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All the greens were pretty, the hills were pretty. There was a golf course there. We didn't really know what we were supposed to do. We got out, then we saw some British come a running over the hill, hollering, "Hey, you bloody blokes, come on up." (Chuckle) And we wandered on up to the buildings there. They were nice, shining buildings that hadn't seen any signs of war.

And we came to find out that there were 70,000 in this camp and they had surrendered to the Japanese without ever having fired a gun. They had their uniforms all shined up, their buttons shined. They had sticks over their backs and were marching up the street in formation. And the guards were putting them off at different places with a stick instead of a gun...carrying right on with their war games in a prison war camp.

And we came to find out that they had made an agreement with the Japanese that they would surrender and stay in there but the Japs weren't allowed to come any further than the gate and bring them food. That was the agreement they had. I sickened us to see what was happening with them.

We had several occasions where their officers had asked our officers to salute their officers and some of our officers told them, "You yellow so-an-so, you don't rate a salute with the way you've done." So, several fights between the Americans and the British erupted in there.

We stayed there three weeks and that was the first time I had seen any Red Cross food. I understand that the British had been getting it ever since they had been captured, a parcel each week for each man, and they had enough on hand to let us have four parcels for five men, to divide up in the group. And we found out that this was extra and they had been selling it, like in a canteen, above the parcel for each man. It looked mighty bad, after what we had been through, to see what was going on with them.

I went down and saw this big 15.9 gun mounted on a track and this gun had never been fired at the Japanese when they crossed. They said it was trained to the seaward side and they couldn't train it to the river side, which was the way the Japanese had come in across the river...in boats. And they let them come in without firing at them.

I think that that gun could have very easily been turned by taking up the track and turning the gun toward the river side, but they just surrendered without fighting. We didn't agree with them.

After staying there for three weeks we left out on a ship without knowing where we were going, but the party I was with found out we were going to Japan after we left. The ship I was on got into a typhoon on the way to Saigon. At times the ship was not moving and at times it was making as much as, they said, three knots. For several days we were caught in that typhoon, and during that time one of the boilers busted loose and couldn't be used. When we finally got into Saigon they pulled into the river and repaired the boiler. We found out it was one of the ships that the Americans had given to the



Japanese in 1923, I believe, after a bad earthquake over there. This was an old American ship we had given them.

We stayed in there three days until they repaired the boiler, and then we started out on another journey to Japan, hugging the coast of China. Our next stop was in Formosa that is on the island of Taiwan, and we came in there and stayed one day then got underway hugging the coast of China.

Our next port was Moji, Japan. We got off there. We got off the ship there and went over by ferry to the island of Honshu. And from there we were on a train for a couple of days to the other end of the island. It was slow going. Sometimes they would have to bring in another engine to help over the mountains.

And when the train would stop for coal, they would put cold rice balls on for us to eat. Just one cold rice ball and nothing else with it. We were beginning to get very hungry since the food we got in Japan was worse than where we were before.

We first came into Kumaishi, which was on the coast of Japan, on the upper end, and from there we had to backtrack up into the mountains a few miles to the little town of Ohasi (*spelling?*) where they had our camp.

This camp was the one that we were supposed to stay in but it wasn't finished, so we stayed in an old school building up there to start with. It was around October 20, 1942, and there was already about 2 inches of snow on the ground. They took us out onto the school ground and made us line up facing one another, pull our shirts off and take big hands full of snow and rub it on the person in front of you. Each person took his turn.

They said that it was to toughen us up to the area since we had just come out of the tropics where our blood was really thin. This was really bad on us. We nearly froze with this snow rubbed all over us, but they said this would thicken our blood up fast and toughen us up for that area.

The next night some of us began to get sick from it, with fever, and two of the men died that night. I sat up with both of them. One of them was Sidell but I've forgotten the other American's name that died in just a little while. I remember sitting up with Sidell. He was really delirious with a high fever. He said, "Paul, I saw my daddy and mother last night and talked with them." I saw then that he was really sick...sicker than I thought. Within about an hour's time he died. The Japanese didn't furnish any medical attention whatsoever. If you made it, you made it. If you didn't, you died. And that's what happened to them. Nobody came in until he died and then the guards came in and took him out.

The next day we had to take both of them down to a little area close by where they put them into an incinerator where they were cremated. This was a really bad task for us to have to do to, take somebody we knew, who had died, and put them on a tray and put them in there to burn. But that was the way it was over there. The ashes came out in a little box about four inches square and it didn't take much room to carry them around.

Some of the Englishmen carried the little box of ashes of their men around with them. I don't know what they did with Sidell's, and the other man's, ashes. I assume that they were buried them there in the ground.





When we went down to take a bath we had to bathe in a big wooden box that the whole little town used to take a bath...women, children, men, everyone. It wasn't unusual go down while people were watching you take a bath in the box that they had just used.

It was a few weeks before they got the other camp built so we were sent out on odd jobs around in the countryside. It was the only work we did until they got the new camp finished pretty close to the temporary camp.

I remember them taking us out on one work party and we sat down in the back yard of the little houses. I was sitting in one group and a woman came out of the back door of her house, came up near us, lifter the back of her dress, bent over at about a 35 degree angle and urinated. We found that it wasn't unusual to see something like that happen in Japan.

We could also find little wild onions growing out on the banks of the roads that we would pick and mix with the rice. I don't care to eat them now, but then they tasted mighty good. As hungry as we were then, all we could think about was to look for something we could eat when we were out of the camp. It wasn't as easy to find food in the countryside in Japan as it was when we had been in Java. They just didn't have anything. The trees were just little scrub trees all up in the mountains. The trees had been cut down and cleared for little garden areas and little rice patties. It was different there.

We went down to this new camp they had built for us. This camp was built on a style like the chicken houses we have here. The buildings had two levels that we stayed in and we had to climb a letter to get to the upper deck.

It was sometime in April when we moved down there. After we got there this Jerry Bunch got these parts together for a radio, assembled them and commenced to operate the radio. He had to run a hidden electrical cable up to the building's electrical wiring because the battery wouldn't last long. I wasn't in that camp all the time but I was told that someone operated that radio in there until the war was over.

Jerry was on the upstairs floor where he operated the radio and I slept 3 mats from him. We had these little thin grass mats to sleep on the floor. He had this electrical wire concealed behind an old box he had fastened to the wall, and he had ear phones he used to listen to the news. He could get news from Tokyo and Vladavostok and sometimes get San Francisco.

He would write down, on a piece of paper, the news that he thought was important and would pass it around so that we could keep up with what was happening and how the war was going at that time.

About that time the guards seem to have gotten worse with more beatings. We didn't know why but there would be blackout at night. We figured that, at that time, the war wasn't going against them some. We had heard some things that made us think that was the reason for that treatment.

Then we started working in the mine. We worked a while outside the mine on maintenance of it, then they put us on a night shift, about 10 hours each night, inside the



mine. The mine was up hill from their camp about 3½ miles. It was hard to climb up to where the mine was.

There was a little train track that began at the foot of the mountain and gradually climbed about ¾ of a mile to the same level as we entered the mine. The shafts from there spread out in different sections and the tracks would run to each section.

We were working in a section with a bunch of Koreans. The guard would take us up to the section we were working in and we would pass through an air lock by opening one door and close it before opening the other door. The jack hammers were working on compressed air and even the air we breather was compressed.

I remember one day when we were working we suddenly heard air spewing through the doors and I jokingly told the Koreans that the mine had caved in and we can't get out. They listened for a moment and ran and opened the door. Sure enough, there had been a cave in. There was a big pile of rubble in the passageway. It was very dark because there were just very small lights in there. The rubble was piled up at an area where we shoveled the mined material down a chute and it looked like we couldn't get out.

One of the Koreans started climbing the pile of rubble and the rest of us followed and there was enough clearance for us to climb out. When we got out on the other side people were running around all excited. They couldn't find the guard, so one of the Japanese workers marched us back down to the camp without us knowing what happened to the guard. It was about two o'clock in the morning.

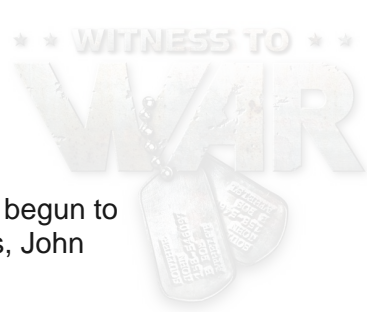
When we got to the camp the guards commenced to beat us, working us over and wanting volunteers to go back to the mine. They didn't tell us what had happened, but no one would volunteer. They did put together a party to go back there but I wasn't in it. When they got back up there the guard had already been dug out of the rubble, but he was dead.

We didn't know what had caused it nor did we have anything to do with it, but the Japanese thought we did. So they kept the whole camp out of work for three days investigating. They talked with each of us, asking questions. After three days they told the nine of us Americans working in that shaft that we were going to be transferred to the Holidatti (*spelling?*) Camp on the next island.

Some of us had heard that it was a British camp and that the prisoners had a pretty bad case of the itch. So an American doctor in our camp gave me a little bottle of condensed Lysol and told me to use it sparingly when washing and said that it was the only thing he could give me to try to keep from getting the itch. So I took it and used it.

We left out across on a ferry over to the town of Holidatti and entered the camp. There were only British and Dutch prisoners in the camp and the nine of us were the first Americans there at that time, but several other Americans were sent up later.

We found that what they said was true about the itch, and it was really bad. Many prisoners had scratched big raw areas all over their bodies and become infected. They looked pretty bad.



They had put us in a little stall-like right in middle of the other prisoners. It had begun to get pretty warm then and the stink was pretty bad. There were two Americans, John Ewing was one of them, that got this itch but the rest of us never did get it.

They had a commandant in there that we called 'the cat' because he looked just like a cat when he looked at you. You could just imagine that he had whiskers sticking out just like a mean cat's face. He was very rough and ordered a lot of beatings. They would bring guards in from outside the camp that would give beatings. I remember one day they got after one of us named Dailey, a big tall man that may have been Korean. The guard kept running after him beating him with a big bamboo stick, especially between the legs, with the man screaming. After that he was ruptured and in pretty bad shape but he lived to get out of it.

We found the working conditions there were really hard and the food was light. There were several different working parties we went on. One of them we called the Ice House where we would load and unload fish and it was very cold in there. But we would manage to steal frozen fish from the boxes and eat them. You couldn't tell that you were eating anything but we could fill up on fish while working in there. And so many of us tried to get on that working party.

We learned from the Dutch that we could tie a frozen fish on a string and then tie it to our body and let it dangle down between our legs and take it into the camp and cook it. I don't know of anyone getting caught smuggling the fish into the camp because the guards wouldn't pat you down but not in the crotch area.

One working party was to unload salt from the ships down at the docks. The salt would be loose in the ship and Japanese workers would shovel the salt into eighty-pound bags. We would have to form lines and walk one plank into the ship to get the bags and another plank from the ship and take the bags of salt in the warehouse all day long. This was very tiresome, especially when the days were hot.

Many times a prisoner would be able to wander away from the line, out of sight of the guards, and look for food in other parts of the warehouses. Most of the time they would find only cases of sardines or salmon. Many of these boxes were stolen and hidden in the bushes or around the warehouse. At lunchtime the guards would allow us to sit around on our own in an area away from them and the location of the stolen food would get around. Hidden from the guards, the boxes would be broken open and the cans passed around. We would then open the tins and pour the fish into our mess tins under the rice. We would then eat from the bottom of the tin while the guards sat and watched us without knowing what we were doing.

After the meal we would crush the cans into a ball, break up the wooden crate and dispose of pieces in the "binjo"...a big hole where we would get rid of it.

Another area I worked in was the iron foundry where there was a big high, open building where there was a big smelting pot where they heated the iron ore and poured in out in castings for different parts of machinery for the ships. When these parts came out of the molds we had to take a little rock hammer and chip away the rough parts and clean them. I've busted many of the parts wide open by hitting them in a certain place. We had a problem with the workers and guards coming around and accusing us of



damaging the parts and we would tell them that they were that way when they came out of the molds. We figured that we were helping our cause by doing this.

One day we noticed the Japanese commenced running around and outside and I noticed this big old pot hanging high in the air had begun to shake from side to side and the whole building was shaking. It was a tin building. Everyone jumped up and ran after them but we didn't know what was happening. After we got outside the building we asked the Japanese what was wrong and they said, "Earthquake. Earthquake." We stayed out there a few minutes and it settled down a little bit. It was the first time I had encountered an earthquake.

Sometimes, then, we had to go outside and pick up scrap iron. One day one of the workers had taken me outside picking up scrap iron. We had, what we called, a yoyo pole that you put over your shoulder with a big bag hanging from the pole by straps. We would pick up as much scrap as you could get in the bag and took it back into the iron foundry to redo the scrap.

I had beriberi pretty bad that day and my legs, knees and ankles and feet were swelled and sore...very touchy. I stumbled while carrying the bag and a Japanese grabbed the pole and commenced beating me across my head and shoulders. I was very angry at that time and I grabbed the pole from him, threw him down on the ground, took my left hand and held him by his collar and, with my right hand commenced beating him. I could have killed him, I was so mad. I beat him pretty bad with my fist and finally turned him loose when I realized what would happen to me if I did.

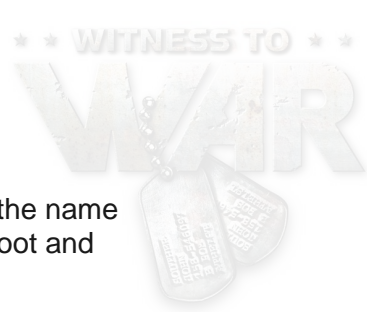
I let him up and he grabbed the pole and commenced beating me again across my head and shoulders and then he hit the calf of my left leg, which immediately commenced swelling and turning dark. And I couldn't walk it hurt so bad. I couldn't put any pressure on my leg.

Then the guard came back in and got into an argument with the civilian. The guard told him that he was going to get into trouble because he wasn't there. He was kind of chewing him out for getting into a fight with me. I could understand a little of their Japanese. They agreed to take me back to the camp and tell them that I had gotten hurt on the job. They called in some of our workers and got a stretcher and took me back into the camp. I was never brought before the Commandant and nothing was said about it.

I stayed in this camp and couldn't walk for nineteen days...couldn't put any pressure on my leg. It was swelled up big and black but it finally went down. They put me on camp work for a while.

Along at this same time I had gotten dysentery pretty bad. I had seen many men die from it shortly after getting it. A doctor had told me one time that the only thing he knew we could do for dysentery is take soot out of the inside of the stove pipe and put on the rice to eat. I tried this and I guess it helped because it never did get real bad.

I stayed in camp and worked but I remember one day they had put me on a working party after I had been up all night and hadn't slept any...was in bad shape. They had a little Japanese, they called the medic that you went before if you weren't able to work. They sent me down to him and he asked what was wrong. I told him that I had been up



all night and couldn't go to work. We called this little medic "the snake", that's the name we gave him, because while you were telling him something he would pat his foot and look at you real hard and mean-like.

And there were two things he would say "work" or "camp". So when he stood and patted his foot and told me "work", I spoke back and told him that I couldn't go out because I was too sick. He slapped me over and kept slapping me down. I messed all in my britches when he did this.

There was an English officer in the area there that followed me back into the camp and told me to stay in and he would put another to work in my place that day. There had to be the right number of people when they counted off or there would be trouble. I still stayed in camp for a few days before going back to work.

When you were at work you were always trying to find something to steal to eat because you were always hungry. Many times I had gone through the garbage cans...at times I would find fish that was rotten with maggots crawling inside them.

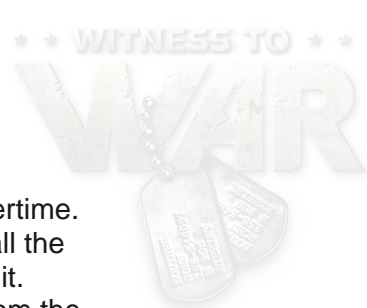
We always kept a little coke fire going when we were working, so I would take the fish, when the guards weren't watching, rake the maggots from the fish and put them on a little tin over the fire to bake and eat.

We didn't have salt or other seasoning in the camp so when we were working close to the sea I would dip a can of water from the sea and keep it on the fire all day so that, at the end of the day, there would be a small handful of salt in the can to whap in a piece of paper and take back to the camp. One time I got caught and got a beating from it, but you would always keep trying.

One day some of the workers had found a keg of peanut oil, and since we would always have a canteen with us a bunch of them would fill up their canteens with the peanut oil and bring back to the camp to be traded. Then one day when we got back to camp we found that all of our things, clothes and little things we had accumulated, were lying out in piles on the floor all over the camp.

One day before that, I had gotten in line at the docks and had made a little stabbing knife, and I had a pair of Army Kline wire cutters that I had traded from one of the Army Lost Battalion bunches that was with us down in Java. They were missing from the piles of our things and I was told to come down to the Commandant's office. So I went down there and the Japanese guard was standing with the knife and pliers marked with my number. I was scared to death because I had made the knife but he commenced asking me about the pliers first. But I commenced to argue with him that they were Army pliers that I had when captured and I had never been asked to turn them in. He would tell me, "No, no", they were not Army pliers but were Japanese pliers. I told him, "No, they weren't".

He finally took the pliers into the Commandant's office, and when he left the room I took my little knife and threw it into the barrel where, I had noticed, they kept things that were taken from prisoners who came in before me. When he came in from the Commandant's office he told me that, yes, they were American pliers and that I could go. So, I was very much relieved.



Another thing I remember, I think this was in the latter part of 1943, in the wintertime. There was a big snow on the ground there then. Snow stayed on the ground all the winter up until June. There was deep snow with deep trails as you go through it. Anyway, this day the *binjo* carts were in the dockyards. They would load up from the toilets everything they had on certain days in big carts. They had a two-wheel cart with great big iron wheels and had one horse to pull it.

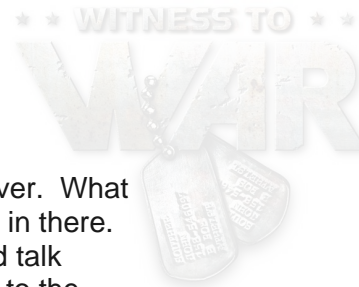
Anyway, I was out working, picking up scrap, one thing and another, and there was a wagonload of corn crossing the train track there. When the wagon wheels hit the train track they slid to the side, down the track, because there was snow on the rails. And when it hit one of the rail bolts it stopped the wagon real quick and it threw his corn off the cart down into the snow and they scattered to right where I was standing. Two ears of the corn fell right next to me so I took my foot and mashed them right down into the snow. When he got off the cart to get his corn he didn't get those two, so after he left I dug them out of the snow.

That evening when I went into camp I hid the corn on me and got them into camp. It was yellow corn, big yellow ears of corn. In the early part of the night I had parched some of the corn in a little pan on the heater. As I was eating it a guard came through, and I hadn't seen him. He asked me what I was doing. I didn't tell him anything, just stood up at attention. He said, "Me Christian. You tell me and there won't be anymore to it." So I finally told him that I had found this corn at the dockyard and had brought it in and was parching it.

He grabbed me hold of me and said, "To the guard house." I stayed in the guard house three nights and two days without anything to eat. It was real cold...I just had a shirt on in there...no coat. I didn't sleep any during the three nights and two days and didn't any food nor water. I shadowboxed at night to try to keep warm because there were big cracks in the walls and the cold was whipping in. It was real cold. When I got out of there I was so weak I could barely walk. I did go and take a bath, the first thing, and when I got out of there I almost fainted. I could hardly walk. They took me down where the cooks had saved me some food, and they gave it to me. I finally got to where I could get around but I almost passed out from weakness.

I remember one other day. The boy that stayed with me all of the time that I was in the camp, we stayed together, was Rose, a guy Mack Rose. He was a Machinist Second Class and I was a Water Tender Second Class. Anyway, they had brought a dead horse into the camp dragging it in behind a cart. It looked like it had just died. And we took everything we could get off the horse to eat for a few days. Anyway they had taken the head and boiled it and got part of the meat off it. Some of the skin and the eyes were still on it and the ears sticking up. Me and Rose took this old head that they had thrown away, and took it up on the hill and sat down and ate everything we could get off this horse head. We laughed about what people would think, back in the States, if they could see us like that.

We took the jawbones, after we ate all we could get off it, removed the teeth from them and cracked the bones and raked all the marrow out of the bones and put it in a little tin which we put on the stove and boiled it with water. When it cooled we took the stuff that floated to the top and we had a big cake of butter...horse butter...we used to put on our rice. It was yellow and tasted pretty good on rice.



After that we had a different Commandant that came into the camp and took over. What he was doing was trying to run a brain washing period with all of the personnel in there. We would have to go in before him and he would give us a long talk. He would talk about how good the Japanese history had been and things that had happened to the Japanese in the past. Then he would tell the bad parts, the bad things the Americans had done. He would tell about the Spanish-American war and about different things the Americans had done. It was a long program that lasted about two hours and he would ask if we were single or married. If we were single he would tell us that, if we had a girlfriend, she would leave us...wouldn't have anything to do with us when we got back. And asked if we wanted to stay there after the war and have a Japanese woman, and go through a long program. If we were married your wife would have done left you and gone with somebody else. There were different things he would bring around about it.

When one would go out we would ask him, then, about what was going on so that we would know what was going on. It was the same thing. Even if you were married it was one way and if you were single it may be a little different in another way.

We went through this program. And our food was better for a while. They treated us better and the beatings weren't so bad. Then it changed back to the beatings...from one extreme to the other...back to the bad beatings and knocking you around. I don't know of anybody that turned with him during this program. But later on he came back into the camp and told us that that is why he was sent in there. That was his job was to brainwash us.

One more thing that I remember...it was in the spring of 1944, I guess. We went down to the dockyard and saw a picture of President Roosevelt on a big poster board down there, real high...a great big picture of him. And it looked like blood smeared all over his picture. We asked some of the workers down there what it was and they told us that President Roosevelt had died and said that we didn't have a chance now to win the war. After he died the Japanese would win the war.

A little guard, when he came out of the Commandant's office, I told the fellows there that were working with me, I said, "Boys, the war is over." I just had a feeling. I felt like I had been told by the Holy Spirit that it was over. And they asked me, "What do you mean that the war is over?" And I said, "Well, it's got to happen sometime." And they just kind of made light of it.

Then the little old guard came out to where we were working and he asked me, "How much of this ground could we grade off by lunchtime." This was about 10:00 in the morning. This was on August 15, over there. And I told him about half of what I thought we could do, is where I drew off on the ground. And he came back about half of where I told him and said, "Do that much and quit and come on in to lunch." And he walked off. But I noticed when he came out there that he had tears in his eyes, and I had never seen one have tears in his eyes before.

Then these fellows that were working turned around to me and asked what was going on here. I told them that, I still say, the war is over. Well, they said they couldn't believe it. I said that it's got to happen sometime. I told them that if that's the way it is, throw your tools down and let's go in the house. They all threw their tools down followed me and we went into the camp, which wasn't very far. And that was the last lick of work that we ever did. We never did go back to work.



We got into the camp and these fellows that were working went down and told some of the English officers what I had told them about the war being over. The officers came up to me and asked how I felt and I told them that it was just how I felt. They said that they didn't have any word of anything and didn't know. I told them about them going into the Commandant's office, and I said that I believed that the war is over now.

And it wasn't but a little while that that the Japanese Commandant called and told those working in the cookhouse to go down and cook a hot meal. We usually already had a meal prepared of rice balls for those who went out on a working party, so they didn't cook anything at lunchtime. We went down and started preparing a meal and, about that time, the workers all came marching in from the camp...that was before lunchtime...maybe 11:00 or so. Then our officers commenced to think that there was something to what I said. So, from there on, all during the day they tried out everything, you know, and it seemed that it was leading toward that.

We all had a hot meal and everybody was really excited about what was happening. From there on into the afternoon some of the guards began leaving the camp and by dark there were just a few guards left in there.

It was really hot and I decided to take my little grass mat on the outside between the buildings and sleep that night because the mosquitoes were bad inside and it was hot in there. So, I took it out and was laying outside asleep and a little guard came by and woke me up and commenced to motion for me to go back into the camp and told me that I couldn't sleep out there. I had done felt pretty brave about it by then and told him to go ahead and leave me alone and get on out from here. He said, "No, no." I said, "Yes, I'm going to sleep here." He finally left me and let me sleep out there.

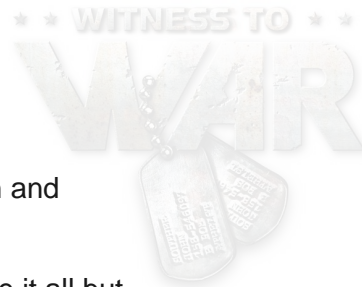
Some of them had decided, though all the excitement, stayed up and took a sheet and what paint they could get hold of and made an American flag. By the morning they had taken down the Japanese flag and hung this American flag up over the camp. That flag stayed there from then on. It never was taken down. That was on August 16.

So, from that time on, little things like that led us to believe that it was over, but they never had told us then, but just about all of the guards had gone and left the camp. The next day we took the Commandant and put him in the brig, the guard house and took over.

There was one guard that stayed in there. He had never given us any trouble before when we were out on working parties. He had told us that he was a Christian and had brought out a little New Testament and showed it to us. He could speak some English...the Testament was in English. And we believed him. Every time any of the beatings went on he would stand back and wouldn't participate in them. Also, he would try to help us to get food when he could, but he had never taken part in any of the beatings. His job was to keep count of the numbers when they went out and check them when they came back in.

He had stayed in and the Commandant was one of the few left in there. From then on we commenced leaving the camp. I was one of the three that day that decided that we would go outside the camp. You could get out of it easily. So we got out and wandered around the little town looking for food, which was very small. We noticed that when we





would go out to the houses, they would leave their houses and run, the women and children, or whoever was there.

We would go in and take whatever we could get of their food. We wouldn't take it all but just a part of it. We would take a sack along and fill it up with whatever we could find...a few chickens, a few vegetables of different kinds, and eggs. We would gather up what we could get and bring back into the camp. The next few days other parties started wandering out. Sometimes we would go four or five miles, go off all day looking for food. We'd come back in and be surprised how much food we had when we got it all together. Some of them brought in goats and live chickens and they would be all over the camp.

We had three shoats, hogs, in the camp and one Holstein cow, a pretty cow. There were four of us and they knew that I was a country boy and knew how to butcher a cow or hog. We got together and killed this cow one day, and all three of the hogs, and dressed them. We had that to go into the pot and we started cooking that and mixed the meat and vegetables together and made a pretty nice stew. And we ate pretty well for the next two weeks from the stuff we had brought in. Also, the Japs had started sending us in more food...anything they could get...into the camp. Our times, at this time were much better on our eating.

Then one day, this officer that had been in the camp before, that I mentioned had come in to brainwash us, he came back into the camp. He was glad to see us, he said and he wanted to make an announcement. So we got a place for him to stand up on a bench. He got up and made a talk and told us, "The Americans and Japanese have peace terms." We commenced booing him down and said, "Peace terms, hell. Unconditional surrender." He'd try to talk and we'd just holler him down. He finally said, "Yes, that is it. The Japanese had surrendered to the Americans." And he made a pretty good little talk. He had pretty good English and told us, "I had never been to America but I had been taught to brainwash you...that was my job...that's what I was sent in to do. If you'll notice the things I told you was all of the bad about America. I never did bring the good points. America has good points but I wasn't to tell you of the good points, but of the bad things that had happened. That was the job I had to do and I did the best I could at it.

It wasn't but a day or so after that that five Americans came into the camp. They were supposed to be war correspondents but said that they were in the Regular Army. One of them was an American-Japanese interpreter. They came in a jeep and had Tommy guns and all kinds of equipment strapped on them. We had a telephone in the camp and they told us that we would be told, from Tokyo, what to do and we were told to take our orders from Tokyo. We were living pretty well at that time.

Later on, in two more weeks, before we got orders from Tokyo to come and get on a train at the little town. Our forces hadn't yet occupied the island, but they said that they had a little temporary air base set up a few miles away and the train would take us to that area. So we carried out our orders and that's how we left the camp.

But before these last two weeks the first B-29s flew over the camp, found us and dropped a little field radio and told us to stand by, make a mark out on the field where they could drop some food. So we had some lime in the camp that we took and made a cross out in the area where they were coming over. They said they couldn't see it so I



took a little flag-like, got out there myself and started waving it with my arms where it was and they started dropping steel drums with parachutes on them that they dropped as close as they could to that area. There were all kinds of canned foods, cigarettes, candy and different things...they just swamped us with food.

I remember that there was one Englishman in the camp that said he wasn't going to get out but would just lay in his bed. One of these drums that they dropped came through the roof and hit him, breaking both of his legs.

From then on we lived well during those last two weeks. A few days later a Navy plane flew over and dropped another field radio and told us that they had three aircraft carriers sitting off near Commichi (*spelling?*) and they were going to bring us food in. The others started bringing food in the same area. They said they would commence about 8:00 in the morning. They brought food in, I believe with B-29 dive-bombers, and lay the food down in that area. Some of them looked like they would be about 10-12 feet from the ground.

They would bring in a lot of hot food. They brought in hot bread that looked like it had come right out of the oven. They would open the little doors on the side of the plane and they would holler at us when they came by. Some of them would throw out little notes with their names and addresses on them.

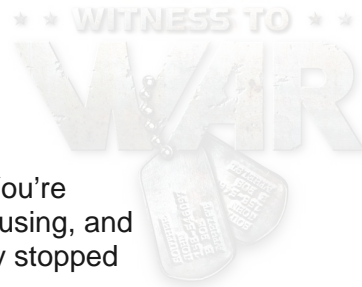
After we left the camp we pulled up, where I had told you before, and went on down on this little train to this temporary air base they had set up. They had planes there waiting for us. From there, I believe it was a C-46 that I rode on to Tokyo. They had trucks there that they put us on and we rode through the town of Tokyo. You could see that the buildings were torn up and there were big holes in the streets and we had to drive around twisting between the streets and buildings.

There was a center there in Tokyo that we went through. We had to go before a doctor for each branch of Service and the one I was to see was in Yokahama, back to where the ships were, twisting through these streets to get down there.

We got down to the docks, Rose and me were together, the only two in that bunch that went back to the Navy. They sent us down to a ship. When we got down there we could see the Third Fleet of ours was laying off at sea. It was mighty pretty to us because it was more ships than we had seen before in the Navy.

They sent us out to one of those ships they use for landing heavy equipment. We went aboard and the office on deck told us to go down below, find you a bunk somewhere and we will give you orders later for what to do. This was on Saturday afternoon. So we went down made ourselves at home, found ourselves a bunk and started eating regular Navy chow, which was might good from what we had been used to for a long time.

We stayed over through Sunday and Monday morning Rose told me, "Let's go find out what we're supposed to do." We hadn't heard anything. I went up to the Office of the Day, a different one that was on the ship we came on. I asked him, "We would like to find out, sir, what we're supposed to do." He looked over on the log and said, "You're the two prisoners of war come aboard here?"



He said, "You see that ship out there underway?" I said, "Yes sir." He said, "You're supposed to be on it." So he got on the telephone or radio, whichever he was using, and called the ship and called for a motor launch and sent us out to that ship. They stopped the ship and put us aboard it.

From there we went to Guam on this ship. There were a lot of prisoners of war on the ship. A lot of Canadians on there that had been on some other camp...ones that had been with me before and I never knew what had happened to them.

I remember one that was on there, one that had been on the Houston before. He had been in the Philippines for a while and they had sent him on into Japan. I hadn't seen him since the ship had been sunk. His name was Pat Wheat.

We landed off the ship in Guam and I was sent from there up to a hospital. I just thought that I had been through Guam on the way out and it was just a little area...not much to it, but they had built big wide, paved roads like in the States. It didn't even look like the same place we had gone through before. We stayed in the hospital there for a day or so, I don't know just how long.

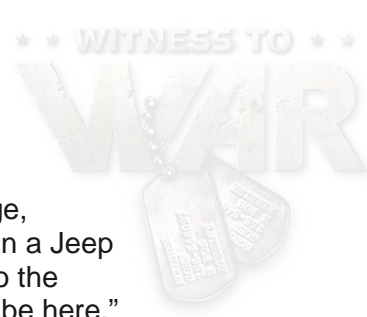
From there I rode a plane all the way back to the States. We left Guam and had come to the Gilbert Islands. I noticed when we got in there they had Red Cross personnel there and anything that we wanted, they were really nice to us. We hadn't been used to all that nice treatment and it kind of shocked us, in a way, being so nice. Anything we wanted, any drinks, anything they had in there, they gave us...any information, and they tried to help us. They were really good, the personnel of the Red Cross. We stopped off there for just a few hours.

From there we went over to Johnson Island, which is between the Gilberts and Hawaii. I remember, when we landed, you could see both ends of the island at the same time. There was just a little airstrip there on it. That was all there was. I remember there was a sign, a picture of a bird saying, "What, no tree to land on?" We just stayed a little time there and then on into Hawaii.

When we got into Hawaii we went to the hospital there and they sent us down to the Marine barracks to pick up some clothes. It was the first clothes I had received on the way back. They said we could get anything we wanted there, so we got some kaki pants and shirts...things to wear...back in Marine uniform instead of the Navy, Anyway we went on out to the place where the ships had sunk with people still down in them. It was very sad for us, what had happened there.

We stayed the rest of that day and sometime, I believe it was late that afternoon, they put us back on a plane and took us on into the States. This time we got on a Navy PBYX. The one we rode before, coming in, was a C54. When we got on the plane there was a Naval Commander there and he called me and told me that he wanted me to sit with him when he found I had been a prisoner of war.

I remember, he wanted to talk about some of the things that happened to me. So I told him some of the stuff that had happened and how rough it was. He said, "Well, I would like to tell you, I know you had it rough and you heard that we treated the Japanese mighty good and their stay was mighty good, but it wasn't always that way."



I remember one instance, he told several, but one he said that he was in charge, himself, of Japanese prisoners of war, you know. He said, "They sent me out in a Jeep to pick up a Japanese who surrendered." He said, "When he started to get into the Jeep, he was so proud that he could surrender to the Americans...so proud to be here."

He said, "I got him into the jeep and drove out to the camp. I stopped on the way out and told him to get out, and asked him if he would like an American cigarette." He said, "Yes sir, I would like an American cigarette." So he gave him and American cigarette and when he lit it up he slapped it out of his mouth and slapped him over and said, "You are now a prisoner of war and you will be treated as a prisoner of war and not as a celebrity coming into this country." I guess he told me that to make me feel a little better...the things that had happened to me.

I think that our speed of this was 280 miles per hour...a 4-motor plane with pontoons on the bottom. It was a Navy plane. It seemed to me like a big old buzzard up in the air. It was loaded with about 40 passengers and the rest of it was cargo. It rode so much easier than the C-54 or C-56 that we had been riding. There weren't the air pockets that we would hit and drop down. The ride was much better.

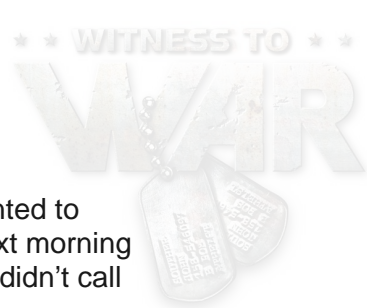
When we left out it was before sundown, I guess, and he asked me, "Have you ever seen the sunset out through the plane?" And I said, "No, I haven't?" So he said, "Come on, let's go in the cockpit." And he took me up in the cockpit and you could see the blue ocean way down below us and the sun was setting. It was a real pretty sight to see in that position.

It took us right about 14 hours to get into Oakland, California, is where we landed. We landed in the bay and, I remember, we came under the Golden Gate Bridge. I said then, "Well, I've be under it, across it and I've been over it." So I had been all three ways across it.

After we landed, we got off the plane, I remember, I was so proud to be back on American soil that I got off and kissed the ground. They sent us on out to the Naval hospital in Oakland. I had been there before when I left to go overseas and Oakland was a small town. It seemed to me to be about the size of Lawrenceville, Georgia, but then it was so big that I couldn't recognize any of the places I had been before.

We got into the hospital the first night, the boy that was with me, I don't remember his name, had a sister that lived in Vallejo, California, and he wanted me to see if we could go up there and see her.

So we went up and asked a Navy lady Lieutenant on watch there at the hospital. She was the Officer of the Day. So we told her what we wanted to do and she said, "Well, I can't issue a liberty card, a pass to go, because you aren't in the right uniform, and all. I can't say you can go, but I'll tell you what, right across the street on the corner, there's a bus stop. That bus goes to Vallejo, and I'll be on until 12:00 and if you decide to go be sure you're back in by 12:00". We took the hint and walked out of the hospital and caught that bus and went on up there to see his sister...stayed a while and got back in a little while before 12:00 and nothing was ever said about it. We didn't have any pass or identification on us whatsoever, but we made it and got back in without any trouble.



We were allowed to make one free telephone call home, or to whoever we wanted to call. We didn't have telephones down here (*in Snellville*) when I left so, the next morning we went up and I called my brother, Boyd, in Richmond and talked with him. I didn't call home because I didn't know we had a phone down there.

I remember, Jerry Bunch wanted me to go over there with him to call his wife. He called his wife and he didn't talk but just a very few minutes to her. And I noticed that he had an awfully sad look on his face when he turned around. He told me, "Paul, my wife asked me for a divorce over the telephone." He was really hurt, because all the time I had been with him in Ohasi camp all he could talk about was to get home to his wife. He was a very quite, good fellow, but that really hurt him. It looked like it had taken all the life out of him when she had told him that.

Late that afternoon, a nurse in the ward where we were staying, passed the word that, if anyone would like to go home, or head toward the East Coast, there were two seats available on a plane. I was the first one to hold up my hand and told her I'd like to catch it because they were having trouble with transportation from out there. The busses were on strike and it was a long way by train. So I said I would take it and I grabbed what little things together and was told that I had just one hour to get to where we had to catch the plane. There was somebody to take us down there so I got on another C-56, I believe it was. They said it might stop off in Texas, from there to Kansas City, from there to Washington, DC on to Pensacola, Florida, would be the route of the plane.

We got on that afternoon and headed out. It wasn't too long after we go on that we got into a storm, a bad storm...to me, it seemed, anyway. I noticed when we got on the plane there was a sign right over the seat that said it was an experimental plane. It didn't sound too good to me. We hit this storm and it got pretty rough. You could look out through these little peepholes and see the lightening flashing and see light streaks in the clouds and when you hit the sides of them you could hear the motors grinding and growling and twisting around. The co-pilot came back and told us to fasten our seatbelts because we were going to have to make a forced landing and that we would be going pretty straight down and it would hurt our ears.

So we made a landing at Bakersfield and when we got down we found that it was Bakersfield, California. It was kind of a short runway that we had come in on and after we got down they told us that a C-54 or C-56, whichever this was, had never landed there before. We stayed down until right before dark and the pilot decided to get back up. And we flew all night, and I didn't know if we were going to stop off in Texas or not, and early the next morning they landed in Independence, Missouri.

First of all, when we started out the gate, I had decided that I was going to go up town and catch me a train to go in. I was very nervous and tired of riding on a plane that far. So I started out the gate and a sailor at the gate told me, "Come and check your name out over here." I said, "No. There's no use for me to check out because I'm not coming back." He said, "Well, check out anyway." So I checked out but I didn't even tell them I was leaving.

So I went down town and checked when I could get a train and they said it would be late that afternoon when I could get a train to Atlanta, Georgia. So I got on a fast train there to go straight through and I went to sleep and rode from there on into Atlanta.



I didn't see any parts of the States because I was tired and sleepy and slept all the way in. The first thing I heard was coming in to Georgia...the conductor hollering "Kennesaw, Georgia".

When I got to the train station I got off and got a taxi and went out to the bus station. I was kind of turned around, I hadn't been there so long I didn't know just how to go, so I got a taxi and went out there.

Everybody was pushing, trying to get on a bus, so I missed two busses. I finally got on a bus coming to Snellville. About 2:00, or a little later, I got into Snellville...a little bitty town with two little stores...not like it is now.

I hadn't heard too much from home. I didn't know how everything was then, but I did know, Vera, my oldest sister did live there. It was real dark when I got off so I went down to where her house was and tried to get somebody up but couldn't get anybody out of bed. I went to several more houses where I knew people had lived there and couldn't get anybody up. So I went back up to where Horace's garage used to be...an old garage sitting there where Mel Malone had later.

There was a school bus sitting there so got up in the school bus and thought I might go to sleep, but it was October and kind of cool then and I couldn't go to sleep. So I decided I would go back down to the house and try again to get somebody up at Vera's. So I went back and hollered really loud and told her I would like some information. And I heard her holler in there asking, "Who is it?" and I said, "Gilleland." She said, "What Gilleland?" and I said, "Paul Gilleland."

So then she came and opened the door and her face was really white because they weren't expecting me to come home. She just sat back on the settee and fainted. About that time Norman and Charlotte and Jean got up out of the house and came in and were working with her...trying to talk with me some, too, at the same time. She finally revived back up.

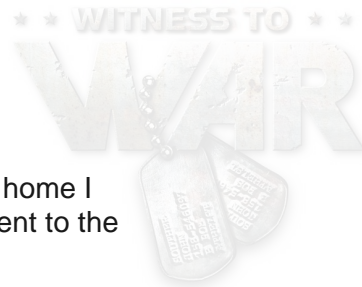
It was quite a gathering because they weren't expecting me home. They hadn't heard from me. They had been listing ex-prisoners of war coming home but they hadn't listed me in the paper. When I was in Tokyo I had sent telegrams from there but neither one had arrived. But after I got home I went to the mailbox and got one out myself.

Anyway, this was way along in the morning before daylight and Norman ran out to Mr. Britt's, Mr. W. C. Britt's house, and got him out of bed and he took me down to where my daddy and mother lived in their home awhile before daylight that morning.

It was a glad reunion of coming home. My mother and father both were really proud to see me. They said they had never given up hope that I would get back.

In a little while, up in the morning, word had spread around and several people came over. I remember Mr. Bud Shell came over and Mr. Taylor Moon came over. Several people came over that morning because they had heard about me coming home.

I stayed here at home two days because they had given me orders, from out there at the hospital to leave. They had put on there to report to Dublin Naval Hospital. They had put on there the date I left, but not the date I was supposed to arrive down there. So I



just took off enough time before reporting down there. It was two days here at home I stayed before going and reporting in. It was the second day, I believe, that I went to the mailbox and found the telegram. I had beat it home.