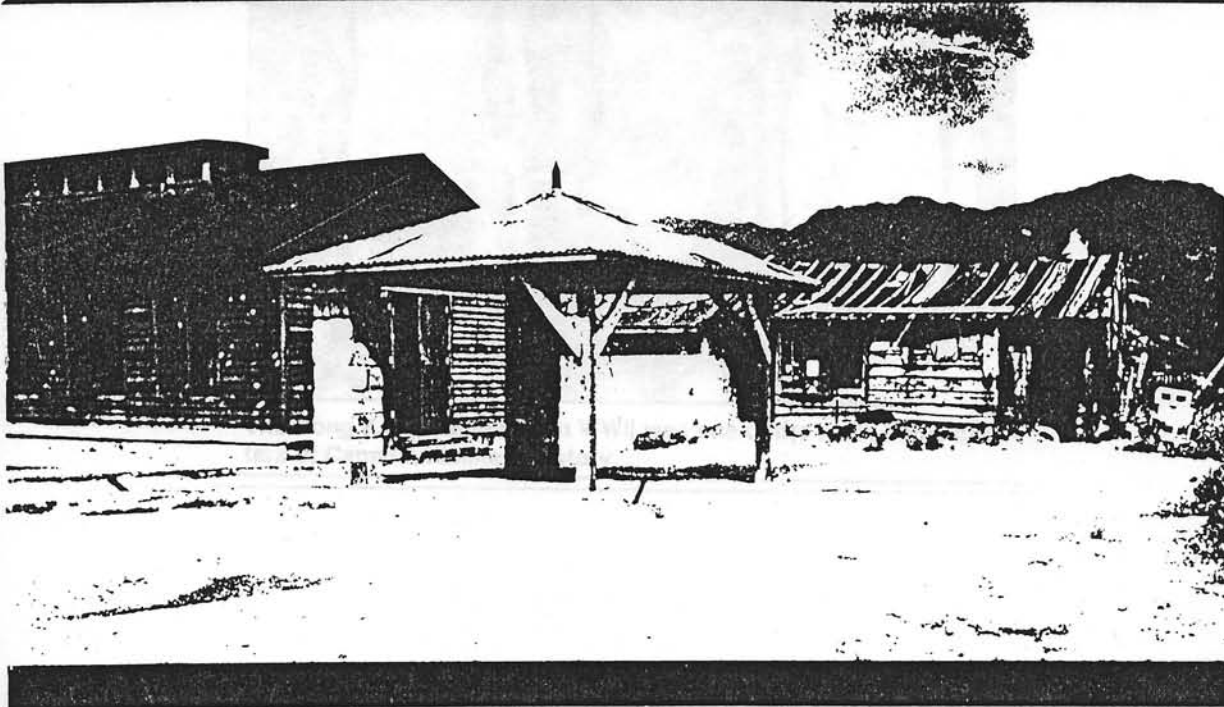
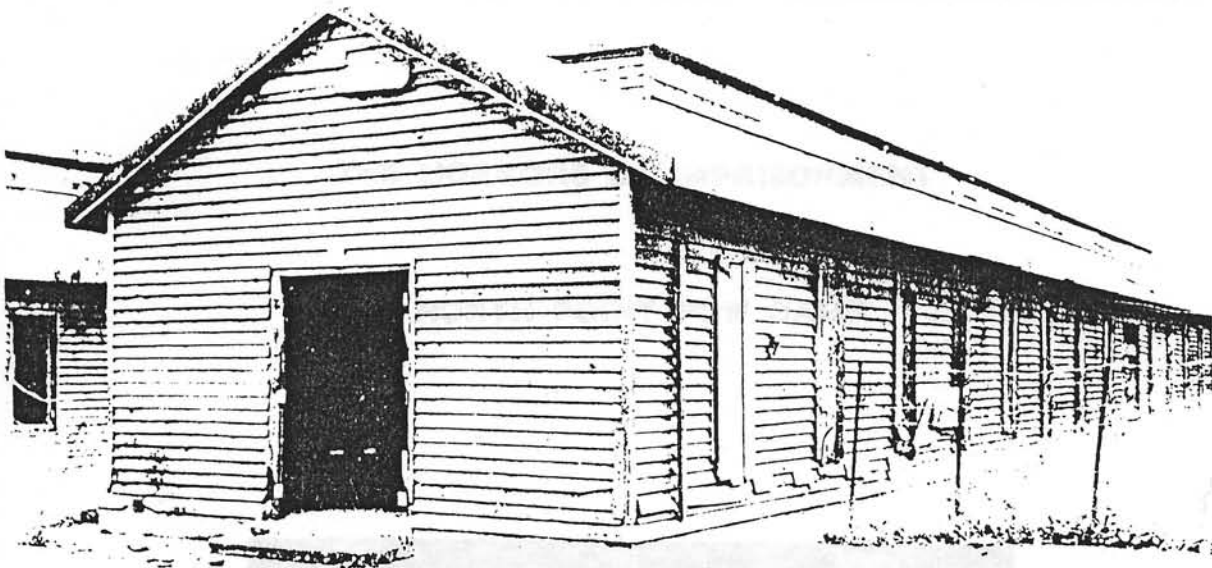
Lest we forget!



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From the Desk of
GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

NORTH POINT CAMP



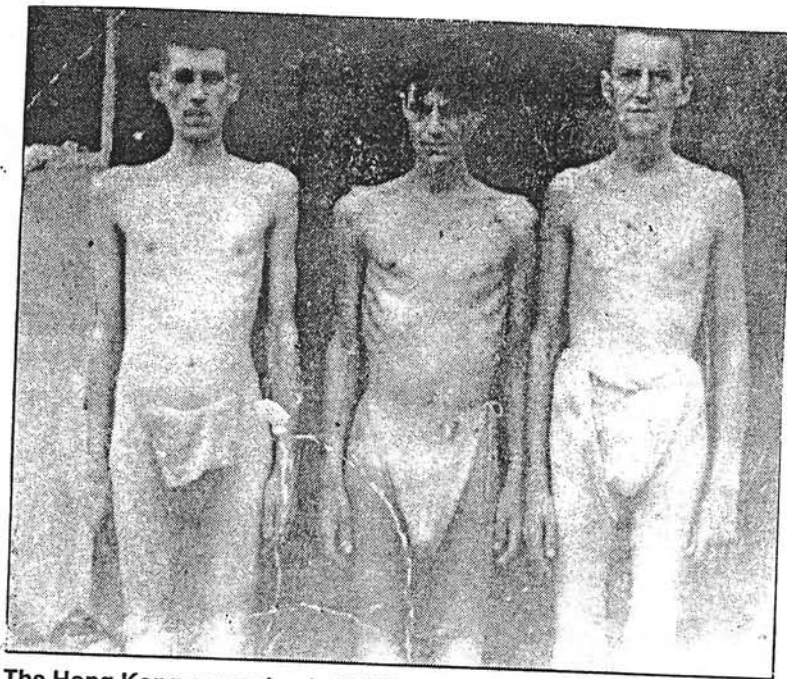
The ramshackled buildings (shown above) where the Canadians were forced to occupy from December 26, 1941, to September 26, 1942.

Since the decayed buildings were overcrowded, many of the men had to sleep on damp concrete floors.

This hellish camp was situated ten feet above the water line facing the Kowloon Peninsula on the mainland.

THE HORRORS OF IMPRISONMENT

NORTH POINT POW CAMP



The Hong Kong campaign in WWII was one of the most tragic chapters of Canadian military history.



"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

I dedicate this story with loving gratitude to the doctors and nursing sisters in Hong Kong hospitals during the Japanese occupation from 1941 to 1945.

-Geoffrey C. Marston



—Geoffrey C. Marston.

YOU NEVER FORGET

THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY



—*Geoffrey C. Marston.*

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY

GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

HONG KONG: DECEMBER 8, 1941

Canadian
troops were sent
to defend the
undefensible

**THE
DOOMED
BATTALIONS**

VETERANS ASSOCIATION

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 1 -

HONG KONG

NORTH POINT CAMP
(DECEMBER 30, 1941 to September 26, 1942)

On December 30, we were ordered by the Japanese to leave Stanley Fort to march 12 miles to North Point, situated across the Kowloon Peninsula on the mainland. The force included 550 Royal Rifles of Canada personnel able to march, augmented by men from the Middlesex Regiment, Royal Artillery, Royal Navy, Royal Engineers, Royal Army Service Corps, H.K.V.D.C. and a small number of Winnipeg Grenadiers.

As most of us had lost clothing and equipment during the battle, all that we owned were carried on our backs.

Enroute, we passed familiar landmarks as Stanley Village, Palm Villa, Tai Tam Gap, Lye Mun, Sau Ki Wan - which had been our battleground for 18 days.

Although we were allowed a frequent rest period, it was a difficult journey for the wounded, and many others who were suffering from fatigue.

Those who were found straggling and unable to keep up with the column were maliciously attacked by armed Japanese guards.

Crawling out of an abandoned pillbox to meet us was a badly wounded rifleman, Arnold Pryce, who somehow survived on some rum he had found.

A little more than a week earlier, he was captured and bayoneted by the Japanese; leaving him for dead.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 2 -

HONG KONG

NORTH POINT CAMP
(December 30, 1941 to September 26, 1942)

None of us expected him to remain alive, but we all took turns carrying him on a stretcher, and later he made a miraculous recovery.

In North Point, he mentioned to me that he owed his life to maggots that fed on his open wounds, keeping the infection under control.

At 1400 hours, we reached North Point Camp.

Tired, hungry and thirsty, we filed through the grim entrance to begin four horrifying years of starvation, malnutrition, torture and disease.

The depths of hell was in our midst.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 3 -

HONG KONG

NORTH POINT

North Point Camp was originally a place for Chinese refugees which years earlier had been condemned by the Hong Kong Government as totally unfit for human habitation, thus it was implicitly clear why the Japanese had endorsed it for their arch enemy.

* The filthy wooden ramshackled huts were built over concrete floors. However, as heavy fighting had occurred in North Point during the battle, four large huts were demolished and the roofs of most others were penetrated with shrapnel. The Chinese had looted the buildings stealing anything of value. Many windows were shattered.

The western end of the camp was a stretch of reclaimed land used previously as an open dump for garbage and a place of bliss for millions of flies. The eastern end of the camp was littered with decomposed bodies of Chinese civilians and animals slaughtered by the Japanese.

The putrid stench which pervaded the area and the huts from corpses left lying outside the barbed wire was so overpowering, it was necessary to cover our nostrils with masks for several weeks before the cadavers were removed and thrown in the nearby channel waters.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 4 -

HONG KONG

NORTH POINT

We Canadians, along with the British and Indian troops, were astounded at the repulsive accommodations. Each hut was packed solidly with 200 men designed to house 65 refugees.

The fortunate were able to secure wooden bunk beds. but many like myself, were forced to use the floor.

Some had blankets, while most had to do without. However, a few of us were able to sew make-shift coverings out of rice bags that were found surprisingly comfortable.

With no glass in the windows, the Hong Kong weather at this time was unexpectedly cold and damp, chilling us to the bone.

During the battle, the water mains had been broken by heavy shelling, and for a month there was no running water in the camp. It had to be trucked in. And with the uncertainty of food delivery, we had to do without for 36 hours.

Our first meal was served the following evening with a mixture of poor grade rice and traces of pork laced with dead flies. It was a stinking mess. But with hunger so great, we ate with gusto.

The future looked bleak.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 5 -

HONG KONG

NORTH POINT

In the absense of latrine facilities, we were forced to squat over a hole cut out of a thick slab of lumber jutting out a few feet over the seawall, enclosed with wire fencing.

For many weeks, bloated Chinese bodies floated past the camp. However, a cadaver became lodged beneath the latrine causing a horrible nauseating stench, but fortunately a few days later it was carried out to sea with the tide.

Having allowed to have use of a truck, an R.R.C. officer and an N.C.O. called for volunteers to accompany them augmented with two Japanese guards to Stanley Fort to fetch food cookers.

Myself, and a number of others, offered our services.

Arriving, we salvaged other valuable pieces of equipment to be used for a camp kitchen. Then I spotted an army duffle-bag lying nearby bearing the name and number of a rifleman from "C" Company.

Back in camp, I located the comrade and returned the bag.

Completely overcome with excitement in having his possessions retrieved, he became emotional and almost broke down since it also contained precious family photos. He couldn't thank me enough.

After leaving his quarters, my eyes were brimming with tears.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 6 -

HONG KONG

NORTH POINT

Granted the use of a Lorry, internees were allowed to send out scrounging parties and were able to haul in a good amount of food and materials. Burial parties were also organized to search for the dead and bury them.

A few days later, the Japanese made it virtually impossible for permission to leave camp. Foraging parties were now history.

The first month, rice was cooked outdoors in an aged bathtub positioned over an open fire and stirred with a piece of wood shaped as a paddle.

One of our two cooks, Rifleman L.G. Reid, known to all as "Gummy", was in charge of equally distributing the rice into containers to be toted to each Company hut.

The server of food had to be precise in dispensing the same amount to each man. A watchful eye was kept that no one was favoured over another.

Many had lost their original mess kits. Most had tin cans and a few utensils. I had a pie plate, a tin cup, and a spoon (foraged from the outside) that served me until the duration.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 7 -

HONG KONG

NORTH POINT

Near the end of January, British and Indian prisoners were transferred to Sham Shui Po Camp on the mainland, and eventually North Point became exclusively Canadian with the exception of 27 Dutch submariners and two H.K.V.D.C.

Finally, the camp was equipped with latrines; running water became available, and kitchen facilities were built from the scrounged materials.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 8 -

HONG KONG

NORTH POINT

Many rumours swept the camp.

One of the strongest, suggested a trade between Japan and Canada that Canadian prisoners be exchanged for Japanese-owned fishing vessels on the west coast.

At first we were overjoyed, but it soon became apparent that the news was unfounded much to our dismay.

The feelings were, that our Officers had masterminded the rumour to help boost morale, but were persistent that they had no knowledge and denounced it as a cruel hoax.

Another, had Chiang Kai-Shek sending a fighting force of a million men to recapture Hong Kong.

Again, nothing materialized.

Weak from the want of food, and sick from an insufficient diet, many of the men also had to contend with the scarcity of cigarettes. Some would follow guards and fight trying to pick up discarded butts. The Japanese found it amusing seeing white men degrade themselves.

With the craving so intense, a few would desperately sell their meagre food ration; exchanging their lives for a smoke. However, our Officers held a firm hand by controlling this practice by making certain that they ate their full ration.

Personally, I had no need for cigarettes as I never inhaled, but felt badly for those who had to go without.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

~~10~~
9

HONG KONG

North Point

PoW Camp

1942

"THE TORTURE OF CIVILIANS"

In early February, we stood utterly bewildered.

Near the entrance to the camp, the enemy were busily engaged driving a wooden stake in the ground.

"What were they up to?" we anxiously asked one another. "Where they planning to use it for prisoners who displeased them?" "Would a prisoner be chosen as an excuse to render undue punishment in order for us to toe the line?."

Not long afterwards, we watched in horror as two guards darted across the way and viciously seized an elderly Chinese man for no apparent reason.

Screaming at the top of his lungs, his frail body was dragged and tied to the stake.

Like crazed animals, they tore every stitch of clothing from his body and proceeded to amuse themselves by tormenting him with bayonets and dancing like small children around a maypole.

During the night, his torturous screams were heard throughout the camp chilling us to the marrow of our bones.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

~~11~~
10

HONG KONG

North Point

PoW Camp

1942

"THE TORTURE OF CIVILIANS"

The following morning, he was dead. His torso was a mass of deep stab wounds.

Like the savages they were, the guards carried the remains to the seawall and flung it into the murky channel waters.

With the passing days, coolies were selected at random and met the same fate much to the perverse pleasure of the guards.

Near the end of June, a pretty Chinese woman and her baby were grabbed and taken to the guard room where she was repeatedly gang-raped.

Her pitiful screams filled us with contempt.

Shortly afterwards, she was killed, and along with her baby was thrown in the channel.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

~~12~~

11

HONG KONG

North Point

PoW Camp

1942

"THE BEAST OF HONG KONG"

Colonel Tukunaga was the Japanese officer who was ultimately responsible in his role as Commandant of Hong Kong camps.

Known to us "The Beast of Hong Kong", this fat pig-like creature was a gross, ferocious sadist who could have done much to ease the horrible conditions in camp, instead his actions led us to speak in low tortured tones as we discussed the fear and hatred that we had for him.

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993



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THE PIANO

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

12

HONG KONG

North Point POW Camp
February, 1942

To try and maintain a high level of morale and to forget the grim realities of camp life, our officers proposed Saturday night concerts.

The Winnipeg Grenadiers, who had a group of talented musicians came to the fore and managed to salvage some of their instruments and brought them into camp from St. Elbert's Convent Hospital.

The first concert had been produced the first week of February, and thereafter had become regular events.

The second week of February, two buddies of mine stormed into my hut shouting, "Geoff, the Japs just brought in a piano!."

"A piano?" I excitedly asked. "Where is it?"

"Just inside the gate" they replied.

Rushing outside, I found it complete with stool.

Although I play by ear and cannot read music, I was promptly surrounded by eager comrades.

Getting into the swing of things, I began attacking the keys with vigor beginning with the tuneful ditty "On The Sunny Side Of The Street", that brought rounds of applause. Even the detestable guards got into the act by clapping and stomping their feet.

After completing a few numbers, some of the Grenadiers claimed the piano and hauled it to the platform to be used for the next concert.

Writer's note: I am grateful in having the opportunity of giving my fellow comrades a few pleasurable moments that will be long remembered.



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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 1 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

North Point POW Camp

July, 1942

The second week of July with the rain still pelting down, I was experiencing persistent bowel movements followed by extreme stomach cramps, nausea and weakness. At first, I thought that it was a bad case of diarrhea caused by intestinal disorders due to the terrible diet that we had to endure. But I was wrong.

Not long afterwards, I noticed that my stool streaked with blood and mucus. But to my utter shock, I now realized that the dread dysentery was racking my body. "This can't be", I kept repeating to myself. I couldn't understand why I had fallen victim to this terrifying disease since I took all the necessary precautions to prevent this from happening.

Committed to the camp's ramshackled hospital which reeked with indescribable stench, I was helped to a cot and lay huddled on it wet with rain that was seeping through the rotted roof.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 2 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

North Point PoW Camp

July, 1942

Next to me lay a very young looking comrade who was laboring for breath. I was certain that he was deteriorating more and more into a state of no return. I shuddered when I thought that his next breath could be his last.

"Could I be in a similiar way within the next few days?", I kept saying. But since my parents came from good stock, I was devoutly determined to fight this debilitating disease and to defeat it.

* The atmosphere was frightening. Patients were tottering at a snail's pace along a narrow aisleway to reach a closed-in quarter at the end of the ward that was used as a toilet.

Those unable to muster strength to leave their so-called beds lay in their own muck. Dirty blood-stained pieces of toilet paper littered the floor.

It's no wonder that this despicable hole that the Japanese picked as a hospital was completely unfit for human habitation.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 3 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

North Point PoW Camp

July, 1942

Mustering enough strength to pay a toilet call, I reeled back by the awesome stench of the room which contained nothing more than five old peanut oil cans that were in constant use, and those who couldn't control their body functions had to use the floor. Cakes of excrement and pools of urine lay everywhere.

The filth proved a mecca for rats who were scampering about in large numbers. We were deathly afraid that they would attack our buttocks, thereby devouring chunks of flesh. Time and again, orderlies tried to stave them off with long sticks to keep them from coming near.

The next day, the downpour had gotten heavier and never let up. The roof begun to leak like a sieve causing a flooding to a depth of six to eight inches. Bricks were hastily brought in to elevate the cots.

In the meantime, our officers confronted the Japanese and sternly requested that they repair the decayed roof and to provide better toilet facilities, but the Japanese were adamant by refusing to do so and declared in anger that if they were further bothered, all prisoners would be subjected to a cut in food rations.

By:

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1992



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET



- 4 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

North Point PoW Camp

July, 1942

X The rodents who were swimming aimlessly around the floating muck, tried to clamber the beds. Some succeeded, and begun attacking the flesh of patients.

But they didn't feel it. The flesh was dead.

Then the inevitable happened. XThe lad next to me expired. "This boy", I thought, "Didn't look much older than 18 years and couldn't have been no more than 16 when he enlisted."

Filled with sadness, I watched as the orderlies taped his eyes and stuffed the mouth and rectum with cotton-wool and wrapped the remains in a blanket then placed it on a stretcher and taken away.

Such a young age to have his life snuffed out under a hellish environment.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 5 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

North Point PoW Camp

July, 1942

Meanwhile, our overworked doctors and orderlies worked feverishly almost around the clock trying to save those who were still clinging to a shred of life.

Without any source of medications, their only alternative to combat the disease was no intake of food for several days to stabilize the intestines. Only tea was given several times daily.

They had no other choice.

Our Padres spent every minute of their time trying to comfort us. They were always there when we needed them. Always trying to manage a smile and to give encouragements.

Their prayers were a blessing to hear.

*On the third day, I could feel my strength rapidly declining. I couldn't raise myself off the bed. I was growing weaker and weaker. The room was spinning like a top with the sounds around me gradually diminishing.

Then I lapsed into darkness.

By:

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1992



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 6 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital
July, 1942

Regaining consciousness, I felt as if I was floating on a cushion of air.

Bent over me was the slightly blurred form of a woman garbed in white and wearing a flowing head veil. I tried to utter words, but couldn't. I thought I was hallucinating. Then I felt a soft touch of my forehead; gently stroking my hair.

Barely above a whisper she said: "Everything is now fine, you are going to be alright".

Soon my eyes began to focus more clearly, but my mind was still clouded.

"Who are you?", I asked with quivering lips.

"A nursing sister", she said as she sat beside me.

"You can't be a nurse, there's no nurses in North Point?",

"This isn't North Point lad. This is Bowen Road hospital".

"How'd I get here?", I said as my eyes searched a brightly lit ceiling.

"You were brought here late this morning".

"Then the war must be over. Are we going home?". I excitedly asked.

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



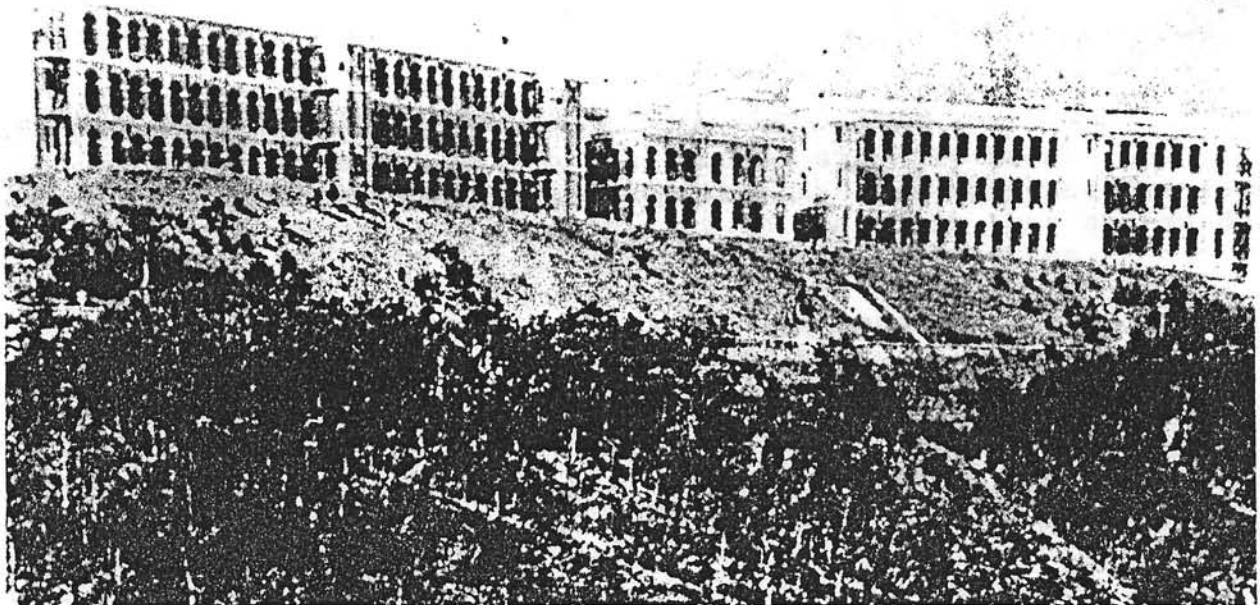
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HONG KONG VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

BOWEN ROAD MILITARY HOSPITAL

HONG KONG



BOWEN ROAD MILITARY HOSPITAL, shortly after it was built. It was not much different in 1941-45.

DURING THE OCCUPATION, FROM 1941 TO 1945, THE JAPANESE TREATED THE HOSPITAL AS ANOTHER PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMP. OFTEN THEY WOULD TAUNT AND HARASS SICK PATIENTS WITH BAYONETS; WICKEDLY AMUSING THEMSELVES WITH FITS OF LAUGHTER.

IT WAS PITIFUL AND FRIGHTENING.

—Geoffrey C. Marston.

WE'LL NEVER FORGET



- 7 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital

July, 1942

I then looked at her and she looked silently back. She avoided the question. But I noticed that her Madonna-like face reflected sadness and tension, yet in that aura that surrounded her I knew that she was a carefully controlled person.

With my mind gradually regaining its senses, I tried further discussions but the words didn't come easy. I was so tired and spent and emotionally drained that my body still felt heavy and languid.

Sensing this, she broke her silence and urged me to rest. Yet looking at her with a keen sense of gratitude, it was like seeing my dear mother's eyes.

With my head buried in soft pillows, I was shrouded in contentment and thanksgiving as if the dull wan shadows disappeared like diffused vapors.

As my eyes grew heavy, I was soon lost in the power of sleep.

By:

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1992



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 8 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital
July, 1942

Upon awakening, the room was bathed in daylight. It was morning, but I could still hear the rain beating against a nearby window. I felt improvement and my bowel movement was less frequent. It was unmistakably a miracle as if I was suddenly reborn. Although I could now master body motions, I still lacked the energy to sit up. But I knew that this would take time until the disease had finally been arrested.

Soon after, a nurse approached carrying a tray. "You look better today, feel like some nourishment?", she said.

"Sure do", I uttered as my nostrils took in pleasing odors.

She then propped up my pillows and tenderly placed her soft hand beneath my head and begun to spoon-feed me from a steaming bowl. It was a broth with smatterings of potatoes and carrots.

Even with this unusual dish, my taste buds were working overtime.

With my appetite now returning to normal, what I wouldn't have given if the bowl was filled with a heaping portion of porridge doused with milk and sugar.

It seemed like ages since I tasted such morsels.

By:

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1992



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 9 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital

July, 1942

When I mentioned this, she replied that the Japanese had rationed the hospital, but the staff was trying to stretch each day's supply as much as possible. Also, the hospital personal were fed the same as the patients. No more. No less.

Out of curiosity, I then asked if there were two Canadian nurses in the hospital.

'Yes, I believe there are, but they're on duty in other wards'.

"Is there any chance of seeing them?", I asked.

"I am afraid not. We are not allowed to leave our wards. You see, the Japanese keep us under close surveillance, but please don't let them disturb you when they make their rounds".

"How often do they come around?", I anxiously replied.

"Most anytime, but I want you to keep as calm as possible ... Believe me, no harm will come to you".

"I will, thank you Sister", I uttered.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 10 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital

July, 1942

However, my mind still kept wandering back to that horrible Christmas Day massacre when Japanese troops stormed St. Stephen's Hospital killing the doctors before running madly through the wards to bayonet and shoot wounded patients in their beds. Five nurses were raped and murdered.

Could the same erupt again at Bowen Road, or for that matter, any hospital that took their fancy. I shuddered when I thought of it.

But, it was a known fact, that human life to these savages, was not worth a plug nickel.

Meanwhile, the ward was a madhouse of activities. Overworked nurses were scurrying back and forth like trojans toting rank-filled bedpans and bundles of soiled linen. Prolonged agonizing sounds of patients filled the sickening atmosphere.

Knowing that vital medications were in short supply, the bone-weary doctors tried desperately to relieve the critically ill.

These devoted and dedicated men spent hours on end caring for their many patients.

But, somehow, I still couldn't erase the recollections of that gloomy hospital at North Point and those awesome tragedies which could have been averted if only our wicked captors had possessed humanized qualities.

By:

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1992



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MASSACRE AT ST. STEPHEN'S
HOSPITAL, CHRISTMAS 1941

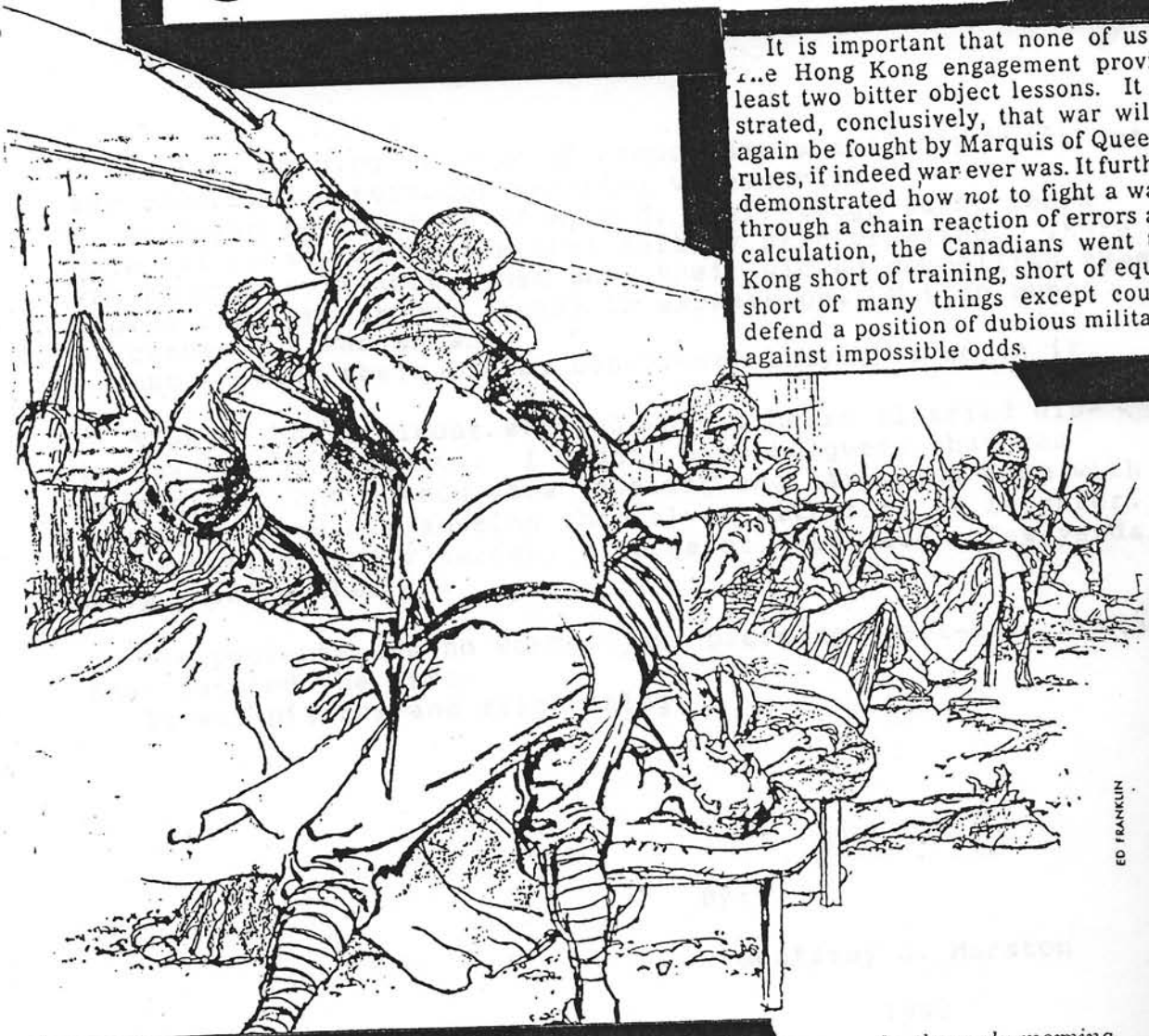
The day Hong Kong fell

CANADA'S MOST

TRAGIC

CHRISTMAS

It is important that none of us forget the Hong Kong engagement provided at least two bitter object lessons. It demonstrated, conclusively, that war will never again be fought by Marquis of Queensberry rules, if indeed war ever was. It furthermore demonstrated how *not* to fight a war. For, through a chain reaction of errors and miscalculation, the Canadians went to Hong Kong short of training, short of equipment, short of many things except courage, to defend a position of dubious military value against impossible odds.



The Japanese killed the doctors before running through the wards to bayonet and shoot 63 wounded patients. Five nurses were raped and murdered.

In the early morning, Japanese conquerors stormed through the Hong Kong hospital, bayoneting and beating the wounded.

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 11 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital
July, 1942

In late morning, a body of armed guards suddenly burst into the ward like a tornado; shouting vehemently.

Standing at the foot of my bed, their tough surly faces gave off an air of menace that left my skin crawling. There was so much evil about them that their wicked compelling eyes looked straight at me; steady in expression. Not an ounce of compassion was shown.

But knowing their brutal behaviour, they thrived on it.

Then my heart almost stopped when I heard flurried disturbances of patients. I didn't have to guess what was happening. The guards were taunting and harassing them with bayonets; wickedly amusing themselves with fits of laughter.

Meanwhile, their leader, a sergeant, was seen a few yards away goading them on.

The patients had no words, just piercing heart-felt screams that rattled the ward.

It was pitiful and frightening.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 12 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital
July, 1942

In the meantime, nurses quickly elbowed their way past the guards to tend and comfort them. Although they knew that harm could be dealt, they steadfastly stood their ground with eyes fixed with scorn. One nurse brushed past a gruff-looking guard almost knocking him off balance. He made a threatening gesture, but she went on helping her charge as if he didn't exist.

There was no doubt in my mind that the staff had grown accustomed to their hazardous ventures since they didn't show frightening attitudes.

After tense minutes, the callous creatures moved off quickly still grinning from ear to ear.

When they left, I breathed a deep sigh of relief.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 13 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital

July, 1942

The following morning, I managed to gather enough strength to prop up a pillow against the back of my head.

Surveying the entire surroundings, I received an icy shock. A number of patients with faces ashen grey with eyes fixed and sightless lay motionless and heaving for breath. I was now certain that their lives were slowly ebbing away.

Across the way, a nurse was pulling a sheet over a body; covering the head. The grim reaper had struck again. Moments later, I was imbedded with grief when I learned that the deceased was a Canadian who was only admitted the night before. But I had no knowledge whether he was a Rifleman or a Grenadier.

Shortly after, the corpse was placed on a carrier and wheeled away.

A freshly made bed caught my eye. Inquiring about it, I was told that the former occupant was British and a member of the Middlesex Regiment whom had passed away during the night.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 14 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital

July, 1942

Two beds down from me a desperately ill Rifleman was unaware of his surroundings.

With his eyes glued to the ceiling and with lingering moans erupting from pursed lips, made me shudder.

An hour later, my heart sank.

Jumping from his bed, he rattled the ward with high-pitched screaming wails and then went into convulsions of a volcanic nature.

Nurses frantically rushed to his aid but found it impossible to contain him. Finally, his body went into spasms and crumbled to the floor.

With his eyes rolled back, they felt no pulse.

Moments later, he reached his final agony. There was no more clouded future.

Now at last he had finally found peace and was safely in the hands of his maker.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 15 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital
July, 1942

A week later, I was able to leave my bed. The rains had finally ceased with the sun striking the windows like glittering jewels.

Like a tot learning to walk, I groped my way to a nearby window.

Peering out, my heart almost stopped beating. The foreground was bristling with guards who were encircling the staid building like a ring of steel.

"What in hell is going on?", I asked myself. "Are they treating the hospital as another Prisoner-of-War camp?"
Apparently they were.

Twice daily, morning and night, guards invaded the ward and continued their verbal slug-fest. As usual, they were dripping with venom.

When they left, their booming voices were so overpowering I could hear their outbursts erupting from other wards.

"God almighty", I thought, "If this is a continual session many of us will end up losing our bloody marbles. And what is this going to do for those who are struggling for survival?"

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 16 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital

August, 1942

Since I was brought here, the death rate had mounted considerably. Yet no matter how those courageous doctors and nurses feverishly worked trying to save them, it was to no avail. Many were at death's door when they were brought in. But others, like myself, were fortunate and had responded to treatment and hopefully on the way to a full recovery. But, on the other hand, there was always a chance of a relapse.

By the third week, I was found fit to return to North Point.

Thanking the staff who had nurtured me back to the world of the living, I swallowed hard trying to hold back the tears. I couldn't help it. I owed my life to them. But somehow I sensed that I was on the brink of death when I was brought in. Yet never once, was this ever mentioned to me.

Just prior to leaving, I wended my way from bed to bed gripping the hands of patients. But sadly, some were still so critically ill that they gave off blank stares.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 17 -

"THE SCOURGE OF DYSENTERY"

HONG KONG

Bowen Road Hospital
August, 1942

Completely overcome with compassion, I still kept wondering how many will live to see another day. Yet I knew that they were in far better hands here at Bowen Road than in North Point.

At this point, the head nurse approached and gently hugged me. "Good luck my son, and God bless", she said.

I couldn't compose myself any longer. My body began to shake with sobs.

Handing me a handkerchief, she further added: "Crying is nothing to be ashamed of, we have all experienced it. You must remember that you are carrying a heavy burden in your heart. A few tears will ease that burden".

On leaving the hospital, I shuddered in having to return to a camp which was rife with torture, privation and disease. But the thoughts of desperately trying to survive the cruel daily battle to exist was foremost in my mind.

How much can we endure? How long must the torment go on?

Of course, these were questions that no one could answer.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1992



YOU ASKED US

The Prisoner Nurses of Hong Kong

Their Japanese captors let them go after 20 months

Q Many Canadian troops were taken prisoner by the Japanese after the fall of Hong Kong in 1941. I once read about a couple of Canadian nursing sisters who were also imprisoned. What happened to them?

LAURA FINCH, EDMONTON

A Both nursing sisters, Lieutenant Kay Christie of Toronto and Lieutenant May Waters of Winnipeg, survived their grim ordeal, escaping the atrocities committed when Japanese troops overran the British crown colony. From the fall of Hong Kong on Christmas Day, 1941, until the following August, they were confined to the British Military Hospital, which the Japanese designated Prisoner of War Camp "A." Then they were transferred to Stanley Internment Camp on the opposite side of the island. Rumors of their imminent release persisted throughout their internment. But the rumor of July 1943 became fact; they learned that they were to be included in a repatriation of all remaining American and Canadian civilians in the Far East, under the auspices of the International Red Cross. On September 23, 1943, they boarded the Japanese exchange ship *Teia Maru*. This former cruise ship, which they called a "floating palace," was designed to accommodate 400 passengers. It presented a vastly different picture when carrying 1,530 people. At breakfast, before eating the congee (rice gruel), they sought out the tiny black 'extras' and the white rice worms; they knew only by the shape of the cup whether they were drinking coffee or tea.

After the official exchange at Goa the repatriates boarded the American exchange ship *M.S. Gripsholm*, which had arrived from New York with a corresponding number of Japanese civilian internees. Accommodations and food were markedly improved, and the women experienced consid-



Kay Christie as she looked just before leaving for Hong Kong.

erable weight gains. After six weeks on the *Gripsholm*, they reached New York. On December 2, 1943, the Canadians reached home.

Both nursing sisters continued in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps until the end of 1945. May Waters returned to Winnipeg for a time but then worked in hospitals in Oregon and Hawaii. Now retired, she lives in Long Beach, California; she prefers the climate to that of Winnipeg. Not Kay Christie. One of her most vivid memories of the homeward odyssey stems from the morning when she went for her pre-breakfast walk on deck as the *Gripsholm* steamed far north of Rio de Janeiro. "I felt that blast of cold, cold December wind and suddenly realized that *that* was one of the things I'd been missing for those two years," she says.

After the war, Kay Christie worked as a medical secretary in Toronto. She and May Waters exchange "annual reports" every year at Christmastime, but they have seen each other only once, in 1966, since they shared this footnote to the drama of Hong Kong.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION? Write to: *You Asked Us*, Today Magazine, 2180 Yonge St., Suite 1702, Toronto M4S 3A2. (Sorry, but we cannot supply personal replies.)



Survivors suffer half a century later

The Canadian brief to the United Nations Human Rights Commission is accompanied by documents attesting that the PoWs held by Japan during World War II are still suffering from their 44 months of captivity.

A report by Dr. Gustave Gingras, of Prince Edward Island, who reviewed medical files of 400 Hong Kong PoWs and interviewed 30 more, said:

- About half of the PoWs captured at Hong Kong who survived the war have since died — most of them around the age of 40. By comparison, average life expectancy for male Canadians is 72.9 years.
- All of those still living suffer from chronic ailments.
- All have suffered from avitaminosis (vitamin

deficiency) because, for many prisoners, the calorie intake was frequently as low as 900 a day. Because of this, all former PoWs are suffering from “a high degree of pain, particularly in their lower extremities.”

- 37 per cent have suffered from neurological ailments and new cases constantly occur. Almost half of the survivors have suffered from psychiatric conditions.

- 50 per cent have gastro-intestinal ailments, and some have died of dysentery.

- About one-third of survivors have foot deformities and suffer pain and neuritis due to frostbite.

- 30 per cent have problems with vision. About 10 per cent have gone blind.



STEWART SHERWOOD

Shamshuipo Slaves

by Geoffrey C. Marston

In the fall of 1942, the Japanese decided to extend the runway at Kai Tak airport in Hong Kong. The slave labor for this massive construction project came from hundreds of Canadian and British prisoners of war who had been captured during the bloody battle of Hong Kong in December 1941.

Many of these prisoners were unfit to walk, let alone move piles of rock and earth. Those who couldn't walk were carried on stretchers from Shamshuipo prison camp to the work site where they would be forced to shovel dirt, mix and pour cement by hand or help level a small mountain adjacent to the airport. Several Chinese were recruited as well, but many of them refused to work because they believed the mountain was a sacred burial place. These people were usually rounded up and killed.

Canadian and British POWs who collapsed while on the job were beaten with a vengeance. In all the time I was there, I didn't notice one ounce of human decency in the twisted minds of our captors.

In October we began laying a track that connected the mountain's summit to two spur lines that extended to the surrounding area below the mountain. Heavy bogies or rail carts equipped with large bamboo baskets were used to transport rock and earth from the summit to the runway where they were emptied. The heavy carts were then pushed manually up the steep slopes to where they were refilled.

The breaking system on each bogie consisted of flat wooden staves that extended out of the back of the cart. Men riding on the rear would have to apply back-breaking weight in order to slow the wheels down and stop the cart safely. Unfortunately, men got hurt when the carts gained too much momentum and ran out of control at the bottom of the mountain.

With pick and shovel we worked from dawn to dusk, seven days a week. We were under constant harassment from the guards who were armed with rifles and sticks. During the diggings, we uncovered tombs and urns that were centuries old.

The men working at the base of the

mountain carried heavy loads of earth on bamboo poles that were slung over one shoulder. The dirt was emptied around the airport and then flattened by heavy equipment. Many of these men were so weak that their legs buckled from the weight of the load. If they fell, they would be beaten by the guards.

Working day after day, the brutal guards continually prodded us with heavy sticks and rifle butts. They wanted us to work harder and faster, but the hunger pangs were always gnawing at our guts. The tiny servings of poor grade rice was often infested with worms or maggots. We were also given stewed greens and a little bit of water, but our total food intake was a mere 800 calories a day.

One morning, while working, I suddenly slumped to the ground. I shivered violently and then noticed that my whole body was soaked in sweat. It was impossible to move and I soon felt blows to my head. There was blood running down my cheeks and I tried to speak, but couldn't. Then, for whatever reason, the guards left.

When the day's work was over, I was carried into camp by comrades and then attended to by Dr. Stanley Banfill of the Royal Rifles of Canada who immediately transferred me to hospital. I had contracted malaria and I'll never forget the kindness of orderly Tiny Martyn of the Winnipeg Grenadiers. He looked after me

for three days and nights and somehow managed to scrounge some quinine that literally saved my life.

I recovered in 2 1/2 weeks and was sent back to work, but still felt weak as a kitten. However, several days later I came down with my second bout of dysentery and was hospitalized once again. Sadly, several deaths occurred in my ward within a few days.

While there I got to know this nice young lad who occupied the bed next to mine. We chatted constantly about freedom and our return to Canada, and, of course, food. Sadly, he died a few days after I met him.

After being released from hospital, I returned to work at the airport, and on Aug. 15, 1943, I was drafted to Japan to begin another life of hell in a prison camp there.

Through it all, we stood unified and were firmly devoted to the cause of helping our fellow beings in every way possible and by whatever means possible. The future was, indeed, bleak, but we steadfastly refused to see it in such terms. Instead, we found moral support by leaning on each other. And as we sought solace in each other's company, we often wondered how our captors could sleep at night with blood-stained hands.

Editor's note: Geoffrey C. Marston was a private with the Royal Rifles of Canada when he was taken prisoner. ■

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

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HONG KONG

Sham Shui Po

PoW Camp

"THE SLAVE LABOR DUTIES"

(Kai Tak Airport)

September 1942, the Japanese decided to commence the levelling of a baby mountain that was adjacent to Kai Tak Airport. They were bent on enlarging it to allow their heavy bombers for takeoff and landing purposes.

Many Chinese were recruited to assist British and Canadian PoW's, but steadfastly refused as they considered the mountain sacred.

In their refusal, most were apprehended and exterminated.

To meet the quota they needed, the Japanese frequently dragged our disabled from their beds to join the work force. Those who collapsed, were attacked with vengeance.

Their tormenters didn't have one ounce of human decency in their twisted minds.

We began with the laying of a main track from the summit with two spur lines that extended from the principal one to the surrounding areas below.

With the completion of the track laying, heavy bogies were used which contained large bamboo baskets for the filling of dirt.

When the carts reached the base of the mountain, the containers were then removed, emptied, and returned by being pushed manually up the steep slopes to be refilled.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

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HONG KONG

Sham Shui Po

PoW Camp

"THE SLAVE LABOR DUTIES"

(Kai Tak Airport)

The breaking system of the bogies consisted of flat wooden staves extending out of the backs of the vehicles. Back-breaking weight had to be forced against the steel wheelings by the men riding the rear in order to slow and stop them upon reaching the bottom. Often, this didn't work if the carts had too much momentum; causing some to sustain injuries.

Under constant harassment from guards, we worked strenuously with pick and shovel from dawn to dusk, seven days a week.

During the diggings, we uncovered tombs and urns, which no doubt, were perhaps centuries old.

We now understood why the Chinese refused to work the project.

Laboriously working day after day, the brutal guards continually prodded us with heavy sticks and rifle butts to work harder and faster.

Hunger pangs were always gnawing our guts as the meagre servings of poor grade rice often infested with worms or maggots, and stewed greens, along with little water for our parched throats, we had to survive on a mere 800 calories a day.

But if only we had a diversion from this none palatable diet, living might have been worthwhile.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

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HONG KONG

Sham Shui Po

PoW Camp

"THE SLAVE LABOR DUTIES"

(Kai Tak Airport)

The strenuous five-mile journey to and from Sham Shui Po, was taking its toll on our already precarious health.

Men were dropping to the ground through sheer exhaustion, with the vile guards beating them where they lay.

Shell-shocked from the unbelievable environments, their transgression went far beyond bounds.

Playing key roles, none of these demons gave a hoot for our suffering or human feelings. It seemed as if the devil had been planted in their subconscious.

Faced with destiny, we stood unified and were firmly devoted to the cause of helping our fellow beings in every way possible and by whatever means.

Yet, with our future visualized as bleak, we steadfastly refused to see the future in such terms. We longed that by leaning on each other, provided moral support.

Solidarity was evident.

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HONG KONG

Sham Shui Po
PoW Camp

"THE SLAVE LABOR DUTIES"

(Kai Tak Airport)

However, despite the pummeling by guards, we were determined that our indomitable spirit with the intenseness of living will enable us to emerge triumphantly.

There is no single word to describe our spirit and integrity, but it composed of openness and experiences.

As we sought solace in each other's company, we oftenly wondered how these unscrupious creatures can sleep at night with blood-stained hands is beyond our powers of comprehension. They had no scruples. The sensation that these people are part of the human race becomes hard to maintain.

Our resentment toward them added permanent bitterness.

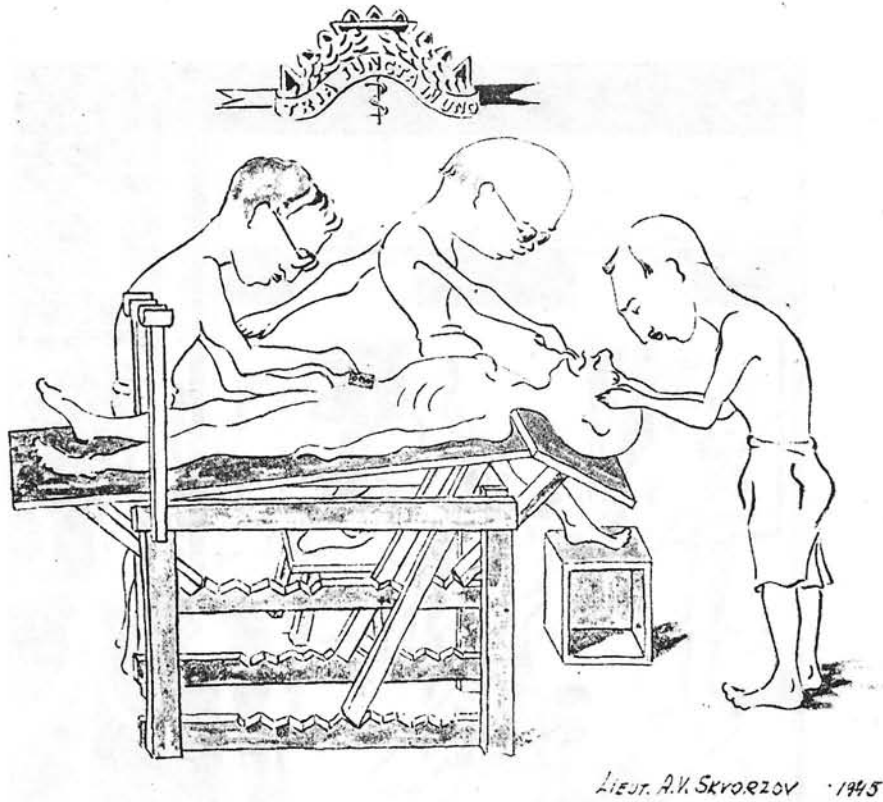
By:

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OPERATING TABLE - SHAM-SHUI-PO PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMP - HONG KONG

In a primitive operating theatre, British and Canadian army doctors fought to save lives. Their instruments were razor blades and knives; their drugs, salt and peanut oil, Even those were precious and zealously guarded. The Japanese had taken over the enormous stores of medical supplies which they used for their own soldiery. Later, by bribing sentries, essential drugs were secured in minute quantities.

To obtain the money for this, men sold to their sentries all they had, including gold teeth.

*Classified under 121447***THE HELLSHIP**

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

Shortly before leaving Shamshuipo POW camp, August 15, 1943, on the draft from Hong Kong to Japan, we were divided into two groups. 363 Canadians and 16 Dutch in one, 138 British and 1 Hong Kong Volunteer in the other. Sub-Lieutenant Louis Bush RNVR was the only officer.

Clutching our meagre belongings, we marched down Nathan Road to the docks and boarded a small 100 ft. long grubby freighter and were herded into two stifling holds and coal bunkers which we aptly described as a "Hellship".

Our group, 162 Royal Rifles and the Dutch, were in the forehold of the ship with coal piled in the stern.

Packed like sardines, we could not lie down and were compelled to sit cross-legged. In some cases, much to the delight of the guards, food was tossed down as if we were animals, and the men, driven by hunger, scrambled for it.

We had no toilets and were forced to use buckets which were hauled up to the deck by hand when full, and emptied over the side. Nor were there any washing facilities as our bodies were caked in dirt. Ventilation was inadequate and because of the extreme heat and the putrid air, some of the men were violently ill.

Food (rice and greens) and fresh water were lowered in wooden containers, but the sick were unable to eat and had become increasingly worse.

Meanwhile, Lt. Bush and Sgt. Rance a Hong Kong Volunteer, both of whom were fluent in the Japanese language confronted the guards and firmly stated that many of the men could die before reaching Japan from the lack of fresh air and exercise, and also requested the use of the toilet on the deck of the ship.

The guards relented and opened the hatches for those who asked permission to go "benjo" (toilet). Then you were allowed on deck to relieve your bowels as quickly as possible. If not, the guards would use their rifle butts to hasten the pace.



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THE HELLSHIP

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

We were well aware of the British contingent of over 1,800 POW's who left Hong Kong, September 27, 1942, enroute to Japan on the Lisbon Maru. It was torpedoed and sunk by an allied submarine, the Japanese shooting those desperately trying to swim from the sinking ship. Hundreds were killed or drowned in the disaster. It was an indescribable tragedy.

Later, I casually mentioned to a close comrade Rifleman I.K.Ray a.k.a. Ray K. of a risky venture I had in mind that the next time we went on deck to pay a benjo call, to take our possessions with us and sit next to the railing on the portside of the vessel. At first he was hesitant and felt it too risky, but later changed his mind and decided that we should gamble and take our chances even if it meant that we could be savagely beaten and thrown back into the hold. However, the more we talked about it the more jittery we were. But we were determined to try it no matter what the consequences would be.

The next morning as we climbed the rickety stairs to the deck to use the lavatory, we slowly inched our way to the railing and sat down expecting at any moment to be seized. As we kept a low profile, the guards stood with fixed stares and scowles that etched wide and nasty but never made a move toward us. Shortly afterwards, they dispersed and left us alone.

After two days of basking in our accomplishments, we still found it hard to verbalize the feelings we had.

On the third day, two comrades shouted, "You guys got something going with the Japs?" "Why in hell don't you join us!!" We hotly replied. They later did.

Within a week, both sides of the ship were lined with men whom were overwhelmed with the sun-drenched weather and the fresh salty air. However, the guards warned that no one was allowed to communicate in loud voices, nor to walk the deck.



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THE HELLSHIP

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

The following days, I noticed that ulcerated sores were forming on both legs. As time passed, the disease had increased in size, eating like a cancer and oozing pus. Devoid of bandages and medications, I wrapped them in a pair of old putties that I fortunately had brought along. The infection persisted until the end of the war. I still bear the scars.

Arriving at the port of Taipei, lab technicians came aboard and everyone had to undergo the experience of having glass tubes inserted in the rectum, presumably a test for dysentery. But no one heard of the final result. It seemed that the Japanese were satisfied with their diagnosis. Afterwards, we enjoyed the pleasure of a salt water hosing washing away the grime and the odor from our stinking bodies.

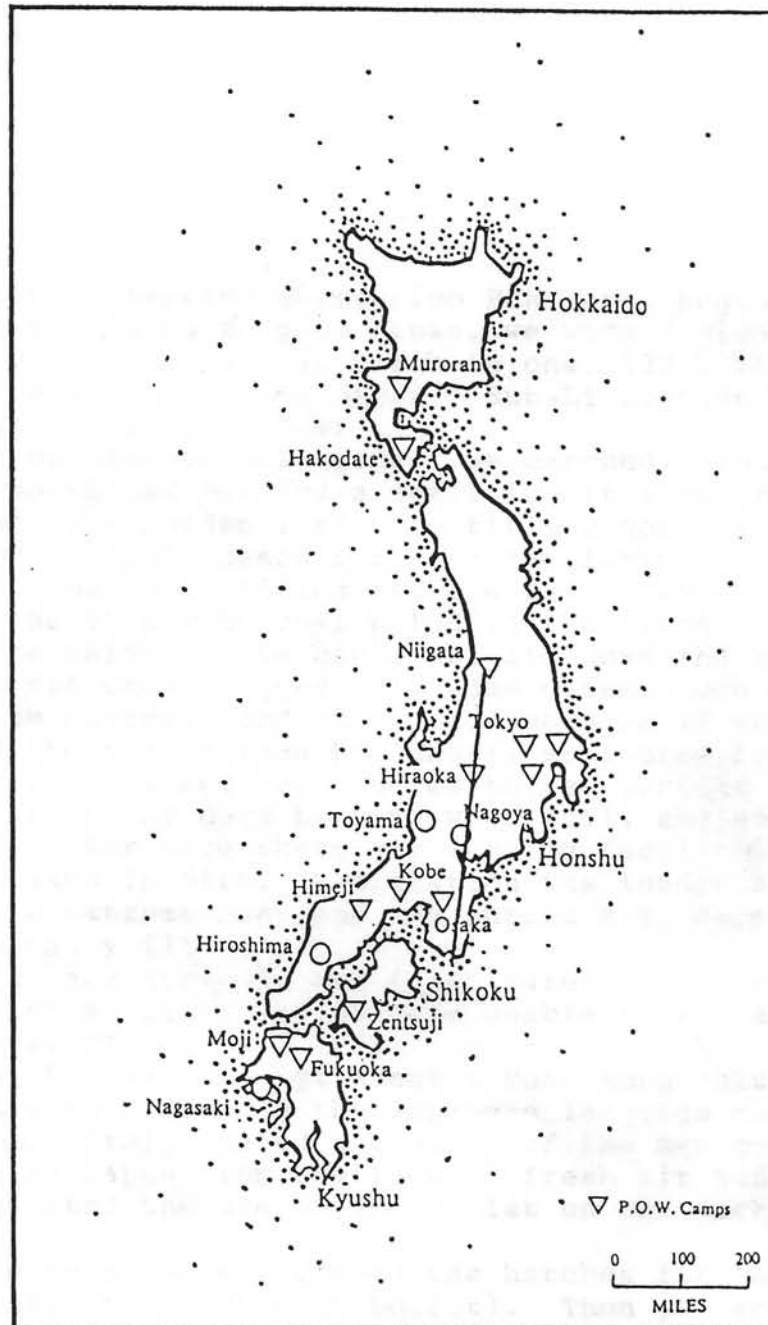
On arriving at Osaka in September, we walked down the gangplank in a drizzling rain toting our scanty possessions, we noticed that everything was drab and the natives shabby. No one looked cheerful. After being lined up and numbered off, we then marched a short distance along a narrow thoroughfare and boarded waiting streetcars to be taken to the railway station. Taking our seats, we were ordered to pull the window shades down. Suddenly, the locals began pelting debris, breaking windows and shaking the cars. It was terrifying as we hugged the floor.

When we arrived, we were jeered and spat upon by a crowd of hostile people while being herded into the station by armed guards with fixed bayonets. An hour later, we boarded a train for Niigata, an industrial city about 250 miles north on the Sea of Japan.

Sadly, my good friend and comrade Ray K. died a month later of pneumonia.



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Map 9

LOCATION OF MAIN P.O.W. CAMPS IN JAPAN

SHINTETSU STEEL MILL

THE SLAVE LABOR DUTIES

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

NIIGATA, JAPAN

At the Shintetsu Steel Mill, I was forced to feed a blast furnace with foot-long slabs of steel placed on two lengthy bars which were carefully pushed together with the use of long-handed tongs. To remove the red hot pieces from the rear, they had to be cautiously lifted out then rushed to the boss to be molded with an air-hammer. There were many times when I dropped a few and was brutally beaten by the boss. On one occasion I was knocked unconscious.

The workload was back-breaking as my body weight was barely 92 pounds. (To this day, I still cannot understand how I managed to survive.)

I was responsible for feeding, cleaning, and stoking the furnace.

The Mill was full of furnaces and ear-splitting air-hammers.

We all suffered beatings by bosses and stick-carrying factory guards who patrolled all areas. Some of the POW's went insane.

We worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week.



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From the Desk of
GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

SHINTETSU POW CAMP

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

NIIGATA, JAPAN

Shintetsu camp consisted of two-storey barn-like structures. The interiors were made up with an upper and lower level which were divided into compartments housing eight prisoners each. The upper quarters were accessible by ladders.

The perimeter of the camp was surrounded by barbed-wire and a high-volted electric fence, patrolled by barbarous well-armed guards.

Our captors didn't believe in the Geneva Convention. The Japanese treated both officers and men with the same cold hatred. We were forced to subsist on 700 calories a day. Those unable to work due to sickness and disease had their rations cut even further. Beatings by guards and civilians were frequent and increased in intensity when they saw that they were losing the war. Men were reduced to human skeletons, and by the time we were freed by American troops in 1945, most of us were below 100 pounds in body weight.

The winters in Niigata were harsh and cruel, yet no heat was supplied for the ugly deteriorating buildings we lived in. Each man was issued three blankets, and to keep warm we would double up. We would put one blanket on the hard wooden flooring, leave our clothes on, and put the other five blankets over the top of us. Many times during the nights, many prisoners would be awakened by a sharp slap on the face from a guard for no apparant reason. He would roar with laughter and walk away.

Rats in the huts were so numerous we could feel them running across our coverings during the nights. To avoid being bitten we would tuck the blankets tightly around us. One comrade had his earlobe bitten off. The rats, the cold, the hunger and the beatings were some of the major indignities suffered by us.



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SHINTETSU POW CAMP

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

NIIGATA, JAPAN

The washup stalls were outside and in the winter the water in these were frozen solid. Many weeks on end, we wouldn't even see a bar of soap. Lice thrived inside our clothing and became unbearable.

With hunger being so great and intense the men were cutting food ads out of old magazines and reading them over and over again. Many treasured the material and often traded them like rare postage stamps.

Breakfast consisted of one small potato and a cup of hot green tea. Dinner was a small bowl of rice covered with potato tops and supper was the same. Deaths were frequent among the Canadians, Americans and British.

There were thousands of Red Cross parcels in camp, but in the two years that we were in Japan, each prisoner was given no more than three parcels. One guard was seen trying to wash with what he thought was soap. "Americano soap bad. No good!" he complained. It was a block of Kraft Cheese.

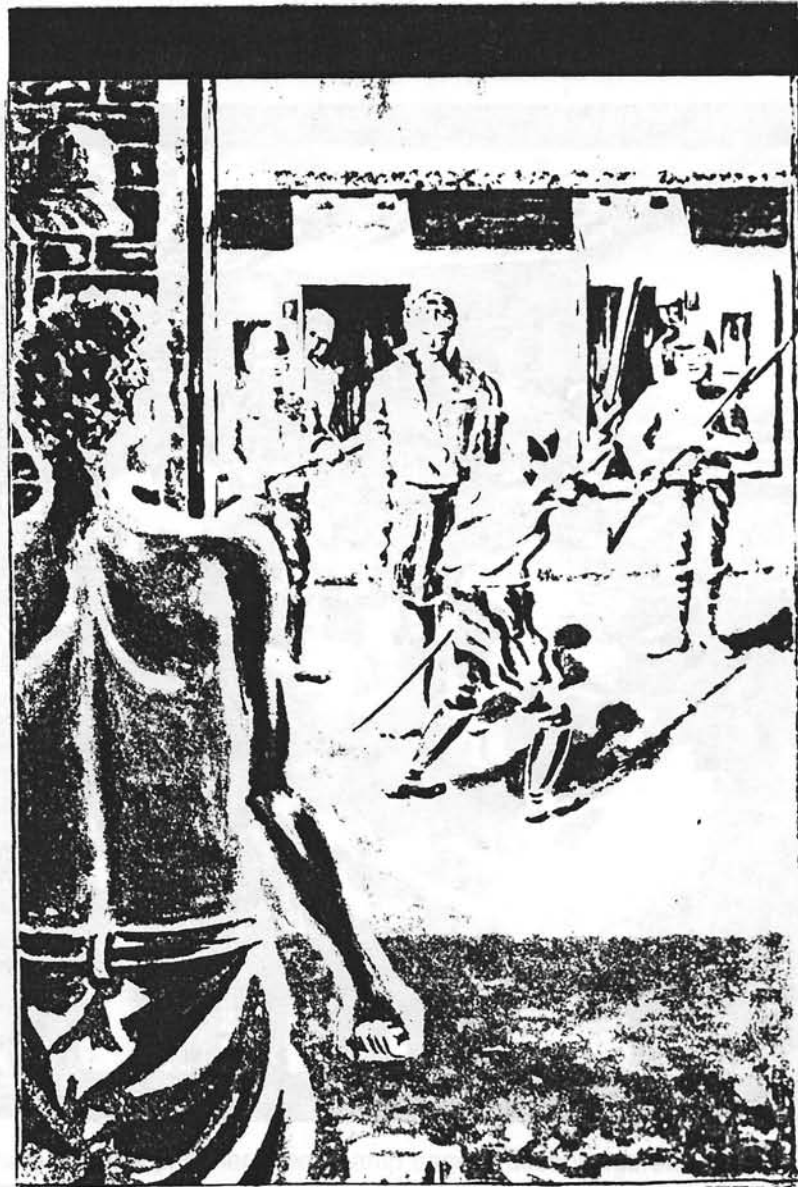
It was common to see guards smoking American cigarettes, with trash containers filled to the brim with empty cans of Canadian, American and British products.



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From the Desk of
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TYPICAL JAPANESE TREATMENT OF POW'S



Seen is an everyday occurrence for which prisoners were brutally beaten for no apparent reason. Often a prisoner would be selected during roll-call prior to forced labor duties. Frequently, the disabled were dragged from their beds to join the work force. Those who collapsed were repeatedly kicked.

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

NIIGATA, JAPAN

Yet, my mind still flashes back to rifleman James Mortimer, January 12th, 1944.

In the early morning hours, he left his bed and cautiously crawled into the dimly-lit guard room at the end of our quarter and grabbed a tin of salmon which the Japanese had pilfered from a Red Cross parcel.

Returning safely, he quickly devoured the contents but mistakenly hid the empty can beneath his blankets instead of getting rid of it outdoors; buried in snow.

When we arrived from work in the evening, a raging sergeant stood holding the evidence and knocked Mortimer down with the flat end of a sword and ordered guards to tie him to a post outside in the frigid January weather wearing only cotton pants.

After 24 hours, the guards cut him loose and our orderlies carried him into the hospital.

However, he miraculously managed to stay alive for several weeks before he finally expired.

A brave man for such a minor offence.

By:

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Fistful Of Onions

by Geoffrey Marston

One sultry morning as we trudged the gruelling 2½-mile route to the steel foundry, I spotted a large patch of green onions growing behind a house about 50 feet from the dirt road. It was July of 1944 in Niigata, Japan.

I wanted the onions, but trying to pilfer some of the tasty morsels could be a major problem. So, I began to abide my time. After a week, I decided to proceed with the dangerous and drastic step, even though a close comrade—Rifleman Frank Leslie—had warned me that if I was caught, it could easily lead to torture and death.



Our work party consisted of three lines of 90 men each with two barbarous, stick-carrying guards—one leading and the other taking up the rear. If I was to succeed, I had to be fast and my strategy had to be precise.

While returning to camp—drained of energy as usual—I positioned myself near the front of the line. When we came abreast of the house, I darted to the rear, pulled up as many onions as I could and quickly stuffed them inside my shirt. I then ran, but barely made it back to the line. Gasping for breath, I muttered to myself: “I made it! Thank God!”

Then out of nowhere I was stunned by a sharp blow to the head. Through the corner of one eye I caught sight of an unfamiliar guard, shouting and gesturing to hand over the onions as evidence for the commandant.

While my heart thumped and body trembled, comrades came to my rescue and gradually shifted me up the line. Someone handed me an old hat, another gave me a coat, which I hastily put on. This ploy enabled me to arrive in camp near the front of the middle row.

I watched as the guard dashed madly into the commandant’s office with the evidence in his grasp. As we lined up to be counted off, I quickly pulled the coat collar up and shoved the hat down as far as possible.

Livid with anger, the commandant stormed out of his quarters like a raging bull. His fists punched the air as he bellowed sharply at the guard to identify the guilty prisoner. As the two of them walked slowly back and forth each man in our group was scrutinized, but fortunately the new guard failed to detect me. When they finally left, I heaved a deep sigh of relief.

The irate commandant kicked the ground, shook his fists and cursed aloud. He then stormed off muttering to himself. Time seemed to move slowly as we stood at attention for almost an hour before we were dismissed.

Inside our quarters, I was surrounded by comrades who showered me with handshakes and affectionate slaps on the back. I was overcome with emotion and cried happy tears. “What can I say?” I told them. “I owe my life to you guys!” Then my voice broke and I could not utter another word. It took me hours to release the tension that was gnawing my insides.

Editor’s Note: *The fighting in Hong Kong, the terrible abuse in prisoner of war camps and the forced labor in mills, mines and shipbuilding yards took a heavy toll. Marston weighed 92 pounds when he and other prisoners of war were liberated by American troops at Niigata in August 1945. When he arrived in Hong Kong with the Royal Rifles of Canada in 1941, the young signalman weighed a healthy 155. After the war, Marston returned to Oshawa, Ont., and resumed civilian life. He got married and raised a family. “I was hired by General Motors of Canada, but after 29 years I was forced to take early retirement from illness dating back to the PoW camps. I still suffer terrifying nightmares of those long years of living hell,” he told Legion Magazine.*

Illustration: Stewart Sherwood

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

Summer, 1944

"THE SAVAGE MILITANTS"

Mid-mornings, we were always startled by loud clangs from a church-like bell signalling the ten-minute break period.

One day, and as always, overcome with sheer exhaustion, two comrades Riflemen Francis (Frank) Hicks and Frank Leslie from nearby furnaces, joined me squatting on the dirt floor.

From out of nowhere, a number of militant workers promptly milled around us and slowly converged; stopping short a few yards away.

With cold leering stares, they seemed bent on doing us harm.

Fearing that some could understand English, we huddled closely together and whispered in low tones. But as they inched closer, we curtailed our tongues.

Realizing our plight, they erupted in fits of laughter, But suddenly their mood changed leaving faces contorted with scorn and anger.

With rebellious attitudes, they begun hurling clods of dirt and ashes covering our flimsy sweat-filled garb; temporarily blinding us.

Not satisfied with their dastardly act, they attacked and repeatedly kicked our frail bodies causing excruciating pain.

I was left with both eyes almost closed from blows.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

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Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

Summer, 1944

"THE SAVAGE MILITANTS"

Meanwhile, there was jubilation in the air as the area furnace bosses were seen goading them on.

But while these tense moments lasted only minutes, the time seemed to tick off like days on a calendar.

When the break ended, these satanic creatures quickly scrambled and were gone like a puff of smoke.

Four days later, Rifleman Francis (Frank) Hicks was savagely beaten to death by his ferocious boss for no apparent reason.

Frank was like a brother I never had. I still grieve his tragic loss.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

Niigata, Japan

Shintetsu Steel Mill

Summer, 1944

"TEDDY THE BEAR"

The most ferocious furnace boss was a short overly-fat sadist whom we appropriately nicknamed "Teddy the Bear". Any prisoner who was forced to work for him experienced nightmarish ordeals.

His domain was always an aura of danger.

Always foaming with rage, some prisoners collapsed under the continual assaults of his wrath. Those who didn't bow, salute or move fast to his liking were attacked with vengeance.

He expected obedience in the strongest terms.

One day, a close comrade of mine, Rifleman Francis (Frank) Hicks from Kingsville, Ontario, was unfortunately assigned to him for an indefinite period.

Two weeks later, while stoking my furnace a few yards away, I heard sounds like someone squashing an over-ripe melon and I quickly turned around. This homicidal manic had knocked my friend down, jumped on his head, and smashed his skull wide open.

Disregarding my own job and safety, I ran over to where he lay, with blood spurting from the gaping wound in his head.

He died in my arms.

His only crime had been to accidentally drop a piece of red hot steel he was taking from the furnace which he found far too heavy to lift in his weakened condition.

By:

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1993



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Niigata, Japan

Shintetsu Steel Mill

Summer, 1944

"TEDDY THE BEAR"

Losing control, I jumped to my feet and went raving mad screaming, "You bastards!!", "Bastards!!", "Bastards!!".

Shortly after, guards and nearby workers surrounded me shaking their fists violently in the air ready to do me harm.

They were like wild animals stalking their prey.

My own boss rushed over and muttered something to them and they quickly dispersed. He then grabbed me like a rag doll and pounded my mid-section until I almost lost consciousness.

When I was able to regain my senses, he pummeled me again and again.

To this day, I've often wondered why I wasn't called upon to testify against this venomous monster who often tortured me for no apparent reason.

I still suffer terrifying nightmares of his inhuman treatment.

As for "Teddy the Bear", he was tried and convicted before an American War Crime Committee.

He received the death penalty.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 1 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

August, 1944

"THE BABE RUTH CAPER"

One day, the second week of August, I became aware of a Japanese man walking toward me.

When he approached - and to my surprise - smiled, bowed, and spoke in good English that he was appointed to help out, and was more than willing to work the heavy chores himself; leaving me solely in charge of stoking the furnace.


I was skeptical of his intentions and could smell a rat, as the Japanese weren't in the habit of having their employees assist the prisoners in any way shape or form.

This character, probably in his late 40's, stood about 5-foot-8, taller than most Japanese I had encountered.

I also observed that his hands were soft and callus free, therefore had not been engaged in laborious duties.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 2 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu PoW Camp

August, 1944

"THE BABE RUTH CAPER"

However, my intuition warned me that this sly individual was obviously a "Plant" seeking vital information that he could pry out of me in the days ahead.

But my guard was up, and I was more determined than ever that I wasn't going to be duped by his somewhat dubious behavior.


That evening, after our arrival at Shentetsu Camp, I related my story to one of the three American officers we had, and his reply was short, but to the point: "You know what to do Marston. If he asks questions, string him along and lay it on!!".

Shortly after, an amusing incident crossed my mind.

It was well-known that the Japanese loved the game of baseball, and most likely knew the name of "The Sultan of Swat", the immortal Babe Ruth.

Therefore I was ready, and decided to try my own skulduggery the following day.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 3 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

August, 1944

"THE BABE RUTH CAPER"

The next morning during a lull in our work, I decided to have a chat with him and found that he wasn't hesitant in replying to questions I asked.

"You know my language very well."

"I study your language when young man," he said.

"You're doing a good job working the furnace," I said.

"Arigato, (Thank you) I was in military many years. Now too old," he replied.

I was impressed with his frankness.

Changing the subject, I went directly into my phoney tale of knowing the incomparable Babe Ruth.

"Do you like baseball?" I asked.

"I like baseball. Baseball good game," he replied.

"Then you must have heard about my good friend, Babe Ruth."

"Babe Ruth!" he gasped. "You know Babe Ruth?"

"Yes, he's a very good friend of mine," I uttered.

"How long you know Babe Ruth?" he anxiously replied.

"Since I was a young boy. We always went fishing together when the baseball season was over with."

"Where you meet Babe Ruth?"

"I was a patient in the children's ward at a hospital and he sat down beside me trying to cheer me up by telling funny stories which made me laugh. We've been very good friends ever since. He really loves kids, you know, and they love him."

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Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

August, 1944

"THE BABE RUTH CAPER"

With his hand resting on a stack of cold steel, he went on saying that Babe Ruth was the only American hero of his people. This remark left me flabbergasted that "The Babe" was held in such high esteem second only to their revered Emperor.

During the mid-morning break period, he approached nearby workers and muttered something to them.

Shortly afterwards, they swarmed around me uttering: "Babe Ruth?" "Babe Ruth?" "Babe Ruth?"

I kept nodding my head in agreement.

It was hard to comprehend that these were the same callous creatures who terrorized POW's in my area.

The following morning, he presented me a large ball of packed rice wrapped in a colorful kerchief; a tin of dried fish; two packs of Kezami (a Japanese hairlike tobacco, which we as prisoners, simply referred to as "Hair") and a slim long-stemmed Japanese pipe.

"Why did you give me such nice presents?", I surprisingly asked.

"You dear friend of Babe Ruth ... These yours in his name", he said proudly.

With hunger gnawing my insides, I quickly devoured the rice and fish with my fingers.

By:

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Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

August, 1944

"THE BABE RUTH CAPER"

Meanwhile, my despicable furnace boss whom had mistreated me on many occasions, was staring angrily at the attention I was getting.

The name Babe Ruth never meant a thing to him.

Almost daily, "My helper" gave me rice and a container of seawood cooked in soya sauce, which I found tasty.

Earlier, I explained the story to the American Officer, and his reply was simple: "At least Marston, you can thank Babe Ruth for putting the extra food in your mouth," he said with a smile.

One week later, and to my surprise, "My helper" announced that he was to be moved to another building.

When he departed, I came to the conclusion that he wasn't a "Plant" who never once interrogated me.

His magnetic personality left me disillusioned.

Afterwards, the novelty of "knowing" Babe Ruth wore off as the area workers were back to their vile, sinister ways.

By:

Geoffrey C. Marston

1993

This story is dedicated in memory of the late George Herman "Babe" Ruth, known affectionately as: "The Sultan of Swat," "The Bambino," or simply, "The Babe" for his outstanding contribution to the game of baseball.

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 1 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu PoW Camp

Summer, 1944

"A CARELESS ERROR"

One sultry July morning as we trudged the gruelling 2½ mile route to the Shentetsu Steel Foundry, I spotted a large patch of green onions growing behind a house about fifty feet from the dirt road.

I wanted them, but trying to pilfer some of the tasty morsels could be a major problem, so I decided not to make a decision in haste but to abide my time.

After a period of a week, I made up my mind to proceed with the dangerous and drastic step.

Meanwhile, I spoke to a close comrade rifleman Frank Leslie about it, and weighed the risk, but he feared for my safety by firmly declaring that if I was caught, it could lead to torture and certain death.

But I wasn't swayed from my determination, so decided to carry out my plan the next day.

By:

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1993

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 2 -

Niigata, Japan

Summer, 1944

"A CARELESS ERROR"

Since our work party consisted of three lines of 90 men each, and of course, two barbarous stick-carrying guards - one leading and the other taking up the rear - my strategy had to be precise and letter perfect.

On returning to camp - and drained of energy as usual - I positioned myself near the head of the line.

When we came abreast of the house, I darted to the rear and pulled as many of the onions my hands could grasp; quickly stuffing them inside of my shirt.

Then I immediately ran - but barely making it - to rejoin the group.

Gasping for breath, I muttered to myself, "I made it!", "Thank God!".

Suddenly, I felt a sharp blow to the head; stunning me. Then, out of the corner of my eye I caught sight of an unfamiliar guard shouting and gesturing to hand over the onions as evidence for the Commandant.

By:

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 3 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu PoW Camp

Summer, 1944

"A CARELESS ERROR"

With my body trembling and my heart thumping away in my chest, fellow comrades promptly came to my rescue and gradually shifted me slowly up the line.

Someone handed me an old worn-out fedora hat, another a coat, which I hastily put on.

This ploy enabled me to arrive in camp near the front of the middle row.

I'm convinced that God was guiding me.

Arriving at camp, I could see the guard dashing madly into the Commandant's office grasping the evidence.

Lining up to be counted off, I quickly pulled the coat collar up and shoved the hat down as far as possible.

Livid with anger, the Commandant came storming out of his quarters like a raging bull with his fists flailing the air; bellowing to the guard to immediately identify the guilty prisoner.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 4 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu PoW Camp

Summer, 1944

"A CARELESS ERROR"

As they walked slowly back and forth, each man was carefully scrutinized, but fortunately, the new guard failed to detect me.

When he left, I heaved a deep sigh of relief.

Meanwhile, the irate Commandant was repeatedly kicking the ground, shaking his fist and loudly cursing.

Then stormed off muttering to himself.

Time crept slowly as we stood at attention for almost an hour, but after what seemed an eternity we were finally dismissed.

When we entered our quarters, I was immediately surrounded by comrades who showered me with handshakes and affectionate slaps on the back.

Overcome with emotion and crying happy tears, I poured my feelings to them. "What can I say?", I said, "I owe my life to you guys!".

Then my voice broke. I couldn't utter another word.

However, it took me hours to release the tension that was gnawing my insides.

By:

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

November, 1944

"THE BULL GANG"

Known to the PoW's as "The Bull Gang", three burly youths and a foreman manned a large furnace which required great strength handling superior loads.

Bi-weekly, a designated Canadian or American would be assigned the terrible task of working with them, leaving the prisoner to pursue the enormous duties alone.

Sitting idly by, these young savages derived enormous pleasure in taunting and intimidating their victims at every given moment. If their legs gave out forcing them to fall, they would corral and brutally manhandle; rendering them almost to the brink of becoming unconscious.

Then the inevitable happened.

Running a temperature resulting from a heavy cold, a young Canadian Grenadier was forced to perform duties which was well suited to the manical methods of the gang.

Previously forewarned of our comrade's illness, they immediately started to jump around like small children playing games. To them, it was a cause for a joyous occasion and venture.

Bent on destroying his mind, they blindfolded him and begun whirling his skeleton-like form around and around from one to the other.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 2 -

Niigata, Japan

Shintetsu Steel Mill

November, 1944

"THE BULL GANG"

Wandering aimlessly with his feeble voice pleading mercy, this sickening sight gladdened their inhuman hearts.

With his brow bathed in sweat, they removed the fold from his eyes and prodded him to the chilly outdoors where he was forced to lift a heavy piece of steel to be carried in and stacked near the furnace.

Once outside, with two of the gang standing near, they erupted in fits of laughter as he vainly tried to lift the ore. But in his weakened condition, he was unable to budge it.

Suddenly, he collapsed in a heap on the hard snow-covered ground.

Like blood-thirsty animals they attacked and repeatedly kicked his head, face and body.

Before leaving the scene, they committed the despicable act of spraying his body with their urine.

The next day, he passed away in the camp hospital.

By:

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1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

Niigata, Japan

Shintetsu PoW Camp

1944 - 1945

"THE BROKEN MINDS"

With the passing days, a growing number of prisoners were declared mentally unsound and disoriented and were placed in the psychiatric section of an isolated structure. Some were potentially dangerous.

One shocking case was the day a seriously demented American who somehow managed to elude an attending orderly, made his way to the camp entrance with his arms swinging briskly in military fashion, and boldly passed through.

Immediately seized by guards, they dragged him to the Administration Office to confront the Camp Commandant.

Speaking through an interpreter, the Commandant pounded on his desk in fits of rage and shouted for an explanation.

Meanwhile, the American who was standing rigidly at attention incoherently uttered: "Going home ... Going home".

Although the Commandant realized the prisoners' mental instability, he didn't dismiss him until he bellowed orders to the guards to administer punishable blows to the face and body.

Following this malicious act, he was carried to his building by his comrades.

He was moaning horribly. His face was a pulpy mess.

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1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 2 -

Niigata, Japan

Shintetsu PoW Camp

1944 - 1945

"THE BROKEN MINDS"

All prisoners in this building had to be spoonfed. No utensiles were allowed.

A number had to be carefully watched because of suicidal tendencies.

With vengeance, many would attack their own thinking they were Japanese; causing bloodshed.

These unfortunate souls had to be held down repeatedly by overworked orderlies to control them. In many cases, encouragements had to be used to quiet their outbursts.

During the nights, we were awakened by terrifying screams erupting from their building, sending chills down our spines.

Many times we would ask ourselves, "Who will be the next to go off the deep end?".

Of course, No one had the answer.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 1 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu PoW Camp

April, 1945

"HOLY JOE"

The second week of April, a runty Japanese sergeant, nicknamed "Holy Joe", put in an appearance at Shentetsu and was overly anxious to accompany our work party to the Steel Mill for an indefinite period.

On arrival at the Plant, we went directly to the unheated isolated building which housed three lengthy tables and benches that was used for consuming our meagre food ration.

Once inside, this short pig-like creature wasted little time showing his power of authority.

Permeated with evil, he ruthlessly seized at random, a startled Canadian, a Grenadier, and ordered him to the front and begun slapping his face in a sadistic manner; drawing blood.

Three days later, he got more than he bargained for by selecting a tall 6'2" American Marine Sergeant to show his so-called manhood in our presense.

The sergeant, a survivor of the infamous Bataan Death March, was not about to be savagely assaulted at the hands of this little pile of manure.

By:

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 2 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

April, 1945

"HOLY JOE"

Standing on a box to reach the height of the American, he viciously slapped him and spat in his face.

Infuriated, the Yank with his fist pounding the air bellowed, "You little bastard, when this God-damned war is over, I'm coming after you and cut you into little pieces!!".

Though Holy Joe couldn't understand English, he recognized the threatening tones.

With his face turning ashen, he leaped from his perch and bolted to the nearby guards' room.

At that instant, all merriment broke loose as we stood and gave the gutsy Marine rounds of applause.

By:

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1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 3 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

April, 1945

"HOLY JOE"

But the plaudits were short-lived.

Guards came storming out and begun raining heavy sticks on heads and bodies, causing some to sustain injuries.

Meanwhile, Holy Joe was screaming to the guards in a ferocious manner goading them on; giving us the impression that he would kill his own mother if there was a nickel profit in it for him.

When we left for work, the injured were later returned to camp.

Each day, he paced back and forth intensely studying any prisoner suitable to his liking. But those of average height were often his target and put on exhibition; then severely dealt with.

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 4 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu PoW Camp

April, 1945

"HOLY JOE"

Three days later and lined up for work, a Canadian Rifleman suddenly slumped to the ground unconscious. This was the comrade's first day back after suffering a severe bout of pneumonia.

Wild with rage, Holy Joe pounced and savagely kicked his body repeatedly, then ordered a guard to continue the vicious assault.

At this point, we lost control and raised our voices in anger, and felt like tearing him apart limb from limb.

Grinning from ear to ear, exposing rotting teeth, the crazed tyrant stood well back enjoying his moment of triumph.

Moving on our way, the broken body of the prisoner was still on the ground, bleeding profusely.

By:

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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 5 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu Steel Mill

April, 1945

"HOLY JOE"

Before starting our work day, many of us sat crouched over tables with our faces buried in our arms.

But I always had a sinking feeling that I would eventually wind up a victim as one of Holy Joe's savage exploits.

With his eyes roaming the building, he walked to where I was sitting and stood with a fixed stare.

My heart sank.

A buddy, next to me, uttered in a whispered tone, "Geoff, he's right behind you!". "I know, I can smell him!", I weakly replied.

Expecting at any minute to be seized and used as another punching bag, I lowered my eyes and kept a low profile.

After a moment of uncertainty, he moved on.

"That was bloody close!!", I murmured, as I wiped beads of sweat from my brow.

By:

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1993



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WE'LL NEVER FORGET

- 6 -

Niigata, Japan

Shentetsu PoW Camp

1945

"HOLY JOE"

The second week of May, the hated Holy Joe departed camp; one month to the day when he established his co-called supremacy.

We later learned, that he executed assaults on PoW's at other camps before transferring to Shentetsu.

Following the Japanese surrender, the American Marine Sergeant, vowing revenge, scoured Niigata for him, but to no avail.

Venting a lot of anger on returning to camp, he shouted "I hope somebody got the little bastard before I did!!".

Unconfirmed reports had it that a group of prisoners finally tracked him down.

After beating him to a pulp, they threw his body into the Bay.

Hopefully, that was the end of Holy Joe.

By:

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1993



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SHINTETSU POW CAMP

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

NIIGATA, JAPAN

On August 15th, 1945, the Commandant emerged from his office followed by guards and listened to a small radio which was hooked up near the camp entrance. They all bowed at the radio. It was the voice of the Emperor informing them that Japan was surrendering and that all of his subjects must "Abide and Endure". Shortly afterwards, the Commandant shot himself to death in his quarters.

THE WAR WAS OVER!! WE WERE FREE!!

August 19th, the guards fled the camp leaving us solely in charge. We knew that the war was now officially over as the lights came on at night all over Niigata

Early the next day, a number of American Naval planes appeared and flew over the camp at roof-top level with the pilots plainly seen waving and giving us the thumbs up sign. We had no knowledge how they knew of the location of our camp. One plane dropped a wrench with a note attached and it read: "War over. Happy days are here again. Paint the roofs of your buildings with large POW letterings. Wait for supplies to arrive by B-29's. God bless every one of you".

Two days later, American flying fortresses, the B-29's, with bombays open, came over dropping drums of food and cigarettes attached to colorful parachutes. Two of them plunged through the roofs of buildings narrowly missing a few of the men. Some of the parachutes became tangled in trees outside of the camp. A number of Japanese tried to cut them loose but were chased off by our men.

The planes kept flying and dropping their loads, but we had enough supplies to feed five battalions. When we left the camp, most of it was left behind.

Many of the men couldn't handle the food and threw up. Two comrades became seriously ill and almost died.



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From the Desk of
GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

SHINTETSU POW CAMP

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

NIIGATA, JAPAN

On August 20th, a few battle-hardened American Marines accompanied by an Officer entered the camp to greet us. But when the Marines saw our emaciated bodies they cried. They couldn't believe that some of the elderly-looking men standing before them were young boys in their twenties. The Officer then stepped forward and announced in a strong voice: "Men, the war is over. Welcome to freedom. The first thing we have to do is to fatten you up with good food and vitamins. You will be travelling by train in a few days to Yokohama and from there...home, back to your loved ones. The sick will have the first priority to move out of here. Now, I strongly urge each one of you not to stray too far from this camp as there are still hostile Japs out there who do not believe in defeat and surrender. Anow, men, God bless you all and WELCOME TO FREEDOM AND LIBERTY."

Before they left, we crowded around the Marines and the Officer and hugged them. There wasn't a dry eye to be seen.

FREEDOM!! FREEDOM!! we kept shouting over and over again. "Home for Christmas", someone yelled. "Yes, turkey and all the trimmings." another cried out.

There was a shortage of tobacco in Niigata and the rest of Japan, so the precious weed was worth its weight in gold. With our pockets bulging with packs of American cigarettes we could buy anything the Japanese had.

August 22nd, two buddies and I decided to explore downtown Niigata. I spotted a barbershop and casually mentioned to them, "Hell, I need a haircut." "Are you crazy?" they said, "The Jap could slit your throat." "I'll wave a couple of weeds at him and watch his reaction."

When we entered the shop, the barber bowed and smiled broadly. I then sat in the barber chair and held out a couple of cigarettes. His face lit up like a beacon and he gladly accepted my offer. He then went ahead and cut my long shaggy hair to perfection. After he was through, my buddies did the same.

When we left the shop, we felt better about ourselves.



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SHINTETSU POW CAMP

BY GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

NIIGATA, JAPAN

Oddly enough, one of our most dangerous moments came at the instant of victory - the atomic bomb raids on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"Thos bombs ended the war and the treatment we were getting. I don't know how much longer we could have lasted." And there was another danger; that Niigata was the alternate target for the Enola Gay if Hiroshima had heavy cloud cover.

We shuddered when we became aware of it

August 26th, the Americans left first, then the British followed. The next day we departed and boarded the train for Yokohama.

I sat next to the window beside a friend as the train started to move slowly. As we passed the site of our former horror camp I openly said, "The hell of it all." My friend hardly heard me and asked, "What did you say?" I loudly repeated, "The hell of it all."

He slowly looked at me and nodded his head in agreement.

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From the Desk of
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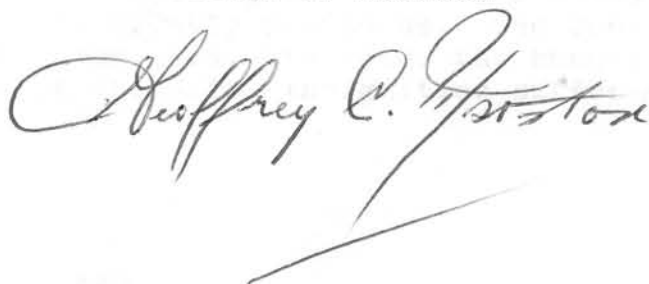
CHORES (FURNACE)

At the Shentetsu Steel Foundry, I was forced to work on feeding the furnace with foot-long square pieces of steel placed on two lengthy bars and pushed into the furnace with the use of long-handed tongs. To remove the hottest ones from the rear, they had to be carefully lifted out, then rushed to the boss to be molded. There were times when I dropped a few and was brutally beaten by the boss. On one occasion, I was knocked unconscious.

The work was back-breaking as my body weight was only 92 pounds. (Even to this day, I still cannot understand how I managed to survive).

I was responsible for feeding, cleaning and stoking the furnace.

GEOFFREY C. MARSTON



NEWLY-LIBERATED CANADIAN PRISONERS-OF-WAR

SHAM SHUI PO CAMP

HONG KONG, AUGUST 1945



Newly-liberated prisoners at Sham Shui Po prisoner of war camp eagerly accept cigarette rations prior to going home Canadian Navy photo



DATELINE — HONG KONG

NEWLY-RELEASED CANADIAN PRISONERS-OF-WAR

SHAM SHUI PO CAMP

AUGUST, 1945



PUBLIC ARCHIVES CANADA PHOTO

SET FREE: Canadian prisoners of war, released at the end of World War II after being imprisoned for nearly four years in Hong Kong and Japan, pose with a war trophy.

DISCOVERY OF POW GRAVES

WE'LL NEVER FORGET

HONG KONG

SEPTEMBER, 1945



NAVAL OFFICER SEEN PAYING RESPECT

WE'LL NEVER FORGET



ALLIES' ORDEAL: Emaciated state of Canadian and Dutch prisoners of war is recorded by Japanese photographer after transfer from Hong Kong to Kobe for slave labor in Japan.



LIBERATED CANADIAN PRISONERS-OF-WAR

AUGUST, 1945



THEY MADE IT THROUGH — Appreciating their luck at still being alive, a group of Winnipeg Grenadiers, taken prisoner in 1941 at Hong Kong and liberated in 1945, are pictured aboard the British

hospital ship, Oxfordshire, in Manila harbor. Reader suggests we remember men like these, and the many other less fortunate that did not make it, before apologizing to the Japanese about Hiroshima.

(AP laserphoto)

JAPANESE SIGNING SURRENDER PAPERS

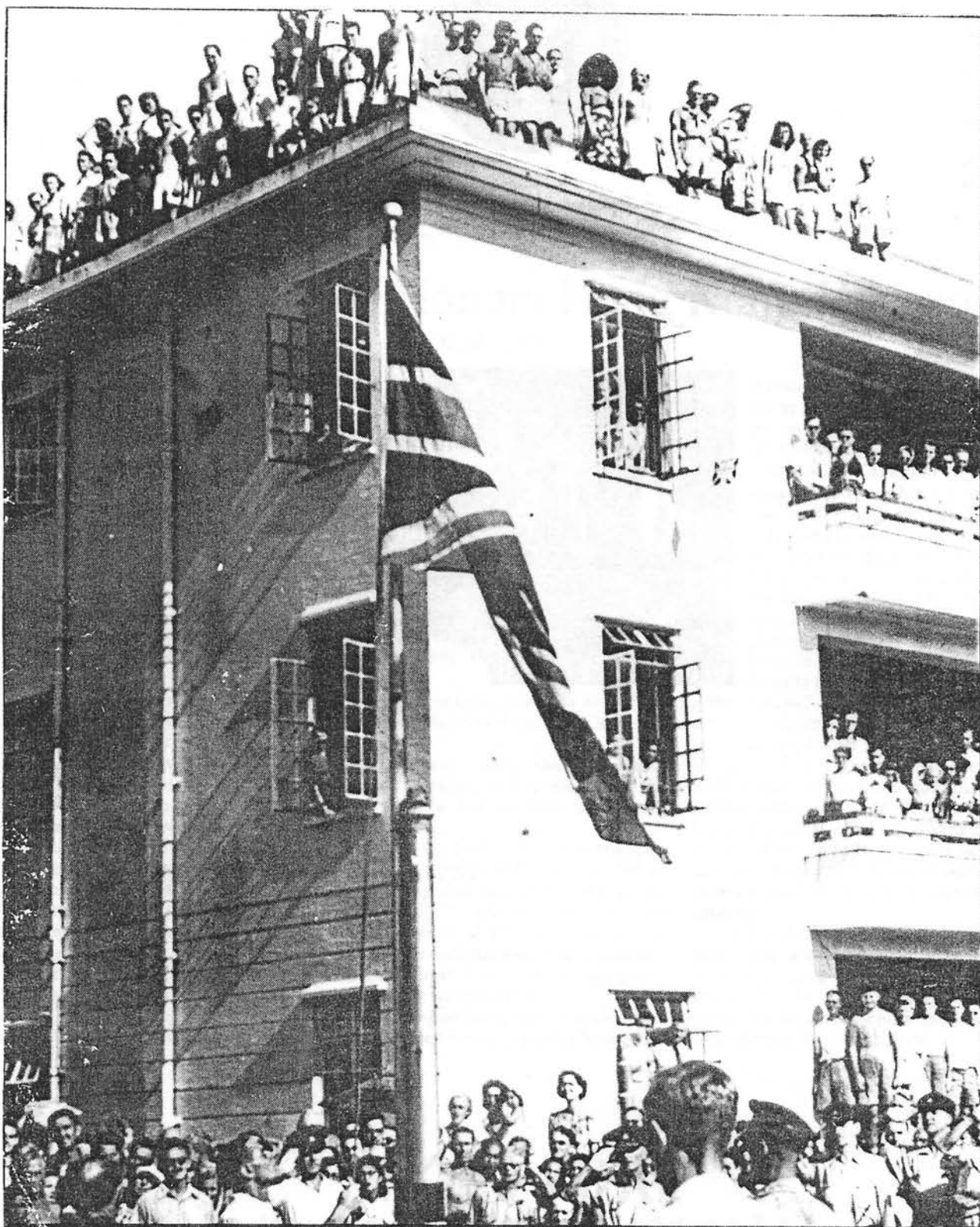
PENINSULA HOTEL

KOWLOON

AUGUST 30, 1945



HONG
KONG



Internees, including Canadians, watch in 1945 as the Union Jack is raised over Camp Stanley for the first time since the Hong Kong base was overrun by the Japanese in 1941.



Osborn Memorial Honors Hong Kong Veterans

by Bill Fairbairn

To Hong Kong veterans the John Robert Osborn VC Tower at Deer Lodge Centre in Winnipeg is more than a tribute to a Canadian who was awarded the Victoria Cross in WW II. They see it as a memorial to all Canadians who defended the British colony when it was attacked by Japan in 1941.

To this end they were instrumental in having the centre's personal care tower named after Osborn. They also planned its dedication last Dec. 19—50 years to the day Osborn won his VC.

Two hundred people watched as a monument to Osborn was unveiled by Lt.-Gov. George Johnson and Frank Harding, president of the Manitoba branch of the Hong Kong Veterans Association. Osborn's son, Gerry, was there to unveil a photograph of his father.

Deer Lodge is a former veterans hospital that once housed a Legion branch. Today it's a long-term care facility specializing in veteran and geriatric care.

Harding was one of 1,975 Canadians who defended the British colony. To commemorate the battle the 250 members of the Manitoba Hong Kong veterans branch raised \$10,000 to place memorials to



Manitoba Lt.-Gov. George Johnson (left) and Frank Harding of the Hong Kong Veterans Association unveil the Osborn monument.

Osborn in the centre. "The Legion was among organizations that offered to help us financially, but we did it ourselves," says Harding.

On Dec. 19, 1941, Osborn's company of Winnipeg Grenadiers became divided as Hong Kong was besieged. However, he led his men at bayonet point to capture strategic Mount Butler. They held on for three hours until superior enemy numbers forced a retreat. Osborn and a small group covered the withdrawal. He ran a gauntlet of machine-gun fire to help stragglers and he also tossed enemy grenades back at the

throwers. After shouting a warning to his comrades he threw himself on a grenade he couldn't pick up. It exploded, killing him.

The other Canadian regiment assigned to Hong Kong's defence was the Royal Rifles of Canada.

Lt.-Gov. Johnson said: "There is no doubt the Canadians at Hong Kong were on an ill-fated, impossible mission...hopelessly outnumbered, inadequately trained and equipped. Despite their shortcomings, members of the Canadian brigade fought with great determination."

He called their recognition belated and of Osborn he remarked: "This is a measure of the man and his deeds, whose name and spirit will be commemorated for all time in the tower of a centre that has a distinguished history of service to veterans and faces an equally distinguished future of service to veterans and all community members it cares for."

Among those watching was Angus McRitchie, a drummer with the Grenadiers in Hong Kong. "It's a lasting memorial," he said. "Canadians, especially the children, know more about Pearl Harbor than Hong Kong."

HONG KONG VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA



SAI WAN BAY WAR CEMETERY, HONG KONG



Sai Wan Bay War Cemetery

**HONG KONG
VETERANS ASSOCIATION
OF CANADA**



HONG KONG VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

"A HONG KONG DIARY"

*That fateful day of long ago,
The Japanese had beat their foe,
But how could we face, or yet erase —
That losing cause on a human race?*

*Our best, we did . . . The battle strong,
What little we knew when things were wrong,
As odds were great as we knew,
Yet on we fought but with so few.*

*With glory and victory remote as could be,
But onward and forward . . . until forced to the sea,
The struggle, the heartache, the anguish within . . .
Like a tide which went out that never came in.*

*This day being Christmas a time of good cheer . . .
We thought of our loved ones so far yet so near,
But this was the beginning of things more severe . . .
As our captors had reveled for nightmares of fear.*

*The days that did follow or the years that went by,
Mercy they never thought of nor would they try,
Yet for those who survived such a ghastly ordeal . . .
Today are still suffering from the scar that won't heal.*

*A decreasing amount through the years bring regret,
Those four years of hell have yet to be met . . .
By a Government whom had sent us should not soon forget . . .
In remembering the plight of the sad Hong Kong vet.*

—Geoffrey C. Marston.

Poetry Institute of Canada

1995
CANADIAN NATIONAL
POETRY CONTEST

Award of Excellence
presented to

Geoffrey Marston

Peter B. Jones

Peter B. Jones
Managing Editor



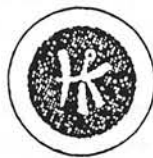
THE FRAGMENT

Volume 152. Spring 1987

The Hong Kong Issue: Update



On June 19, 1986, we forwarded a "Notice of Intent" to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, concerning our claim for compensation from the government of Japan for Canadian Hong Kong veterans. The notice describes the general nature of our claim, which will document the "gross violation of human rights" suffered by Canadian Servicemen incarcerated by the Japanese following the fall of Hong Kong in 1941.



HONG KONG VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

"THE HONG KONG VETERAN"

*Together they fought with glowing pride . . .
In defence of freedom for all mankind.*

*In having grown weary . . .
And now old and gray . . .
They still feel the anguish of that sad yesterday.*

*The ordeals that they suffered,
And as slaves they endured,
Hence Japan should remunerate . . .
In place of mere words.*

*Thus with the passing of years . . .
And now there are few . . .
Remember the Vets of Hong Kong . . .
Before each day is through.*

— Geoffrey C. Marston

The War Amputations of Canada



H. Clifford Chadderton, OC, SBStJ, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
The War Amputations of Canada

"THE LOVE OF LIFE"

WHEN THE WAVES RUSH THE SHORE
AND THE SKY MEETS THE SEA
'TIS THE BEAUTY OF NATURE
THAT SWEEPS O'ER ME.

AS MY EYES GAZE AFAR
WHAT SPLENDOR I DO SEE
FOR I'M FILLED WITH TRANQUILITY
AND A LIFE THAT IS FREE.

YET WITH THOUGHTS OF THE YEARS
THAT ARE PASSING ME BY
I STILL CHERISH MEMORIES
I SPENT AS A BOY.

BUT THINK HOW WONDROUS
THIS WORLD COULD BE
WITH THE DOVE OF PEACE
FLYING MERRILY.

THEN THE EARTH COULD GAIN FREEDOM
OF WORLDLY STRIFE
LEAVING AN EVERLASTING SYMBOL
FOR THE LOVE OF LIFE.

-GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

1990



From the Desk of
GEOFFREY C. MARSTON

Mr. H.C. Chadderton, OC, SBSJ, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
The War Amputations of Canada

THE FRAGMENT

Volume 155, Spring 1988



The War Amputations of Canada

A Prayer for Peace

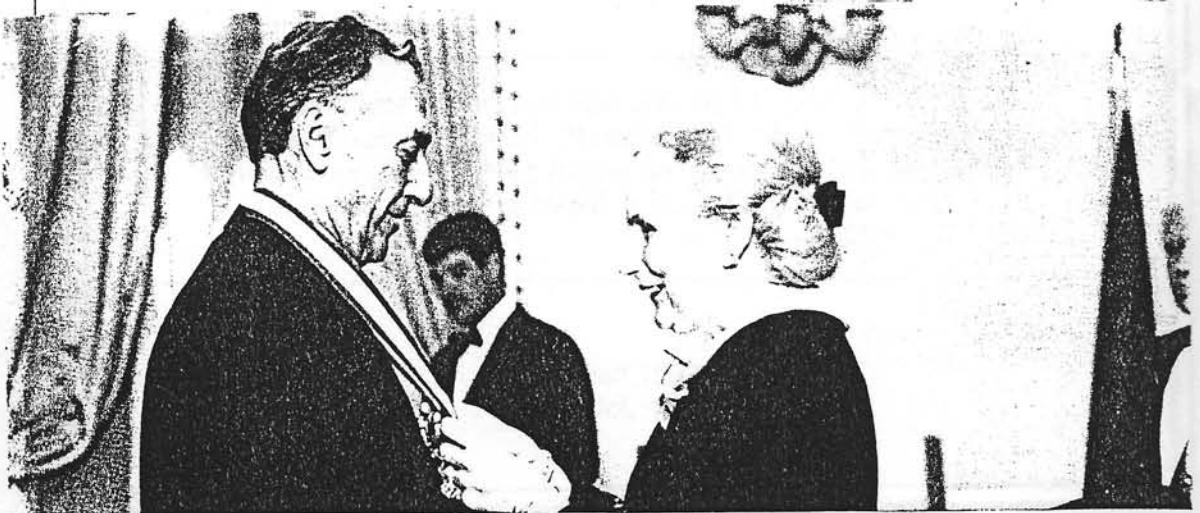
*In this day and age our future is cast —
So why not look forward and forget a surly past,
As we are of God's creatures no matter what breed . . .
Unto he, no barriers of race, color or creed.*

*Yet, with thoughts of the present that later could bring —
Will a flower ever bloom with the coming of Spring?
Will a dawn still appear that will bring a new day?
Thus, will there be a morrow . . . Let us hope, let us pray.*

*As the fate of the earth bring anguish and fear,
Let strife between nations be solved in the near —
Then a bright note of sunshine, hence eternal peace . . .
Into a world of unhappiness that will suddenly cease.*

—Geoffrey C. Marston

I dedicate this poem to my good friend Cliff Chadderton whom I greatly respect with pride and loyalty. He represents for all a symbol of love, freedom and justice. May the good Lord bless him always!



FRONT COVER: H. Clifford Chadderton was elevated to Officer of the Order of Canada by Governor General Jeanne Sauvé on November 12, 1986.

THE FRAGMENT



A TREASURED FRIEND

To a most treasured friend,
We owe a lasting debt
When he fought those troubled waters
For the sake of the Hong Kong vet.

'Twas the burden that he carried,
And those long years between,
As he lobbied a stolid government
For his hapless fellow beings.

Now his name is a symbol,
And thus we are proud,
So be worthy and pay tribute
To our President, John R. Stroud.

This poem was written and thus dedicated to John R. Stroud, our beloved President (Ontario Division of the Hong Kong Veterans' Association), as a lasting tribute for his outstanding service and achievements on behalf of his fellow Hong Kong veterans.

— Geoffrey C. Marston