ESCAPE OF
LT. COMDR. MELVYN H. McCOY, USN
FROM A JAPANESE PRISON CAMP
IN THE PHILIPPINES

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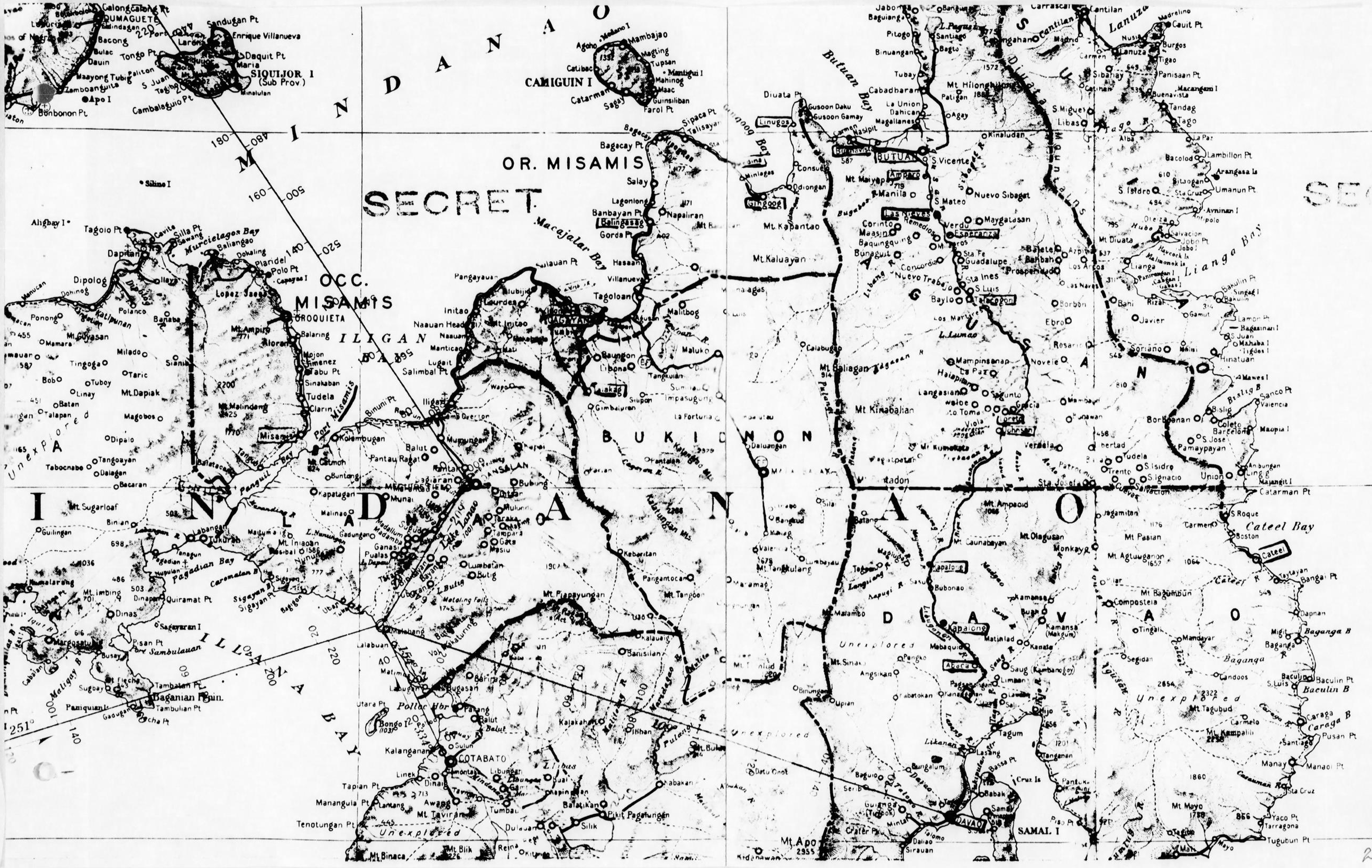
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ESCAPE OF

LT. COMDR. MELVYN H. McCOY, USN

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CONTENTS

Lt. Comdr. Melvyn H. McCoy, Radio Material Officer of the 16th Naval District, was stationed at Cavite during the first stages of the Japanese invasion of the Philippines. On 25 December 1942, a week before the Japanese entered Manila, he was evacuated to Corregidor, where he remained during the siege. Although that fortress surrendered on 6 May 1942, it was not till the 22nd that he was moved from the island to Old Bilibid Prison, Manila, where he was kept for the following six weeks.

On 6 July he was transferred to the main American Prisoner of War Camp at Cabanatuan, Luzon. There he remained until 26 October, when he left for the American Prisoner of War Camp, Davao Penal Colony, about 30 miles north of Davao City. En route he again passed through the Old Bilibid Prison before arriving at the Davao camp on 7 November.

He made his escape from this camp on 4 April 1943, leading a group of 10 officers and men. A month later the party succeeded in reaching our guerrilla forces. On 13 May Lt. Comdr. McCoy met Lt. Comdr. Parsons, U.S.N.R., and on the 23rd Lt. Col. W.W. Fertig, leader of the guerrillas in Mindanao. He had remained at Misamis, the scene of this meeting, for about a month when the Japanese occupation of the place on 26 June forced a hurried departure. On 3 July he started for a rendezvous with the submarine which was to take him to Australia, which he made as scheduled on 9 July 1943.

The following pages contain Lieut. Comdr. McCoy's account of his experiences, his observations and recommendations.

* * * * * *

About two weeks before Corregidor surrendered the Japanese commenced a very heavy bombardment of the island. At no time during this period did fewer than 5,000 shells daily strike the island, the largest number up until the last day being 16,000. Most shells were about 155 caliber, although some 240's and 105 caliber were used. By May 5th, all of the large gun batteries on Corregidor had been destroyed by enemy gunfire as well as all searchlights, so that it is probable that the first Japanese landing barge landed without being seen about 2300, May 5. However, in spite of the fact that there was no illumination and only smaller caliber semi-portable guns could be used, we probably sank about two-thirds of the Japanese barges, according to their own admission.

The landing was preceded by a terrific bombardment of the area in which they landed. After the first landing, they were pushed back by our forces perhaps 200 yards and rapidly fell back about 500 yards more and requested by radio a renewed barrage which was forthcoming and drove our forces back towards the center of the island. The Japanese also sent for reinforcements which arrived and could have repeated this process indefinitely if necessary. If was informed about 0400, May 6th, that it was the intention to surrender at 1200 that date.

All Naval radio equipment with the exception of one transmitter and receiver was destroyed before 1100 and the rest of the equipment was destroyed at 1155. All codes and ciphers were destroyed by burning and all coding machines completely demolished and distorted by burning also. The Army did not destroy all of its radio equipment, but I personally saw to it that thecoding machine which they had borrowed from us was destroyed. All in-shore patrol vessels which included the

Yangtze River gunboats and minesweepers were sunk, except the Luzon, whose engineering plant had been completely damaged by enemy shells. The Luzon was later towed by the Japanese to the Cavite Navy Yard.

After the surrender I was able to view the area in which the Japanese landed. Prior to the landing this area was heavily wooded. At the time I examined it, there was not a blade of grass or remains of a tree, 8 inches high in it. The Japanese were bombarding us with many guns from Bataan; one of the reasons that they were able to install somany artillery units on Bataan is that they put them adjacent to and within our No. 2 hospital area in which we knew were located at least 3000 American and Filipino wounded.

After the surrender, no Japanese officers appeared for sometime in the Navy tunnel, but many enlisted were passing through the tunnel at all times, looting and robbing, but not molesting the prisoners. It seems to be a practice of Japanese officers to permit their troops to have a chance to loot unobserved; because if an officer actually sees a Japanese soldier robbing, he forces him to return the loot and slaps the soldier around. The Japanese soldier is very fond of wrist watches and I saw one with one arm covered with watches from his wrist to his elbow and the other arm half covered, with his bayonet in the stomach of another man striving to obtain more watches. These soldiers were awed by the electric refrigerators, in fact I have elsewhere seen them put ice within perfectly operatable electric refrigerators.

These first Japanese soldiers who entered were a healthy, rugged and tough lot, mostly Marines who had already seen action at Hongkong, Singapore, and Bataan, in other words - the shock troops. In general they were of the lower classes - uneducated and uninformed. They seemed

to harbor no resentment toward us. On the contrary, many of them patted us on the back and said we were much braver than the British, and that had the British fought at Singapore as we had on Corregidor they could never have captured Singapore.

The officers in general were of a much higher type but of low rank. A sergeant in the Japanese Army corresponds in general in experience, ability, and authority to the present day United States Army 1st Lieut. Discipline in the Japanese Army appeared to be very rigid, and the men seemed to consider the officers as the direct representatives of the Emperor. Japanese officers stated that they lost about 5,000 men killed in taking the island. I do not know our exact losses but they were estimated at well under 1,000.

One amusing incident which occurred in the Navy tunnel was that the rifles and pistols which we surrendered were left lying upon the desk in the center of the tunnel, all loaded. We were allowed to remain in the tunnel that night, the night of the 6th, and these arms were never removed. No Japanese remained in the tunnel. About midnight they realized, apparently, that there were approximately 100 loaded weapons in the tunnel and routed us out, with much anger on their part, to dispose of these arms and also search thoroughly the rest of the tunnel for arms.

Another amusing sight is to watch the average Japanese soldier use a modern toilet. I have seen them walk straight forward, over the bowl, drop their pants, defecate - missing the bowl and landing in front of it on the floor - wiping the rectum with a rag withdrawn from a pocket and return said rag to the pocket. Toilet paper was within reach of his hand. Unfortunately, American soldiers had to clean up

after them when they messed up the deck.

On the day following the surrender the Japanese bombed and shelled the island - the planes coming over at extremely low levels. One interpretation of this could be that the Japs were trying to demonstrate to General Wainright that they would, if necessary, fulfill their threat to massacre all persons on Corregidor unless all American forces in the Philippines surrendered. Of all the fortified islands, only Fort Drum, the concrete battleship, was undamaged by Japanese shells and bombs. Drum's armament suffered no damage whatsoever. The officers and men on board Drum were subjected to 48 hours of hazing after their surrender, during which time they were not allowed to sit down or to sleep or to have water or food. This was due to the fact that Fort Drum had dropped a 14" shell amidst a large group of Japanese on Bataan, killing a high ranking Japanese officer whose brother was still in Manila and who ordered this special hazing of the Fort Drum occupants.

Practically all prisoners were placed in the 92nd Garage area, which is a concrete square about 100 yards on the side. There were ten thousand prisoners placed here without cover. There was one water spigot for the 10,000. There were no latrines. The heat during the day was terrific and several nights it rained. During the day the only relief was to go out into the bay up to the neck, which was permitted by the Japanese. The fact that this bay was used as the common latrine was an unfortunate, but not a deterring, factor. The Japanese furnished these prisoners with no food for seven days, but some food trickled in from working parties who were able to obtain it during the work. These prisoners remained there until May 22, which is just after the date on

which the last General in the Visayan Islands surrendered. They may have been kept there in keeping with the Japanese threat mentioned elsewhere. On the afternoon of the 22nd, we prisoners were loaded on to three merchant vessels of about 7,000 tons displacement. These vessels were designed to accomodate twelve passengers. There were about 3500 of us on each vessel. We remained aboard all night, without sleep naturally, and the following day proceeded to Manila. Instead of going to a pier in the city itself, we were taken beyond the city, off Pasay, placed into landing barges and put ashore. This operation took place during the hottest part of the day, as has always been used with any Japanese dealing with prisoners. In the landing barges we hung around for about an hour packed like sardines. We were then dumped in the water up to our armpits; this last action was unnecessary as the boats could have been run right up on to the beach but the Japanese wanted to be sure we made the march through Manila in wet clothes and with wet equipment. We marched through the entire city of Manila, about five miles, ending up at Old Bilibid Prison. The Japanese were undoubtedly attempting to impress the Filipinos, but throughout the march I saw no smiles on the faces of any inhabitant, many tears, and many surreptitious victory signs.

Although many prisoners fell out and were unable to make the march only one died - a Lt. Col. Short, U.S.A. Due to having to walk on the cement with wet shoes the condition of many feet was deplorable, especially among the more aged officers. I left Bilibid that same afternoon in company with Capt. K. M. Hoeffel, U.S.N., the Naval Commandant, and several other officers, for the Pasay Elementary School, at which the Naval Hospital Unit from Canacao, Cavite, Philippine Islands, was

located. Generals Moore and Drake were also with me with this party, as were members of their staffs.

While there, a group of 300 American prisoners who had been captured on Bataan and had been at Camp O'Donnell passed through on their way to a work detail in Batangas. All were in a deplorable condition and 18 were unable to walk the following morning. These 18 remained at the hospital and were replaced by 18 men already there. Later at Cabanatuan the remainder of this working party were returned. About 270 of the 300 died on the job to which detailed. While at this camp I learned that all officers of the rank of full Colonel and above, with corresponding ranks in the Navy, would be sent to Tarlac, Luzon. Each General was allowed one enlisted orderly and each two Colonels was allowed an orderly. Of the Navy, this group taken to Japan included Capt. Hoeffel, U.S.N., Capt. W.E. Wilterdink, Supply Corps, U.S.N., Capt. K.T. Lowman, Medical Corps, U.S.N., Capt. R.G. Davis, Medical Corps, U.S.N., Capt. L.J. Roberts, Medical Corps, U.S.N., and Col. S. L. Howard, U.S. Marine Corps.

On May 27th, I was returned to Old Bilibid, Manila, where I remained until July 6th. At this time most of the Corregidor prisoners had been sent to Cabanatuan and the remainder were going at the rate of about 1,000

per day. About 30 officers remained at Bilibid, in addition to the hospital unit, to supervise working parties engaged in clearing up, repairing the prison, and to do odd jobs about Manila. I was one of these 30, and there were about 300 enlisted men. After the work was finished most of those were sent to Cabanatuan. A few permanent working details were formed and remain until this day, I believe, in Manila, for the most part working in the port area. Naval officers were in charge of all of these groups.

While at Bilibid, I went on one volunteer working party to load canned milk for prison camps. I later ascertained that only about 10% of what we loaded was ever sent. This milk was located at Rizal Stadium and in this stadium was also a large amount of supplies, almost all of which were U. S. A. Quartermaster supplies.

On July 7th, I was taken with 250 other American prisoners to Cabanatuan, Luzon, about 75 miles north of Manila. We were placed in metal box cars, 75-80 in a car, and the trip took about six hours. There was no sitting room in the cars.

At Cabanatuan we were thoroughly searched and then installed in Nips quarters. These were quarters used for the Philippine Army. We were very crowded and located in small bays with just room enough to lie down side by side in each bay. At this time it was not an unusual sight to see dead prisoners lying around the barracks and each morning there was a new group of dead carried outside and laid on the ground awaiting disposal. These bodies at times lay around for several days, which did not enhance either the odor or the sanitary conditions. Water was rationed but adequate. Bathing facilities were inadequate, consisting of a few wells

for the 6000 men in the camp. Latrines were open and a decided nuisance. The question of food will be gone into elsewhere. At this time and throughout the month of July the average death rate was 30 per day. The maximum being 43. All prisoners were Americans.

This camp had been established about June 1st with prisoners from Corregidor and Camp O'Donnell arriving at about the same time. Camp O'Donnell was the prison to which the Bataan prisoners were first taken and is located in the province of Tarlac, Luzon. The Cabanatuan camps consist of Camp # 1, and the hospital adjacent to it, about six miles north of Cabanatuan City; and Camp #2, which is about twelve miles north of the city. All of the Bataan prisoners were taken to Camp # 1. Camp # 2 is composed largely of enlisted men from Corregidor, with a few officers, also from Corregidor, and the health there is considerably better than that at Camp # 1.

The death rate for June and July of 1942 was thirty per day - in August 21 per day - September 11 per day - and in October about 19 per day. That means from the time Cabanatuan was established until I left there were approximately 3400 deaths, mainly of people who had been captured on Bataan. Deaths were due to malaria, dysentery, diptheria, and malnutrition. At the time I left Cabanatuan, responsible doctors told me that of the 2500 patients then in the hospital they did not expect any of them to live. One almost had to be dead to get into the hospital. At Camp O'Donnell during April and May the number of deaths is estimated to have been about 2200 Americans, but the confusion was so great there that this estimate could be slightly inaccurate, but not by more than two or three hundred.

This means that a total of over 5,000 Americans died in captivity prior to November 1942. The reason for the confusion in accurately determining the number of dead at O'Donnell was that there were originally 45,000 Filipinos at the camp who were dying at the rate of about 500 a day and the problem of burial became acute, the Japs being unwilling to help and there being too few Americans or Filipinos strong enough to take care of the bodies. Of these 45,000 Filipinos, at least 27,000 are now dead.

About the middle of July the prison camp was divided into three groups and all the Navy and Marines were placed in group one. Officers were not required to work but could volunteer to be in charge of working parties. Almost the only work enlisted men were required to do was to secure and deliver firewood for the galleys. The camp is surrounded by barbed wire and sentries, but as a rule there are no Japanese within the fence and the prisoners can live unmolested by the Japs. We were allowed to hold classes in various subjects to pass the time, but not in foreign languages. Card playing is frowned upon by the Japanese, but not strictly prohibited. To help the morale of the camp, we put on little skits of entertainment, two or three times weekly, and now and then the Japanese would permit an exchange of shows between prison camps. The Japanese have furnished a very small amount of soft ball gear, but this is ample as only about 5% are physically able to use the gear. A man able to play will get about one opportunity a week.

Throughout the time I was at this camp there were no medicines available in the hospital, nor did the Japanese permit the Philippine Red Cross to furnish any until shortly before my departure. When this

one group of supplies from Manila arrived, including quinine, the Japanese would not permit it to be unpacked and used for sometime, during which time many died of malaria whose lives could have been saved by the quinine. When I arrived in camp there was some sulfathiazole and quinine in the hands of private individuals, mostly Army hospital corps men, who had appropriated these supplies from the hospitals in Bataan or Corregidor and had not returned them when the hospitals were reestablished at Cabanatuan. These men were selling the medicine for four dollars a pill. Obviously they should be treated no better than the Japanese, as in effect they have caused loss of the lives of many of their countrymen by hoarding stolen medicine.

The most common diseases are malaria and dysentery. The malaria was generally incurred in Bataan and due to lack of quinine, keeps repeating in most of the cases. There have been a large number of cases of cerebral malaria, almost always fatal as the cure consists of intra-venous injections of quinine, none of which was available. Whether the cerebral malaria was caused by frequent reoccurrence of the ordinary malaria or whether it is a distinct type many doctors were in doubt. The dysentery was acquired from drinking polluted water from carabao wallows on the march out of Bataan and polluted water at Camp O'Donnell, and is transmitted in the camp by the general unsanitary conditions.

There were several efforts to escape made - all by enlisted men except for the original effort made by three Naval Reserve officers; Ensigns Barry, Kirk, and Sanborn. Those three left, rather than escaped, the night that Cabanatuan was first formed. There were no lights, no fences, no muster and very little guarding done; and escape was simply a matter

of walking off. After three months these three officers turned themselves in, in southern Luzon, because they realized that if they did not do so, the Filipinos would have turned them over to the Japanese and the punishment been much harsher. All other incidents of escape have been of individuals, and these men have all turned back in within a space of two weeks. None of these above-mentioned has been executed. The enlisted men were beaten up and put to hard labor in chains. The officers were confined only, and required to read statements of their experiences on the outside, and to make speeches on the futility of escape, to all hands in the prison camp.

About September 30, Lieutenant Colonels Lloyd Biggs and Howard Breiting, with Lieutenant R. D. Gilbert (C.E.C.) U.S.N.R., attempted to escape. Through an unfortunate accident and the loud mouth of Colonel Biggs these men were apprehended by the Japanese, tortured and executed. The details of the treatment by the Japanese will be related along with the atrocities committed. While these three were crawling in single file, each armed with a club, along a ditch which lead under the camp's barbed wire fences, an enlisted man named Tonelli (ex All-American football player from Notre Dame) commenced to urinate in this ditch instead of the regular latrine. Lt. Col. Biggs, upon being urinated upon, rose in a rage and turned to on Tonelli with his club, loudly cursing at the time. Tonelli resisted and called for help. The American perimeter guards came to his assistance but were unable to subdue the three officers and some other Americans from the living barracks took a hand. . The three officers were finally subdued and lead away and during this time the Japanese guard outside the fence had come up abreast of the scene of action, but I doubt if a suspicion that an escape was in

progress was aroused. Upon arrival at American Headquarters which is in shouting distance of Japanese Headquarters, Lt. Col. Biggs was raving and ranting about being stopped and saying that it was the duty of the other Americans to help him escape. The Japanese Camp Commander, Lt. Col. Mori, was giving some instructions to the American Camp Commander Major H. J. Say (posing as Lt. Col.) and when hearing the rumpus told Say to go out and take care of the affair. At about the time Say arrived Lt. Col. Biggs eluded his captors and dashed off into the darkness. When a guard caught up with him, he wrested a club from the guard and turned on him again, but was finally subdued with additional aid. Upon being returned to the presence of Major Say he reminded Say that he, Biggs, was senior to Say, that he was required to escape if possible, and that it was Say's duty to assist him. Biggs used such loud language that the Japanese, who were no alertly listening, were able to pick up the word "escape" several times and accordingly stepped into the affair. Lt. Col. Mori told Say to send one of these three officers into him for questioning and the other two were turned over to Japanese guards. Unfortunately, Lt. Col. Biggs was the man chosen to be sent in for questioning. Had he had the beating up by the Japanese which the other two received, perhaps he would have not been so cheesty when he faced Col. Mori. He "read off" Col. Mori and told him that he was not supposed to take any action against him, Biggs, for attempting to carry out his duty of escaping and that if Col. Mori did so, after the war he would see to it that Col. Mori got demoted. The sequel of all this was torture and execution. There is but little doubt that had it not been for Biggs' loud voice and arrogant attitude, the affair would never have come to the attention of the Japanese authorities.

In addition, all officers who lived in the barracks in which these three officers had been quartered were confined for a period of thirty days, were not allowed to purchase additional food, receive any from friends or leave the building to bathe. They could go to the head under guard. No other retaliatory measures were taken.

In October, 1942 the Japanese inaugurated a policy to reduce the number of prisoners in camp by means other than starvation and sickness. There was a small group of about 80 men sent to Japan from Camp #1 to work in factories. About 100 enlisted men from Camp #2 were sent to Davao Penal Colony. At Camp #1 they called for two groups of personnel - one of 1000 and one of 400. These were to be officers and men alike. The requirements for the first group were that they could stand a sea voyage; and for the second group, in addition to the sea voyage, they also had to be technicians. They stated that the 400 would go to Japan and the 1000 to Davao. I do not know the exact number that were called for from Camp #2 but they all went to Japan from Camp #2. At this time there were approximately 12,000 in Cabanatuan Camps, including 2500 in the hospital. The Japanese indicated that Camp #2 would be abolished and there would be altogether only about 8000 left at Camp #1, including the hospital, when transfers were effected. I have no information as to what happened after the thousand men group left Camp #1, October 26, 1942 but inasmuch as no other prisoners arrived at Davao between that time and April 4, 1943 and no large working parties have been reported elsewhere in the Philippines by our guerrila spies, I assume that either the Japanese abandoned the plan, or sent approximately 5000 men prisoners to Japan.

The trip from Manila to Davao required eleven days and was made on

about a 7000 ton British built vessel. There were 969 prisoners, of whom two died on the way. We were placed in two holds. There was not room for all hands to lie down even though side by side, with the result that many remained top-side, in spite of the fact that it rained every night. The Japanese made no effort to identify this vessel as having prisoners-of-war on board. The food was the best any of us had had since being captured consisting mainly of canned corned beef from our Cavite Navy Yard pre-war supplies. We disembarked at the Lasang Lumber Dock near Davao City about 0800, November 6th. We were kept in the sun without food until one o'clock, given rice, then marched 17 miles to Davao Penal Colony. We were stopped twice. We arrived at the penal colony at 0100, November 7.

The Davao Penal Colony was operated by the Bureau of Prisons and contained about two thousand convicts. All but 150 of these convicts were transferred to the Filipino Prison near Puerta Princessa, Palawan. The 150 convicts who were left to aid in the management of the farm were the hardened criminals, all of them homicides. Prior to the war this colony was not only self-sufficient for two thousand convicts, but sold considerable produce to the surrounding inhabitants.

After arrival we found that the Japanese expected this to be a work camp and there were now approximately 2,000 prisoners in all, as all American prisoners captured in the Visayan Islands and Mindanao were in the Davao Camp. Lt. Col. Moriat Cabanatuan, if he knew prisoners were wanted for work, did not tell the American Camp Commander, with the result that the party which left Cabanatuan was composed largely of sick and undesirable personnel. There were a few volunteers; and in the case of the Navy and Marine personnel, almost all were volunteers including

myself. The Davao Camp Commander, Major Hida, was very angry because of our physical condition, however he insisted on all hands working unless actually hospitalized. At the time I escaped, of the 2000 prisoners about 1100 were working and the other 900 were in the hospital. The Japanese made no effort to distinguish between officers and men in types of work, and all along had made every effort to break down the internal discipline between American officers and men. They have succeeded in this to a great extent. Enlisted men of the Navy were head and shoulders above those of the Army in this respect as well as in many others. I have seen Lt. Colonels and Commanders up to the age of forty-five years old working in rice paddies in mud knee high, planting and harvesting rice. I have personally cleaned out Japanese latrines and sewage disposals. No kind of work is too low for the Japanese to assign to Americans. Although there was much useful work which could have been done in the way of planting the colony farms, we were not allowed to do this but were assigned unnecessary tasks. Had we been able to work usefully, we could have produced enough food on the colony adequately to feed ourselves, but the Japs did not want us to do so. At the time of my departure we had sixty officers logging to furnish 1000 logs over a three-month period to a Japanese firm in Davao City. The agricultural facilities of the camp were so reduced that they supplied almost no food for our own use, as much of what we grew was turned over to the Japanese themselves. There were on April 4, 1945, approximately 250 Japanese in the camp.

Most of the Japanese are clerks and the guards are mainly young recruits from Formosa with very little training. There are some Filipino administrators who administered the convict colony before the war. The

Superintendent is a Mr. Robin, not to be trusted. The Assistant Superintendent was Mr. Juan Acosta, a capable and trustworthy man who has befriended the Americans at every opportunity. There were also civilian evacuees from Davao to the number of about 20 as well as 150 Filipino convicts present. I understand from information obtained about a week after I escaped that all Filipinos were moved out of the colony on account of the escape and 200 Japanese soldiers moved in, but that no retaliation was taken upon Americans. Whether the Filipinos removed included the convicts or not, I do not know.

A Japanese sentry had murdered in cold blood an Army hospital corps man named McFee four days before I escaped. Through guerilla spies we learned the Japanese have indicated that they believed we escaped for the purpose of getting guerillas and attacking the prison camp in retaliation for the murder of McFee, and that was the reason for the additional 200 guards.

At Davao the working prisoners lived in 8 large barracks. These barracks are wooden with galvanised tin roofs, while those at Cabanatuan were all bamboo with nipa roofs. At Davao our living quarters were more cramped even than at Cabanatuan. There were no recreational facilities at all during the week, but on Sunday afternoons we could play two softball games, which meant that very few people could ever take part in any athletic endeavor.

On Sunday, April 4, our escape was made and details of it will be the subject of a special enclosure.

Details of Escape

I was the officer in charge of a working detail which harvested coffee on the plantation. Major Mellnik and two Army sergeants, Spielman and Marshall, assisted me upon this detail, which included approximately 35 officers of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, all over 40 years of age. The reason for so many assistants was that my primary aim was to see that enough extra food was stolen so that we could build up the health of those older officers. At first we had a Japanese guard on the detail, but when the Japanese later reduced the number of guards in the Colony this coffee detail was one from which they removed the guard. It was obvious that without a guard we could probably make an escape and get about eight hours head start before the Japanese found out about it. Early in January the three assistants and I commenced making plans to escape. We decided to wait until we could all build up our health and also to feel that if we got near New Guinea and were picked up, that there was a fifty-fifty chance that it would be by one of our own forces.

I was able to receive radio news from San Francisco approximately every other day due to the fact that there was a Filipino, one Mr. Candido Abrima, formerly cashier of the Philippine National Bank in Davao City, assigned to advise me in the harvesting of coffee. Mr. Abrima was a close friend of the assistant superintendent, Mr. Juan Acenas. Acenas had a radio in his home and a hidden antenna and so was able to receive San Francisco news and pass it on to me via Abrima.

To build up our health, Major Mellnik, Sergeant Spielman and I found that with the exercise of considerable caution we would be able to enter the Japanese chicken farm and relieve them of some of their charges. During the months of January, February and March, we stole 138 chickens. These we used not only to feed ourselves but also to supplement the diet of the officers working for us and to obtain supplies for the escape.

In early March I was approached by Captain A. C. Shofner, U.S. Marine Corps, who told me that there were six officers who had been preparing plans for an escape and would like for me to take charge of the party if I so desired. Both escaping groups felt that we would have to make our escape from the Island itself by sailboat, as we had no information available regarding the extensive guerilla activity and radio or submarine contact between Mindanao and Australia. We had heard rumors that there were some guerillas to the north of the camp and fairly close by, and we hoped that after our escape we might receive help from them.

The group intending to escape now consisted of the following men: Lieut. Commander M. H. McCoy, U.S. Navy; Major (CAC) S. M. Mellnik, U.S.A.; Major (AC). W. E. Dyess; Captain A. C. Shofner, U.S.M.C.; First Lieutenant Jack Hawkins, U.S.M.C.; First Lieutenant Michael Deberevich, U.S.M.C.; Second Lieutenant (AC, Eng.) L. A. Beelens, U.S.A.; Second Lieutenant (AC) Samuel Grashio, U.S.A.; Sergeant R. B. Spielman, U.S.A.; and Sergeant Paul Marshall, U.S.A. Through Mr. Aburim we made arrangements to obtain native guides and contacted Benigno de la Cruz and

Victorio Jumarang for this purpose. Victor had been three times to the barrio where we thought we might find guerrillas; but his last trip had been made a year previously. Victor spoke very little English; Ben and his companion spoke excellent English as well as many native dialects. Ben is an example of one of the higher-type, intelligent Filipinos and was a doctor's apprentice, having had considerable experience in taking care of the Filipino convicts. Both of these Filipinos were convicted of homicide. Neither wanted any financial reward for aiding us, but only the opportunity of accompanying us to Australia and the assurance that, if successful in reaching American forces, we would intercede to obtain a pardon for them.

Lieutenant Beelens constructed a home-made sextant for me, and from a book on science and astronomy I was able to obtain the right ascension and declination of all principle stars and also the equation of time. From a book of Army survey tables I was able to obtain the altitude corrections. I could compute the right ascension and the declination of the sun and so felt prepared to navigate with reasonable limits. I also had a good Hamilton pocket watch which had a fairly constant rate and whose error I determined by comparing the watch with the time of local apparent noon. I found, when I finally was able to get a time tick by radio, that I was fifteen seconds off.

Captain Shofner and three other members of the party were working on a plowing detail of which Captain Shofner was temporarily in charge. This detail worked in various parts of the Colony and used Indian steers for plowing. Their basic area was very close to that section of the jungle

from which we intended to make our escape, while my coffee area was on the opposite side of the Colony.

The problem of taking out ahead of time what equipment and supplies we could obtain was not too difficult. One of our main difficulties throughout the whole plan was to prevent other Americans from finding out that we intended to escape because, unfortunately, the morale of some was so low that they would have reported us, feeling that our escape might bring restrictions upon them. For this reason, for example, I was unable to bring out of the camp a complete roster of all prisoners there. If we set out articles of clothing, blankets, shelter halves, etc., it was quite possible that our next-door neighbors would notice these things. Undoubtedly there were some suspicions aroused, but there was nothing definite enough to go on, and outside of a few comments nothing was done.

We decided to escape on a Sunday, as on Sunday we could go out as a depleted working party taking only those who intended to escape and thereby reducing to a minimum the possibility of any retaliation on the Americans. Captain Shofner's plowing detail always went out as a working party of four on Sunday to change the grazing location of the steers and to water them, so that their going out would excite no suspicion. My detail did not generally work on Sunday, but without obtaining permission of the Japs on the previous day, I decided to take the other six out, and if we were questioned as to that we were going out to build a rain shelter in the coffee plantation. We selected March 28 as the day for the escape, and on March 26 we commenced sending what equipment and supplies that could be spared out to the jungle. On March 14 we rehearsed the route

of escape by going through the entire procedure without any equipment whatsoever and proceeding to our rendezvous point in the jungle in order to find out if the Japanese guards at their various posts, or the Japanese tower sentries, who are equipped with binoculars, would make any effort to stop us. We were successful in reaching the rendezvous and then returned to the camp.

Captain Shofner's group, less Major Dyess, took their equipment out to the plowing "shack" on March 26 and 27. It was there put into five gallon cans and sneaked into the jungle near the rendezvous point. My party, plus Major Dyess, took our gear into the coffee plantation and assembled it there. Saturday morning all of this latter gear was placed in a bull cart and covered over with small tree trunks which were ostensibly for the purpose of erecting a fence, in case the Japanese should inquire. Major Dyess, who was the regular bull cart driver, accompanied by Major Mellnik, drove this bull cart near to the jungle and at an appointed spot was met by a couple of the plowers who carried the gear into the jungle. This bull cart had to pass one of the main Japanese sentry houses which almost invariably stopped it to obtain fruit as the bull cart usually carried fruit from the colony orchard to the Japanese quartermaster. A burlap bag of star apples was placed on the rear of the bull cart to appease the Japanese sentries. The plan worked without a hitch.

About 1100, March 27, Lieutenant Kusumi, known as the "Crown Prince of Davao," due to his proclivity to slap Americans, made an inspection of working parties for the purpose of seeing if they were using forbidden

foods in the preparation of the noon meal. At 1100 he inspected the plowing detail and searched the musette bags of all members of the detail. In Captain Hustner's bag was a large bottle containing 1,000 tablets of quinine and some other bottles of medicine, but no food. Fortunately, Lieutenant Hosume had a single-track mind and did not have his suspicions aroused by the presence of medicine. After slapping around all members of the plowing detail, Lieutenant Hosume left and almost ran into Captain Carberry, an Army Chaplain, who was carrying two five-gallon cans containing blankets, and other suspicious supplies. Father Carberry saw Hosume first and ducked off into the banana groves.

We had added Father Carberry to our party as we felt that we would obtain much more cooperation from the Filipinos if we had a Catholic priest with us. Unfortunately, Father Carberry was unable to accompany us as on March 31 he became ill with amoebic dysentery.

On Saturday night, March 27, we discovered that all hands would have to work the following day in the rice fields, somewhat in the nature of a punishment for the fact that Lieutenant Hosume had found working details cooking unauthorized food for lunch. This completely upset our plans for leaving on March 28 and we postponed the date of departure until April 4. However, much of our equipment was now stowed into the jungle and it was considered too risky to try to bring it back in as the Japanese frequently make thorough inspections of officers coming back from work, to make sure that they are not smuggling in fruit. There was considerable risk in this equipment being found as naturally it was not very far into the jungle and people do roam as far as we had our equipment hidden.

On Sunday, April 4, we carried out our original plan without incident. We all presented a somewhat bulky appearance in passing the main gate where the Japanese sentry had to check us off as working parties and we had to make excuses to our American companions who noted that we had taken out our mosquito nets. My excuse was that I had found bed bugs in it and was taking it out to wash it during the noon hour. In going out I had to take my group of six in the direction of the coffee plantation which was opposite to that in which I desired to go, and I took a short cut on the way which had been expressly forbidden the previous day by a special order from the Japanese. We then ducked into coconut groves and worked out way back to the point where we could cross the main road, less than 50 yards from where I originally started. There was no earthly reason for an American group to be using the road at that spot on Sunday but although we passed within 20 yards of the Jap sentry who saw us, he said nothing. This crossing and getting out of the main gate with our equipment was probably the biggest hazard encountered.

At this point I will insert an exact copy of day-to-day notes which I jotted down from April 4 until May 15, inclusive.

L F O
of Expedition Commanded by
M. H. McCoy, Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy

MEMBERS:

Lieutenant Commander M. H. McCoy, U.S. Navy
Major (CAC) C. M. Mallait, U.S.A.
Major (AC) H. A. Dyess
Captain A. C. Shofner, U.S.M.C.
First Lieutenant Jack Hawkins, U.S.M.C.
First Lieutenant Michael Yaborvich, U.S.M.C.R.
Second Lieutenant (C.E. Engr.) L. A. Bonlone, U.S.A.
Second Lieutenant (AC) Samuel Grashio, U.S.A.
Sergeant L. D. Spielman, U.S.A.

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Sergeant Paul Marshall, U.S.A.
Benigno de la Cruz
Victorio Jumarung

April 4 - at 0800 I left in charge of 5 others as a "Coffee Detail," ostensibly to build a rain shelter. We all carried a little more than usual, such as mosquito nets hidden in shelter halves, but cleared the gate without comment. Capt. Shofner followed shortly thereafter with remaining three Americans as a plowing detail to shift steers. This is a regular Sunday detail and excited no comment. 0830 - My group met Shofner's at plower's shack and proceeded into jungle where we assembled our gear. Some of this gear had to be moved across the road where Jap sentry could spot us. Our equipment was in deplorable condition. 0900 - Victor Jumarung appeared but was without Ben de la Cruz. Apparently they wanted to make certain we really meant to escape. Victor returned to get Ben. The two of them arrived about 1030, during which time some of us had a few uneasy moments for fear the Filipinos had let us down. 1030 - Started for Lugnog. After about 200 yards, Victor, the guide, apparently lost the trail but continued to travel at random for about 1/2 hour. He then admitted he was lost. I decided to travel North by compass, when possible, and otherwise to lean towards the East. The purpose of going North was to get well away from the Penal Colony. 1830 - Stopped for night. Travel had been difficult and getting easier all the time. There were many streams to cross by wading or climbing down trees along the bank to make a walk below the surface. Needless to mention, we were all wet, as it rained most of the afternoon. Made camp for the night near a stream. Water was ankle deep. Made structures of boughs to

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keep us off the ground. Although we and the bedding were wet, most of us slept during the night as we were so tired. The water rose during the night so that some of us had our tails in it by morning. We each ate 1/2 can of devilled ham with cold rice before retiring, our only food since breakfast.

April 5 - Monday. Up at dawn and ate 1/2 can of corned beef each. Started on an Easterly course favoring the North. Reason: going directly North we would have to pick up a trail to Manila in order to locate ourselves, and after Victor's initial display of ignorance, I was afraid he might miss the trail to Manila. While if we went East, we were certain to cross the railroad, which anyone could recognize, and then travel up the railroad. After about two hours travel we got into a swamp. Water over the knees and "Coogon" or sword grass higher than our heads. At times we could scarcely travel 50 yards in an hour. Ken and Victor led the way by cutting apath, while some of us carried their packs. By 1400 I was completely exhausted, and most of the others within 10 minutes of the same state. I had been feeling ill from the time I awoke. At 1400 we backtracked about 10 minutes walk to a place where a log, large enough to have its top above water, lay. Here we made camp. Surrounded by water and jungle we were still able to build a fire on top of the log and had rice with 1/2 can of corned beef each. Also hot tea. We built a rude structure for sleeping above the water and turned in. 1800- Heard unmistakable sounds of rifle and machine gun fire to the northward and not too distant, perhaps 3 or 5 kilometers.

April 6 - Tuesday. All had slept well as we were so tired, and I felt O.K., much to surprise, as whatever had been bothering me had completely vanished. I decided to move to the northward, hoping to clear the swamp, which drained to the eastward, before turning East again. Ate a hot breakfast of oatmeal and started out feeling much better than the previous day's start on cold corned beef. Instead of all moving together slowly, all but three eat, while those three cut their way through without packs. This method was far less tiring and about 1500 the way because much less swamp, and we travelled faster in a generally NE direction. At about 1400 we picked up a trail. About 100 yards down this trail we came onto the railroad tracks and great was our joy. Investigation showed signs of recent travel, including what appeared to be prints of a dap shoe. Accordingly, the two Filipinos and Sgt. Spielman went ahead to reconnoitre while the rest made camp for the night. Spielman reported that no one had been seen, but three nipa huts were found, one recently occupied. We had hot tea and cold corned beef for supper. Built the usual structure for sleeping. Major. Mallmik suffered a bad cut on the left hand, while using a bolo.

April 7 - Wednesday. Up at dawn and under way at once, without breakfast. Went straight down the R. R. tracks. Found definite evidence of Japanese presence at some time, such as broken sack holding dap cookies. Found two clips of .303 cal. ammunition and surmised we were near the scene of the firing heard Monday night. Stopped nearby, about five kilometers from starting point, at a P.A. barracks, empty now, but

recently occupied. Had breakfast here, at Kinamayan. While Capt. Dyess was on guard he and two armed Filipinos espied each other simultaneously. The two natives disappeared quickly, although Dyess called to them. After breakfast went up R.R. track about 1 km. and met a native who took us to the house of a soldier of the guerillas. While runners were sent ahead for the "headman" we were given eggs, rice and cassavas. Here I ate my first baloot (2 of them) and they weren't bad at all. We bathed and shaved here. After a couple of hours Sgt. Casiano de Juan appeared, with pistol drawn. He seemed almost alone, but after he satisfied himself that we were Americans and not aids of the Japs, about 30 of his soldiers sprang from the woods, now that the fear of an ambush was over. All were armed with either rifles or revolvers, and two had were submachine. Sgt. Casiano, in the future to be referred to as "Big Boy," is a living picture of the motion picture ideal of the big-hearted latin-American bandit, who protects the poor, and is generally played by Leo Carrillo. Big Boy is much younger than Carrillo and has a very engaging smile. He seemed overjoyed to see us. He led us to Lugnog and we occupied a building in the center of the barrio, amply large enough for us. The entire barrio population gathered there to watch us unroll our gear, etc. Big Boy made all arrangements for our food which was carried to us three times daily. Many people made gifts of chickens and eggs to us. We were beginning to get the benefits of the justly famed Filipino hospitality. These people did not have plenty for themselves, our presence might mean retaliation upon them by the Japs, but they were most eager to share their food with us. We stayed here until about 0000 April 10, less than 10 miles from

the nearest Jap outpost at Anibogan and about 12 miles airline from the Prison Camp. Yet we had no fears for our security. While here we learned that the previous Monday a number of Jap soldiers from the colony encountered a Filipino patrol at Zimmayan. The Japs were looking for us. The Filipinos reported that they had 16 men against 85 Japs; suffered no losses and killed 10 Japs. One of the two Filipinos who saw Capt. Dyess April 7, said he attempted to fire on him, but that his rifle misfired. He thought Dyess was a Jap, and the two of them reported to their leader that 100 Japs were coming.

April 10 - Saturday. 0900 left Lugnaog for Luna, 4 kms., arriving at 1015. We were guided by Sgt. Aquilino Baguiled. Luna was formerly known as Abaca. It is a plantation owned by Mr. Onofre Beldua. There is a sugar mill here. Mr. Beldua was very hospitable. For lunch we had a drink made from sugar cane which looked and tasted like wine but much more powerful. The food here was excellent; and we had pork from a pig given to us by Big Boy. Fried eggs for breakfast and plenty of chicken.

April 11 - Sunday. 1000. Left to Sampao, 5 kms. away, arriving at 1140. We stayed here with Mr. Jacinto Royo, brother of the mayor of Lumpnaog. Again amply fed.

April 12 - Monday. 1000. We went about halfway back towards Luna to a small market place where all hands nearby had gathered. There was cockfighting, etc., and we ate lunch there. After lunch we returned to Sampao, picked up our baggage and went on to Kapungagan, where we stayed with Mr. Eligio David, a former resident of Davao. He is the leader in this area, and although a civilian, also is in charge of the military.

Here we remained until we could make arrangements with Capt. Claro Laureta for moving on.

GENERAL SITUATION: There is an organization in Davao Province under the command of Capt. Claro C. Laureta. During the war he commanded the Constabulary Battalion, Davao, and never surrendered. His present command contains a great majority of volunteers. Lts. Rivera and Tuvilla and two others are his assistants, all PC officers. Capt. Laureta is a dictator in the district, which he administers under military law. A certain portion of his command tills the soil, while the others patrol. In addition, the civilians are each requested to contribute a certain amount of food per week for the soldiers. They are very willing to do this as the Japs are kept out. In order to obtain our objective, it was almost essential to contact Capt. Laureta and obtain his cooperation. On April 8, runners were sent to Capt. Laureta with a request that he arrange a meeting. As it turned out, he was very suspicious, as the Japs had been using all types of tricks to ensnare him. He moved eventually to Kapuyagan where we met Lts. Rivera and Tuvilla on Tuesday, April 15. They requested permission to examine our effects, as Capt. Laureta wanted to be certain of our bonafides. I permitted this, although deemed the greater part of it unnecessary. Having satisfied himself as to our identities, Rivera dispatched a runner to Capt. Laureta who arrived at noon, Saturday, April 17. He is very pleasant and willing to cooperate with us in every way. I had two courses of action to choose from. First was a 7-day hike to Cateel on the East Coast where I would try to secure a sailing vessel, and have it

provisioned for a trip to New Guinea. Second course was an 8 or 9-day trip by walking and bancas to Ampara, just short of Butuan, provincial capital of Agusan, at the mouth of the Agusan river. At Ampara, we expected to be able to contact the main guerilla C.P., which is in radio contact with GHQ, Australia, according to a letter written March 21, by Lt. Col. McElish, U.S.A. If so, we would ask that a submarine pick us up, just before commencing her return trip to her base. If no success from this quarter, we could still make an East Coast port and try the original scheme. There is no need to enumerate the pros and cons of each course. I decided on the second one, and Capt. Laureta is now busily engaged arranging for our supplies and cargadores.

April 16 - Friday. Lt. Cebervich became ill in the afternoon. Had a fever. Was chilly the night before. I gave him 30 grs. quinine in two doses.

April 17 - Saturday. 30 grs. quinine to Mike (Lt. Cebervich) in forenoon. He vomited all it. Had fever still but not so high.

April 18 - Sunday. No quinine for Mike. His symptoms not those of malaria, particularly which he has had several times before. He says he has the "flu" although if so, it is different type from ours in the States. Gave him anything but aspirin, he has no appetite. Today in market days witnessed several cockfights in P's box on one, and won. Had a dance in the open from 1700 to 1900. After dinner, dancing continued by the light of an almost full moon, a beautiful night.

April 19 - Monday. Mike was heavy in the cockles about 0430, but ate a good breakfast at 0730. A fat bull carabao was killed. The meat

will be heavily salted and sun-dried, and will then keep about 3 months. This is further proof of the abounding generosity of the Filipinos. Carabaos are few and far between in this area, and this one was brought from several kilometers away. Enough of the dried meat will be retained for a possible trip by sailing vessel. Present indications are that we will not depart until Wednesday, the 21st.

April 20 - Tuesday. Mike's health is much better. The cargadores arrived with supplies. We will carry with us about 20 live chickens, 110 lbs. dried carabao, 5 dozen eggs and plenty of rice. Acquired a Colt, .45 cal. revolver today. Spent last evening singing songs by moonlight.

April 21 - Wednesday. 0600. Under way for Amparo, Agusan. The Davids were very sorry to have us go and Mrs. David shed many tears. We, too, felt badly about it, as they had been our very good friends. Mr. David hiked with us. At Camp Victor, Capt. Laureta's post before surrender, we stopped for tuba and to wait for the bancas. We used 5 bancas in all. They were pulled, pushed, or poled up the Libuganon River, depending upon the depth of water. The current is quite strong, about 3 or 4 knots. Stopped at noon for lunch at a Chinaman's place. Our chow had been prepared at David's so had only to be heated. The Chinaman had a kind of rice wine which smelled terribly and tasted like kerosene. We just couldn't take more than a sip, although the Chinaman got quite drunk. 1400 - Under way again and stopped at 1730 at Florida, a former small camp of Laureta's. Here we were given an example of how Filipinos can throw things together. In no time at all they had built a serviceable table, served coffee, and then rice and meat. All times in this log so far are Zone - 9. Darkness is

Darkness is about 1900 and dawn at 0600. We did not go very far today. It is very hard work moving these bancas upstream. Our party consists of 36 in all.

April 22 - Thursday. Breakfast, at 0630, of rice, soft boiled eggs, meat, vegetables and coffee. Under way at 0745. We are making better progress today, but we have a long haul before we arrive at Lt. Rivera's camp. The river bottom is very rocky. I don't see how the cargadores manage to walk all day on them, pushing or pulling as they go. Passed a hut inhabited by a character called locally "Mahatma Ghandi" because of the decided resemblance. He really does, is very emaciated, practically no teeth, etc. Spent 20 years in the States, but for the past 8 years living here in the jungle with a crazy mountain woman. The mountain people, called Atas, are non-Christians, ignorant, live in tree houses. At 1130 stopped for lunch. Had rice, vegetables, chicken, fresh tomatoes and coffee. Under way at 1415. Passed several tree houses. I sure would like to take a movie of this trip. Stopped at dark at Cupitan, the post of Lt. Rivera. We expected to find less civilization as we went further along, but here we find a large native house, had omelet and chickens with our rice. Mrs. Rivera is here and two or three other women. They moved here into a complete wilderness last August, but now have corn, camotes and about 150 chickens. The Rivera's child is two years old now; they are expecting another in about 3 months. Hope she can get to Davao. Rained most of the night.

April 23 - Friday. A shorter haul for today, so slept until 0715. Had rice, cottage cheese, omelet, carabao meat and coffee with carabao milk for breakfast. Also tomatoes. 0830 - Under way.

having a very difficult time due to the current and high water. Made exactly nothing after one hour of straining at one stage, but managed to get across the river where the going was better. 1400 - Stopped for lunch by Ata's house. Visited it; occupant not at home. We have several Atas with us. They use spears, and bows and arrows, the latter being poisoned. 1530 - Under way again. Rained sporadically. 1830 - Stopped for night at ex-settlement of Atas, consisting of 4 houses. The first two days of this trip we covered a distance normally made by a Filipino runner in half a day. However, he would transmit light and must swim occasionally. There is no point in our travelling faster than our equipment.

April 24 - Saturday. 0700. Under way after another excellent breakfast. 0730 - met about 3 families of Atas floating downstream on bamboo rafts. They probably live where we had lunch yesterday. The women's breasts are no larger than the men's. (P.S. Just passed another raft. I was wrong about the breasts.) Passing a small group of Atas on the shore. They are ever ready to move. To make these temporary homes they move their raft upon the beach, raised a few inches above the ground by stones, and construct a rude grass roof over them. We stopped tonight at Kapalong, a small outpost of Laureta's of about 6 men. Here we secured a different group of cargadores. All but 2 of those who brought us up the river returned to their houses. We got the head man of the Atas and requisitioned Cargadores from him.

April 25 - Sunday. Under way about 0600. The late start was due to getting the new cargadores ready. Our party now consists of 46 men.

The travelling was really rugged today. Climbing hills, slippery from recent rains, crossing streams many times, wading in them and in swamps. The streams in general were rocky and very hard on shoes. When we stopped for lunch I was very fatigued, but as the afternoon went on I felt stronger and stronger and was far less tired than the majority of my group when we arrived at a jungle camp about dark (1900). Almost at once it rained cats and dogs. The roof leaked badly. All our clothes were soaked and no way to dry them; so we passed a most uncomfortable night. Those who really needed sympathy were the Atas. Each of them carried an enormous load on his back, generally about 100 lbs. How they managed to walk, climb, or stumble all day long is beyond me, and I would never have believed it if I had not seen it. Then, at the day's end, they had to build themselves a rude shelter in the rain. (Walked 25 kms.)

April 26 - Monday. Up at dawn (0600). The Sargadores were up earlier, ate before us and left about 0700, while we left at 0800. It was misery to put on all wet clothes. Today was similar to yesterday in the type of trail, but there was more walking on sharp stones. Shoes were definitely going bad. In the late afternoon it rained hard, although it was not possible to get much wetter as the wading gets us wet up to our hips and I could wring perspiration from my shirt. Arrived at a deserted barrio, Binakayan, about 1800. It is the southernmost barrio in Agusan Province. The inhabitants went to the hills, scared of the Japs. No Jap would ever get near the place, it is so far into the hinterland. Most of the huts were in bad shape, rotten flooring and leaky roofs. However, we had fresh coconut juice and built fires for drying our clothes and passed a very comfortable night (by comparison with others).

April 27 - Tuesday. A shorter trip today so left about 0900. The trail was more slippery and much more swampy. Very little of the rocky creek beds to travel. Made a leisurely 2 1/2 hour stop for lunch by a river, and arrived at Johnson about 1700. There is a very small outpost of the Agusan forces here. We were very comfortable here, tuba and coconut milk available. The inhabitants are very poor and have no rice or corn. Eat mainly camotes and sago, a product of the palm tree. Here Lt. Abunda (In Ch) had a young pig killed for us. The rain held off till after dark and we were again able to dry our clothes. Six of the ten of us now have no shoes fit to walk in. Accordingly, I decided to send those 6 to Loreto in 2 bancas or barotos the following day, while the other 4, including myself, walked. By trail, which goes direct, it is a half-day trip, but by boat, an all-day affair.

April 28 - Wednesday.. The 6 shoeless men left about 0700. My group left at 0815 and made by far the most rapid hike yet. We fairly ran at times to keep up with our guide. Stopped only 15 minutes for rest the entire trip and arrived Loreto at 1250. The trail was very difficult, being a swamp 3/4 of the way. We were filthy on arrival but had ample time to wash and dry our clothes. Lt. Antonio, CO Comdr. and Lt. Casal, comdr. of the Loreto detachment, were here. The post is quite military, and clean and we were pleased to find several American flags, the first seen since the surrender. Compared to Davao Province food is scarce. But we had lots of dried fish and a fried egg apiece. We expected the other 6 about 1700. At 1300 Doherwich arrived with one guide, walking barefooted. Said he had gone on ahead because the others

were so slow and seemed to be worried lest Maj. Wellmik be upset about it, as he hadn't asked to leave the tent. Just after dark the remainder arrived. We had been very worried about them. Their feet were in bad shape and so were they; and madder than hornets. Dobervich had gone off with the only competent guide; the other got lost. Fortunately, a third native in their party thought he knew the way and was able to get on the right trail after the party had gone 40 minutes out of the way. Walking through the swamp in the dark was brutal, there are many thorns and boughs to stub one's toes on. It was inexcusable on the part of Dobervich and will probably keep Shofner quiet about how wonderful Marines are, for at least 24 hours. The 6 shoeless were "taken in." They travelled by banca from Johnson to Novigrueias in about 2 hours and were then given an excellent lunch. During this time the guerilla Lieutenant and the mayor gave the boys a pep talk about the foot trail direct from there to Loreto. By banca it is round-about and upstream, through swamps and is hard work. The escorts didn't want to work, so the Americans were told the trail was level, dry and easy walking and could be traversed in 2 hours. Then as Exhibit "A" they brought in a young girl in a clean white dress who said that she had just arrived from Loretto, had worn that dress on the walk, and although it took her 3 hours, a man could make it in two. The men bit hook, line and sinker, and excusably so; especially after such a fine meal. Actually the trail was neither level nor dry, but just like the one we traversed. I felt very sorry for them as it was bad enough to have to hike barefooted, let alone get lost. This is our last day of feet travel on the way to Ampare. I

will mention a couple of additional items which are applicable to all four days travel on foot. The jungle is full of leeches. They are very thin and travel with a jack knife motion and can worm their way anywhere. Although we pull our socks over our trouser legs, they wear leggings, they can still get on our feet. They blow up like a balloon with blood and can't be safely pulled off. They will drop off by applying fire or tobacco leaf to them. We got enough on us, but the Filipinos, being barefooted, got many, many more, and their feet are bloody messes by the end of a day. For two days of our trip, we went ahead of the cargadores and used a child. Ita about 12 years old as a guide. We named him "betel nut". He carried a 2 1/2 gal. can of rice on his back. They use straps passed over the shoulders, and another strap over the head. They have great endurance and are said to be able to hike 3 days without food so long as they can chew betel nuts. We carried our own rice with us and all other provisions. It is remarkable what good food the Filipinos are able to produce under adverse circumstances.

We received very good news from Lt. Antonio, which indicated that there is a radio transmitter and receiver near Ampare, and that subs have already been landing supplies in Mindanao. Will get more info at Ampare.

April 29 - Thursday. At 0300 a carabao was killed and prepared for us. We had fish, rice and carabeo for breakfast and took some of the latter with us. At 0530 under way in five bancas going down the Umayan River. Our party consisted of 16 Filipinos plus our original 12.

1115 - Entered the Agusan River. I noticed many floating houses. Those houses are not generally used for mobile purposes but to adjust themselves to the rise and fall of the river. Generally several families get together and land is planted, etc. Had a very short trip today. Stopped at a floating house about 1130 and cooked lunch. Only travelled for one hour after lunch until we arrived at Teeguma, a group of about 5 floating houses. One was vacated for us and here we spent the night. Played some bridge in the afternoon. The night was disturbed many times by some half-grown kittens yowling and trying to get to where their mama had been located before we moved her out. Apparently mama deserted her kittens without feeding them. Lt. Antonio said he was leaving for Amparo tomorrow with 14 men. We are taking four days this trip, the reason being availability of suitable stopping places.

April 30 - Friday. Under way early at 0750 as the day's trip will be considerably longer than yesterday's. 1235 - Stopped for lunch. 1435 - Under way.. 1630 - Arrived Talacogan. The Japs have never been here. There are 2 Dutch priests here. No soldiers are stationed here. People not so cooperative. 2200 - Listened to radio at priest's home. Not loud enough to catch much news.

May 1 - Saturday. Most of us went to church, although only one of us is a Catholic. 0820 - Under way. 1300 - Stopped for lunch. 1530 - Under way. The long time consumed at lunch was due to the fact that the rice cooked for us this morning at Talacogan was undercooked and spoiled and had to be thrown out. The cooking was done by Talacoganites. 2000 - Arrived Esperanza. A long, hard day, the last hour travelling

after dark. Due to difficulties in getting food, etc., had supper at 2400.

May 2 - Sunday. 0930. Under way. Lateness due to preparation of rice from paley and changing bancas. We secured a large, light one in exchange for our heavy, slow one. Met the wife of the Mayor of Davao City at the beginning of the war. He is badly wanted by the Japs. Her son is very ill with malaria so gave her quinine. Today's trip should require not over 8 hours of paddling. Stopped for lunch at Las Nieves where a fiesta was going on. 1740. Arrived Ampare. There is an American ex-civilian, now 2nd Lt. in the Army, here, named Nestor. We were quartered here for the night. Food supply is very limited. Learned that Japs have reinforced Butuan and have complete control in the immediate sector only.

May 3 - Monday. 0830 - Departed with Capt. Shafer, Lt. Turilla and escort under guidance of Lt. Viajar for Medina, HQ of Lt. Col. McClish. First hour by banca took us very close to Japs' river outpost. At 1200 ate lunch at home of an Attorney, Mr. Banag, where there was a fiesta going on. We were 1 1/2 miles from Butuan. 1330 - Departed. Left trail and took National Road 6 kilometers from Butuan. Hiked 10 kms. along the road to Buena-vista, arriving 1700. A Capt. Baxter is in charge there. After eating we left by sailing banca for Medina at 2300. Supposed to be a 12 hour trip.

May 4 - Tuesday. What little wind exists is unfavorable. Under these conditions the banca is propelled by one or two of the crew using a sculling motion. 0730 - Put in to Cayagan, a small, dirty barrio to

secure something for breakfast. We had only rice on board. The Mayor was very old and spoke Spanish. The people were kind, giving us bananas, camotes, 3 eggs, 2 chickens and a kid. They killed and skinned the latter. I left the Mayor some quinine. It is the first time I've ever eaten goat or kid, and it was excellent; no odor whatsoever. The sun poured down on us all day long. About 30 we stopped at Linugos and got some coconuts, 2 ripe pineapples, fish and a little sugar and coffee. Had a real feast tonight. The wind sprang up but was exactly dead ahead, so our progress is still slow. Lt. Tuvilla has been seasick the entire time. I neglected to mention that Mr. Erickenbeck is with us. He is a 40-year old Britisher, born in Ceylon, whose claim to fame is that he has never slept with a white woman.

May 5 - Wednesday. At last Medina is in sight!! I was beginning to think it did not exist. 0930 - Arrived at Medina. Lt.-Col. McClish is a very pleasant man and has done excellent work in organizing the area. Shofner and I had lunch with him at the home of ex-Governor Pelaez, a wealthy landowner. Lunch was excellent. McClish had an 11-piece orchestra play for us during the meal. We are staying at the home of Mr. Tomas Reyes. The people are very willing to help Americans here. Lt. Tuvilla and Mr. Erickenbeck left at midnight via a motor sailboat which was to pick up the remainder of my party whom I had instructed to be in Buenavista not later than May 6. I hated to leave Tuvilla and gave him $100.00 to buy salt for the soldiers. Sent 2 slips to Teresita (age 5 years).

May 7 - Thursday. A little before noon Shofner and I left with McClish for Gingoog, on horseback. I've not been on a horse for 15 years. We stopped for lunch about 5 miles along the road at the house of another Reyes. And wonder of wonders, had some real Canadian Club Whiskey. Also piano music with the delightful meal. Stopped only momentarily at Gingoog and rode 8 miles further to Anacan on business, where a Mr. Walters, manager of the lumber mill, resides. Returned to Gingoog and spent the night at the house of still another Reyes. We rode 20 miles today and I'm a bit sore but Shofner is much worse off with four running sores of good size on his rear.

May 7 - Friday. Called on Mr. Peters, an American, employed at Cavite by Pacific Air Base Contractors. He was shot by Leyte guerillas and suffered a bad hip wound. Now gets around on crutches but one leg is shorter than the other. In the afternoon, drove back in an alcohol-using Chevrolet, about 1931 vintage, to Medina or Kabug.

May 8 - Saturday. Met Maj. Childress. Learn that communications to GHQ are slow and none too satisfactory. Went to a local dance at Gingoog this evening. The dance is a benefit for the army which gets 50% of the intake and they also have a quaint custom of selling flowers from various ladies in the audience. If you buy a flower you must dance the next dance all by yourself with the lady from whom you bought the flower. After much discussion as to whether to return to Gingoog or to Medina for the night, we finally decided to return to Medina in a motor banca. We were late getting started and in going from the beach to the banca, a small gondola in which Col. McClish and Maj. Childress were

riding, sank about half way out. Each was carrying a small bag and his pistol belt and by the time they had reached the larger banca, they were both almost exhausted. A man in the banca threw Maj. Childress a line but as fast as Childress tried to heave himself aboard by the line, the boat-man kept paying out the line, much to Childress' annoyance. We finally arrived in Hodina about 0300.

May 9 - Sunday. Have practically no sleep as about 20 minutes after my return from the dance the preceding night, the remainder of the group with Maj. Hallmik arrived from Buenavista and I was busy all morning getting themsettled.

Today, ex-Governor Pelaez is 74 years old and had all Americans in the vicinity to his home for lunch. This evening we went to the fiesta at Dean Lunsod. It was very lovely. I wonderhow the Filipinos have managed to preserve their beautiful customs during the war.

May 10 - Monday. All of us had lunch with Capt. Sapanta at his home at Dean Lunsod. In the afternoon we returned to Hodina and Childress, Hallmik and myself left on Sapanta's motor-banca, our ultimate destination being Talakag. My intention was to see a Lt.-Commander Parsons, USNR, who had been left here by submarine in March, on a special intelligence mission.

May 11 - Tuesday. Arrived Baligasag about 0900 and went to the home of Capt. Formashon. A birthday party for his sister-in-law was in progress. It seems that everywhere we go in the Philippines this month, we stumble into parties or fiestas of one type or another which makes travelling a great pleasure. Here there was a piano and many

young ladies who knew how to play, so we enjoyed hearing many of our old favorites again. We left Balingasag in the afternoon in order to arrive at El Salvador by dawn. Capt. Sapunta had never been to El Salvador and could not be certain that he could lay a course direct to that barrio. It was necessary to arrive at dawn because the Japs have a patrol boat which leaves Cagayan at about dawn. During the night the wind blew up and it became quite rought and also made it more difficult to arrive at the exact spot we desired to reach.

May 12 - Wednesday. We lay to about an hour before daylight and when daylight broke we were able to see 3 small supply vessels between us and Cagayan, the nearest of which was only about 2500 yards distant and mounted a 3-inch gun in the bow. We were fortunate in that, had we left Balingasag an hour later we would probably have ended up in the middle of these 3 Japanese ships. We were naturally quite nervous about their reaction to seeing a large two-masted banca nearby but nothing happened and when they turned to go into the dock we followed discreetly behind them until we were opposite our port of debarkation. Had breakfast and lunch at El Salvador before proceeding, both afoot and by horseback, to Pagatpat, where we spent the night. Here I met Capt. Grinstead, an ex-civilian.

May 13- Thursday. Departed for Talakag about 0800 on horseback. The trail passes over a fairly high ridge and the country in general reminds one of farming country in innumerable places in the Middle West if it were not for coconut trees visible in almost any direction. The natives have planted corn in place of rice, which gives the countryside

this familiar appearance. After about 11 kms. we picked up a car in which we drove to the river. After ferrying the river we rode on a bus to Talakag arriving about 1800. Here I met Lt.-Col. Bowler and Lt.-Commander Parsons. I was very lucky to contact them as they had intended to depart this morning for Malaybalay. After talking to Parsons, I decided that there was no great hurry in my getting back to Bodiam and as I badly needed a rest, - I have been on the road almost continuously since April 6 - we decided to remain here until Bowler and Parsons return from the journey on which they started on the following day.

When Lieutenant Commander Parsons returned I met him near the coast and on May 23 left for the town of Misamis in the province of Misamis Occidental in which the headquarters of the Tenth Military District were located. When I first arrived at a radio station, about May 6, I had the following two dispatches sent to the radio station which communicates with Australia:

FROM COMMANDER NAVAL FORCES SOUTHWEST PACIFIC

TWO COMMANDER MARINE FORCES

FROMLIEUTENANT COMMANDER WILVIN F. MC COY

ARRIVED AFTER ESCAPE FROM AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR CAMP DAVAO WITH

THREE MARINE OFFICERS CAPTAIN SHOFNER, THREE AIR CORPS, CAPTAIN

WYESS, ONE CAC, MAJOR MELLETT AND TWO SERGEANTS X ALL CAPTURED

BATAAN AND CORREGIDOR HAVE EXTENSIVE INFO REGARDING CORREGIDOR X

BRUTALITIES AND ATROCITIES WITH EXTREMELY HEAVY DEATH TOLL TO WAR

PRISONERS HAVE CAME X HAVE SOME INFO RE DAVAO PROVINCE X IF PRAC-

TICABLE REQUEST EXTRA PARTY PLUS TWO FILIPINOS WHO AIDED ESCAPE

DEPART HERE VIA NEXT TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE X".

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"FOR LIEUTENANT GENERAL RICHARD K. SUTHERLAND, GENERAL HEADQUART
U.S. ARMY FORCES IN AUSTRALIA
FROM MAJOR STEPHEN M. MELLNIK.

HAVE ESCAPED WITH SEVEN OFFICERS AND TWO ENLISTED MEN FROM JAPANESE

WAR PRISONERS' CAMP IN DAVAO PENAL COLONY X LIEUTENANT COMMANDER

MC COY U S NAVY HAS REQUESTED SENIOR NAVAL OFFICER IN AUSTRALIA

FOR SUBMARINE TRANSPORTATION TO AUSTRALIA X WILL YOUR OFFICE AS-

SURE A FAVORABLE ANSWER X JAPS VIOLATING ALL RULES OF WARFARE AND

DECENCY X FIFTY PERCENT USAFFE FORCES SURRENDERED IN BATAAN NOW DEAD

FROM MALNUTRITION AND DISEASES X REMAINDERIN VARIOUS STAGES OF

BERI BERI, DYSENTERY, MALARIA AND BLINDNESS DUE TO VITAMIN DEFI-

CIENCY X WAINWRIGHT, MOORE, BEEBE, DRAKE GOOD HEALTH AT SURRENDER X

REGARDS COLONEL DILLER, GENERALS MARQUAT AND WILLOUGHBY X HOPE

TO SEE YOU SOON.X"

Lieutenant Colonel Fertig, head of the guerilla forces, had not only not sent either message but had not informed me that he would refuse to forward them. While waiting in Talakag for the return of Lieutenant Commander Parsons I sent a radio to Colonel Fertig asking whether my messages had been forwarded. He did not answer, although communication between the two points was easy. I understand that Colonel Fertig finally sent a message stating, in effect, "LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MC COY AND MAJOR MELLNIK HAVE ARRIVED HAVING ESCAPED FROM AMERICAN PRISON CAMP AT DAVAO." His handling of this matter, in my opinion, was unfortunate, as each of the other seven ex-prisoners who did not get to come with me knew of incidents related to Japanese conduct towards Americans different from those known to the three of us.

I remained in Misamis with Major Mellnik until June 26, at which time I left by a four-knot unprotected motor launch and proceeded to Boni Facio. From there we hiked to Colonel Fertig's main radio station. Lieutenant Commander Parsons arrived there on July 1 and Major Dyess on July 2. On July 3 we departed to make our rendezvous with the submarines. This particular trip turned out to be very difficult but the incidents would be mainly of interest in story telling and not as an official document. We had considerable trouble at all times although this fact once turned out very favorably for us. At one point of the journey the Japanese were following us and they were looking for us; and our guide lost us. When we got back on the main trail we found that we were behind the Japanese, and eventually when they turned to the left we turned to the right and proceeded to our destination in a roundabout manner. At one point we had to cross a crocidile-infested stream through a five-knot current, both ends of the bridge being burned out, but the center remained. Lieutenant Commander Parsons used great ingenuity in devising a way so that we could get across without getting wet. At another time we had to cross a stream, with a current of about eight knots, and that was accomplished by the construction of a bamboo raft, but we almost were washed all the way down to the coast before being able to get secured on the other side; and had the river not had a fortuitious bend in it, the results might have been disastrous. On the day on which we had the most guide trouble, we hiked from 0600 to 1900 without stopping for food, and had had no breakfast. The contact scheduled with the submarine came off perfectly without any delay.

Food Received and General Health Conditions in Prison Camps

The food supply at Camp O'Donnell was generally the same as that at Cabanatuan, so only the latter will be described.

For breakfast we were rationed one mess kit of lugao which is a rice and water concoction. At noon and night we received one mess kit of steamed rice with not over a half canteen cupful of watery, greenish-colored soup, sometimes with no substance in it. When there was substance it consisted of camote tops. In the five months that I was there the only piece of meat I ever received was about one-quarter of an inch cube. This great event happened once. At one time the Japanese gave us three chickens and nine eggs for each mess of 500 men, no doubt so that they could claim in their propaganda that we were fed on chicken and eggs. As polished rice contains no vitamins whatsoever and its calorie value is about one-third that of the next lowest cereal, this diet would not sustain life.

Many prisoners had some money and finally machinery was set up whereby those with money could purchase through a prison store various items--all ordered in advance. The main items were canned sardines and canned milk. It was very difficult to get any fresh fruit although the surrounding country abounded in it. Sugar and salt were obtainable at very low prices and, in general, were purchased by the small amount of profit made by the ship's store so that sugar and salt could be furnished to all hands in prison regardless of their financial condition. It was therefore possible, if a prisoner had about 25 pesos a month, to barely exist by supplementing the Japanese diet with supplies from

the store. Those who had no money became victims of beri beri and scurvy. Death occurred quite regularly by the end of the fifth month of captivity. It is worthwhile noting that the death rate at Cabanatuan decreased steadily from July to September, but was on the increase again in October. At the time I left Cabanatuan, October 27, 1942, many men were going blind from lack of Vitamin A.

Old Bilibid prison in Manila is the location of the Naval Hospital unit from Canacao, Cavite. The food there is a little better than at Cabanatuan and a ship's store is also operated there. At Davao prison camp when I arrived November 7, the food there was so much better than I had been accustomed to that I thought it was excellent. The diet was still rice, but with each meal we received some vegetables such as camotes, green papayas, cassavas, or cooking bananas. Also, at least once a day we generally had mongol beans which are very nourishing.

However, a great many of those prisoners who had just arrived from Cabanatuan had already had symptoms of beri beri and now became seriously ill with it. The diet at the Camp was not sufficient to keep them from sliding backwards, although if you did not have beri beri you could hold your own. Advanced cases of beri beri were sent to the hospital. It was a pathetic sight to visit the hospital and watch the people sitting all day long massaging their toes and their fingers. They lose appetite and generally need a narcotic in order that they may be able to sleep. However, due to the better diet at Davao prison the decline of these patients was very slow and only a few died. Now and then we received a meat gravy due to the fact that a carabao or steer died of old age.

There are 600 head of cattle and carabao on the penal farm of which only 200 are needed for working the farm, and there are many cattle accessible outside of the colony. The Japanese would not let us have meat regularly no matter now much was available. When a carabao does die the Japanese (250 in the camp) always take the choicest parts and leave the remainder for the 2,000 prisoners.

In early January the Red Cross supplies, brought over in one of the Japanese diplomatic vessels, arrived. Each man received two individual packages and fifteen cans of corned beef or meat and vegetable stew, and these were issued to him at the rate of two cans per week. This food was a life saver and was the best Christmas present that any of us ever had received. In addition to the food there was an ample supply of quinine and sulfa drugs. There was an inadequate supply of vitamin B_1 solution. However, there was sufficient medicine for beri beri that even the most severe cases in the hospital improved beyond description to the point where men who had been given less than a week to live were able to totter around. Unfortunately, unless such supplies can continue to arrive these men will slip backwards again and will be joined by many others. Undoubtedly a portion of the Red Cross supplies must have gone to the Camp at Cabanatuan and must have saved even more lives there than at Davao. As mentioned in the article on atrocities, the Japanese, in effect, confiscated the Red Cross food, and by the middle of March the Red Cross supplies had vanished but the Japanese did not restore our former rations. The ration which I received at Davao for the last three weeks before my escape was the same but in

smaller quantity than that given me at Cabanatuan at the time I left. Our supply of vegetables was completely cut off but sometimes in the evening we had one tablespoonful of mongol beans.

This last diet will not support life and this camp is unfortunate in that even though you have money there is nothing to buy. A small store has been set up in which one can purchase tobacco and perhaps once a week a small amount of fried bananas. The colony abounds in fresh fruit which the Japanese would not let us bring in. They punished us severely if they caught us stealing it. However, those on working details managed to augment their daily ration with fruits they found in their area. This is a wasteful method and the supply of fruit was being rapidly depleted.

The thousand prisoners at Davao who had been captured in the Visayan Islands at Mindanao had suffered no food shortage during the war and were in excellent physical condition at the time they arrived at Davao. As a result of this and the medicines received from the Red Cross on June 1943, the death rate at Davao prison has been quite low--approximately three per month.

Cabanatuan and Davao are the only two American prison camps in the Philippines, although there are isolated working parties of Americans elsewhere in the Philippines such as in the Manila port area and in Palawan. The situation regarding diet at each camp at the time I was last there will cause many deaths unless it is rectified. I understand that the Japanese claim to be giving the prisoners the same diet that a Japanese soldier gets. For breakfast he generally has a vitaminized

mash together with his rice. At noon he has fish and vegetables with his rice. At night he has his biggest meal and meat is almost always served with it.

I feel that if we could arrange to provide the prisoners with a vitamin pill which contains vitamins A, B, C, and N in such a way that one pill per day would be sufficient so that they could get by even on the present insufficient diet. I understand that the Japanese will not permit us to supply prisoners with anything like that. It is perfectly feasible to supply the prisoners at the Davao Penal Colony with vitamins without the Japanese knowing anything about it. Detailed plans concerning that have been taken up with interested parties at Australian Headquarters.

Brutalities and Atrocities
Miscellaneous Violations of International Law by the Japanese

In detailing the brutalities and atrocities I am mentioning only those which I know from personal experience or which were the personal experience of a responsible officer who himself told them to me.

After the fall of Bataan on April 8, approximately 10,000 Americans and 45,000 Filipinos were marched to San Fernando, Pampanga, a distance of about 120 miles. These prisoners were marched in different groups, naturally, and some groups were treated much more terribly than others. In most cases they were given no food and no water. One officer stated that in seven days of marching he received only one mess kit of rice and nothing to drink. If a Filipino was unable to keep upon the march and fell out he was summarily disposed of and left by the side of the road. He was generally killed by bayonetting or shooting. In the case of Americans they were generally removed from the immediate vicinity of the road and shot just out of sight of the prisoners.

Due to the fact that there was no water allowed or given, many prisoners were forced to drink from carabao wallows and probably contracted dysentery therefrom. There were instances of Filipinos being buried while still alive and the Japanese made it a point to use American officers to do the burying.

Major Keiger, U.S.A., a West Point graduate, stated to me in Cabanatuan that he had buried Filipinos alive several times and would never forget to his dying day the picture of their hands reaching up

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through the soil trying to claw their way out; nor the time he was forced by the Japanese guard to club one of them down again into the grave with the shovel.

During the march almost all groups passed through a town called Lubao and were kept there overnight. They were quartered in a large building of galvanized tin with no windows but with small grid openings near the floor of the building. The prisoners were crowded into the building in such a way that there was scarcely room to sit. First, the Japanese herded as many into the building as possible, requiring them all to stand; then when the building seemed to be completely full, more prisoners were placed just outside the door and a line was attached to one corner of the building with guards on the other end. This was used to squeeze those outside into the building, and the place was then closed up for the night. The prisoners were not allowed to leave for any reason whatsoever and had to use the place naturally as a latrine right where they sat or stood. After several groups had passed through Lubao it can easily be imagined that the building became quite filthy, especially as many of the prisoners were already feeling the effects of dysentery. There were quite a few dead when the march started the following day.

At San Fernando they were placed in iron box cars, 100 to the car. This left no room whatsoever in which to sit, there being just enough room to stand, and then the sliding doors were closed. They were taken to Capiz, Luzon, a two or three hour trip. This was always done in the heat of the day so that the conditions within the cars were such that had

the trip not been so short suffocation of many would almost certainly have ensued. At Capis they were marched to the prison camp at Camp O'Donnell. The Japanese had made no preparations for receiving the prisoners and the camp commander stated to the prisoners that he didn't like Americans and that he didn't care how many of the prisoners died. There was only a single water spigot and the water in the nearby stream was polluted with dysentery.

The death rate there was so alarming that the Japs moved the Americans to Cabanatuan and discharged many Filipinos whom they realized would undoubtedly die shortly, but preferred to have them die in the bosom of their families rather than in the camp. However, approximately 27,000 Filipino prisoners died in the camp itself. At Cabanatuan the death rate for the first two months was 30 Americans per day; but the dead were left lying around the camp instead of being taken over to the hospital. This camp at that time was in charge of a Japanese corporal, but after some degree of organization was obtained a Japanese lieutenant colonel named Mori arrived and took command. Lieutenant Colonel Mori formerly operated a bicycle shop in the city of Manila.

It was almost impossible to get a sick man into the hospital unless he was practically dead—the Japanese did not want to have their roll calls distrubed by these transfers. Lieutenant Commander A. E. Harris, USN, died after being unconscious for four days in my living quarters. During this time we made every effort to have him transferred to the hospital. Permission was finally obtained but he died as he was being carried through the hospital gate. Such incidents are not unusual; but, in fact, are common.

Medicines are almost non-existent in the hospital. There were some medicines available in Manila and the Philippine Red Cross was more than anxious to let our hospital at Cabanatuan have it; but at first the Japanese refused. They later apparently became alarmed at conditions in the camp and had their own doctors make a survey of these conditions, as a result of which we were finally permitted to receive some medicine, mainly quinine, from the Philippine Red Cross. However, after those medicines arrived the Japanese kept them and would not release them to our doctors for some time, during which time many died of malaria. They told the doctors that they would release the medicine after they had taken an inventory of it, which they were in no hurry to do. The amount of medicine received was inadequate to last for but a short period of time.

Occasionally the Japanese, particularly the interpreters, would brutally beat or slap Americans without cause. We were required to move some Nipa shacks from one portion of the camp to another. This was very heavy work and taxed the men's strength. Although they were doing the best they could, the Japanese non-com in charge of the moving belabored them vigorously with a large heavy riding crop and serious damage was suffered by several Americans.

Lieutenant Colonel Cain of the 200th National Guard, while acting as Executive Officer of the camp, was struck behind the ear with a riding crop by a Jap interpreter. He now suffers periodically from very severe headaches, with growing paralysis. This condition has been aggravated by another slapping at the hand of the Japanese interpreter in the Davao Penal Colony.

The Japanese after one march from Cabanatuan and into the surrounding neighborhood returned singing with a Filipino head dangling from a pole. This head was put on a fence picket on the main road and left there about a week for passerbys to take warning.

About September 30, Lieutenant Colonels Biggs and Brougham, U.S.A., and Lieutenant R. D. Gilbert (CEC), USNR, attempted to escape. They were apprehended and beaten severely by the Japanese immediately. The Japanese system of beating is to use clubs and feet mainly in the vicinity below the knees until the victim falls down and he is kicked and stomped upon them. After these preliminary beatings, the men were taken to a house just outside the camp at one corner, located on the main road. They were stripped and tied up with their hands behind them and beaten more or less continuously throughout the day. They were made during this time and were not allowed to have food or water. Every Filipinio who passed along the road was stopped and required to beat all three men in the face with a two-by-four board. If the Filipino did not strike them hard enough the Japanese beat the Filipino. After three days of this it was impossible to recognize any of the officers. They were also left naked in the open during a typhoon for one day. At the end of this time all three were dragged off for execution. One officer's (probably Colonel Biggs) ear was lieing upon his shoulder. The Japanese reported that they shot two and beheaded Biggs. These officers were not given any kind of trial whatsoever as required by International law.

About July 1, 1942, six American prisoners, all enlisted men, were apprehended by the Japanese for dealing with Filipinos to get food, which

they were selling at high prices through a "black market." These men were tied out in the hot sun to a fence post for 48 hours without food or water. Finally one of them, crazed with thirst, got loose from his bonds and ran back into the prison camp, having been tied up outside. He went straight to his barracks and got a drink of water and remained in his barracks after that. The Japanese found him there, took him out and summarily shot him, and also shot the other five Americans who were still tied up. This also was done without any trial and on the excuse that this particular man was trying to escape.

A working party of 50 Americans—enlisted men—repairing the Calumpit Bridge under guard was attacked one night by Filipino guerillas. The guerillas killed several Japanese guards and wounded others and got away. The Japanese selected five Americans at random from the working party and shot them on account of this attack.

At the Davao Penal Colony, about April 1, 1943, the Japanese guard in a sentry tour by the hospital shot and killed an Army hospital corpsman by the name of McKee. McKee was digging camotes underneath the tower and just outside of the hospital compound fence. He became thirsty and called to one of his buddies on the other side of the fence and asked him to throw over a canteen of water. When this was done and as McKee was stooping to pick up the canteen, the guard above him shouted at him. McKee, after picking up the canteen, opened the cap and let some of the water trickle out to show the guard that it was an innocent act. While pouring the water, the guard shot McKee, the bullet entering

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his shoulder and coming out the lower abdomen which shows that the firing took place from almost directly above. The Japanese again tried to blame the shooting on an attempted escape on the part of McFee. McFee had no clothing or equipment of any kind with him.

Many prisoners are becoming afflicted with scurvy due to a lack of Vitamin C. There are many lemons, a rich source of Vitamin C, in the Davao Penal Colony. The Japanese themselves do not like lemons and will not permit us to have any, and during rains I have seen over a thousand lemons at one time floating down stream and out of the Colony.

One American white woman was raped on Bataan by two Japanese two weeks after she had had a baby. An Army officer was a witness to this. One of the outstanding violations of International Law was the fact that after the capture of Bataan they installed artillery within and closely adjacent to our field hospitals which were still crowded with sick and wounded with the result that instructions were given on Corregidor not to fire on these batteries.

The Japanese did not permit us to send any notice home until on January 1, 1943. We were then permitted to make out cards and again a month later. Whether or not these cards ever arrived I do not know but I believe that International Law requires that the opportunity to make out such notifications shall be afforded to all prisoners immediately after their capture.

In my eleven months of imprisonment I was paid once, receiving the sum of 25 Japanese printed pesos, to get which I had to sign up for about

$100. We were assured that the remainder was on deposit to our credit in the Japanese bank at Davao City, and the Japanese even went so far as to charge us one peso for manufacturing our "chop"—our signature. They did not furnish us with our "chop." However, the Japanese were preparing to pay us again at the time that I escaped and they had already paid warrant officers and second lieutenants. On this second payment the amount was increased so that I would have drawn 50 pesos had I remained to be paid. The payment was made on a sliding scale downward according to rank and enlisted men were not paid at all. The Navy and Marine Corps officers had already set up a board which divided some of the money received by the officers among the Navy and Marine Corps enlisted personnel. The Army was attempting to put the same idea into effect.

At the Davao prison camp there arrived early in January 1943, Red Cross supplies, which I understand were brought by the Japanese vessel which had been used in the exchange of diplomats. Each man received two individual boxes and fifteen cans of either corned beef or meat and vegetable stew. These cans were distributed to us at the rate of two cans a week. Immediately upon receipt of these supplies the Japanese discontinued giving us any of our regular rations except for plain, simple rice; whereas, before we had been getting some vegetables and now and then meat if a carabao should die of old age. Their stopping of the regular ration to us, in effect, constituted a confiscation of the Red Cross supplies as the Japanese quartermaster could then put into his own pocket the money which he was supposed to use to feed us. Unfortunately, after these Red Cross supplies gave out in about eight weeks, the

Japanese did not go back to the previous ration. This will be covered elsewhere under the subject of "Food."

The Japanese require every one at the Davao prison camp to work and they make no distinction between officers and men in the type of work. The American camp officials have succeeded in differentiating between the work done by enlisted men and officers. However, officers of all ranks and up to the age of 45 are required to work under very adverse circumstances in rice paddies, harvesting and planting rice. I, personally, had to clean out Japanese latrines, sewage disposals, garbage pits, and do other labor which no American should be required to perform for anyone. The Japanese would not permit us to do useful farming to maintain ourselves, but used us to work for civilian Japanese firms, such as logging companies.

American prisoners captured on Cebu, were, for the most part, kept in a school house. Lieutenant J. E. Bullock, Supply Corps, U.S.N., apparently decided to escape and with a pack went beneath the school house about dusk in May 1942, and was waiting there until it became dark, so that he could attempt to go through the outer fence. While waiting he changed his mind according to his statement made to friends and returned to his quarters. A Filipino reported to the Japanese that an American had tried to escape. The Japanese questioned Americans and no one admitted to the act. The Japs then took all Americans to the jail in Cebu and questioned them individually with no success. They then called them all together and stated that each American would be individually tortured until these asseted the name of the man who had been under the school house. Lieutenant Bullock then stated that if the Japanese would agree not to reap any retaliation on the other prisoners he would admit to being the prisoner in question. The Japanese agreed and kept the bargain. The other Americans were returned to the school house at once and Bullock a few days later. He received no punishment and, in effect, was only warned not to be a bad boy and try it again. The Japanese warned that, in the future, if anyone attempted to escape and was caught, he would be executed, and that if they escaped successfully Colonel Cornell, the American Commander, would be executed.

Sometime later two Filipinos were apprehended tinkering with the light switch at the Japanese prison headquarters. The Japanese construed this as an effort on the part of the Filipinos to escape. About two o'clock one afternoon the Japanese sent for Colonel Cornell and told him that they

were going to execute the two Filipinos and Lieutenant Bullock, and desired to know if he wished to witness the execution. Colonel Cornell refused. The Japanese took Lieutenant Bullock out then and he had no inkling that he was about to be executed. As he went through the gate one Japanese said to him, "You had better tell your friends goodbye," and Bullock turned and waved and said, "See you later, boys." The Japanese reported that they beheaded Bullock. At no time did he receive any trial nor was it, in effect, ever shown that he made a definite attempt to escape, as he returned to his quarters of his own volition.

Radio Electrician J. S. Leroy, U.S.N., was picked up by the Japanese on Cebu before surrender and with three Filipinos was in a cell in the Cebu city jail. When American officer prisoners were taken to the jail after the surrender one were assigned to his cell. His clothes and those of the Filipinos, with other items such as toilet gear, were still in the cell and none of the four were ever seen again. Filipino occupants of the jail stated that Leroy and the three Filipinos from the same cell were executed by the Japanese.

The incidents related in the preceding two paragraphs were recited to me by Lieutenant Charles Slain, U.S. Naval Reserve, who acted as a kind of liaison officer between the Americans and the Japanese.

Shortly after the surrender of Mindanao some American prisoners were concentrated at Dansalan, Lanao, and Mindanao. They were later marched to the seaport of Iligan, a distance of about twenty miles. Although these prisoners had shoes they were required to carry them and walk barefooted, and throughout the journey all prisoners were linked with each

other by wire. On this trip the Japanese executed three American prisoners whose names I cannot now recall for certain, but the fact of the executions is certain.

DISPOSITION OF REMAINDER OF ESCAPED PRISONERS

Captain A. C. Shafner, U.S.M.C., 1st Lt. Jack Hawkins, U.S.M.C., 1st Lt. Michael Debervich, U.S.M.C., 2nd Lt. (AC, Eng.) L. A. Boslens, U.S.A., 2nd Lt. (AC) Samuel Grashio, U.S.A., Sgt. R. E. Spielman, U.S.A., and Sgt. Paul Marshall, U.S.A., are still on the island of Mindanao with the guerilla forces. Each one has had his own individual experiences as to Japanese treatment and atrocities practiced upon Americans. These men escaped from the prison camp, not to join the guerillas, and not just to effect their own personal freedom, but for the purpose of re-joining their own fighting forces, where they would have a chance to get back at the Japanese without being behind the eight-ball all the time. While I realize it would not be feasible to divert any naval vessel for the purpose, I earnestly request that if a submarine should touch any where in that area in the performance of other assigned duties, that these seven officers and men be picked up. I also suggest that this pick up be made even though it means keeping the seven on board throughout a war patrol as it could easily happen that at the end of a patrol these escaped prisoners could not be available due to the rapidly changing situation between the guerillas and the Japanese. These men had been perfectly willing to risk their lives to try and make a reasonably dangerous voyage by sailboat and I cannot too strongly request consideration of this plea.

The two Filipinos who guided the party, Benigno de la Cruz, and Victorio Jumarung, only asked that they be allowed to accompany us on the sailboat and that if we reached safety I intercede to obtain a pardon for them. Jumarung has served eleven years of a life term for homicide and de la Cruz - nine years of a seventeen year sentence. Both of these men were helpful, willing, and courageous and neither was of the hardened criminal type. I request that President Quezon be asked to issue them a pardon to be effected when practicable.

In case any publicity is even given to this escape it might be possible that the presence of these two Filipinos would be desired here or in the United States for propaganda purposes in promoting Filipino-American harmony and cooperation.

MISCELLANEOUS

American and British civilians, including Army and Navy female nurses, were interned at the Santo Tomas University in Manila. I understand that in June, Manila radio announced that the internees were being transferred to Los Banos. I also understand that their treatment has been satisfactory as they are allowed to supplement the diet furnished them with money obtained from friends in Manila and from the Philippine Red Cross. Lt. Comdr. Parsons has considerably more detailed information than I on this subject.

The staff of the U. S. Naval Hospital at Canacao, Cavite, were interned first at Santa Scholastica on Pennsylvania Street in Manila, then moved to the Pasay Elementary School and finally about July 1, 1942 moved to Old Bilibid Prison, Manila, where they are still located. According to most recent reports by guerilla spies they were not permitted to retain their surgical equipment and have very little medicine.

The field hospitals in Bataan were eventually removed to Camp #1, at Cabanatuan. This hospital had practically no medicines whatsoever and very little equipment. The Corregidor hospital was moved first to the old top-side hospital and later evacuated, the patients going to Old Bilibid in Manila and the nurses to Santo Tomas University. The majority of the doctors were sent to Old Bilibid. The Davao Hospital was allowed to retain such of its Army medical and surgical equipment and in addition has the use of what equipment was in the convict hospital in the penal colony. However, there was very little medicine

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available in Davao Penal Colony except that which arrived in January 1943 in the Red Cross supplies.

At the time I left Cabanatuan, the Japanese were sending out American doctors to accompany all departing prisoner details including those going to Japan.

The Japanese were using American divers to try and bring up the silver which was dumped over the side near Corregidor. The Japs used Filipino divers to locate the silver and Americans to bring it up.

The morale of American prisoners is generally fair and exceptionally good considering the circumstances under which they are living. The majority of them keep their morale up by believing that help is just around the corner. As far as I know there has only been one actual suicide due to mental depression. At Davao a couple have tried to kill themselves due to the intense pain they are constantly suffering from beri-beri. Their attempt failed.

Lt. Comdr. Frits Worcester, U.S.N.R.; Lt. Sam Wilson (I.V.S.), U.S.N.R.; and Pvt. I. D. Richardson, U.S.M.C., are free on the island of Mindanao. The former two have lived in the Philippines a considerable length of time and might possibly have information of considerable value. Lt. Comdr. Worcester and Lt. Wilson are now deep in the jungle in hiding from the Japanese. Lt. Comdr. Worcester has already withstood one seige of hiding out and it is my personal opinion upon close observation that he may break down mentally if he undergoes another such period. I know of only five Navy enlisted men in the guerilla forces on Mindanao. I do not know their initials or rates but will try estimating their rates:

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C.M.M. Offerte, R.M. 2/c Konko; S.C. 1/c Napolina; M.M. 1/c Lewis, and Tuggle, rate unknown. I believe that all of these men were attached to the Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron #3.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

(a) It is perfectly feasible to contact responsible American officers in the Davao Penal Colony from the northern side of the colony without the Japs finding it out. This is due to the fact that they have Americans gathering firewood or logging in the jungle itself. These working details are guarded by about two Japanese who in general are afraid of getting near the jungle and do not maintain a close watch on the prisoners. It seemed to be a general sentiment among the Japanese guards that the jungle was infested by Moros ready to lop off their heads. Accordingly, it would not be impossible to deliver to a responsible American prisoner Multiple Vitamin Pills and intra-venous vitamin B_1 solutions. I left in Mindanao detailed sketches and information regarding the prison camp itself.

Lt. Comdr. Parsons assures me that he could get similar medicines smuggled into the prison at Cabanatuan. If these medicines could be sent in I believe that deaths could be reduced 30%.

(b) In case we should contemplate sudden attack on Mindanao I suggest that the prisoners there be delivered by the guerrillas forces adjacent to the camp about four days before the attack. Because of the Japanese attitude towards death it is quite possible that in case of a general attack on Mindanao the prison authorities might attempt to exterminate the prisoners. Since they are often confined in a very small area consisting of eight closely spaced barracks surrounded by barbed wire, the Japs would be able to carry out this plan before many Americans could get over the fence.

(e) If it is ever intended that useful information be received from Mindanao and the Philippines in general, I recommend that our people be furnished with standard portable communication equipment, and Navy type strip ciphers of limited disposition, with trained personnel to observe and operate. If possible, there should be some means of direct communication between the master station in the Philippines and the Navy station VIXJ at Perth. Because of the exceeding difficulty of communicating by any means other than radio between points within the Philippines, an internal communication system there is very important. Otherwise in the time of need an entire plan will break down due to lack of speedy internal communication. I will discuss details with the Senior Army Signal Corps officer here.