

Steel City Survivor

The Military Experience of George L. Yakopcic

1938-1946



George K. Yakopcic

*For the memory of George Louis Yakopcic
and all the prisoners of the Japanese captured on Bataan and Corregidor, and
George's wife Mildred, who during 56 years of marriage through good times and
the challenging health issues, some a result of his 1229 days of internment, took
care of George.*

Preface






This book attempts to record the military career of George L. Yakopcic. George was a veteran of WWII and a prisoner of the Japanese after participation in the defense of Corregidor. Like many veterans George didn't talk about his experiences. The information contained here is compiled from many different sources with attributions.

George was my father. I remember when I was growing up the other kids would ask what did your dad do in the war. I knew he was a POW in Japan. But I am sure I really didn't know what that meant. Over the years George would tell a short story, make a comment, count to 10 in Japanese, but not really describe his experience. I decided to do some research to find out what exactly he had experienced. This is mainly for my own knowledge but I think it will be of interest to his grandsons and their descendents.

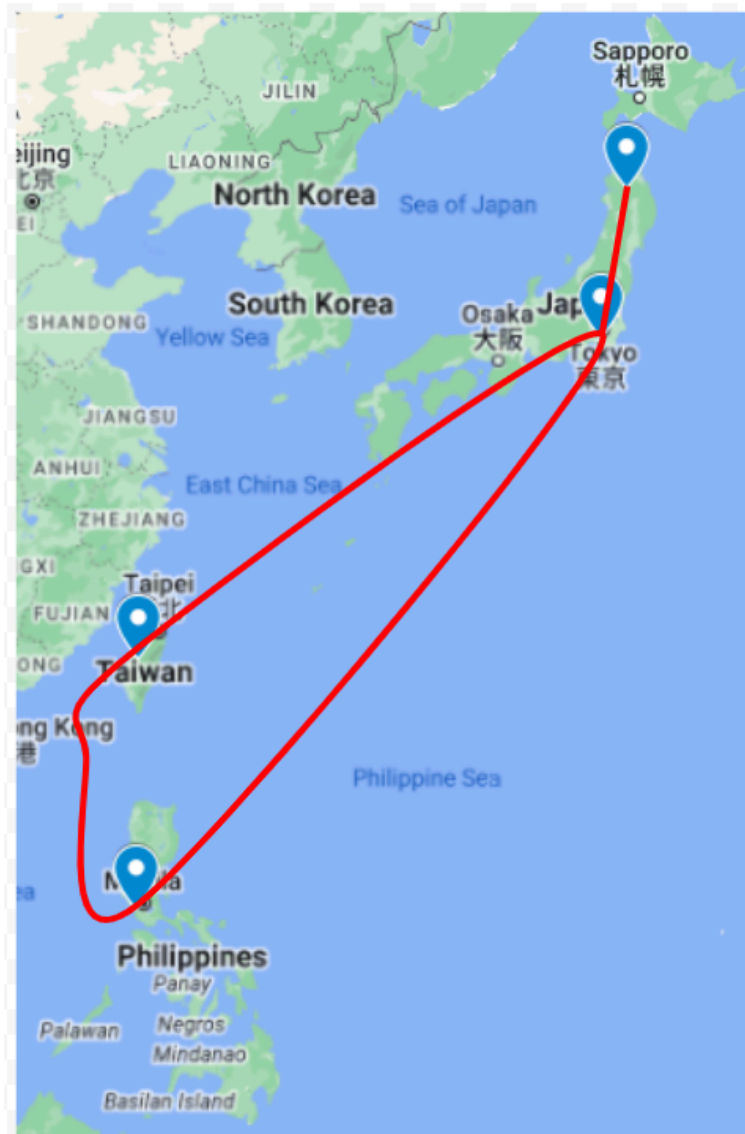
I have assembled a timeline of George's experience. Much of these accounts come from the writings, oral histories and historical documents of other soldiers that were in the same places as George at the same time. I tried to give these accounts through the eyes of the men that were there. Other information has been gathered from newspaper clippings of the time and some information came from George's personal possessions. In addition to the timeline I have included a series of appendices to better explain the events discussed in the core of the story.

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Timeline

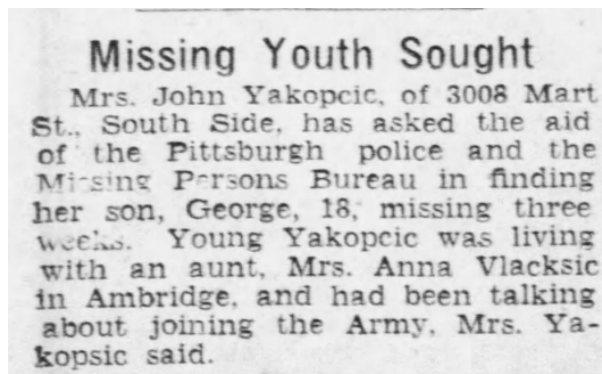
Ft Bliss	1939	
	1940	
Pittsburgh		
Ft McPherson		
Corregidor	1941	
Siege		
Philippines	1942	
Formosa		
Yokohama	1943	
	1944	
	1945	
Kosaka		
Liberation		

George's Far East Travels

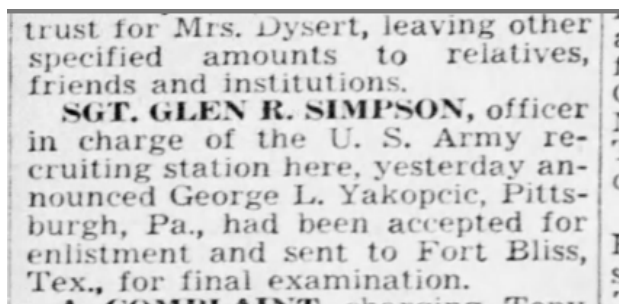


Stateside

George was born on New Years day 1920 in the South Side Slopes neighborhood of Pittsburgh. George lived there until 1936. In 1936 George's mother filed for divorce from his father John. George was sent to live with his cousins in Ambridge, PA. It Seems he left or ran away from this home in 1938.



("Missing Youth Sought" Pittsburgh Press)



("Little Stories of Phoenix Daily Life"
Arizona Republic)

George's travels took him to Phoenix Arizona where he enlisted in the Army on May 10, 1939.

George spent the next 17 months at Fort Bliss in the 82nd Field Artillery Battery B. At this time the unit was part of the 24th cavalry, notice the horse on the unit patch. This unit was instrumental in the defeat of Pancho Villa in 1919. The field artillery was moved by using horses to pull the guns. George's training would include not only operation of the guns but the maintenance of the horses.



On October 20, 1940 George was discharged from service in the 82nd Field Artillery Battery B and re-enlisted in the 59th Coastal Artillery Command Battery A with a grant of detached service until December 10, 1940. At this time he was to report to Fort McDowell, California for transportation to the Philippine Department. (Headquarters Fort Bliss, *Special Order 168*)



George Yakopcic Collection

This detached service may have been to travel back to Pittsburgh to see his new step-brother who was born after his mother remarried in 1939. At George's wife's funeral his cousin Walter related a story about a visit that must have occurred during this trip. He said George was excited about going to the Philippines even though the family was concerned that if a war was coming it would happen first in the Philippines.

At this time if you enlisted for overseas duty your term would be 2 years instead of the standard 3. It's not known if this is the reason George volunteered for the Philippines, since he had already been in the Army for a year and a half, or a desire for an adventure in the far east..

George told a story of visiting Alcatraz while he was waiting to depart for the Philippines. It seems he was assigned to a detail making a delivery to the prison. He said while passing crates to a prisoner on the dock, the prisoner placed a foot on the boat to steady himself. At that point the guards brought up their shotguns and ordered the prisoner to step back. This must have made an impression on George to relate it 40 years later.

George departed for the Pacific Theater on January 24, 1941 and arrived February 21, 1941.

Corregidor "The Rock" 2/21/41-12/9/41

Corregidor is described as a "tadpole" shaped island. Three areas of the Island were designated "Topside", "Middleside" and "Bottomside" according to their relative elevation. Bottomside was the tail of the tadpole.

In 1941 Fort Mills probably felt like a great assignment for George. A soldier's paradise. The Fort had 3 movie theaters, a Gym in the YMCA, a 13 mile electric railroad for getting around. Large parade grounds and a baseball grandstand. They even had a beach for the enlisted men complete with shark nets.



("Palafox Associates")



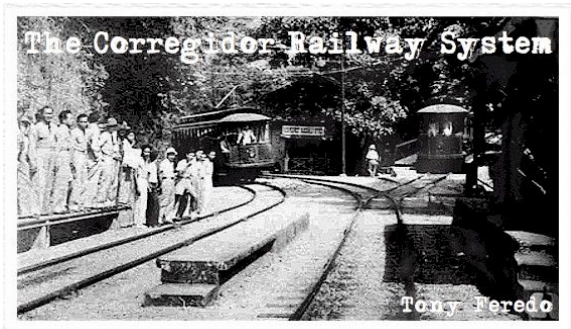
("Images - Corregidor Fort Mills ")

George would have lived at the Topside Barracks known as the "Mile Long Barracks"

George Brenzel describes life on The Rock, "The enlisted man, nobody did much on the 'rock.' The Filipinos, you paid I forget, it cost about \$2-3 a month, see we were paid in pesos so the first payday at \$21, in pesos it looked like a hell of a lot of money. But the American soldiers, they didn't make their beds, they didn't

sweep the floor, they didn't do any KP. That was all done by Filipinos for \$2 a month. And your laundry was only a couple of pesos a month. And the movies, the equivalent of first-run movies, and those cost a nickel. Cigarettes were a nickel a pack." (Mark Van Ells)

If you could get a pass, there was a regularly scheduled boat to Manila on Saturday and a return on Sunday afternoon. (Williford 253 Cites Capt.



Corregidor Railway ("Rails")

Of course the officers had many more amenities, including a golf course, swimming pool and tennis courts.



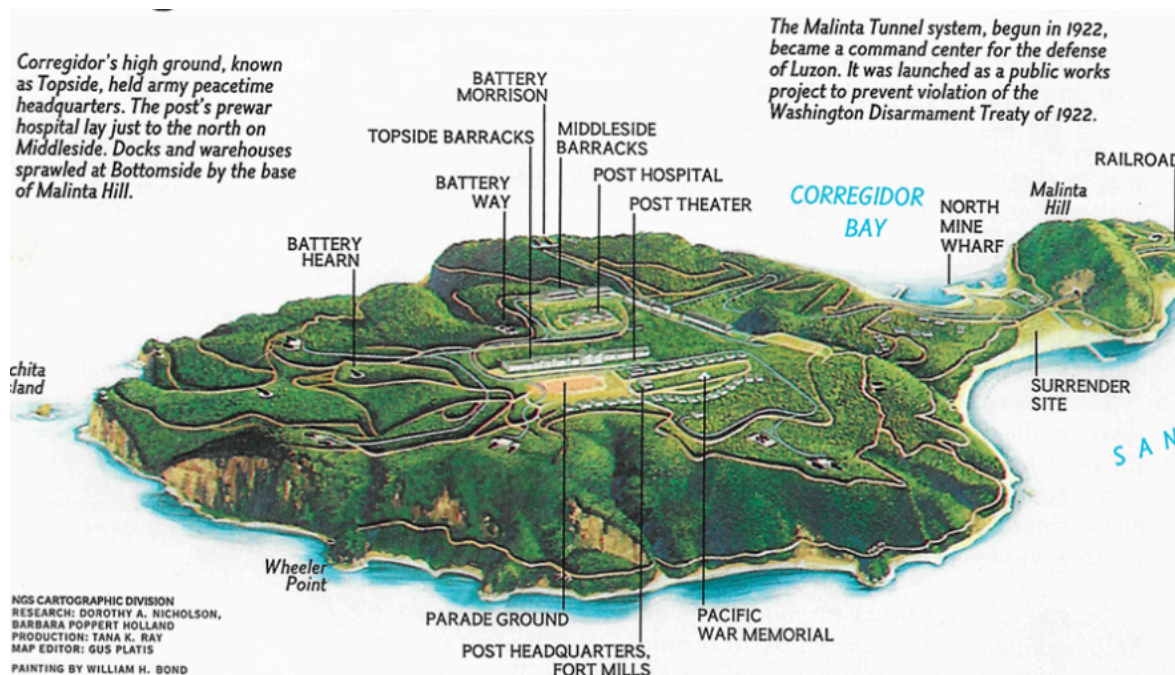
This Picture was used on Postcards the Troops would send home (Williford)

George Steiger)

George Brenzel describes Manila in an oral interview. "You could go to Manila, in fact the trip, I think, oh, I think it took about an hour to get from Corregidor to Manila. And then things were pretty wild in Manila. The booze would be, the rum was cheap, the scotch was cheap, the girls were cheap." (Mark Van Ells)



Manila 1940 (Quezon)



(National Geographic Maps)

"The armament of Corregidor was formidable. Its seacoast defense alone consisted of 23 batteries, many with their own names and traditions. Altogether, Corregidor had a total of 56 coastal guns and mortars, all of World War I vintage, ranging in caliber from 3 to 12 inches." (Morton p474) The armaments were so massive Corregidor was known as the "Gibraltar of the East" and would control the entrance to Manila Bay, the best natural harbor in the orient.

Here is a description of the 59th Coast Artillery Regiment to which George was assigned. "Like the 60th the veteran 59th Coast Artillery Regiment manning the big guns mingled a cadre of old-timers with recruits. All were volunteers, most having requested duty in the Philippines. The 59th prided itself on being strictly 'R.A.' (Regular Army). The Boss, Colonel Paul Delmont Bunker, was serving his second tour as its regimental commander, a tour he knew

would be his last before retirement.” (Belote and Belote 78) Bunker was the first All-American football player selected from West Point. At 60, he was 5’10’ and 220 lbs.

On November 29th the regiment moved out of their Topside [Mile Long] barracks and occupied the seaward batteries assumed their battle positions. Lt. Col. Norman B. Simmonds operated the large caliber gun group including Battery Hearn. (Williford 262) The men had cots at the battery and a field kitchen, they would remain there for the duration of the siege.

In 1941 George was promoted to Private First Class. This would have meant a raise in pay from \$30 to \$36/month. The newspaper clipping is from December 23, 1941.

...ate pilot's license and 30 hours of
flying under the CAA program.

Pittsburgher Wins Promotion —
Private George I. Yakopcic, Coast
Artillery, Fort Mills, Corregidor,
Philippine Islands, was promoted to
the rank of Private First Class.
He is the son of Mr. John Yakop-
cic of 216 Station St., Pittsburgh, Pa.

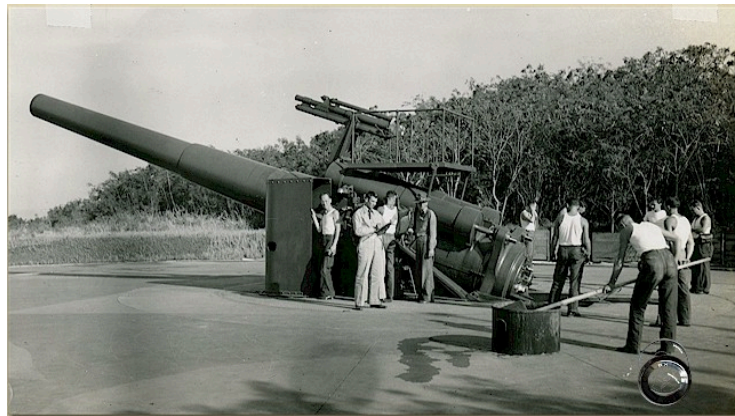
(“Pittsburgher Wins Promotion” Pittsburgh Press)



Mile Long Barracks

(“Papers of Chief Warrant Officer James L. Wilson”)

Battery Hearn



Firing Practice at Battery Hearn
("The Ruhlen Collection ")

instruments to furnish fire control data for major caliber guns. (United States Army) George was assigned to Battery A of the 59th Coast Artillery (Arroyo). Corregidor Battery Hearn was manned by Battery A of the 59th CAC."Hearn's armament, at war's commencement, was one 12-inch (305 mm) M1895A2 guns on a Barbette Carriage Model 1917 capable of ranging to 30,000 yards (nearly 17 miles)" ("hearn text"). The 12-inch gun could fire a 1000 lb shell with 270 lb bagged charge. It took 33

enlisted men and 1 officer to operate the gun and had a fire rate of [1] round per 55 seconds. (Williford and Black)

The Corregidor Foundation Inc. plaque at the site states the following. "In 1941-42 the Battery was manned by Battery A 59th Coast Artillery [George's unit] under Capt. Samuel MCF McReynolds. On Feb 12 1942 Hearn commenced almost daily counter-battery fire against the Japanese artillery emplaced in the vicinity of Naic, Ternate and Puerto Azul. From 6:00 PM April 8 to 5:10 AM April 9 Hearn and Smith Fired road interdiction fire northward toward the Pandan River bridge in Bataan in a futile effort to stem the Japanese Advance toward Cabcaben. After April 9 both guns fell silent, their circular emplacements making perfect bulls-eyes visible from high ground in Bataan." (Williford and Black)



(Hyde)

"On May 6 , 1942 the Gun carriage[s] were disabled by the crew before surrendering but the Japanese had American POW's place the battery back in service by replacing the mounted gun with a spare nearby and stripping parts from battery Smith to rebuild the carriage. In early January 1945, a large bomb dropped by an American B-24 bomber exploded beside the gun putting it permanently out of action and a second bomb collapsed the underground passageway behind the gun." (Williford and Black)

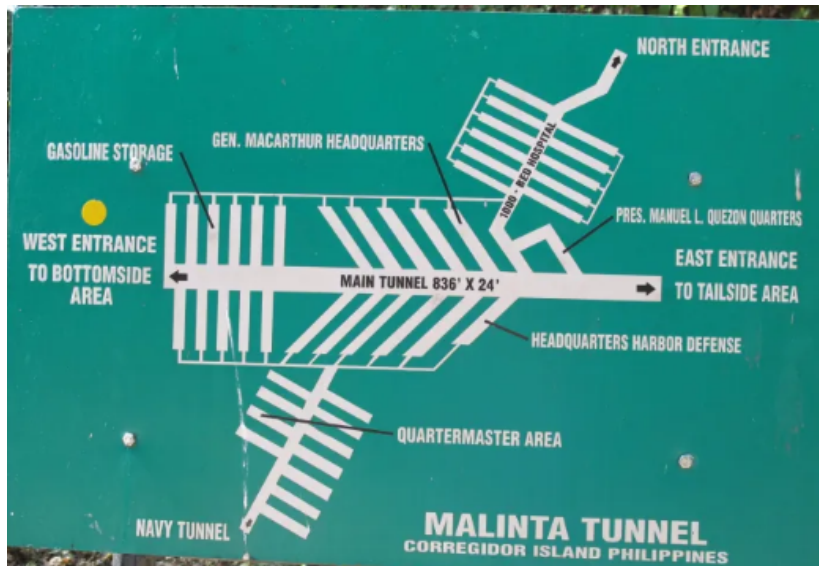
Malinta Tunnels



("Malinta Tunnel | Military Wiki | Fandom")

Corregidor had another unique feature. The Malinta Tunnel is a tunnel complex built by the Army Corp of Engineers, substantially complete in the 1930s. It was initially used as a bomb-proof storage and personnel bunker, but was later equipped as a 1,000-bed hospital.^[1] The main tunnel, running east to west, is 831 feet (253 m) long, 24 feet (7.3 m) wide and 18 feet (5.5 m) high. Branching off from this main shaft are 13 lateral tunnels on the north side and 11 lateral tunnels on the south side. Each lateral averaged 160 feet (49 m) in length

and 15 feet (4.6 m) in width ().



(McGovern and Berhow)

This tunnel system allowed the Allies to survive the severe bombing and shelling that would occur during the siege. (McGovern and Berhow)

The tunnel also served as MacArthur's headquarters and the seat of the Philippine government for a short time after the eventual fall of Manila was foreseen.

Japanese Siege 12/9/41- 5/6/42

An excellent description of the siege is described in Louis Morton's book *The Fall of the Philippines*.

Corregidor's vulnerability stemmed from its primary role as protection for Manila Harbor before the advent of air warfare. Its guns were perfect for firing on approaching ships, pointed at the sea with a limited elevation capability.

This made it vulnerable to air attack. Even the ammunition for its guns was designed to penetrate ships armor and then explode after a delay. This delayed fuse was useless against aircraft and when firing against a ground target the shell would penetrate too deep into the ground before the delayed fuse ignited the charge. This threw up a lot of dirt but didn't cause the damage intended. Over the course of the siege the troops on Corregidor experimented by modifying the fuses but never came up with an effective shell for anti aircraft purposes or countering the Japanese shelling from land on Bataan after its fall.

On December 29th, 1941 the siege began in earnest. "Corregidor's baptism by fire had lasted for two hours in which 81 medium and 18 dive bombers had dropped more than 60 tons of bombs on the fortress." (Morris 222)

"From 29 December 1941 until 6 January 1942, the Japanese airplanes bombed the island, destroying half of the wooden structures on the island, the electric train system, and the water distribution system. Everyone was put on half rations. With 15,000 people on the island, there was food for only six to eight weeks." (McGovern and Berhow 29)



("Attack on Corregidor - Japanese Forces | Gallery")

Mon. Dec. 29, 1941

We sure got hell today. The Japanese bombed hell out of Corregidor. We had a continuous air raid for over 3 hrs. The first bomb dropped at 1155. Blew Topside Cine all to hell. They dropped 9 big demolition bombs where I was stationed, blew up 2 cars, and a truck and put the power plant out of order. 1 bomb dropped directly on our bomb proof shelter, the concrete cracked but it didn't come down. They bombed Corregidor from one end to the other. The biggest casualties were at Middleside barracks where the Marines were, several killed and many wounded. I guess the Marines are going to evacuate from here now. We are still staying but it looks hopeless. We have no air force and it sure looks like some one sure as hell sold us out. It's pretty tough to see men blew to hell. Arms, legs and heads blown off. I was on the flash phone during all the raid telling our gun btrys. the no. of planes and where they were coming in from. One of our hospitals here was well marked with a cross and the dirty devils tried to get it but missed. A lot of the 91st barracks are burning and a big fire at the docks. All we can do is hope and pray our shelter holds and that we get planes from the States. Our relief sleeps in a tent back of the C.P., after the bombing, what I called Shrapnel were bomb fragments, they were using demolition bombs, our tent had 14 shrapnel hole threw it. We even found shrapnel in our beds. 2 very good friends of mine were killed, heads and legs blown off, it is terrible.

This diary entry gives an eye witness account of December 29th, 1941.

("Diary of Pvt Wayne Blankenbaker, HQ Battery, 60th Coastal Artillery")

Life on the four fortified islands in Manila Bay settled into a dreary routine. When the men were not building fortifications or going about their daily chores, they had little to do. Complaints were frequent and often dealt with the subject of food. The ration had been cut in half on 5 January, at the same time it had been cut on Bataan. ("The Siege of Corregidor")

Life everywhere on the islands went underground and the symbol of the new mole-like existence was Malinta Tunnel. (Morton p491) "As many as 7,000 other military personnel were sequestered in the various tunnels and laterals, most of them so terrified of the bombing and shelling that they left their warrens only at night. We called it 'tunnelitis'. Those of us who lived in the open hated to enter the tunnels in spite of the bombing and shelling. The heat and the lack of water for bathing, plus mass fear, produced an indescribable and pervasive stench." (McClure)

On January 15th 1942 MacArthur put out a communication to the Allied troops in which he said "Help is on the way from the United States. Thousands of troops and hundreds of planes are being dispatched. The exact time of arrival of reinforcements is unknown as they will have to fight their way through Japanese attempts against them. It is imperative that our troops hold until these reinforcements arrive." (U.S. Naval Institute)

There is controversy around this statement because it is believed MacArthur knew there was no help on the way. As time went on it became more obvious to the troops on Corregidor they were being abandoned or sacrificed.

("Diary of Pvt Wayne Blankenbaker, HQ Battery, 60th Coastal Artillery")

1/19/42	"we haven't heard any more about all the help that is coming to the Philippines"
1/26/42	"If we only knew for sure we were getting help it would make a lot of difference."
1/29/42	"We heard today the U.S. sent several thousand men to Ireland To the Phillipines - NOTHING"
2/1/42	"We heard our help would be here by Mon. night the latest. Ho, Hum, the propaganda rumors are alright but nobody believes them anymore."
2/6/42	"Well I suppose the U.S. is still sending lots of planes and men to Britain. All we are getting is congratulations."
2/11/42	"That hundreds of planes and thousands of men Gen. MacArthur said was coming to the Philippines must have got delayed somewhere. They must have got lost and went to Ireland. They sure as hell haven't arrived in the Philippines."
2/22/42	"Still no help from the States; we call ourselves 'the Forgotten men of Corregidor' Well the Japanese gave us 3 days to get off Corregidor last Friday., our time is up tomorrow, ho hum"
3/6/42	"I must not forget to enter in my diary, just heard thousands of troops have landed!!! (In Ireland). If they don't keep that kind of news in the states, I'M going to flip my lid, blow my cork and throw a wingding some day."

3/8/42	"Well if the Japanese don't get us the damn mess Sgt will starve us to death. Boy are we hungry here all the time; just two meals a day and not much at either meal."
3/11/42	"If the United States should wake up some day and find out there is a war over here, They might send us some help by way of Australia."
3/16/42	"It don't look like the U.S. ever intends to help us any."
3/26/42	"Planes to Britain, Planes to Russia, men to Ireland and planes and men to Australia. To the Philippines, nothing."

George Brenzel describes the soldier's attitude at this time. "Well, you see, we knew we were being lied to. Every couple of days there was a new communiqué on the bulletin board about the thousands of men and hundreds of ships and thousands of planes that were coming down and were on their way to relieve us. It was good for morale." (Mark Van Ells)

In the first firing of major caliber coast artillery since the Civil War, Batteries Geary and Greer fired on Japanese positions on Longoskawawayan Point. On January 27th Batteries Geary and Hearn fired on the same Japanese positions the results were considered excellent and 24 more rounds were fired on the 29th. "In general , the guns of Smith and Hearn were not heavily used in the siege, the defenders were hoping to conserve them and avoid counter-battery fire in case they were needed to engage naval targets." (Williford 283-285) Photo:



("The Ruhlen Collection ")

"On February 16 Captain Achille Tisdale, a headquarters officer, recorded that the damned Nips have got a new propaganda program that does not help our morale any. The men joke happily, but underneath they are disquieted, KZRH in Manila American songs to American soldiers on Bataan and Corregidor at 2145 every night. Theme song *Ships that never come in* followed by popular songs." (Belote and Belote 89)

From February 5th to March 22nd a constant daily artillery duel between the guns on Corregidor and the Japanese guns on the mainland)(Morton p485)

On March 11th 1942 McArthur left his temporary Headquarters in the Malinta tunnel. He traveled by PT boat initially, eventually arriving in Australia. General Wainwright was placed in command. This is when he pronounced "I shall return". This was soon modified and used by the men on Corregidor as "I am going to the latrine...I shall return".

Over a ten day period in late April 1942 16,000,000 silver 1 peso coins were sunk in the Caballo bay off of Corregidor to keep them from the Japanese. George participated in the hauling of these coins from the Malinta tunnel vault to the dock. He said that occasionally a box would “fall off the truck” and break open. Soldiers would pick up these coins and use them as poker chips while they awaited the fall off the island. He remembers one soldier saying “he had so many coins in his money belt it nearly cut me in half”.



The Japanese forced captured US navy divers to recover some of the coins, in 1946 others were recovered by a US Navy Salvage operation. Over the years the recovery continued by private groups and it is believed many of the coins still remain at the bottom of the bay.

“Most days Japanese artillery opened up with dawn and fired steadily until noon when there was something of a lull, what became known on the Rock as the Japanese siesta. About midafternoon the bombardment began anew and continued till past midnight; then a random gun provided harassing fire through the night and robbed the men of rest and sleep.” (Morris 436)

April 29, 1942 “It was Emperor Hirohito’s birthday, and the Japanese celebrated by firing the biggest barrage of the war; some 10,000 shells hit Corregidor”(Morris 445)

May 1st was even worse, many who thought April 29th was the enemy’s maximum effort were disappointed to find out that this day was even worse. Shells dropped from dawn till midnight. On May 2nd General Wainwright calculated that 1,800,000 pounds of shells dropped on the island. The bombardment reached a new peak on May 4th with 16,000 additional shells falling on the island. (Morton 547, 549)

On May 5th the pre-invasion bombardment began with the Japanese targeting all the American batteries. About midday General Wainwright ordered Colonel Bunker to fire all his remaining batteries to try to slow the shelling. At 2:47 PM the 300th air raid sirens of the siege sounded and Japanese bombers attacked. At 9:30 PM the Japanese shelled the areas where they intended to land. After 11:00 PM the landing began. The Marines defending the beaches and the guns placed for beach defense took a heavy toll on the invaders. Even so the



Tsuchida's Chi-Ha Kai on Corregidor.
("SENSHA: The Tigers of Corregidor")

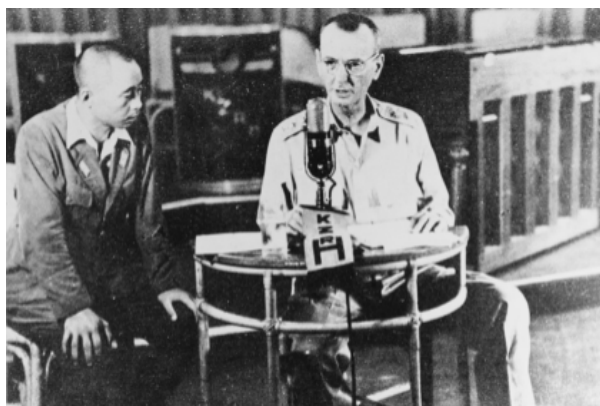
greater numbers of Japanese invaders gained a foothold and by 03:00 AM they managed to land 3 tanks. This began the invaders' advance toward Malinta hill. (Belote and Belote 155-157)

General Wainwright knew if they stopped this wave, the Japanese would keep sending additional waves of invaders. The Japanese had 75,000 troops to eventually overwhelm the starved, sick and thirsty 13,000 Americans and Filipinos.

Having made his decision, Wainwright ordered a surrender broadcast to the Japanese Commander Homma. General Moore was to put into effect the previously prepared plan for the destruction of all arms larger than .45-caliber, to be accomplished by noon May 6. At that time the American flag on Corregidor would be lowered and burned and the white flag hoisted. (Wainwright, General Wainwright's Story, pp. 185-86. 561)

The Japanese were not satisfied with the surrender of Corregidor only. They demanded a surrender of all forces in the Philippines. They threatened the lives of the 11,000 captured on Corregidor, who they said were not considered POWs till their demands for surrender were satisfied. Essentially holding the captors as hostages. Wainwright then started the process of contacting the dispersed commanders to have them also surrender.

The battle at Corregidor was the only place that Allies put up a fierce resistance during Japan's initial sweep through the Philippines and Southeast Asia. A force of 12,000 Americans and 40,000 Filipinos, lacking air support and cut from supplies and reinforcements, held off a superior and better-equipped Japanese invasion force for six months before MacArthur escaped to Australia. It is estimated that 100,000 Filipinos were killed. Supplies promised the men at Corregidor never arrived. On the matter, Secretary of war Henry Stimson said privately "There are times when men have to die." ("JAPAN TAKES THE PHILIPPINES: MACARTHUR, CORREGIDOR AND THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH")



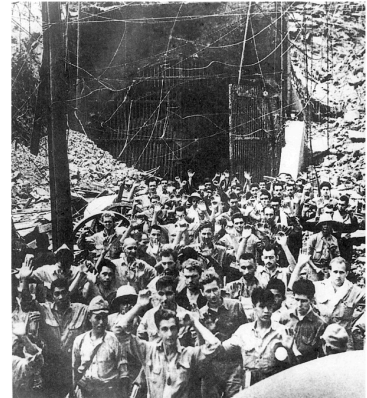
("Surrender Message")

Army Lt. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright broadcasts his surrender message following the capture of Corregidor by the Japanese in May 1942.

By June of 1942 George had survived the first two threats to his life, the Siege and then the threat by the Japanese to kill the captured personnel on Corregidor. These are the first of many more to come.

Captor and Captured First Contact 5/6/1942-5/8/1942

This picture is a staged Japanese propaganda photo showing Americans and Filipino prisoners coming out of the Malinta tunnel. "Many Americans participated in this photo because they were told they would be seen back home, and it was a way to communicate to their families that they were alive." (McDonald)



(Topp and Gallicchio)

The following passages describe the first contact with the Japanese. These were taken from Joseph A. Petak's (POW#695) book *"Never Plan Tomorrow"* which he signed and gave to George in 1995. Joe was a Combat Photographer with the Photo Section, 228th Signal Corps. He evaded the Japanese advance on Bataan and as he describes it "I ran the wrong way" and was on Corregidor at the time of surrender. He was Liberated from Hoten POW Camp [Mukden] Manchuria at the end of the war.

"We sat with our backs against the concrete embankment about a hundred yards from the west end of the [Malinta] tunnel." (Petak 1)

"We sat waiting. The Japs came through one at a time, or three or four in a group. They stopped here and there took what they saw or could find on the men. A Watch. A ring, a wallet, or the money that a soldier had hidden in hope of buying food or medicine from those fortunate enough to have thought of grabbing anything of value." (Petak 1)

The captured soldiers were milling around for the next two days wondering what would happen to them next. Most were down 25 pounds from their normal weight since the half ration mandate of January 5th. Soldiers started foraging for food testing the mobility they would be allowed by the Japanese soldiers.

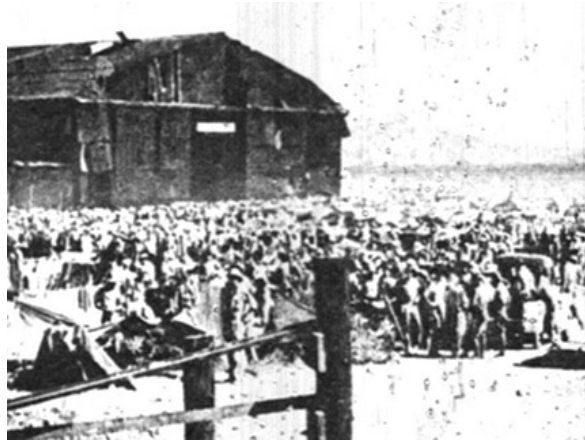
One of the few stories George did tell about his experience was related to the search for food. George was looking for food in one of the tunnels when he was chased out of the tunnel by a Japanese soldier. When he reached a group of Americans on the road an older soldier told him to take off his shirt as the group was shirtless. His explanation was the Japanese could not distinguish between the American's faces and this way he would blend into the group. The tactic worked and George said that the suggestion likely saved his life.

92nd Garage 5/8/1942-5/23/1942

The 92nd Garage before the Siege and after the POWs were gathered there.



(Salm and Ríos)



(Salm and Ríos)

The Account of the 92nd Garage is taken from a memoir of Chief Warrant Officer Alma Salm of the US Navy Submarine Tender USS Canopus. While the Canopus was at Maraveles Bay it was bombed by the Japanese on 12/29/1941 and 1/1/1942. It was eventually scuttled, the crew was evacuated to Corregidor on 2/28/1942 where they joined the Marines there to serve as beach defense. ("USS Canopus (AS-9)")

"The next morning, May 8, 1942 [two days after the US surrendered Corregidor], the Japs began shouting and screaming at everyone in the entire area to immediately form into marching columns on the road." (Salm and Ríos)

"In a few moments, we were marching up the sloping road along the south side of Malinta Hill, eastward into the broiling sun, for a distance of about one mile." (Salm and Ríos)

"Our destination was a small, almost sea-level, area about six hundred feet square and flanked on the eastern side by two or three large and old galvanized iron buildings painted black. They had been perforated with hundreds of holes due to previous enemy bombings and strafing runs. There were a few bomb craters on the perimeter of this open space. This place was known as the Army 92nd Garage." (Salm and Ríos)

"There were no [latrine], there was a ditch and the dysentery began quick. The garage area, we called that MacArthur Park or else we called it "Shit City," one of the two, see. No matter how you wanted to call it. From time to time they'd turn us loose to go back into the tunnels and hills and where ever they want to scrounge for food and supplies, whatever we wanted because they weren't, the Japs weren't ready to feed us. Back and forth, you had to go by the foxholes and the dead men piled over and the corpses and the stink and the, when they're dead awhile they

swell, bloated bodies. And the Japs were burning bodies. I don't know if they were burning our bodies or their own so they could send some ashes home. Yeah, there were dead men all over on the island.” (Mark Van Ells)

As Brenzel witnessed and related in the paragraph above, the deprivation of the allied prisoners by the Japanese started only 2 days after the surrender. And it didn't have to. “There was no excuse for not feeding the prisoners properly because Corregidor had been prepared for a long siege and was well stocked with stores of all kinds. The Japanese used working parties of as many as two thousand prisoners daily to load these stores on to Japanese transports and which then sailed to the China Sea.” (Russell 185-186)

“For the next seventeen days this tiny packed square was to be the home of approximately nine thousand American uniformed fighting forces that included a few hundred civilians and about two thousand uniformed Filipino soldiers and civilians. This area held the heat of a hot oven. It was the hottest and driest time of the year, just before the rainy season.” (Salm and Ríos)



(Salm and Ríos)

“Most of us settled down on the ground outside. There were no facilities whatsoever here. We were protected from the sun by small sections of canvas shelter halves, blankets, or any other covering we had the forethought to carry with us.”(Salm and Ríos)

“We would stand in the water line sometimes as long as three hours in the fierce heat before our turn arrived. No food was furnished to us by the Japs at this time. Reluctantly the Japs finally gave us permission to forage for food and water among our surrendered installations a mile away on Malinta Hill.”(Salm and Ríos)

“Malnutrition silently started to work. And already the diseases dysentery, diarrhea, and malaria began ravaging many of our number, although this was mild in comparison to what lay ahead. We had to take care of each other as best we could. Occasionally one or two were permitted to be littered back up the hills for temporary treatment at the hospital in the [Malinta] tunnels where there were yet many of our worst cases. However, a lot were discharged prematurely and sent down to us in order to make room for Jap sick and wounded who were also being attended by our doctors.” (Salm and Ríos)

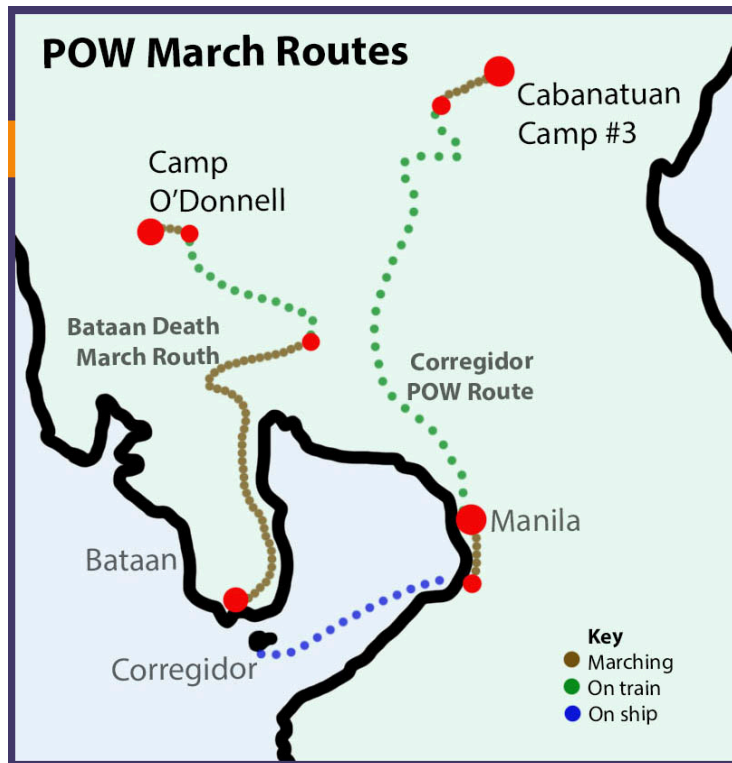
“In the early hours of the morning of May 23, 1942, the first torrential rain storm of the season fell. Daylight found us huddled together, completely drenched as only a tropical deluge can saturate one. After being herded together again for several hours under the ever-present blazing sun, we were marched in groups down to the small pier extending into South Harbor. In

various small boats and launches we arrived alongside three old and extremely filthy Japanese troop ships.” (Salm and Ríos)

One of the ships used was the Hokku Maru as reported by Lt. David Nash USN in his Diary. The POWs spent the night in the cramped holds. “At daylight the 3 ships got underway and proceeded to Manila. Arriving there we piled into landing launches which transported us into the beach where we jumped into waist-deep water and walked onto the beach.” (Rock)

Leaving Corregidor 5/23/1942

On 23 May (1942), the Japanese prisoners on Corregidor were marched to the South



(Salm)

Mine Wharf and boarded on three ships anchored in San Jose Bay. After landing in Manila, the Filipinos were off loaded onto a dock, while the Americans were paraded down Dewey Boulevard to Old Bilibid Prison, then onward to Cabanatuan Camp No. 3. (Belote and Belote)

The parading of American prisoners was designed to demonstrate to the Filipinos the superiority of the Japanese over the Americans. In fact the beach landing of the Americans into chest high water was designed to make sure the Americans looked as defeated as possible. This route resulted in a 7 mile march rather than landing on the dock that would result in a 1 mile march. (Russell 186)

“The forced march to their accommodations was a bizarre, but largely silent parade past Filipinos lining Dewey Boulevard. “We didn’t know how to accept the mostly silent populace. There were occasional shouts and waves from a Filipino that would recognize a POW. If there was no Jap guard, someone might dart from the crowd with a cigarette or a bit of food. The Samaritans were taking a risk and some paid for it with blows from the Japs. The acts of bravery and kindness were many all the way to Bilibid.” (Gilpatrick p209)

“The men in the column were deluged by questions. Names, any bit of information that could be obtained. The Japs pushed the civilians back, although they could do little to stop the thousands that gathered along the line of the march. They finally gave up and let the questioning and the donations and gifts of food and cigarettes go on unhampered.” (Petak 33)



(Salm)

Bilibid 5/24/1942 -5/27/1942



Bilibid Prison

(Muntinlupa City - TracesOfWar.com")

Bilibid was a former civilian prison converted to a POW camp, hospital and transit camp for POWS. Almost every man captured on Corregidor passed through this camp at one time or another. (Frankel and Johnstone)

"When the prisoners of war from Corregidor arrived at Old Bilibid their captors searched them and stripped them of all articles such as knives, forks, watches, flashlights, extra clothing and any other personal possessions which the Japanese deemed it unnecessary for prisoners of war to have. Each man was allowed to keep only one uniform, a shelter half, and a blanket, as well as any mess gear he

might have in his possession, including a spoon. Many of the prisoners were unable to obtain a mess kit or water canteen, and had to utilize any kind of container they could find, such as cans, pieces of sheet metal, or even coconut shells, if they were to eat and drink." ("Bilibid Prison - Form") (Tarver)

"They stayed at Bilibid only a few days, at the end of which time they were sent in groups, on successive days to the prison camp at Cabanatuan."

("Bilibid Prison - Form")



POWs held at Bilibid

("View of WW2 prisoners of war,")

Cabanatuan 5/27/1942-9/20/1942



"Images - Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp

After a few Days at Bilibid POWs were loaded on box cars and transported to Cabanatuan. The POWs were packed so tight they could only stand for the trip. Upon arrival at Cabanatuan, they were given a bowl of rice and the next morning were marched the 15 miles to Cabatuan Camp #3.

"There wasn't much patience anymore in the force walk to Cabatuan, the camp, behind the barbed wire. I know we got, had an object lesson on the way because the camp had been open awhile, the guys tied to posts outside the gate when we went in." (Mark Van Ells)

"Camp sanitation was very poor or practically non-existent. The open latrines were ideal for the breeding by the millions of these pests. The flies were "black messengers of death," causing the spreading of the dreaded dysentery throughout the camp. They were particularly attracted by anything that fermented or soured. Sometimes where the waste water from rice washings would stand and sour in small drainage ditches, they would be black around the banks. It was an ideal breeding place too. Undaunted, they would make a landing right on top of your rice ration while eating, and you had to almost brush them off forcibly at times." (Salm, Alma. "A Brutally Honest Look Inside Japan's Largest WW-era POW Camp.")

To prevent escapes, the Japanese instituted the "blood brother" rule on June 21. The POWs in the camp were placed in ten men groups and lived in the same barracks, slept in the same area, ate together, and worked together. If one man escaped, the other nine were executed since – according to Japanese logic – they should have been able to stop the man from escaping. ("Likens, Sgt. Claude")

When men tried to escape they were recaptured, brought back to the camp and beheaded in front of the camp population. (Saylor) When the opportunity to "volunteer" to be moved, the men took it to get out of Cabanatuan. (Saylor)

Much of the description of POW life in the following sections come from the writings of David G. Brenzel, also of the 59th Coast Artillery. Brenzel describes Camps and Hellships that other sources place George at or on at the same time. Brenzel was



Cabanatuan Prison Camp
Photo Courtesy National Archives

POW #762 as George was POW #793 it is easy to imagine these two men standing in the same line when numbers were assigned.

“After three month’s Brenzel volunteered to join a 350-man labor detail rumored to be headed to Japan” (Gilpatrick p214)

I believe George also volunteered for this detail because the dates of the movements of Brenzel coincide with the ship and camp rosters where we find George.

“The work crew was soon loaded onto trucks then rail cars bound for the special work detail.”(Gilpatrick p214)

“We were pretty sure we were leaving a lot of friends behind us, buried under beer bottles. We used Pale Pilsener bottles for grave markers, neck down and stuffed with curled records of the man’s name, rank and serial number.” (Gilpatrick p214 Cites Brenzel)

“Those first three months would soon be thought of as ‘the good old days’, compared to what conditions awaited the work detail and those they left behind. ‘Monotonous as the diet was there was food enough to sustain life. Jap morale was high because they still had momentum and hadn’t suffered the losses that would mark the turn of the tide later in 1942’ As the Japanese gave back territory, they gave less to the POWs. Food became scarce and acts of viciousness increased.” (Gilpatrick p215)

Hellship Lima Maru 9/20/1942 - 10/4/1942

Launch	3/25/1920	445 ft, 7,250-ton passenger cargo ship for Nippon Yusen Kaisha
Sinking	2/8/1944	Transporting around 2900 men of the Japanese 19th Brigade from Moji to Takao. The Lima Maru was torpedoed and sunk by the US submarine USS Snook some 30 miles southeast of the Goto Archipelago at position 31°05'N, 127°37'E. The Lima Maru exploded and sank very fast. Fewer than 150 soldiers survived." (Barry)



Lima Maru
("Japanese Army Auxiliary Transports")

On September 20 1942 George left Manila and boarded the Hellship Lima Maru with 300 other American POWs and was transported to Taichu POW Camp on Formosa, now Taiwan. (Hudson)

"The three hundred were placed into a small forward hold, where the air immediately became stale as they packed shoulder to shoulder. The hatch was covered, and only two forty-watt bulbs swinging overhead provided

illumination." (Michno p38)

"I was reminded of pictures I had seen of crowded slave ships of old' King said. " (Michno p38 citing Pvt Harry D King)

"On the third day , a man died screaming. On each succeeding day, one, two, or three corpses had a line tied around their middle and were hauled to the top deck and probably tossed over the side. Toward the end of the month, heat, malaria, dysentery and thirst weakened them so they died quietly." (Gilpatrick p216 Cited Brenzel)

"After four days the men were let out on deck to use the outboard latrines and wash in saltwater, letting the waste water run down the decks and over the side. Daily meals came in individual boxes of two rice balls and watery soup...Eight men died on the journey " (Michno p38,40)

"During the voyage, a good number of the POWs died from beriberi, dysentery, and enteritis. They also grew weaker from the lack of food, water, and adequate rest." ("Likens, Sgt. Claude")

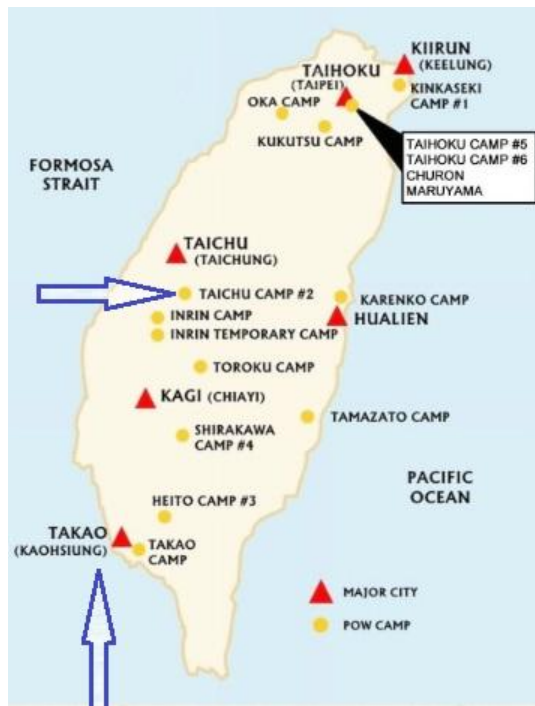
“The Lima Maru continued on its course, zigzagging to avoid Allied submarines. ‘It took a month and 50 lives to sail what was roughly 500 miles in a straight line’ to Takow, the Southern most port of Formosa” (Gilpatrick 216, Cited Brenzel)

Taichu 9/20/1942 - 11/12/1942

Established	September 27 1942
Slave Labor	POWs were engaged in (river) bank protection works at Daikoukei. And railroad trestle reinforcement.

George is included on the camp roster for Taichu ("Never Forgotten :: The Story of the Taiwan POW Camps and the men who were interred in them.")

"The first POWs to occupy the camp were Americans who were moved north from the Philippines following the surrender of the forces on Bataan and Corregidor. They came on the hellship Lima Maru in early September 1942 through the port at Takao (Kaohsiung) and were immediately sent north by overnight train to Taichu." ("Never Forgotten :: The Story of the Taiwan POW Camps and the men who were interred in them.")



"Never Forgotten :: Taichu Camp #2")

"From there, they were taken to Taichu Camp where the POWs cleared rocks from a dry river bed. The POWs worked there for 47 days before they were returned to Takao." ("Likens, Sgt. Claude")

When the POWs arrived in Taikow they were marched around the town for 2 hours even though the train depot was only 400 meters from the dock. They boarded a train and were taken to Taichu. On arriving at the camp the POWs were stripped and their belongings were rummaged through by the guards. They were told to leave their shoes in a pile. (Gilpatrick 216-217)

The POWs were provided shoes and clothes which they soon found, although they came in three sizes, were too small for most of the Americans. (Gilpatrick 216-217)

Sgt Brenzel of the 59th Coast Artillery was on a slightly different work detail than that of Sgt Likens.

"The prisoners were herded from the camp to the railroad tracks where they were to reinforce the trestle using short handled, pointed hoes, shallow baskets and about 40 four-wheeled gondolas." (Gilpatrick 219)

Sgt Brenzel relates the way the prisoners complied but did not give it their full effort. "The IQ of the POWs en mass became zero. We understood nothing. We were clumsy. Every time a JAP back was turned the rushing current below the trestle was likely to swallow lines and poles." (Gilpatrick 219 Cited Brenzel)

"After several days of rice, we were served a new dish, which we thought at first was oatmeal. Actually it was rough barley, which soon supplanted the more costly rice. Scurvy and beriberi – among other things – became more obvious. Cracked, bleeding lips and sore tongues made the act of eating painful." (Gilpatrick 219 Cited Brenzel) "The sick shared with the well, though we had orders not to give the sick any because 'it is not good for them.'" (Gilpatrick 219 Cited Brenzel)

"Standing at attention for extended periods of time was a condition we had many chances to get used to in coming weeks and years. It was a form of mass punishment and torture that did not incapacitate workers. After a while, you learn to lock the joints and muscles and turn off the brain and almost go to sleep." (Gilpatrick 220 Cited Brenzel)



("Never Forgotten :: Taichu Camp #2")

"In the Middle of November , the POWs knew they'd soon be shipping out. 'We found our shoes piled on the parade ground when we assembled.'" (Gilpatrick 222 Cited Brenzel)

7 District Men Prisoners Of Japs in Philippines

19 Pennsylvanians Listed As Among Those Captured

In December, 1941, Private George Yakopcic sent his mother Christmas greetings, his last word home. Then came Pearl Harbor.

In May, 1942, the War Department advised the mother, Mrs. Helen Stepanovich, of 3008 Mary St., South Side, that her son was missing in action during the siege of Corrigidor.

Recently, the Government sent Mrs. Stepanovich a telegram that her son was alive but a prisoner in the Jap camp at Taiwan, Formosa.

His name was included today by the War Department, in a list of prisoners held by the Japs which included six other district men, among 459 Americans captured in the Philippines.

Enlists At 19

Pfc. Yakopcic, 21, enlisted in the Army shortly after his graduation from St. Peter's High School in 1939. A younger brother, Frank, 19, has enlisted in the Marines, following word that George was missing.

Another Pittsburgher, held prisoner in the Philippines, is Second Lt. Arthur H. Buchman, 23, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Buchman, of 1411 Beechview Ave., who was captured when Corrigidor fell.

Lt. Buchman, a graduate of the University of Minnesota, was commissioned in the Reserve Officers Training Corps, and volunteered for service in the Philippines in July 1941. He was sent there a month later.

Held prisoner with Private Yakopcic in Formosa is Pfc. Tony Yakubac, son of Mrs. Mary Yakubac, of Nemacolin.

Another Pittsburgher held prisoner by the Japanese is Pfc. Maurice A. Mazer, 30, son of Jacob Mazer, of 5620 Jackson St., East End. Private Mazer enlisted in February, 1941, was sent to the Philippines four months later, and was reported missing last July after being in action on Bataan. Word that he was a prisoner came to his parents from the War Department yesterday.

List Released

The list of American prisoners released today included the names of 19 Pennsylvanians and seven West Virginians. Three Army nurses and 327 officers from the United States were included in the total announced.

Other district men held prisoner in the Philippines are:

Second Lt. John Phillip Crandell, son of Professor J. S. Crandell, of



PFC. GEORGE YAKOPCIC



LT. ARTHUR H. BUCHMAN
Captured In Philippines

Bear Meadows Farm, Boalsburg.

Second Lt. William L. Haines, son of Mrs. Mary M. Haines, of Waynesburg.

Lt. James L. Lesgett of 514 Broad St., Sewickley.

Three Army nurses and 327 officers were numbered among the prisoners held by Japan.

("7 district Men
Prisoners Of Japs in
Philippines")

The American POWs were transported to Yokohama. On November 12, 1942 the American POWs were loaded on trains and sent back to Takao where they boarded a ship called the Dainichi Maru which had just docked with a load of 500 British POWs from Singapore. Surviving British POWs reported that as they came off the hellship, the Americans began boarding. It is known that this group of American POWs were transported to Japan where they worked in the ship-building yards of Yokohama."
("Never Forgotten :: Taichu Camp #2")

George's mother got word in May 1942 that he was alive according to the Pittsburgh Press.

Dainichi Maru - 11/12/42-11/25/42

Launch	7/21/1921	385 ft, 5,814-ton cargo ship for Mitsui Bussan K.K. (Mitsui Line) named IBUKISAN MARU
Renamed	7/13/1935	Renamed Dainichi Maru for Itaya OSK Lines, Otaru,
Sinking	10/8/1943	Luzon Strait. At about 0100, LtCdr Charles H. Andrews' (USNA '30) USS GURNARD (SS-254) attacks the convoy. Andrews torpedoes and sinks TAIAN MARU that takes down 4S military and 32 crew. Next, Andrews torpedoes and sinks DAINICHI MARU at 18.48N, 119.21E. 2,025 military and 32 crew are KIA.



("Dainichi Maru")

"Though not a pleasant ride this voyage would be better than their last journey by sea." (Gilpatrick 222)

"It Took little urging to get us down into the hold quickly because we knew from past experience it was important to establish territorial rights in any new quarters." (Gilpatrick 222 Cited Brenzel)

The Americans were mixed in with British and Dutch POWs with the British boeing in worse condition due to fever and Dysentery. Time on deck was limited to standing in line to use the latrine with some POWs carrying their pants as the Dysentery was so bad. (Gilpatrick 223)

"The Prisoners confinement was 'more relaxed' as homebound Nipponese soldiers had 'almost a festive attitude. Food and water supplies were ample. POWs were fed twice a day but plenty. There was fish in the soup.'" (Gilpatrick 223 Cited Brenzel")

Moji in Japan is 1,700 nautical miles from Taikow. This trip took 13 days to complete. ("List of Hellship Voyages")

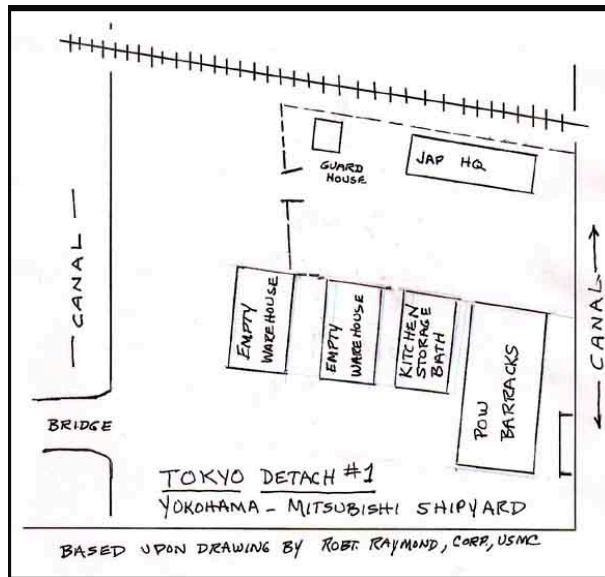
After a ferry boat ride to Honshu, Japan's biggest island , they boarded a passenger train. The POWs got their first look at Mt. Fuji and noted it was Thanksgiving Day. They rode through Hiroshima, Kobe, Osaka, Nagoya and Kyoto before arriving at Yokohama. 'It was a land untouched by war, but shabby-like a Midwest Dairy farm with a trim herd of cattle and a lot of buildings in need of paint'" (Gilpatrick 223-224 Cited Brenzel)

Yokohama #1-D 11/28/42-5/12/45

Established	November 18 1942
Primary Slave Labor	Shipyards Labor and Ship Construction
Men employed by	Mitsubishi
Hell Ship	Americans- Lima Maru (in transit)- ex Manila 20 Sep 1942; Men remained in Taiwan for approximately 2 months then shipped on 15 Nov 1942 to Moji, on the Dainichi Maru
Camp destroyed	13 May 1945
Died in Imprisonment	45

(Rudkin and Monument)

"In the usual column of four, the prisoners were marched a few miles to the dock area and warehouse that would be our home— from Nov. 28, 1942, to May 12, 1945— The Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. Warehouse at Yokohama. By Midpoint there were some 484 prisoners working for Mitsubishi [at Yokohama] of which 272 were American." (Gilpatrick 224)



(Rudkin and Monument)

Thousands of American prisoners were requisitioned by Mitsubishi during the war. They were used across the company's businesses and Mitsubishi profited from this cheap labor, as well as using POWs to advance Japan's war effort in violation of the Geneva Convention. (Holmes 84)

While at a stop light in the 1980's George looked through the windshield and pointed out the Mitsubishi emblem on the car in front of us, and said "I wore those three diamonds on my shirt for a lot of years".

"Our compound was a warehouse where Yokohama touched Tokyo Bay. Bread awaited us as did an assortment of shoes and Japanese army uniforms and overcoats as well as one blanket per man. On the sixth day we each got a work uniform: black, baggy pants and a coat." (Gilpatrick 224)

Photo of George as a POW. This photo was in George's possession, probably taken by the Mitsubishi corp. His number patch is visible 793 is barely legible.



George Yakopcic Collection

"That first day 'eight Japanese soldiers herded us [squad of 40 POWs] along. Over the months, this guard-type operation dwindled to two soldiers with rifles and six company [Mitsubishi] guards with vitamin sticks, which vaguely resembled pick handles and made a POW apply himself with renewed vigor when applied to his back.'" (Gilpatrick 224 Cited Brenzel)

"The day began with a shrill 'Sho,' from a sleepy Jap sentry ambling through the warehouse who roused us from the low wooden platform we lived on when we didn't have our feet on concrete floors. We slept on straw mats, which were tossed out in the spring with their tiny tenants.'" (Gilpatrick 225 Cited Brenzel)

"Five minutes later came 'Tenko' and we went outside to form squads. The Jap officer of the day, a non-com, made the rounds with two bowlegged sentries, listened to reports and checked the count. When O.D. called 'Bango' we gave an eyes-right and counted off in Japanese, each man turning his head forward as he shouted his number.'" (Gilpatrick 225 Cited Brenzel)

"A few minutes of calisthenics was followed by a rushed breakfast. After the bowls were licked clean, those with tobacco had time for a quick smoke before the order 'Shigoto (work)' was heard." (Gilpatrick 225)

"The first winter at Yokohama took its toll. Of the original 500, 450 POWs remained and some 50 of those were too sick to work, though the POWs had to maintain a work quota of 400" (Gilpatrick 226)

No.	Name	Rank	Date	Initials
619	JONES	RA	26.12.43	RA
719	HADSON	USA	7.3.44	RA
771	BEEL	USA	21.8.44	RA
783	JACOBSON	USA	2.9.44	RA
607	GIBSON	RA	2.12.44	RA
1008	TROTT	RA	26.12.44	RA
931	BARTLETT	USA	2.12.44	RA
1043	AMES	USA	6.4.45	RA
612	SIMPSON	RA	16.4.45	RA
1040	HOLLANDS	USA	6.4.45	RA

All above men have died from illness and hunger in death in the Yokohama camp

(Rudkin and Monument)

To the left, a partial list of Deaths at Yokohama, notice the caption "All above men died of disease or beaten to death at Yokohama camp."

The cooks who were also POWs had to adjust the count to make sure the sick were also fed. The Japanese mandated that if a POW couldn't work he was given $\frac{1}{2}$ or a $\frac{2}{3}$ ration. At a full ration of only 1000 calories a day the sick would never recover on the reduced ration. (Gilpatrick 226)

The POWs marched two miles from the bay through the city to the shipyard. At first this was an orderly parade but over time this became a ragged ramble with the guards bunching up to gossip among themselves. (Gilpatrick 228)

The POWs worked 9 days on and 1 day off. William Overmier describes the 10th day as “a day to get the lice out of your clothes and play cards” (“2010 World War 2 POW William Overmier, Oral History) William was captured on Corregidor, he was a Tech Sergeant in the 200th Coast Artillery.

The POWs were separated into different “skill” groups. These skill groups were a result of filling out a questionnaire while they were in Cabanatuan. Overmier was assigned as a shipwright because he had claimed carpentry skills, Brenzel was on a welding crew. George was assigned to a painting detail in the shipyard. One time when George was on a ladder at his home after the war, some 20 years after the war, he said he didn’t like being on a ladder. “But if someone is pointing a gun at you it is surprising how fast you can climb a swaying bamboo scaffolding to paint an aircraft carrier.”

**Scott Fieldan
Picks Up Tokyo
Prison Message**

A radio student, experimenting in a classroom at Scott Field, picked up a message from the Tokyo radio and relieved the anxiety of Mrs. Mary Yakopcic, Pittsburg, over her son, George, a prisoner of the Japanese.

While Pvt. Robert E. Yocom, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Yocca of Anderson, Mo., tuned in various frequencies on his radio during a class in familiarization, he heard a clear voice announce in English that “Radio Tokyo had a message” for Mrs. Yakopcic.

The message read: “From George Spotts, I hope you will feel better after you hear this message from your son. Hello, Mother, am in good health and hope all you at home are the same. Received your letter. Try to send me snapshots of all the family.”

Receiving the permission of his superior officers, Pvt. Yocom forwarded this message to the mother who wrote in reply, “This is the first opportunity I have had to let my mind relax and I must thank you for your thoughtfulness and kindness to me, and also for George for carrying out his message as well as you did.”

(Belleville News -Democrat 5)

The POWs would engage in small acts of sabotage as part of their daily work. They might pick up a tool along the way and drop it in the bay. Damaging tools beyond repair was also popular. Loose rivets on the side of a ship could also degrade the Japanese war effort. (Gilpatrick 230-232)

In August of 1944 a message for George’s mother was picked up by a Private in a radio familiarization class at Scott Field in Illinois. Scott Field’s main function during WWII was to train radio-mechanics. The message was eventually relayed to George’s mother.

The POWs could tell how the war was going by noticing how many of the shops, businesses and restaurants along the route closed over time. Occasionally they would find a newspaper or hear from a German merchant sailor how the war was progressing. (Gilpatrick 229)

Also over time they began to notice more and more air raid shelters being constructed. There were no air raid shelters for the POWs. The firebombing of Tokyo made the POWs think about a new danger to their existence, the possibility of being struck by Allied bombs. (Gilpatrick 233)

William Overmier remembers seeing the 400 B-29s pass Mount Fuji in a straight line, come over their camp, turn left and bomb Tokyo with incendiary

bombs the night of March 9th, 1945. The POWs could see the whole action from their camp.
("2010 World War 2 POW William Overmier, Oral History)



Tokyo after the bombing (Tomizawa)

"Without Warning, on May 12, 1945, the POWs joined the general exodus from Tokyo metropolitan area and were transported by train more than 400 miles north, high into the mountains and snow to the Copper Mine at Kosaka." (Gilpatrick, Cited Brenzel)

A note about Mitsubishi.

"MITSUBISHI OCCUPIES A UNIQUE PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF Corporate Japan's use of POW labor during World War II. The company built, owned and operated at least seventeen of the merchant 'hellships,' that transported prisoners to their assigned destinations; and this company

profited from prisoner labor over a larger range of territory than any other." (Holmes 84)

Sendai #8B-Kosaka 5/13/1945-9/14/1945

Established	December 1 1944
Primary Slave Labor	Mining and smelting of copper
Men employed by	Fujita-gumi[Group] Construction Company, DOWA Holdings today
POW Count End of War	343 (236 American, 99 Dutch and 8 British) were imprisoned at
Died in Imprisonment	8

("Sendai POW Camp #8-B Kosaka Japan")



(George Yakopcic Collection)

The Americans arrived from Yokohama Camp 1D in May 1945 (most previously in Taiwan). The Commonwealth men were already present at that time. About 100 mixed nationalities arrived around 13 June 1945 from Tokyo #1 Yokohama after the firebombing of Tokyo.

George is on the Camp Roster listed in Fair condition with Next of Kin and Home Address of 3008 Sarah St Pittsburgh PA. ("Sendai POW Camp #8-B Kosaka Japan")

"Kosaka was a new Ball game for us but not for the Japs. They had been working POWs for years, including two men from my battery who I'd not seen since two days before the surrender of Corregidor." (Gilpatrick, Cited Brenzel)

"The change in scenery was good—if anything was good. The mountains were beautiful if we took the time to appreciate them when we assembled every morning for calisthenics, roll call and the daily bow toward the emperor. Kosaka was a colder, hungrier and buggier place. No bedbug or louse eradication program had ever been undertaken there." (Gilpatrick 234-235 Cited Brenzel)

"When we had arrived at the established camp at Kosaka there was literally a skeleton crew of surviving Yanks and Dutch there. One Dutch man was 6-feet two and weighed only 78 pounds. Of course none of us were much better off. If a guy had a shirt off you could tell at a glance if he had any cracked or missing ribs" (Gilpatrick 237-238 Cited Brenzel)

"The news blackout was total at Kosaka and somehow the living conditions were worse than ever, as the POWs were housed in a tight dark grubby tunnel-like building where they lived like cave dwellers." (Gilpatrick 238)

The two accounts I have found of POWs in Kosaka both involved prisoners who didn't have to "go into the hole". I believe George did go into the mine because he told a story about filling a mine car with ore, "one car filled and you would receive one bowl of rice". This is consistent with the no work, no food, policy of the Japanese.

POW accounts at other mines describe working in a loincloth and barefoot because of the unbearable heat. The tasks assigned to the POWs were generally the most dangerous in the mines.

The treatment at Kosaka must have been as brutal as at the other camps. A *Sydney Morning Herald* article describes the search for two suspected war criminals from Kosaka. "Thirteen Japanese whose arrest has been ordered by General MacArthur are still at large. They are ...San Osanoe, who maltreated prisoners at Kosaka Camp: Gunzo Muira, brutal guard at Kosaka;...". ("Rounding Up War Criminals") On the 21st of September *The Sydney Morning Herald* reports they had been arrested.



This is a sketch of George, signed by Sgt Daniel Borodin of the 31st Infantry Regiment dated August 22, 1945. Sgt Borodin was liberated with George from Sendai #8B. This was done between the day the Japanese surrendered and when the POWs left the camp in September.

George Yakopcic Collection

Liberation 8/20/1945

“August 17, 1945 was the last day POWs worked at the smelter. On August 18 all their uniformed tormentors had disappeared and only hunger and disease remained. Still some 400 miles north of Tokyo and well behind the ‘front’, The POWs did not receive official word the war over until August 20, 1945.”

The POWs received a note dropped from a US torpedo plane, it read, “We are getting you a few odds and ends to drop you tomorrow. By the looks on your faces today you can use everything we have and more too”. On August 27th drops began in quantity. (Gilpatrick, Cited Brenzel)



Photo of Kosaka POW Message
to pilots dropping supplies.
("Sendai POW Camp #8-B Kosaka Japan")

The POWs lived on what was left behind by the Japanese and what was dropped by the US. This continued until September 14th, 1945 when they finally left the camp. The leaflet itemizes clothing for 50 men and instructions for feeding 100 men from the dropped supplies.

Handwritten: Dropped from B-17 - Aug. 28, 1945 - In two bombloads
Aug. 5: 8:00 AM + 6:15 PM

レノゴウグンホリヨヘ

ALLIED PRISONERS

The JAPANESE Government has surrendered. You will be evacuated by ALLIED NATIONS Forces as soon as possible.

Until that time your present supplies will be augmented by air-drop of U.S. food, clothing and medicines. The first drop of these items will arrive within one (1) or two (2) hours.

Clothing will be dropped in standard packs for units of 50 or 100 men. Bundle markings, contents and allowances per man are as follows:

BUNDLE MARKINGS				BUNDLE MARKINGS			
SO MAN	500 MAN	PACK	CONTENTS	SO MAN	500 MAN	PACK	CONTENTS
A	2	Drawers	2	B	10	Laces, shoe	1
A	1-2	Undershirt	2	A	11	Kit, sewing	1
B	22	Socks (pr)	2	C	31	Soap, toilet	1
A	4-6	Shirt	1	C	4-6	Razor	1
A	7-9	Trousers	1	C	4-6	Blades, razor	10
C	23-30	Jacket, field	1	C	10	Brush, tooth	1
A	10	Belt, web, waist	1	B	31	Paste, tooth	1
A	11	Capt. H.B.T.	1	C	10	Comb	1
B	12-21	Shoes (pr)	1	B	32	Shaving cream	1
A	1-2	Handkerchiefs	3	C	12-21	Powder (insecticide)	1
C	31-34	Towel	1				

There will be instructions with the food and medicine for their use and distribution.

CAUTION

DO NOT OVERHEAT OR OVEREXERCISE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FEEDING 100 MEN

To feed 100 men for the first three (3) days, the following blocks (individual bundles dropped) will be assembled:

Block No. 1 (Each Contains)	Block No. 5 (Each Contains)	Block No. 9 (Each Contains)
2 Cases, Soup, Can	1 Case Soup, Dehd	1 Case Candy
1 Cases Fruit Juice	1 Case Veg Purée	1 Case Gum
1 Case Accessory Pack	1 Case Bouillon	1 Case Cigarettes
	1 Case Soap Supplies	1 Case Matches
	1 Case Vitamin Tablets	

Block No. 2 (Each Contains)	Block No. 7 (Each Contains)	Block No. 10 (Each Contains)
3 Cases "C" Rations	1 Case Nescafe	3 Cases Fruit
1 Case Soap Supplies	1 Case Sugar	2 Cases Juice
2 Cases Fruit	1 Case Milk	
	1 Case Cocoa	

A Leaflet dropped for allied POWs.
("Operation Swift Mercy and POW Supply")

"First, a narrow gauge railroad took them down the mountains from the Kosaka to the port of Sendai where a British Destroyer was waiting to rush them to Yokohama.

When the POWs saw Americans for the first time it was a strange meeting. "These men were wearing strange uniforms and different helmets, they were carrying different guns, and they all looked huge, seven feet tall and unbelievably well-fleshed—they could have been from another planet." (Daws 343)

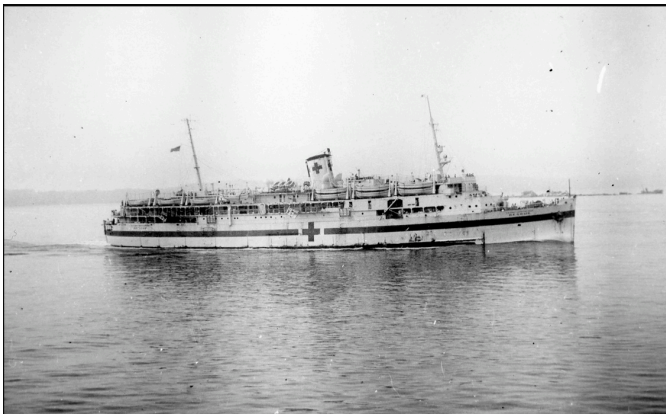
Prisoners of War at the dock area in Yokohama, Japan waiting to be processed prior to boarding a hospital ship.

"There they boarded the hospital ship, the SS Rescue that took them to Okinawa for a return trip to where it had all begun – Manila." (Gilpatrick, Cited Brenzel)



(Getty Images)

USS Rescue entering Tokyo Harbor



(NavSource Online)

George is listed on the Sendai -08b, Kosaka camp roster at liberation on September 11 1945. Most prisoners boarded the hospital ship in Sendai Harbor for transit to Yokohama. ("Sendai POW Camp #8-B Kosaka Japan")

George returned to San Francisco October 18, 1945 aboard the Storm King. (Parshall)

Photo # NH 96685 USS Storm King (AP-171) in 1946



(Duncan and Mueller)

Survival

George survived the Siege of Corregidor, two hell ship voyages on the Lima Maru and the Dainichi Maru, prison camps at Cabanatuan, Taichu, Yokohama and Kosaka.

George's unit, Battery A, had 88 taken as POWs. Of these 35% died in captivity. 20 died on hell ships, 11 in various camps. The 57 that were liberated were rescued from over a dozen different camps. (National Archives) Elmo Deal was one of the 11 to survive the Palawan Massacre where 150 POWs were burned alive in air raid shelters. (Moore and Lukacs)

The National Archives list 933 Pennsylvanians taken prisoner by the Japanese. Of these 188 died of disease, 156 were either executed or died on hell ship sinkings. This represents only a 63% survival rate for Pennsylvania.

While researching I found that 230 members of the 59th Coastal Artillery were listed as "not recovered". 170 went missing on hell ships, some surviving one sinking only to be put on another ship and presumed perished when it was sunk by the Allies. 18 presumed dead on Corregidor. Another 454 are presumed to have died in various camps. ("Service Personnel Not Recovered Following WWII")

By the War's end, 40 percent or over 12,000 Americans had died in squalid POW camps, in the fetid holds of "hell ships," or in slave labor camps owned by Japanese companies. (Thompson)

Epilogue

George returned to Pittsburgh, married in 1949 and had a career with General Motors. George suffered from malaria long after the war, he also suffered from stomach issues and eventually lost his upper teeth due to his time as a POW. Not uncommon to Pacific POWs, George had an aversion to white rice and rarely if ever ate it.



(ADBC Museum)

George was a member of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor and attended several of their conventions. This group was “Dedicated to those persons both living and dead who fought against overwhelming odds at the beginning of WWII”

George never talked much about his experiences but he did join a support group in the 1990s. This group was organized by the VA for WWII POWs. It did seem to help George but as time went on it became a depressing experience as the group members died off. Especially upsetting to George was the death of the Psychiatrist who led the group.

He often said a Doctor told him upon his return to the U.S. the POW experience would likely take 10 years of his life. Despite this he lived to be 85 succumbing to liver cancer in 2005. George Was Survived by his wife, two children and three grandsons.

When George’s obituary was published, his daughter-in-law received a phone call from a former POW saying George had saved his life by building a straw mat and stealing milk for him. He said that without these actions he would have died, George had saved his life. The man on the phone did not leave his name or what camp this occurred, he simply wanted to relate his story and let someone know he thought George was a hero..

At the Funeral home a former president of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor told me “George is in Heaven, because he has already been to hell.” This man had a cane with him and I didn’t think much of it. A man in his 80’s using a cane is not an unusual sight, but he told me he had needed that cane ever since his liberation in 1945. This really brought home how many years these men had carried their scars.

Appendix A First Vacation



George was able to take advantage of a government benefit awarded POWs after their return.

(Carrico)

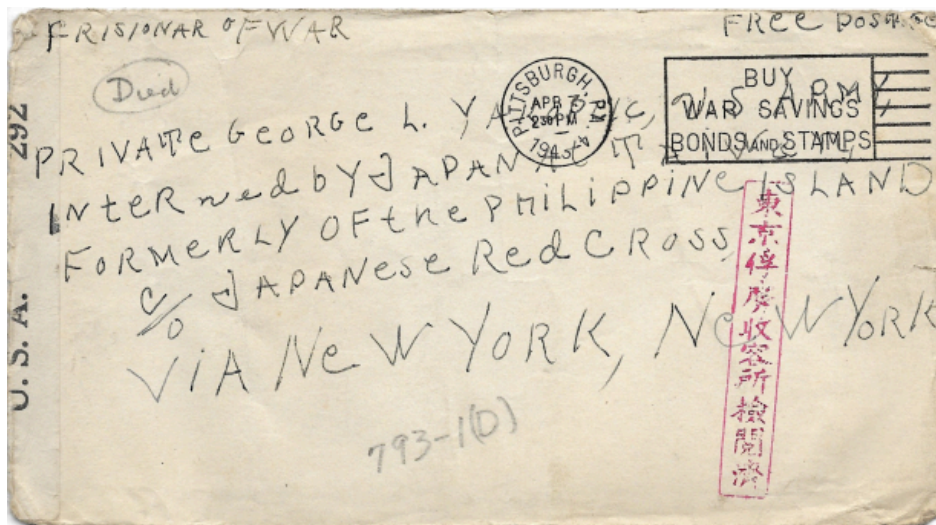
Here is a picture with George and his sister Ann during their stay at the Natural Bridge Hotel.



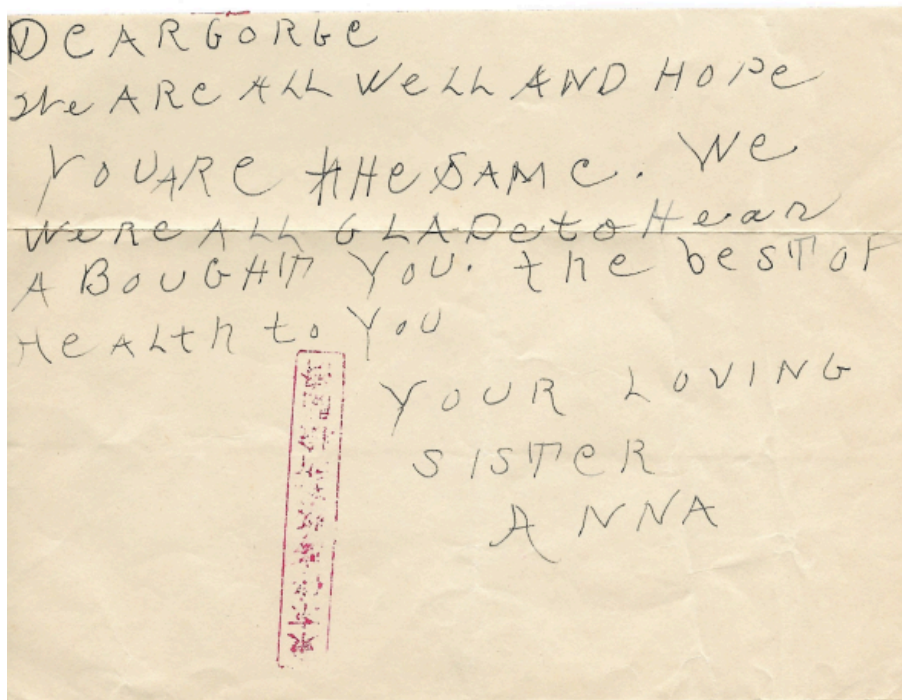
The article describes the stay as a "wonderful vacation after three rough years as a PW's and a breather before going back to civilian life." The article goes on to say "S-Sgt Lilley and Cpl Yakopcic said they have not decided what they are going to do after they put on their civies."

(Carrico)

Appendix B Letters from Home



While a POW George Received 11 letters from home. He managed to keep these with him and I still have them. Here is one of the letters. This is from his 14 year old sister Anna. Letters were sent for free and designated with the recipient's POW number, here it is listed as 793. I have also seen 796 and sometimes 793/6. It is unclear who added the erroneous "died" marking on the envelope.



Appendix C Japanese POW Syndrome

Physicians, who were themselves prisoners of the Japanese, are in agreement that all the survivors returned home impaired in health. Medical treatment was inadequate at best, as evidenced by the high mortality rate. Malaria, beriberi, tuberculosis, pellagra and all types of intestinal and respiratory ailments were prevalent. In addition to the after effects of these maladies, torture and malnutrition this group suffers still - and they are predisposed to JAPANESE POW SYNDROME, which is a chronic anxiety reaction. Is it any wonder? (American Ex-Prisoners of War)

Data on Ex-POWs include:

- “The average army or army air forces Pacific POW had lost sixty-one pounds in captivity, a remarkable statistic given that roughly three quarters of the men had weighed just 159 pounds or less at enlistment.” (Hillenbrand 346)
- “A 1954 study found that in the first two postwar years, former Pacific POWs died at almost four times the expected rate for men of their age..” (Hillenbrand 346)
- “Twenty two years after the war, former Pacific POWs had hospitalization rates between two and eight times higher than former European POWs for a host of diseases.”(Hillenbrand 346)
- “... a 1970 study reported that former Pacific POWs committed suicide 30 percent more often than controls” (Hillenbrand 347)
- “Nearly forty years after the war, more than 85 percent of former POWs in one study suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), ...” (Hillenbrand 347)
- “As of January 1953, one-third of former Pacific POWs were categorized as 50 to 100 percent disabled, nearly eight years after war’s end.” (Hillenbrand 347)
 -
- “In one study of Former Pacific POWs, more than one quarter had been diagnosed with alcoholism.” (Hillenbrand 347)

Appendix D Maj. Gen. Douglass MacArthur

General MacArthur has been a controversial figure in America's Military History.

At George's funeral one of the mourners upon hearing George was on Corregidor said "I bet your dad really liked MacArthur", referring to his famous return to the Philippines. I had to explain that George did not have high regard for MacArthur. He felt abandoned by MacArthur when he left Corregidor in March of 1942.

And researching this document I found the same sentiment expressed by most if not all of the men that were on Corregidor. George felt that MacArthur left knowing with their WWI vintage arms there was no way they could hold off the Japanese. He was especially vocal about MacArthur's criticism of Wainwright's surrender.



Wainwright & MacArthur on
Corregidor
("MacArthur on the Rock")

I think the famous pronouncement of "I shall return" was interpreted by the troops as a promise to come back with supplies and reinforcements to prop up the defense of Corregidor.

"One of the most controversial moments in the controversial life of Douglas MacArthur came in early 1942, when he received \$500,000 from the Philippine government during the siege of Corregidor and Bataan. This fact remained a secret until historian Carol Petillo broke the story in a 1979 article, and while some of the details may never be known, the incident has received well-deserved attention." ("The Secret Payment | American Experience | Official Site") That \$500,000 payment would be worth over \$9,000,000 in 2024.

"A majority of American soldiers on Bataan believed that the situation they found themselves in was a direct result of the military decisions of General Douglas MacArthur. Soldiers stated that during the withdrawal into Bataan they passed warehouses full of food, ammunition, and medical supplies. Many held deep resentment toward General Douglas MacArthur and referred to him by the nickname "Dugout Doug". While they lived with daily strafing from Japanese planes and shelling from Japanese artillery, they believed General MacArthur was safe in the Malinta Tunnel on Corregidor." ("Dugout Doug")

Fort Mills, P. I.
January 15, 1942.
Subject: Message from General MacArthur
To: All Unit Commanders

The following message from Gen. MacArthur will be read and explained to all troops. Every company commander is charged with personal responsibility for the delivery of this message. Each headquarters will follow up to insure reception by every company or similar unit.

"Help is on the way from the United States. Thousands of troops and hundreds of planes are being dispatched. The exact time of arrival of reinforcements is unknown as they will have to fight their way through Japanese attempts against them. It is imperative that our troops hold until these reinforcements arrive.

"No further retreat is possible. We have more troops in Bataan than the Japanese have thrown against us; our supplies are ample; a determined defense will defeat the enemy's attack.

"It is a question now of courage and determination. Men who run will merely be destroyed but men who fight will save themselves and their country.

"I call upon every soldier in Bataan to fight in his assigned position, resisting every attack. This is the only road to salvation. If we fight we will win; if we retreat we will be destroyed.

"MacArthur"

"By Command of General MacArthur."

Appendix E Lt. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright

Jonathon Wainwright Graduated from West Point at the top of his class in 1906.

Wainwright was assigned to the United States 1st Cavalry Regiment in Texas serving from 1906 to 1908. He then served in the Philippines during the Moro Rebellion from 1908 to 1910. In 1918, Wainwright was ordered to France to serve during World War I. In between World War I and World War II, Wainwright served in a variety of posts. He attended the Army War College in 1934. In 1938 he was promoted to Brigadier General and put in command of the 1st Cavalry Brigade at Fort Clark, Texas. In 1940, Wainwright received a temporary promotion to Major General and was assigned to the Philippines under General MacArthur.



("Jonathan Mayhew "Skinny" Wainwright IV Passes Away")

Unlike MacArthur, who had only once left the tunnel to visit troops on Bataan, "Skinny" made frequent visits to the peninsula to check on the status of his men...and to fight Japanese. In the months preceding his promotion to command of all forces in the Philippines, Wainwright had not only commanded the Philippine Scouts in I Corps, he had fought with them. On more than one occasion he had come under direct fire from enemy soldiers, watched men next to him die, and returned fire on the enemy. He was a unique kind of commander, perhaps indeed, the "Last of the Fighting Generals". (Fausone)

"[after the surrender of Corregidor] Wainwright was taken prisoner, spending the next three and a half years as a POW in Luzon, Philippines, Formosa (now Taiwan), and Manchuria, China. Upon Japan's surrender, Russian forces in Manchuria liberated the POW camp in which Wainwright was being held." (History.com)

"The years of captivity took its toll on the general. The man who had been nicknamed "Skinny" was now emaciated. His hair had turned white, and his skin was cracked and fragile. He was also depressed, believing he would be blamed for the loss of the Philippines to the Japanese." (History.com)

After the Japanese surrender the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) mounted an operation to locate General Wainwright. Wainwright, being the highest ranking American POW, it was feared he would become a hostage of the Japanese or the advancing Russians. Here is an account of the OSS Officers meeting with the General at the POW camp at Sian.

"The two OSS agents met with the camp commander, and after a short but

confrontational discussion General Wainwright was summoned. A poignant meeting between the Americans occurred a few minutes later. General Wainwright suddenly appeared in the doorway of the commander's office. The emaciated American hero stood silently in tattered clothing. The OSS men stared at each other with stunned disbelief. Wainwright broke the silence. "Are you really an American?" he asked.

"General, you are no longer a prisoner of war. You're going back to the States," Lamar responded.

Wainwright, however, was conflicted. He had survived over three years of brutal captivity and was afraid of what his fellow Americans thought of him. Would he return to the United States in disgrace and live the remainder of his life in shame?

Wainwright responded slowly, his voice cracking with emotion, and asked the question he had agonized over for three terrible years. "What do the people in the States think of me?"

"You're considered a hero," Lamar replied.

The tired old general nodded silently but was still not convinced." (Mancini)

General Wainwright received his fourth star and was awarded the Medal of Honor. He remained on active duty until his retirement in 1947. He died September 2, 1953, eight years to the day following the formal Japanese surrender. (Mancini)



("President Truman presenting Congressional Medal of Honor to General Wainwright, Washington, D. C., September 1945")

Appendix F Officers and Men of Corregidor

Colonel Paul Delmont Bunker

Commanded 59th Coast Artillery Battery Hearn during the siege

Colonel Bunker was taken prisoner by the Japanese on May 6, 1942 and was held in a Japanese prison camp until he died of starvation and disease on September 7, 1943. He is buried in the cemetery at West Point. ("The Fort MacArthur Museum Association: Battery Paul D. Bunker")



("File:Paul D. Bunker.jpg")

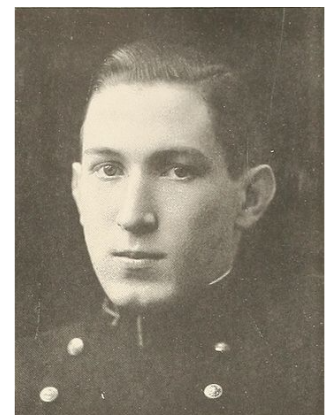
"Col. Paul Bunker, under orders of General Moore, took down the American battle flag on Topside [Corregidor] at noon[5/6/42], put up a white flag, and burned the American banner so it would not fall into the hands of the enemy." (Morris 460) "Bunker secretly tore off a piece of the flag, which he intended to keep and give to the Secretary of War when he got back to the states. In a quiet moment he placed the strip inside a patch he had sewn to the inner side of the left pocket of his cotton shirt." (Morris 460)

"Before he died in the Japanese prison camp, Bunker sent for Colonel Delbert Ausmus, cut the flag remnant into two pieces and gave one of the pieces to Ausmus. He told Colonel Ausmus he did not expect to survive the prison camp and that it was Ausmus' duty to take his piece of the flag to the Secretary of War. Ausmus concealed the remnant in his shirt cuff, and shortly after the war ended, Ausmus delivered it to Secretary Patterson." (Camp)

Lieutenant Colonel Norman B. Simmonds

Commanded large caliber guns during the siege.

He was taken as a POW following the Japanese invasion and was interned in the islands until December 1944, when he was transferred to the Oryoku Maru for transport to Japan. Records indicate that LTC Simmonds survived the sinking of the Oryoku Maru and was ("VMH: NORMAN B. SIMMONDS, LTCOL, USA") eventually transferred to the Brazil Maru where he reportedly died on January 21, 1945, though information about



("VMH: NORMAN B. SIMMONDS, LTCOL, USA")

his cause of death and burial were unrecorded. (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency)

Capt. Samuel MCF McReynolds

Commanded Battery Hearn during the siege

According to his granddaughter whose mother was born on Corregidor, “a West Point graduate from the class of 1933 and spent nearly 3 years as a POW in the Philippines before he was placed on the Japanese Hell Ships, the Oryoku Maru, Brazil Maru and Enoura Maru to be sent to Japan and used as slave labor. Approximately 1600 men were on the original ship. Only about 400 of those 1600 made it to Japan, due to the horrific treatment and conditions they received throughout the journey. He died 2 days after arriving in Japan, leaving a young widow and two daughters.” (“Corregidor: The guns”)

Sgt David Brenzel

59th Coast Artillery POW #762

David's Path was the same as George's, Corregidor, Bilibid, Cabanatuan, Taichu, Yokohama and Kosaka. He returned to the U.S. on the Admiral Hughes in 1945. In 1991 he self-published the book *Confessions of a POW: 45 Months Between The Rock and The Hard Place*. His story was one included in Kristin Gilpatrick's 2001 book *The Hero Next Door Returns*. This is where I came across his story which I am grateful for because it filled in some of the details of George's ordeal. Pvt



(“Never Forgotten”)

Pvt Wayne Blankenbaker

60th Coast Artillery HQ

Wayne spent time in the Heito camp in Taiwan, and traveled to Japan on the hell ship Hokusen Maru on 10/1/1944 where he was liberated from the Sendai #7 camp Hanaoka. Wayne traveled back to the U.S on the Simon Bolivar 10/21/1945. (“List of Hellship Voyages.”) (“Never Forgotten :: The Story of the Taiwan POW Camps and the men who were interred in them.”)

Pvt Joseph A. Petak

Photographer 228th Signal Corps POW #695

Joseph was captured on Corregidor, was sent to Bilibid, Cabanatuan and eventually to the Mukden Camp in China. He returned to the U.S. on the SS Klipfontaine in October of 1945. Joseph wrote of his experiences in his 1991 book *Never Plan Tomorrow*. He provided me with a great first person account of the early days as a POW.



Appendix G Slave Labor

“Approximately 25,000 American Prisoners were sent to do slave labor in the factories, shipyards, and mines owned by Japan’s industrial giants, now among the



(Popa and Author)

richest in the world: Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Showa Denko, Nippon Steel, Kawasaki Heavy Industries and at least forty other Japanese Companies.” (Holmes xvii)
(Popa and Author)

The Geneva Convention article 31 and Fourth Hague article 6 prohibit the use of POW labor to further the war effort of the captors.

“On September 8, 1942 , ALLIED INTELLIGENCE INTERCEPTED A TOP SECRET message from Japan’s transportation and communications chief to the Shipping Transport Command, it said: ‘Due to the serious shortage of labor power in Japan, the use of white POW is earnestly desired. Therefore it is required to render consideration to send some white POW to Japan by every returning ship (including both transport and munition ships).... It is also desired to send as many personnel as possible by every means such as loading them on decks.’” (Holmes 22)

A message intercepted by Allied intelligence December 10, 1942 from the Japanese Prisoner of War Management to “Units concerned” reads in part “ Due to Improper treatment on the way of transport of POW who were recently sent to Japan there were a great many sick people (dead) and many who could not immediately be used for labor work....” (Holmes 43)

These instructions were issued a few days after the Nagato Maru arrived in Moji in November 1942. Of the POWs aboard 150 were so sick that they were considered useless for work, so they were just left on the dock, and never seen again. (Holmes 43)

“When they arrived at existing company facilities in Japan, the POWs could see why their services were so ‘earnestly desired’; with nearly all Japanese skilled laborers then serving in the military, the local work pool consisted primarily of elderly men, women and, mostly farmers.” (Holmes 27)

At least 60 Japanese companies have made use of slave labor by Allied prisoners of war. Virtually all of these companies are still actively operating from the exact same locations as during the war.” (Molemans and Anthony) There were 127 locations on Japan’s home island

Appendix H Geneva Conventions and The Red Cross

Japan signed the 1929 Geneva Convention. But it failed to ratify the agreement in the Diet, Japan's parliament. Japan saw the provisions for the treatment of POWs as unilateral because there would be no Japanese POWs in Allied hands. The Japanese soldier was expected to fight to the death or commit suicide but never surrender. (Holmes 10)

"The youth of Japan had been brought up, in accordance with the Bushido precept, to consider that the greatest honour was to die for their Emperor and that it was ignominious to surrender to the enemy." (Russell 55) In fact Japan tried to emulate the Hitler Youth with the Great Japan Youth Party.

This failure to ratify the 1929 Geneva Convention is given as an explanation of why the Allied POWs did not enjoy the protections of the Geneva Convention. However there are other obligations that were violated by Japan's treatment of the POWs

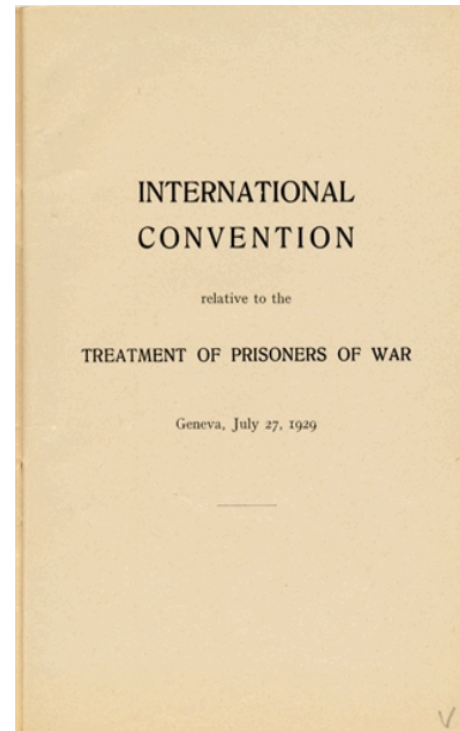
"The Japanese Foreign Minister, Togo, gave a formal assurance that although she was not bound by the Convention Japan would apply it, *mutatis mutandis*, to all American, Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand prisoners of war." (Russell 54)

"But in any event the Japanese were formally bound by the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907." (Russell 54)

"It was useless, therefore, for the Japanese leaders to maintain at the Tokyo trial, as they did, as they had never Ratified the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention of 1929 they were under no obligation to treat their captives properly." (Russell 54)

"According to Article 29 of the Geneva Conventions, each prisoner was to be allowed one Red Cross package per week." (Holmes 102) The Fourth Hague Convention also states "Agents of these societies may be admitted to the places of internment for the purpose of distributing relief, ...". ("1907 HAGUE CONVENTION IV")

Red Cross packages were shipped to Japan for the POWs throughout the war, but most were never received by the POWs. On Several occasions packages were distributed but they



(International Committee of the Red Cross)

were to be divided between 4 to 7 POWs. Upon Liberation, warehouses were discovered in many locations packed with the undistributed Red Cross Packages. At other times items were removed from the packages and used by the Japanese.

During the war, the Allied powers, principally the United States and Great Britain, tried to provide physical relief for their POWs held by the Japanese. The Allies' most significant act was to arrange to transfer funds through the Swiss National Bank to the Yokohama Specie Bank. ("RESEARCHING JAPANESE WAR CRIMES")

Eventually, the United States, Great Britain, and the Dutch contributed several million dollars that were to be transferred into this account. But the Japanese withheld most funds, and, possibly as a result, the Swiss representatives in the Far East found it difficult to purchase supplies because of scarce supplies and rising expenses. ("RESEARCHING JAPANESE WAR CRIMES")

"Not only did Allied POWs receive little benefit from the efforts on their behalf, But the U.S. Treasury never saw the money again." (Holmes 105)

Appendix I “Hell Ships” of World War II

“Allied prisoners of war called them ‘hell ships,’ the requisitioned merchant vessels that the Japanese navy overloaded with POWs being relocated to internment on the Japanese Home Islands or elsewhere in the empire. The holds were floating dungeons, where inmates were denied air, space, light, bathroom facilities, and adequate food and water—especially water. Thirst and heat claimed many lives in the end, as did summary executions and beatings, yet the vast majority of deaths came as a result of so-called ‘friendly fire’ from U.S. and Allied naval ships, submarines, and aircraft.” (Michno 292)



(“The Japanese “Hell Ships” of World War II”)

SIGHTED AT OLANGAPO, LUZON, MORNING OF 15 DECEMBER 1944.

“In his comprehensive study of the sources, historian Gregory F. Michno shows that by the end of the war, 134 Japanese hell ships had together embarked on more than 156 voyages, which carried an estimated 126,000 Allied prisoners of war.” (Gladwin Cited Michno)

“Approximately 1,540 Allied POW deaths resulted from conditions in the holds and violence aboard hell ships, whereas more than 19,000 deaths came as a consequence of Allied attacks.” (Michno 292)

“The U.S. Navy carried out most of these attacks but with the help of Allied intelligence services and the Royal Navy’s Far East patrols. On 18 September 1944, for example, a British submarine torpedoed and sank the Japanese hell ship Junyo Maru. Nearly 6,000 people died: 4,120 Javanese laborers and 1,520 Allied POWs.” (Michno 316)

“The Empire of Japan required great numbers of workers—often enslaved or coerced—and huge quantities of oil and other raw materials in order to wage war against the Allies, particularly the resource-rich United States. Japanese hell ships therefore became integral to the massive effort to keep the war machine running. They plied the waters with the necessary cargoes, which the Japanese extracted from subject populations in occupied areas. As Japanese forces picked up more and more Allied prisoners of war between 1942 and 1944, the cargo-laden vessels doubled as prisoner transports, obscuring any last distinction between ships that should be attacked and ships that should be spared.

In the process of sinking these vessels, the U.S. Navy and the Allies effectively drowned many of their own men, who were trapped and concealed in the holds. These men and the other Allied POWs below decks were not, of course, the Allies’ target. The targets were the vessels as

such and the people and supplies on board that were necessary to the continuation of the Japanese war effort." ("The Japanese "Hell Ships" of World War II")

The following was posted in imperfect English on all prison ships

REGULATIONS FOR PRISONERS

Commander of POW Escort

Navy of the Great Japanese Empire

- I. The prisoners disobeying the following orders will be punished with immediate death:
 - a. Those disobeying orders to instructions.
 - b. Those showing a motion to antagonism by raising a sign of opposition.
 - c. Those disobeying the regulations by individualism egoism, thinking only for yourself or for your own good.
 - d. Those talking without permission and raising loud voices.
 - e. Those walking and moving without orders.
 - f. Those who carry unnecessary baggage in disembarking
 - g. Those resisting mutually.
 - h. Those touching the boat material, wires, lights, tools switches, etc.
 - i. Those showing action of running away from the room or boat.
 - j. Those climbing the ladder without permission.
 - k. Those taking more meal than given him.
 - l. Those using more than blankets.
- II. Since the boat is not well equipped and inside being narrow, food being scarce and poor you'll feel uncomfortable during the escort time on the boat. Those losing patience and disordering the regulations will be punished for the reason of not being able to escort.
- III. Be sure to answer "nature's call" Evacuate the bowels and urine before embarking.
- IV. Meal will be given twice a day, One plate only to one prisoner,. The prisoner called by the guard will give out meal as quick as possible and honestly. The remaining prisoners will stay in their places quietly and wait for your plate. Those moving from their places, reaching for your plate without order will be heavily punished. Same orders will be applied to handling plates after meal.
- V. Toilet will be fixed in four corners of the room, the buckets and cans will be placed, when filled up a guard will appoint a prisoner. The prisoner called will take the buckets to the center of the room. The buckets will be pulled up by the derrick to be thrown away. Toilet paper will be given. Everyone must cooperate to make the sanitary. Those being careless will be punished.
- VI. The navy of the Great Japanese Empire will not try to punish you all with death. Those obeying all rules and regulations and delivering the action and purpose of the Japanese Navy; co-operating with Japan in constructing the "New Order of the Greater Asia" which leads to the world peace, will be well treated. The Great Japanese Empire will rise to Govern the World.

END

(Garner 101-103)

Appendix J Kill All Prisoners

There is much discussion about whether or not a Kill all Prisoners order was given by the Japanese high command. With orders given by the Japanese to POW commanders to burn all their records, it is not surprising that the smoking gun document has not been produced.

The following document was circulated to POW camp commanders. Some argue it is proof that the order did exist and this is an individual commander seeking clarification of that order. While others argue this document came from one camp commander and does not reflect a universal order.

Document No. 2701 (Certified as Exhibit "O" in Doc. No. 2687)

From the journal of Taiwan POW Camp H.Q. in Taihoku,

entry 1 August 1944

1. (entries about money, promotions of Formosans at Branch camps, including promotion of To Tu-Saku to 1st 01 Kaibiin - 5 entries)
2. The following answer about extreme measures for POWs was sent to the Chief of Staff of the 11th Unit (Formosa POW security No. 10).

"Under the present situation if there were a mere explosion or fire a shelter for the time being could be had in nearby buildings such as the school, warehouse, or the like. However, at such time as the situation become urgent and if it be extremely important, the POWs will be concentrated and confined in their present location and under heavy guard the preparation for the final solution will be made.

The time and method of this disposition are as follows:

(1) The Time.

Although the basic aim is to act under superior orders, individual disposition may be made in the following circumstances:

- (a) When an uprising of large numbers cannot be suppressed without the use of firearms.
- (b) When escapees from the camp may turn into a hostile fighting force

(2) The Methods.

- (a) Whether they are destroyed individually or in groups, or however it is done, with mass bombing, poisonous smoke, poisons, drowning, decapitations, or what, dispose of them as the situation dictates.
- (b) In any case it is the aim not to allow the escape of a single one, to annihilate them all, and not to leave any traces.

(3) To: The Commanding General

The Commanding General of the Military Police

Reported matters conferred on with the 114 Unit, the Kiirun Fortified Area H.Q., and each prefecture concerning the extreme security in Taiwan POW camps.

It is clear that some camp commanders did execute all their prisoners on the pretext of imminent invasion by the Allies. One example of this is the Palawan massacre where 150 POWs were burned on December 12, 1944 after the camp commander falsely claimed they were being invaded.

From *Unbroken* describing Tokyo #4B Naoetsu camp atmosphere after the Atomic Bombing “For the POWs, time had all but run out. It was now approaching mid-August, and the kill-all policy loomed. Even if Japan surrendered, many POWs believed that the guards would kill them anyway, either out of vengeance or to prevent them from testifying to what had been done to them. Indeed, an Omori interrogator had told the Commander Fitzgerald [Cmndr. John Fitzgerald USN] that the Japanese had plans to kill the POWs in the event they lost the war.” (Hillenbrand 302)

“Official orders to execute all the prisoners[at Batu Lintang], both POWs and civilian, on 17 or 18 August 1945 were found in Suga's quarters after the liberation of the camp. The orders were not carried out, presumably as a result of the unconditional surrender of Japan on 15 August. A ‘death march’, similar to those at Sandakan and elsewhere, was to have been undertaken by those male prisoners physically able to undertake it; other prisoners were to be executed by various methods in the camp:

- **1** All POWs and male internees to be marched to a camp at milestone 21 and bayoneted there
- **2** All sick unable to walk to be treated similarly in the Square at Kuching [in the square at the camp rather than in Kuching town]
- **3** All women and children to be burnt in their barracks

Revised orders for the execution on 15 September 1945 of all the internees were also found, this time in the Administration Office at Batu Lintang:

- **Group 1** Women internees, children and nuns – to be given poisoned rice
- **Group 2** Internee men and Catholic Fathers to be shot and burnt
- **Group 3** POWs to be marched into the jungle, shot and burnt
- **Group 4** Sick and weak left at Batu Lintang main camp to be bayoneted and the entire camp to be destroyed by fire

The camp was liberated on 11 September 1945, four days before the revised proposed execution date of over 2,000 men, women and children.” (Pringle et al.)

George MacDonald relates his experience negotiating the release of Prisoners after the Japanese surrender at the Ohashi Prison Camp on August 15th, 1945 “Complicating the negotiations was the Japanese military code of Bushido, which required an officer to die fighting or commit suicide (seppuku) rather than accept defeat. We also knew that the camp commander—First Lieutenant Yoshida Zenkichi—had written orders to kill his prisoners ‘by any means at his disposal’ if their rescue seemed imminent. We also knew that we could all easily be deposited in a local mine shaft and then buried under thousands of tons of rock for all eternity without a trace.” (MacDonald)

With thousands of miles between the examples given, Batu Litang to Taihoku to Naoetsu, it seems very plausible that a universal order to kill POWs was centrally distributed.

The IMTFE - Prosecution's opening statement on war atrocities Doc 6914 and War atrocities in Indo-China Doc. 2772 includes this text.

"In most of the areas there will be **evidence of the plans to kill all prisoners of war** in the event of there being a landing by allied troops in Japan or any attempt made to recapture them. In some of the areas these plans were in fact put into execution. Even in the absence of any direct order, from the fact that similar plans had been prepared in many areas, **it may be deduced that such plans were part of the policy** of those in control of prisoners of war."
("Taiwan Documents - Order to flee, Order to kill all POWs")

Appendix K Atomic Bomb



Atomic bomb blast over Nagasaki "Rain of Ruin: The Bombing of Nagasaki" (PBS). *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* Files

The use of Atomic bombs in Japan has been a subject of debate from the time of the explosions till the present day. From the perspective of the POWs held by the Japanese it is seen as the action that ended the war and saved their lives. For descendents of the POW, such as myself, it is the reason we are here today.

Hiroshima was bombed on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9th 1945. The Japanese Emperor broadcast Japan's surrender on August 15.

There are various accounts of the POWs in different camps hearing rumors of a big bomb but their main recollection is that the attitude of the Japanese guards changed on that day.

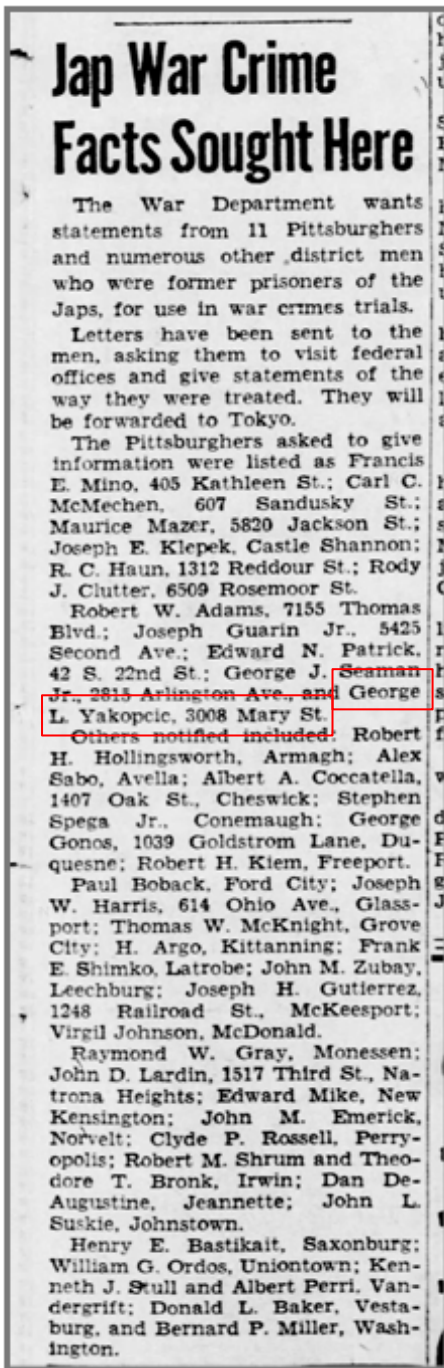
Lorenzo Banegas and Ruben Flores were members of the Coast Artillery that ended the war in the same POW camp as George in Kosaka.

"When Banegas and Flores returned home, they heard the United States should not have created or dropped the atomic

bomb because the Japanese were going to surrender. Banegas and Flores each said they would not be alive today, had it not been for the bombs." ("We heard this tremendous explosion!: American POW recalled bomb dropped on Japan")

Japan sought to use the Atomic Bomb to keep their influence in the Far East as well as mollify the world wide distrust of Japan. This effort began only weeks after the Atomic Bombing. After the War the U.S. was still able to read the Japanese diplomatic codes. The Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu sent a message in mid-September that was intercepted by the U.S. "The analysts note for General Marshall that ' the Japanese leaders plan to play up the atomic bombings not only to explain Japan's surrender [to an army that does not believe it was defeated in combat], but to offset publicity on Japan's treatment of Allied prisoners [of war] and internees [plus countless other atrocities].'" (Lee 548-549)

Appendix L War Crimes



("Jap War Crime Facts Sought Here")

In August of 1946 This article appeared in the *Pittsburgh Press*. George did mention one interview he had with an FBI agent. When questioned about the beheading of fellow POW ,a friend of George's, George stated he turned his head when the fatal blow was struck. To this the FBI agent said, "well then you really didn't witness the execution". George got up and walked out of the interview.

I don't know if anything came of this interview, and I was surprised at how difficult it is to find war criminals at the camp level listed in the documentation available.

"Surprisingly, the United States General, Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in the Far East, as a result of popular opposition in Japan to war crimes trials of Japanese, took the initiative in mid-1947 to urge Allied governments not to hold further war crimes trials. " ("Universal Jurisdiction: The duty of states to enact and enforce legislation: Chapter 2: The evolution of the practice of universal jurisdiction" 37)

"A series of similar political decisions were taken by Japanese and American officials to bring to an end trials of Japanese accused of war crimes and to release those convicted, commute their sentences or pardon them. At the same time that the trial of senior Japanese civilian and military was taking place before the Tokyo Tribunal, Japanese Emperor Hirohito promulgated a secret imperial rescript pardoning under Japanese law all members of the Japanese armed forces who might have committed crimes during the war, which was later tacitly approved by United States General MacArthur, as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. As a result, there never were any prosecutions in Japanese courts of Japanese for war crimes. The Far Eastern Commission (FEC) issued a formal advisory in 1949 to the 19 Allies in the Far East that trials of Japanese for war crimes should take place no later than 30 September 1949. Two years

later, the Treaty of Peace with Japan provided in Article II that all Japanese who had been convicted of war crimes would be returned to Japan to serve the rest of their sentences under the authority of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, with the aim, as it later became

known, to ensure early release on parole or commutation of sentences. (“Universal Jurisdiction: The duty of states to enact and enforce legislation: Chapter 2: The evolution of the practice of universal jurisdiction” 38)

“The [war crime] trials concluded in the fall of 1949. Liberal clemency and parole policies reduced the number of prisoners serving in the years that followed. By 1956 the total population of Sugamo Prison, where most of the war criminals were incarcerated, was down from a high of 2000 to 383. These were the long-term prisoners guilty of some of the most serious offenses.” (Kerr 296)

As reported in the New York Times December 31 1958, “United States authorities finally freed the last group of Japanese war criminals from Sugamo Prison here.”(Kerr 296) So if you did not receive the death penalty you were out by 1959.

The Tokyo War Crimes Trial commenced April 25th 1946. It resulted in 6 Executions.



(“The Tokyo Trial at Richmond: Digitizing the Sutton Collection of Documents from the International Military Tribunal for the Far East”)

“Australia, China, France, the Netherlands Indies, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, and the United States convened separate trials convicting more than 5,500 more lower ranking war criminals. The trials were held all over Asia and the Pacific and the last one was in 1951. “ (Tokyo War Crimes Trial”) 944 convicted war criminals were executed as a result of these trials

“The Tokyo trials were not the only forum for the punishment of Japanese war criminals, merely the most visible. In fact, the Asian countries victimized by the Japanese war machine tried far more Japanese -- an estimated five thousand, executing as many as 900 and sentencing more than half to life in prison. But with Japan under the control of the Americans, the most prominent Japanese war leaders came under MacArthur's jurisdiction.” (“The Tokyo War Crimes Trials | American Experience”)

At the Yokohama War Crime Trials, Of those tried[996], 854 defendants were convicted, with 124 of them receiving death sentences, of which 51 were carried out. All of the convicts served their sentences or were executed at Sugamo Prison. In 1958, those still serving prison sentences from the trials were all paroled. (“Yokohama War Crimes Trials”)

“For all the excuses and reasons given for the poor treatment of POWs it is clear that the Japanese knew their actions would be looked upon as crimes. “The Chief of the Prisoner of War Camps sent a signal on 20th August 1945 to all commands in which prisoner of war camps were situated, and these two extracts are striking testimony of the Japanese guilty knowledge.

- (1) Documents which would be unfavorable to us in the hands of the enemy are to be treated in the same way as secret documents and destroyed.
- (2) Personnel who ill-treated prisoners of war and internees, or who are held in extremely bad odour by them, are permitted to take care of the situation by immediately transferring or fleeing without trace." (Russell 69)

Appendix M Reparations

United States

“In 1948 the U.S. government recognized that ex-POWs had had a more arduous experience than the average veteran and awarded each ex-POW one dollar a day for every day he was deprived of adequate food rations in violation of the Geneva Convention. Two years later an additional dollar and a half per day was authorized as reparation for enforced labor and inhumane treatment.” (Kerr 296-297)

For George this would have been \$1,203 and \$1,804. \$15,400 and \$23,100 in 2024 dollars.

“In 1995 POW and civilian internee groups from several countries filed suits in the Japanese court system, seeking a net payment of \$20,000 for each POW/internee. However, Japanese courts ruled out compensation, pointing to Article 14 of the Multilateral Peace Treaty, in which the United States waived any further claims by U.S. citizens against Japan.” (“U.S. Prisoners of War and Civilian American Citizens Captured and Interned by Japan in World War II: The Issue of Compensation by Japan”)

In subsequent years POWs have gone to congress for relief and have tried to sue Japanese companies in civil suits. These efforts have failed, all using Article 14 as the reason.

The Treaty of San Francisco came into force on 28 April 1952.

Article 14 states “It is recognized that Japan should pay reparations to the Allied Powers for the damage and suffering caused by it during the war. Nevertheless it is also recognized that the resources of Japan are not presently sufficient, if it is to maintain a viable economy, to make complete reparation for all such damage and suffering and at the same time meet its other obligations. (“Treaty of San Francisco”)

Article 14 III b states, “Except as otherwise provided in the present Treaty, the Allied Powers waive all reparations claims of the Allied Powers, other claims of the Allied Powers and their nationals arising out of any actions taken by Japan and its nationals in the course of the prosecution of the war, and claims of the Allied Powers for direct military costs of occupation.” (“No. 1832. TREATY 1 OF PEACE WITH JAPAN. SIGNED AT SAN FRANCISCO, ON 8 SEPTEMBER 1951”)

Appendix N Siege of Corregidor Chronology

"The Japanese did not attack Corregidor on 8 December and had no plan to do so at the start of war." (Morton p479)

"Hardly had news of the evacuation of Manila and the transfer of MacArthur's headquarters to Corregidor (12/23/1942) reached Homma (Japanese 14th Army commander, Lt. Gen. Masaharu Homma,) on 28 December when he ordered the 5th Air Group to begin operations against the island." (Morton p479)

"Almost exactly on schedule, at 1154 of the 29th [December], the first flight of 18 twin-engine bombers of the *14th Heavy Bombardment Regiment*, covered by 19 fighters, approached Corregidor at a height of 15,000 feet and in regular V formation.(Morton p480) At 1230, 22 bombers of the *8th Light Bombardment Regiment*, accompanied by 18 dive bombers of the *16th Light Bombardment Regiment*, had their turn. When the dive bombers left at 1300, the Navy bombers came in. Numbering about 60 planes, the naval formation continued the attack against the island and shipping in the bay for another hour. Altogether, the Americans estimated, the Japanese used about 81 mediums and 10 dive bombers and dropped about 60 tons of bombs during these two hours." (Morton p480)

"In this first attack the anti-aircraft defenses at Fort Mills, Fort Hughes, and southern Bataan gave a good account of themselves, firing a total of 1,200 rounds of 3- inch ammunition. Score for the 3-inchers was thirteen medium bombers. The dive bombers, too, were met by strong and effective opposition. The .50- caliber machine guns of the anti-aircraft command downed four of the planes in their first low-level strafing attack. Thereafter, according to American sources, the Japanese did not again attempt to dive-bomb targets on Corregidor until the end of April." (Morton p480)

"By the 7th practically all unprotected surface installations had disappeared or were in ruins. Bomb craters were uniformly scattered over the island and one could hardly walk more than twenty-five yards in any direction without stumbling into one." (Morton p482)

"The air attacks against Corregidor ended on 6 January, the day the Bataan campaign opened. They had proved costly to the Japanese and had produced no decisive military results." (Morton p482) "On 5 February, his orders arrived and next morning at 0800 the *Kondo Detachment* (A Japanese artillery unit) opened fire against the fortified islands. Until the middle of February the daily attacks followed much the



(Tewell and KENNEBECK)

same pattern. The artillery duel which had begun early in February came to an end on 22 March.” (Morton p485)

“The aerial attack opened on schedule simultaneously with the artillery preparation on Bataan, at dawn of the 24th (March), when the first of the [Japanese] Army's six bomber squadrons rose from Clark Field and headed toward Corregidor.” (Morton p493) “During the last week of March there were about sixty air-raid alarms lasting for a total of seventy-four hours.” (Morton p494)

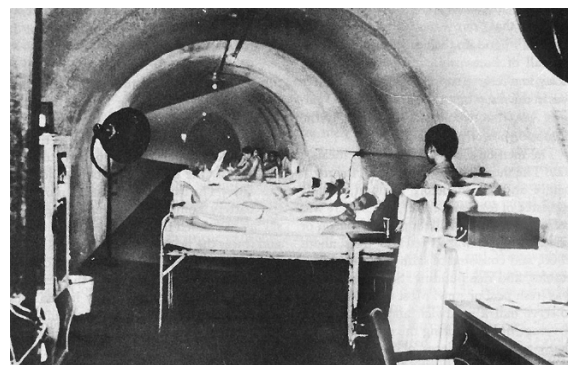
“By the beginning of April, the aerial bombardment was virtually over. Little additional damage had been received and comparatively few casualties had been suffered by the men who had had two months to prepare.” (Morton p497)

“Though almost all enemy resistance on Bataan peninsula collapsed by April 9th, the Japanese reported regretfully, ‘the enemy in the Corregidor Fortress did not abandon its will to fight.’” (Morton p521)

“Areas that had been heavily wooded were entirely denuded. In some places not ‘a stick, not a leaf’ was left. Trees, ‘once so dense . . . that they shut out the sun,’ were shot away or burned, leaving only charred stumps. Deep craters, empty shell cases, and huge fragments of concrete pockmarked the landscape. The beach defenses were demolished, the huge Seacoast guns silenced, and the anti-aircraft batteries reduced to impotence during these twenty-seven days. At the end of the bombardment the island was literally a shambles, a ‘moving picture version of No Man's Land in World War I.’” (Morton p536)

“By the end of April the first signs of malnutrition had made their appearance. beriberi and scurvy were observed at about this time and the symptoms of avitaminosis were noted by unit commanders whose men showed a decrease in combat efficiency. In one anti-aircraft battery Vitamin A deficiency had already affected the vision of the gun crews.” (Morton p544)

“With the influx of patients the hospital [Malinta Tunnel] expanded into three more laterals until by 25 April it had a capacity of 1,000 beds. Double and triple deck bunks were used for patients and hospital attendants alike.” (Morton p544)



(“Malinta Tunnel”)

“The attack on 1 May was discouraging to those who believed that the bombardment of 29 April represented the enemy's maximum effort. The first shells began dropping before dawn and continued until midnight. At 1515 the 274th air alarm of the war was sounded and eight bombers dropped their loads before the entrances to Malinta Tunnel”. (Morton p547)

"During a five-hour period of the day [5/2/1942], 3,600 shells of 240-mm. caliber, in addition to shells of other sizes, fell in the vicinity of Batteries Geary and Crockett on Topside. The rate of fire of the 240-mm. howitzers alone was twelve shells per minute. 'Moore and I,' wrote General Wainwright, 'delving further into the mathematics of the fury, estimated . . . that the Japs had hit the rock with 1,800,000 pounds of shells,' in addition to the bombs dropped by Japanese aircraft during thirteen air raids. It was the heaviest concentration of fire yet experienced on Corregidor." (Morton p547)

"The intensity of the air and artillery bombardment reached a new peak on 4 May, despite Wainwright's belief that 'the tempo of the Jap shelling' could not 'possibly be increased.' Japanese fire from Bataan that day was the heaviest of the campaign and totaled 16,000 shells of all calibers in a period of 24 hours." (Morton p549)

"Even the topography of the island had changed. Where there had been thick woods and dense vegetation only charred stumps remained. The rocky ground had been pulverized into a fine dust and the road along the shore had been literally blown into the bay. Portions of the cliff had fallen in and debris covered the entire island. The Corregidor of peacetime, with its broad lawns and luxuriant vegetation, impressive parade ground, spacious barracks, pleasant shaded clubs and bungalows, its large warehouses and concrete repair shops, was gone. The island lay 'scorched, gaunt, and leafless, covered with the chocolate dust of countless explosions and pitted with shell holes.'" (Morton p550)



("WW2 - Bataan and Corregidor - TogetherWeServed Blog")

On the night of May 5th, 1942 the Japanese made their amphibious assault. The 13,000 defenders of Corregidor faced 75,000 Japanese troops.

"Just before midnight, an intense artillery barrage hammered the area between North and Cavalry Points near the island's tail. Storming the beach, the initial wave of 790 Japanese infantry met fierce resistance and was hampered by oil which had washed ashore on Corregidor's beaches from the numerous ships sunk in the area." (Hickman)

"Though American artillery exacted a heavy toll on the landing fleet, the troops on the beach succeeded in gaining a foothold after making effective use of Type 89 grenade dischargers known as "knee mortars." Fighting heavy currents, the second Japanese attack attempted to land further east. Hit hard as they came ashore, the assaulting forces lost most of their officers early in the fighting and was largely repulsed by the 4th Marines." (Hickman)

"The survivors then shifted west to join with the first wave. Struggling inland, the Japanese began to make some gains and by 1:30 AM on May 6 had captured Battery Denver.

Becoming a focal point of the battle, the 4th Marines quickly moved to recover the battery. Heavy fighting ensued which became hand-to-hand but ultimately saw the Japanese slowly overwhelm the Marines as reinforcements arrived from the mainland.” (Hickman)

“Four hours later, the Japanese succeeded in landing three tanks on the island. These proved key in driving the defenders back to concrete trenches near the entrance to the Malinta Tunnel. With over 1,000 helpless wounded in the Tunnel’s hospital and expecting additional Japanese forces to land on the island, Wainwright began to contemplate surrender.” (Hickman) The Japanese suffered 900 killed, 1200 wounded and the Allies suffered 800 killed, 1000 wounded and 11,000 captured.

“Having made his decision, Wainwright ordered Beebe to broadcast a surrender message to General Homma. General Moore was to put into effect the previously prepared plan for the destruction of all arms larger than .45-caliber, to be accomplished by noon. At that time the American flag on Corregidor would be lowered and burned and the white flag hoisted.” (Wainwright, General Wainwright’s Story, pp. 185-86. 561) “These arrangements made, Wainwright announced his decision to President Roosevelt and General MacArthur.” (Morton p561)

The Japanese were not satisfied with the surrender of Corregidor only. They demanded a surrender of all forces in the Philippines. They threatened the lives of the 11,000 captured on Corregidor, who they said were not considered POWs till their demands for surrender were satisfied. Essentially holding the captors as hostages. Wainwright then started the process of contacting the dispersed commanders to have them also surrender.

“During the next week the troops on outlying islands submitted to the Japanese, and by 9 June all forces in the Philippines, with the exception of certain small detachments in isolated areas, had surrendered. On that day General Wainwright was notified that all organized resistance had ended. ‘Your high command,’ the Japanese told him then, ‘ceases and you are now a prisoner of war.’ The six-month-long struggle for control of the Philippine Archipelago was over. The victory which Homma had hoped to win by the middle of February was finally his on 9 June, four months later. Each day’s delay had meant a loss of face for the Japanese, and General Homma paid the price. The campaign was hardly over when *Imperial General Headquarters* relieved him of command and brought him back to Tokyo, where he spent the rest of the war on the sidelines, as a reserve officer.” (Morton 92 Cited USAFFE-USFIP Rpt of Opns)

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