



submarine attack. We were sailing across the Straits of Korea in broad daylight, and the later captives had some idea of American power at this point. Frankly we were indeed fortunate to have made this trip without being bombed or torpedoed and going "down with all hands". What a terrible end this would have been for the Wake Island survivors. It had happened to other POW's taken from the Phillipines.

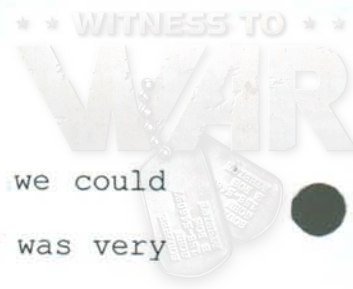
PART ELEVEN. JAPAN

CHAPTER 57

About dark we anchored in a small bay, obviously on the west coast of Japan at a small fishing village named Susa. We were taken off in lighters to shore and put up briefly in what appeared to be a schoolhouse. Late at night, we loaded on passenger trains and departed.

The next morning we arrived at another port city which the sailors identified as Shimoneseki, which is on the southern tip of the main island of Honshu, Japan. We could see the evidence of sunken ships lying in the harbor with their superstructures sticking out of the water. It was the first view that the Wake island crowd had ever seen of Japanese defeats. They were speechless with emotion. We all loved the sight of every broken spar.

After two days, on July 1, 1945 we again loaded onto passenger trains at about twice the capacity of the cars. We could take turns lying on the floor under the seat to sleep or doze. Occasionally we



would get stepped on. The window shutters were closed so we could not see out, nor could outside people see in. This journey was very slow with many halts and long waits on rail sidings. Some of those knowledgeable about Japan knew we were headed north toward Tokyo. At one point they got the a shutter cracked open without the knowledge of the guards, and reported that we should be near Kobe or Osaka. The scenes of devastation were horrendous (but not to us!) Everything looked like it had been "levelled" with iron bombs and fire bombs. We were so thrilled by these sights that we almost forgot to think about food.

On the night of July 3, 1945, we arrived at an elevated railway station, obviously in the southern part of Tokyo. We were herded off the train and pushed into subway-type cars. A large Marine gunnery sargeant was last in the group and as we approached the car, a civilian was running behind him beating him on the head with an umbrella. As he jumped in the automatic doors, he reached back and "decked" the civilian with one punch just as the door closed. Everybody cheered. It was the most liberating thing that had happened in quite a while.

We were taken off at a large railway station filled with hostile civilians. The soldiers created a path though the mob, and pushed us at a dead run through the station, and once again placed us in railway passenger cars. We were grateful for the movement as nobody was hurt. We waited in the station for a few hours before departing. We were heading north to an unknown fate.



CHAPTER 58

All along this route to the north, we were aware that various groups of POW's were being taken off the train. We heard that they were going to small work camps. Why weren't we? I had recurrent visions of going to a place of solitary confinement like that I had suffered in China. So did some of the others. It was something that was not discussed. I guess we were trying to be manly, or brave, or something.

On July 5, 1945 we reached Aomori, a city on the northern tip of Honshu. Here the five Air Force Sergeants in our group were taken off the train along with Dr. Foley (Navy), a group of civilians, and three to five Navy hospital corpsmen.

We later heard that they walked about two miles to a new large barracks in the hills. This was a POW camp named Sendia #11, about twelve miles south of Aomori. The five Sergeants were put in charge of about 190 Wake Island civilians, and put to work immediately. Here the Sergeants suffered the same separation from all the others that we did when we arrived at our final destination on Hokkaido. The isolation was continued for all of us right through to the end.

This group worked an above-ground iron mine, loading iron ore on a tramway at the mine leading to the coast. After about a month, the tramway stopped because of air raids, lack of shipping or whatever. Then they carried fire wood down from a small mountain to the town.

The Navy Doctor (Foley) had Sgt. Watts put in solitary for



some food-scrounging efforts. That did not endear Foley to the rest of that group, or to any of us when we heard about it. There must be a "Col. Bogey" in every POW camp. Give some people a little authority..... .

This group was not told of the surrender until about August 24. The Japanese commander had apparently committed Seppuku (we called it Hara-Kiri, literally "stomach-cut") just after the Emperor's speech on August 15, 1945.

CHAPTER 59

We continued by ferry from Aomori to Hakodate, a city on the southern tip of the northernmost Japanese island of Hokkaido. Finally on July, 7, 1945, we twelve Army Air Force officers were again separated from the other prisoners after being allowed freedom enroute from Pusan to Horokurai, a place north of Sapporo. That's when we really felt like "The Diddled Dozen."

We arrived at a place about 3 o'clock where we were put in a large building with special guards, as usual. The room with its boarded-up windows was obviously an Army post of some sort. We learned that we were near Sapporo, the capital city of the island of Hokkaido.

We met three young Japanese serving as interpreters. Two of them were raised in the USA and one in Canada. They had been brought back to Japan by their parents before the beginning of the war. We had a half-hearted interrogation from them. We picked up a little news and a few cigarettes from them, but only saw them the



first week in Sapporo.

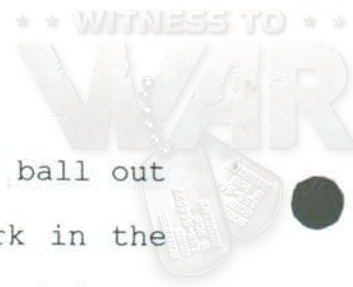
The room we were locked in contained a table and a few stools and twelve wooden platforms on which we were supposed to sleep. Food was brought to us three times a day. It consisted of a wooden bucket of rice, soup with some kind of vegetables and unrecognizable bits of (we hoped) fish. We ate with one large spoon, or could use chopsticks made of wood twigs. Occasionally there would be a little fish for us. The Japanese swore we were getting the standard ration for their soldiers.

There were 24-hour a day guards on duty both around the outside of the building, and in the hallway between the room and the latrine. There was a water tap, and a toilet (or "benjo" in Japanese). The toilet was a concrete pit that was scooped out regularly and hauled off to the fields for fertilizer in a "honey wagon".

We had a Japanese-style bath twice a week in a huge concrete tub. It was about two and a half (2 1/2 ft) deep, and the water was scalding hot. The technique was to scoop water out of the tub and wash yourself with lye soap outside of the tub. When you were completely clean, you climbed into the tub and soaked up the heat. As hungry as I stayed, the bath put me to sleep for a while after I got out.

CHAPTER 60

There was a Japanese Major named Miki in charge of us. He was the man to whom we complained, generally to no avail. He did allow



us out for exercise once in while, where we made a sort of ball out of rags to throw around. Miki tried sending us to work in the potato fields on two occasions, where we ate a few raw potatoes, and pulled a few weeds. This duty was not continued.

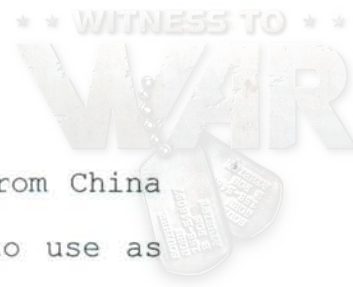
We were issued about 12 cigarettes a day which of course we shared. It is no myth that cigarette smoking reduces your appetite. Even the guys who did not smoke took it up.

We had two decks of cards that we brought with us from Shanghai. They were so overused that they were about twice the thickness of a normal deck. Cards did give us something to do, which took our minds off of food. Bridge was the norm, but an occasional poker game was played for very high stakes; credit of course. I "won" several hundred thousand dollars because of my superior play and fighter pilot's bravado.

Howard and McMillan, both from New England, planned a restaurant and a bakery. They spent hours salivating over the menus and all the money they were going to make. Then Schaeffer got us interested in chicken farming, as he obtained from our dynamic library a poultry book by Lippincot and Cord. It's a pity someone never followed through on the chicken deal as one of us could have been America's great poultry producer, Frank Perdue!

CHAPTER 61

We avoided talking about the immediate future as we all figured an invasion of Japan was imminent. We believed that the



possible reason all of the POW's were brought to Japan from China was that we would be used as hostages for our captors to use as they saw fit. It was doubtful that they spent the transport and food in Japan for the modest amount of labor that those prisoners would provide.

On July 24, 1945, Major Miki came in with a Lt. Col. Emoto. That officer had recently been in charge of conscription, but early in the war was rumored to have been in charge of Allied prisoners on Honshu. He had allowed the POW's to raise gardens and otherwise lead better prison lives. This didn't sit well with some of the more militant Japanese, and he was relieved of that command.

Before the war he had been professor of English in a Tokyo University. He told us of his method of teaching English and how he had become an outstanding teacher in Japan. He told how Japan had been walked over rough-shod and took it, of Japanese modesty, and how Japan had not been defeated in 664 years. He recounted that they allowed two Mongol survivors to return home to tell the story of their terrible defeat by the Japanese, and of the typhoon Divine Wind or "Kami-Kazi" that had wrecked the Mongol fleet of Ghengis Khan.

In another lecture, he told us about the opium war at Hong Kong, and the cunning way the Americans stole the Philippines. He claimed that Japan had now given China back to the Chinese, Burma



back to the Burmese, and the Philippines back to the Filipinos. Of course we knew this was false, but we were forced to listen politely. The Rape of Manila, where 30,000 innocent civilians were slaughtered toward the end of the war, and other atrocities were known, but we kept our mouths shut. This was neither the time nor the place for debating. Losing could be costly.

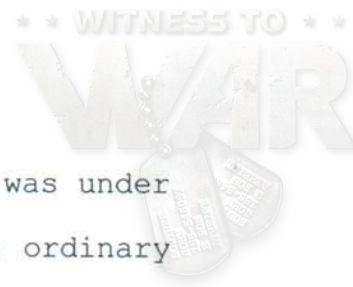
CHAPTER 63

On August 1, 1945, Major Miki came into our room. He told us we would leave in ten days to join the other POW's in a new camp.

He also said our rice would be increased. It wasn't. On August 10, he dropped in to bring us some toilet paper and said we would be leaving in six days, " ..I think." For the third time he told us he had ordered his subordinates to increase our rice and that we were getting the same as the Japanese soldiers, which we knew was a lousy lie.

This prison compound we were in was on a very busy camp or base with troops drilling and shouting all day. The Japanese issue orders at the top of their lungs. So when the morning of August 15, 1945 came, and the camp was almost deathly quiet for the morning hours, we knew something very unusual was was going on.

We went to the guard and asked in Japanese; "Oyasumi desu ka?" (Is it a holiday?) The guard answered with a grin, "Hai oyasumi chigaimasu." (It is a very different or unusual holiday). That is all he would offer. We were left to speculate as to whether the



invasion had started or some other significant happening was under way. The puzzling part was the apparent happiness of the ordinary soldiers.

PART TWELVE. ITS OVER

CHAPTER 64

Our curiosity was to be answered much sooner than we expected. Major Miki Shosa arrived with some soldiers at about 2 PM that same August 15th with a GIGANTIC announcement!

"Amedica iss vedy bad! You have dropped a-tomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These bombs caused wonderfully great destruction over a wide area. Over 200,000 innocent civilians have been killed. People are still dying. The Emperor has ended the war. Amedica iss vedy bad! You go to Amedica vedy soon."

Before we could react from this stunning information, he further told us that they were made of uranium and worse than poison gas. He mentioned that they were dropped by parachute and that the Yanks had claimed the wind carried them away from the main target, but that they knew all along where they would land. Moreover the supply was limited and would not last long.

With that pronouncement he strode from the room.

WE LOOKED AT EACH OTHER AND THEN LITERALLY SCREAMED FOR JOY!!!
WE EXPLODED!!! THE WAR WAS OVER!!!

CHAPTER 65

We sat around in a delirious daze speculating on what had



happened. Atomic bombs. That was the most ridiculous thing we ever heard. Hell! They just had some of those 10-ton blockbusters dropped on them and they were looking for a face-saving way to get out.

That night we had three times the normal chow, next morning-same thing. About noon (August 16) Miki came in and told us to prepare to leave at 5 o'clock.

"I think you may be returning to Amedica very soon." He didn't say the war was over, but that it was some kind of exchange that wouldn't take more than a month. The guards were all smiles.

Damned if they hadn't discarded their ammunition. They also started handing out cigarettes. We gathered our things and waited and waited.

Finally about 2 AM, we asked the guard to call Miki Shosa and find out when we were going. The message came back, "You will not go just yet." I don't believe we ever saw Miki again.

We immediately started getting about three times as much rice as before, so we were stuffing ourselves and getting sick in the process.

On August 20, 1945 an entourage arrived in our "room" headed by the same Lt. Col. Emoto, mentioned earlier.

He announced; "I have been placed in charge of all POW's on the island of Hokkaido. We wish to send you home in the best health possible; so please give us your needs and we will attempt to get the things you want."



He had brought crackers, butter, coffee, face and laundry soap, lots of cigarettes and matches, G-string underwear, toilet paper and writing paper. All of these things were welcome, particularly the toilet paper, which was certainly better than that we had been using. We also received a box of clothes. Two more boxes of clothes were received on August 22nd.

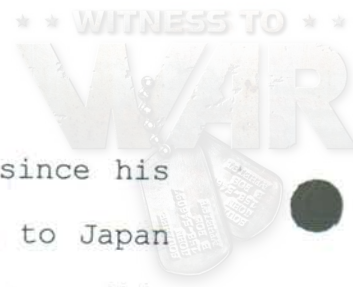
We naturally wanted to know when we would be going home, but he only said it would be some time yet.

Emoto (ever the professor - and compulsive propagandizer) mentioned how well the Japanese understood America and England because they studied English. He claimed that the cause of the war was the fact that we understood nothing of Japanese customs and didn't teach the Japanese language. Japan had to start the war because the American embargo on oil and steel threatened the Japanese economy. He could have been 100% right, but at that time we didn't give a damn. We just let him prattle on.

Emoto was accompanied by two interpreters, and two or three young officers who he indicated would procure the things we named.

One of the young interpreters was in civilian clothes, but with a Japanese Army cap. When we got down to particulars he prompted us by spelling such things as "B-E-E-R", "B-E-E-F", and so on. We also allowed as how some ice cream would be very much in order, after he had prompted us that such things existed in Japan.

He asked in perfect Americanese, "How would you guys like a chocolate malted milk?"



We said "Yea man!" He claimed he hadn't had one since his parents brought him from Hawaii (where he was born) back to Japan just before the war started. He wanted one just as much as we did.

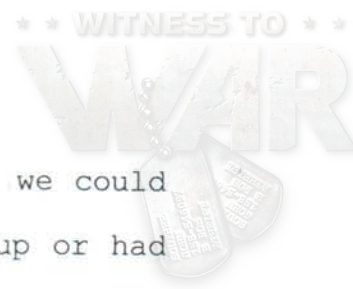
On August 22nd we received more presents from Col. Emoto, plus a speech about his English students. Each of us received a red-and-blue pencil, a plain black pencil, a five-cent box of carmel candy, eight crackers, 1/2 can of salmon, a promise of more to come, and a pound of butter for us all. Their reparations were somewhat slim in the beginning, but we weren't complaining. Perhaps that is all they could scrounge up on short notice.

On the 23rd, two interpreters walked in with some soldiers carrying a Jap soldier's uniform (new) for each of us, including a blouse, pants, shoes, socks, two sets of pajama pants and shirts, and a hat. None of us could fit into anything but the socks which were a simple tube with no heel.

One of the interpreters gave us some news details. The surrender was August 15, 1945, preceded by an unprecedented speech over the radio from Emperor Hirohito to the Japanese people and the army. During all this time since the speech, soldiers were demobilizing at the very base where we sat, as well as all over.

He told us that on August 28, some USAAF brass will fly into Tokyo, and the same day 37,000 US troops will land in the same area. General MacArthur is to talk peace terms on a boat about the same time. Obviously, we were not going home before that.

By Friday, August 24th, we were no longer measuring our rice



by the grain as we had ten days before. We had more than we could handle. Each of us ate a huge amount, got sick, threw up or had diarrhea, or both. We would sleep for a while, and then come back for more chow.

We also had saki, beer, and whiskey arriving. In our weakened condition we easily were cheap drunks. Nobody cared.

We were told to choose rooms for ten (10) more prisoners in the same building. (SEE APPENDIX D) "Make any arrangements you wish for two more officers and eight enlisted men. Japanese soldiers will come to clean up." We chose one small one medium and one large room plus a "three-holer" benjo to supplement our "one-holer".

Quigley, Burch, and a new one, Zack, occupied the small room, eight enlisted men occupied the medium room. The large room became our dining room.

Actually, two (2) more people joined us making 23 in all. These last two were Englishmen (SEE APPENDIX E) that somehow had wound up on Hokkaido. One had been caught in Singapore and done something the Japanese didn't like and was placed in solitary for the entire war. He kept his mental balance by unraveling and re-knitting his sweater many, many times.

On the afternoon of August 24th, supplies were pouring in. We were joined by a Japanese Captain, a Lieutenant, an interpreter, and several soldiers. We all had crackers and drank some beer as a toast to our health and happiness. It was pretty good beer. They



left a couple of quarts of saki.

That evening they all came back, and we were all assembled. The Lieutenant read a speech through the interpreter; which he introduced by saying it would make us very happy. We applauded.

"After tomorrow, all planes flying will be American. All POW locations are to be marked with a large white circle visible from the air. They will come to drop packages and you will be allowed to go out and get the ones that fall near here - with a sentry for your protection of course. They should start tomorrow by 6 AM."

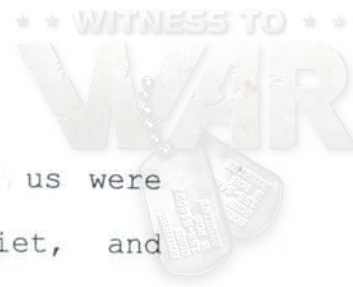
The thought of American cigarettes and chocolate was pleasing beyond belief.

CHAPTER 65

The new mess hall was a real pleasure with bright lights, tables and benches, and a charcoal burner for coffee and cooking. The dining room was opened with a beer party by the Jap officers. They toasted our good health. It seems there was always hot coffee on this thing in the dining room 24 hours a day. This night some of us stayed up most of the night, or alternated sleeping awhile then getting up and drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes.

Two Japanese officers dropped in, had coffee and cake and a long "hanashi". The First Lieutenant was drunk, and sobered up on the black coffee. The Second Lieutenant, named Kitazawa, had been only recently commissioned and had a wonderful time talking. He weeps but is happy that all American officers are such gentlemen.

On August 25th, daybreak finally came. The weather was



terrible. No planes were to be heard or seen. Some of us were still being regularly sick from the unaccustomed diet, and "gorging". We keep on eating nevertheless. Who wouldn't after what we had been through?

On August 26th it was more of the same . Still no airplanes showed up.

August 27th was a memorable event. We had a movie. It was some French job that was lousy, but it was a show. Nobody understood it. What we did understand was a case of madarin oranges that was delivered with the movie. They were delicious. We also had some real eggs along with some canned salmon and canned clams. We were eating high on the hog. We noticed that the Jap soldiers were knocking down on the goodies such as milk and white rice as much as we were. I only stopped swilling long enough to have a bath at 2PM.

On August 28th, Lt. Col. Emoto came in with three quarts of whiskey, pronounced "uiski" in Japanese and gave us a short talk. He said that Japan had surrendered, then he drank to our health and happiness.

CHAPTER 67

On the afternoon of August 29th, a B-29 came in, circled the camp, and left. After supper it came back and dropped a note written on the back of a map, tied in a red sail from a life raft, and weighted with a wrench. It read:

"Hi, Fellows, we will be back as soon as possible with



supplies. We know you need them badly. We're doing our best.

Maj. Vance E. Black, 500th Bomb"

Ironically, we were told years later that Major Black served in the Korean War, was shot down, and died in captivity in North Korea. I hope that information was wrong.

That night we had a big party. Two or three young Jap officers joined us and we all got pretty drunk and wound up teaching the Nips how to do a Conga line. The line got out of hand and we were "congaing" down the tables and through the "benjo", knocking stuff everywhere. The soldiers were frantically trying to rescue the "dinnerware", food, booze and all, but we were all a little out of control, including the Jap officers.

The next day four B-29's came over at about 5,000 feet going north. Only one came back over us but they didn't come down at all. I was so hung over I didn't care.

August 31 was the first time Swiss and Red Cross representatives came in with a bunch of Japanese officers. We received parts of some of the packages that were dropped at other camps. We received a complete American uniform, toilet paper and some canned food. Also The Japanese brought us some ice cream. Claimed they had to open up the ice cream factory in Sapporo to make it. We certainly never received any more.

On September 1st, The Japanese brought supplies dropped from the B-29's at another camp for Aleuts captured in the Aleutian Islands. None of them knew what to send us. We ended up with 176



pairs of GI shoes, underwear, socks, towels, field jackets, suntans, etc in the same proportion. There were a few C-rations which we did not need. No cigarettes, no candy, no gum, no medical supplies.

We heard that eventually Alfred, King of the Aleuts, made some trades with us for the shoes, which probably ended up on Japanese feet, and we received some vitamins, and various medical supplies, and lots of fruit cocktail.

CHAPTER 68

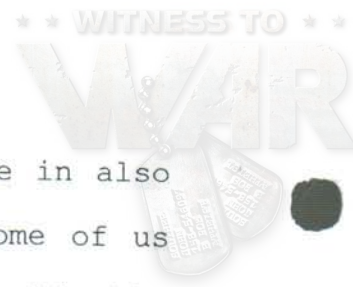
The events between September 2nd and September 12th were and are still kind of in a fast forward blur. I will try to recount them without too much repetition to avoid boredom.

September 2: The Japanese took us out to see some of the countryside. We went to a dairy farm. We also learned that peace terms were settled today. Theoretically we are not prisoners anymore, but for our own safety we are guarded.

September 3: Went for another trip out in the countryside to an experimental farm. Received one bottle of milk for three of us, bread, and two bottles of beer each. We are supposed to receive these things daily from now on.

September 4: Jackpot! We received American cigarettes, candy, chewing gum, comb, tooth brush, and canned food. Part of the group went on a tour.

September 5: Lt. Hanley came down from another camp and checked our ailments. Lts. Wood and Rouse (they were China airmen



captured in late 1943 and not segregated as we were) came in also and decided to spend the rest of the time with us. Some of us went swimming at the beach this afternoon. The "sand" was black!

September 6: Our family increased by one more. Another medical man came in to take care of our ailments. Tonight is cool.

September 7: Went on another tour. Saw downown Saporro, Hokkaido. Quigley and I went to a department store for a souvenir or two. There we ran into a pilot from a C-47 who was not a prisoner. He had a .45 Army issue pistol on his hip. He told us that we would be flown out pretty soon. He also told us that the atomic bomb was for real. We later went to a nearby airport where we saw two Sally bombers and some cargo and other planes.

September 8: We had quite a celebration. A Swiss Council and some Red Cross representatives came into camp with Col. Emoto and a contingent of Japanese officers. The affair was quite wet in more ways than one.

September 9: I went into Sapporro shopping and picked up a few more souvenirs. The movie tonight turned out to be no good. We were becoming critics.

On September 10th we learned that we were to move out to the airport tomorrow preparatory to leaving. We had a big celebration that night. At last we would be going home. It was a very emotional time for each of us. The past few days were supposed to begin the healing process. However, some things that happened to us will never be forgiven or forgotten.