**Clarence M. Graham**



Born: Rural Eastern, NE (1920)  
Attended Nebraska U in 1939 - 1940  
  
US Army,  Field Artillery, Battery "G", 60th CA (AA) Ft. Mills  
- Corregidor, Camp Cabanatuan, *Canadian Inventor,* Fukuoka camp #17 (Omuta)

**Clarence’s recollections, in his own words.**

**Bataan, Corregidor and Japan**

Battery G was moved to the Bataan Peninsula just north of Corregidor Island prior to the start of World War II. The Philippines were bombed by the Japanese on the same day that Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was bombed. We fought there on starvation rations, living partly off of what we could obtain from the jungle until Bataan was captured on April 9, 1942. The night of the capture, our Battery was returned to Corregidor to rejoin our 60th Battalion, where we continued the fight until the Philippines were captured, on May 6th, 1942.

We, who had survived this far, were herded into the Corregidor 92nd garage area without food or water. From there we were moved to Bilibid prison in Manila, then to Cabanatuan Prison Camp #1. In this camp malnutrition, flies and disease took a heavy toll. I worked on a detail in Leap then back to Cabanataun -- this time Camp #3.

From there, on the hellship Canadian Inventor to Fukuoka Camp #17 in Omuta, Japan, where I worked until the end of the war. We were eye witness to the explosion of the Atomic Bomb dropped on Nagasaki which I tell about in detail in the book I have written and published entitled ***Under The Samurai Sword.***

This is a true story of the experiences of just one military man in his life and death struggle while in the Pacific Theater during World War II, the war that has been recorded as being the greatest and perhaps one of the most tragic wars in the history of the United States. It is the war in which some 55 million died and some 3 million more are unaccounted for. It is also the war in which the United States suffered its greatest and most humiliating defeat -- that of the loss of the entire Philippines.

The story opens with the peaceful and relaxing island life, then carries the reader through the days of intense combat, the facing of the enemy as ammunition and supplies expire, the horrible experience of being captured, the brutal days of torture and slave labor as a prisoner of war and then on to the wonderful return to freedom back in the arms of the United States.

In so doing it gives the reader an insight into that period not covered in most U.S. history. It points out the confusion that led to the "writing off" of the entire Allied forces in that far-away theater. It is this part of history that some of our great leaders would like to forget.

Those who erred are not to be blamed, for we all do make mistakes. It is however, only by revealing them that we can avoid such in the future and hope that it will be knowledge helpful to generations to come.

This book has been well received. It tells of many war atrocities in a light and casual way. It is used in a few High School History classes and even in some Sunday Schools.

Mr. Tom Brokaw of NBC tells of my story in his second best seller book The Greatest Generation Speaks, pages 4 through 7.

Upon returning to the States after the war I married a girl, Doris Lueders, whom I had known in my high school years, attended the Nebraska Ag college on the GI bill and obtained a job with the US Soil Conservation Service. I worked for them for twenty five years, retired and then worked for the Oregon State Parks as a park ranger.

My wife and I have been married for over 55 years, have four children, a son and three daughters and ten grandchildren. I speak to school children about Freedom and what it has cost.

We have a wonderful country of which I am very proud.

**Article “Canby Veteran Finds Peace After the War”**

World War II veteran Clarence "Cal" Graham shares a moment with his Paso Fino horse at his South New Era Road ranch last week. Graham is the author of "Under the Samurai Sword," which features gripping accounts of his years as a prisoner of war.

Looking around the Grahams' rural Canby ranch, complete with horses in a classic corral, life is idyllic and tranquil. It was exactly what Clarence and Doris Graham were looking for when they moved to Canby five years ago, after living 18 years in Reedsport, where he worked as a park ranger for the Oregon State Parks.

Whenever he wishes, "Cal" can ride his favorite, but fiery, Paso Fino horse, or tend to the ranch chores on their South New Era Road property. The couple's son, Bob, and his family moved to Canby from Montana seven years ago, and they live on adjoining properties. (The Grahams have three other children - Merridee, Debra and Joyce - and 10 grandchildren.) Graham previously worked for 25 years for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service, joining after being discharged from the U.S. Army.

A farmer's son, he loves the outdoors life, and relished his years as an Oregon park ranger in Tugman, Cape Blanco, Humbug Mountain and, finally, Reedsport.

Cal Graham said he loved his time working for the federal and state governments, enjoying the varied work, stunning scenery, and interesting people he met along his many travels. It was the perfect career for an energetic man who sought the lung-filling clean air of the great outdoors and the tremendous terrain of the Oregon Coast.

It was also the perfect antidote to the many months he spent as a loincloth-wearing prisoner of war, inhaling coal dust deep down a Japanese mine.

Cal Graham is a World War II survivor. He knows that war is hell. He knows that World War II was hell on Earth. And the Purple Heart recipient knows the terribly costly war had to be fought to preserve freedom and self-determination from tyranny.

Maiming, mutilation and murder were daily occurrences in the war-torn world of the 1940s, and Sgt. C.M. Graham witnessed or suffered atrocities regularly. He saw his commanding officer decapitated by a sword-wielding Japanese officer, and saw a pregnant Filipino woman who tried to give him a ladle of water bayoneted in the stomach by the enemy, who then beat people who tried to help her.

Graham avoided the infamous Bataan Death March by escaping to the neighboring peninsula island of Corregidor a month prior. The brutal 70-mile march resulted in the deaths of 10,000 of the 60,000 Americans and Allies, who perished from hunger, heat, exhaustion and brutality.

While he avoided the inhumanity of the evil march, he, too, suffered greatly as a POW, with his hard-working but starved body withering to about 85 pounds. Graham contracted dysentery, scurvy, pellagra, diphtheria and wet beriberi, among other illnesses, during his time in captivity. On one occasion, illness actually saved his life.

What follows is the second part serialization of Graham's book, "Under the Samurai Sword," which he wrote and self-published. It is his very personal account of war. Copies of the book have been mailed to addresses in 48 states coast to coast, and he is happy his memoirs of his least happy times have been well received.

He hopes they will serve to educate today's generations about the sacrifices made by their grandparents and great-grandparents. And he hopes people never forget the young men who died in faraway lands, or who are missing and presumed dead.

Captivity and slavery

After staving off capture by escaping from Bataan, Graham and members of his anti-aircraft battery on the Philippines island of Corregidor were eventually captured by the Japanese on May 9, 1942. The captured men were made to wear loincloths and were used as slaves in mines and factories geared up for the Japanese war machine. Many POWs were beaten, tortured, and starved by meager food rations. Many were murdered in custody, or died of disease, malnutrition or starvation, Graham recounted.

During the last year of his 42 months as a POW, Graham worked in a condemned lateral of the Fukuoka coal mine near Omuta, Japan, where POWs were forced to fuel the very industries of war they were sent to fight against.

"It was very hot work, and very deep," he wrote, likening the terrible treatment of the POWs to that of oxen. "You had to keep your wits about you to stay alive because one false move, and your life was nothing in that country. They'd kill you in an instant if you disobeyed. ''We took just one day at a time. I kept saying, 'I've got to keep my mind clear, and look for something good.'"

Keeping the faith

The work was strength sapping, and the malnourished men used every ounce of energy. If they grew tired on the job, they would be punished. It was a dark time, and hearts were heavy, but POWs had to keep hope alive.

"You have so little that you have to say that you don't carry on a conversation . . . I kept thinking if the Good Lord wanted me to get through this, I would make it," he wrote.

"'If he didn't, I wouldn't. I kept my faith pretty high, because so many just gave up and you couldn't. You had to have inner drive, or you'd just die."

Graham had that drive and, as he says, God decided wartime was not his time to die.

A living nightmare

"In my sleep it seemed that I was being kicked and yelled at by a Jap guard. As I woke I fund that it wasn't a dream. I really was being kicked by one. Many of our fellows were already lining up. It was still as dark as pitch except for the prison lights.

''We were lined up again in four columns with 100 to a group, counted and recounted, then marched out of the big iron gates of Bilibid Prison. We had no idea where we were going or how the war was going. For all we knew we were being marched to be executed."

The awful train ride

"The box cars were designed to hold 40 men or eight horses . . . Into each of these cars the Japs forced a group of 100 men and then, with yelling, hitting and poking with bayonets they would force up to 15 more.

''We were packed so tightly that is was hard to draw a full breath. The doors were slid shut and locked. All ventilation holes had been boarded up. Oxygen was depleting rapidly. We yelled and pounded on the sides and on the door and called for air, but got no response. Men started fainting. They couldn't fall. ''The brain plays cruel tricks on one when under desperate situations. Some men became raving maniacs. Some suffocated to death . . . The heat, the stench, the yelling, the swearing, the praying and the dying made this a real hell that I will never forget."

Commanding officer executed

"The Japanese Camp Commander was furious at our commanding officer and ordered him tied to a power pole. An interpreter shouted to us that he would remain tied there for three days without food or water. He then would be severely punished. As I stood there looking at this poor man I suddenly recognized him. He was Colonel Brightung, our Battalion Commander.

''What he may have done to make them so furious, I had no idea. But being the tough old cavalry officer that he was, I know that he would never bow down to anyone. He stayed there in the blistering sun, wired to that pole for three days. He was beaten at each change of the guards. As he would pass out, they would throw water on him so he would keep suffering.

''The guards screamed 'kyotskie' then 'karay,' which meant that everyone should bow. They then unwired our colonel and dumped a bucket full of water on him and told him to kneel down. Colonel Brightung spit in the Jap officer's face instead. The guards were horrified, the prisoners snickered in the ranks, but the Jap officer went into a screaming rage.

''He ordered the guards to force him to his knees and pull his arms behind his back. Then with one mighty swish of the two-handed sword Colonel Brightung's head came tumbling down towards our feet. ''The thing about this that still haunts me to this day was watching his head as it came to a stop and seeing how his eyes kept looking around. I wonder how long the brain functions when severed from the body."

Life spared by illness

"My fever soon flared up again. My lungs started to fill with fluid and I couldn't get enough air. I passed out as I was wheeling another heavy load.

Apparently the Japanese doctor saw it and had me hauled back into camp in my wheelbarrow. He told the guard that I might have a dangerous and contagious disease which might spread to the guards. He asked to have me and one other with the same problems sent to a Japanese clinic in Manila to have us examined. They agreed. When the guards disappeared this doctor gave each of us a boiled egg.

''The two of us . . . were loaded into the back of a truck. This doctor told me that we were very fortunate to be leaving. That something very bad was going to happen to the rest of the men. I heard some time later that they were all lined up at attention and machine gunned."

Diphtheria and devotion

"As I improved I was able to help him more and more. Bob Scorby had been a powerfully built man in peace time. He had been a bouncer in a saloon but he himself never drank. 'Four ax handles across the shoulders and four ax handles tall' is how they used to describe him. He was always kind and gentle though, a real nice kind of guy. Now he was just a big frame of bones with loose skin hanging over them.

''Bob was a great inspiration to me. He had a great desire to live. He never swore or held a grudge and always had a great respect for the Lord. He used to tell me that if he ever got out of that prison camp alive, he would never let his stomach be empty again. He did make it back, and he did live up to his word to his dying day."

'Get better or die trying'

"The camp at this time had around 3,000 officers in it, one for every five enlisted men. Money is always power and now the officers started using this power. Rank, power and money went together. The enlisted men in the hospital area couldn't work and so didn't get any pay. This made recovery even more difficult. I was determined to get better or die trying.

''I couldn't help thinking how short a life is, whether it be a day or a 100 years. A whole generation is hardly a flash in eternal time. During our lifetime we each have a chance to leave our mark, good or bad, that in some small way can influence others.

''How different the various cultures are. Yet a similarity is there. An American is raised in a free society where every life is precious. In some civilizations an individual's life is of little importance, however, both the Japanese and the Americans were giving their lives for their country. ''Perhaps, the difference is in how we do it. In prison camp, a friend's word or helping hand can mean so much. Cruel harsh words and acts can be so damaging even to the point of making those on the balance between life and death tip the balance in favor of death. ''I made up my mind that from that point on I would always try to present the good and pleasant things in life, and there are always good things. Sometimes they are just a little harder to find."

Graham sees Nagasaki A-bombed

After years and months of unfounded rumors of imminent liberation, the end of the war finally approached as Graham and other POWs were finishing another choking, grueling coal-mining shift. The Japanese had been extremely brutal because of the bombing on Hiroshima, and many POWs were punished as a result. Graham and the other POWs came up out of the mines into the daylight Sept. 9, 1945, and, at the sound of an air raid siren, they went into the trenches between the barracks. The all-clear sounded, and Graham looked up to see a B-29 bomber through an opening in the clouds. "Why don't they bomb?" he wondered. "What are they joyriding for?" Moments later, there was a brilliant flash to the west and across the bay toward the city of Nagasaki.

"There's no way to describe the brightness," he wrote. "You couldn't describe the brightness. You couldn't tell where the flash came from - just a brilliant brightness. Then, seconds later, there was a small tremor on the ground. You could feel the ground shaking. Then there was a strong wind that came from the west . . . and, following that wind, there was a hot, hot wind. Then there was a lull and a terrific wind, almost a typhoon wind from the west, which was the air rushing back to the bomb center after the heat had gone up. That's when we saw this huge orange dome to the west, and we were wondering what in the world it was. And then out of it, there was an opening about it, and all the clouds disappeared and you could see the bright blue sky. And then this column of white smoke came up just like a tornado - a column. And we're standing there watching and the Japanese are all quiet. And then all of a sudden it starts to mushroom towards the top."

Six days after the second atomic bomb was dropped, the six-year war was over. But Graham didn't wait to be liberated - he slipped through a gap in a fence Sept. 10, stole a bicycle, and made his way to the nearby city of Omuta to meet up with Allied forces.

The journey home

Graham was flown out of Japan on C-47. As the big plane gained altitude, he looked down and saw a rainbow against the deep blue waters of the China Sea, and then a second rainbow formed. Graham, a lump in his throat, said to the pilot, "Do you see that?" "Yes, it must be for you," the pilot replied.

Graham closed his eyes, and offered a silent prayer to God.

He was headed back to the U.S., back to his home in the nation's heartland, back to regain his health and weight, and back to marry the woman who remained in his heart and mind through the long days and nights of incarceration in southeast Asia. His mind cast back to the disheveled vagrant who helped him when he was cold, penniless and waiting to go to war more than four years earlier.

And the generosity of that old bum on a San Francisco wharf, who spared him change for coffee and a ferry ride, remains a random act of kindness Cal Graham says he will always remember. He was with him in spirit, as was God, and it was a combination of spirit, courage, faith and luck that enabled Graham to survive a war that killed millions of people around the globe.

"On Oct. 15, 1945, we sailed back under the Golden Gate Bridge, ending four years, six months and five days overseas, and nearly six years service time - all on just one three-year enlistment," he wrote.

"But I was one of the lucky ones. I was coming back . . . It was a beautiful day. A soft breeze fluffed out the folds of the Stars and Stripes above us (on the boat). I saluted it. 'Long may it live.' I thought about all of those who would never see it again, those who had given their lives so we could enjoy the freedom of our great nation. God bless them all. I swallowed hard, but the lump in my throat would not move. My wish was, and is to this day, that everyone in the United States could appreciate our freedom and this wonderful country as I do."

*By David Howell (Herald) Photo by Steve Wilkowske*

**For Reconciliation** (Clarence asked that the following be shared)  
by Hitoshi Motoshima

I was born in 1922 in a tiny village on an island off the coast of Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan. All the thirty households in the village were the descendants of the persecuted Jesuits. Of the thirteen students in my grade school class, only two-myself and one girl- survived World War II. I did not suffer the atomic blast, but went to Nagasaki and saw the devastation only a few weeks after the second atomic bomb was dropped on that city. The indescribable scenes of destruction and suffering of the victims were forever carved into memory.

Even as a devout Christian, I was a soldier of the emperor's army. Many years later I became the mayor of Nagasaki and issued an annual Peace Declaration sixteen times. During those days I often thought about a line from the Book of Job, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." Today, I firmly believe that the post-atomic bomb era and the 21st century must be an age of forgiveness and reconciliation.

What should Japan, Hiroshima and Nagasaki do to contribute to realizing such a world? Bear witness to the horror of nuclear weapons as the only nation or cities who suffered the actual use of a weapon of mass destruction? That is an important job. But before we do even that, there is a serious task we have to finish, a task crucial for the forgiveness and reconciliation. That is to apologize, genuinely apologize, to the victims of the Japan's fifteen-year-war of aggression.

The Bataan Death March and many other atrocities were clearly violations of international law at that time.

If Japan is to be in the forefront in the nations of the world in their efforts to call for abolishing all nuclear arms and world peace, it must first apologize to its former victims. Moreover, that apology must come from each and every citizen's heart. Many people may argue that responsibility of the Japan's wartime crimes belongs to the government, and therefore it is the government of Japan that should issue an apology. Yet, I have to challenge my fellow Japanese to ask themselves whether such an official apology alone would be enough. I believe that responsibility rests not only on the military or on soldiers but on all of us including citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even those who were too young at the time of the war to remember anything or those who were born after the war cannot escape from shouldering the legacy of the past. Only by showing our willingness to take responsibility and to apologize genuinely will we be able to ask for forgiveness and understanding from the people whom we once victimized.

I fervently pray that Nagasaki will remain the world's last city to suffer from an atomic blast and that the 21st century will be a century of forgiveness and reconciliation.

~ Hitoshi Motoshima was the mayor of Nagasaki from 1979 to 1995.