PROLOGUE

When my mother, your Great Grandmother, died in 1982 it suddenly dawned on me just how stupid I had been. I had often promised myself that I would sit her down and ask her about your Great, Great Grandmother fleeing Russia with a six-month-old baby (my mother) in 1914, and now it was too late. True, I had some pictures from albums, and a smattering of stories, but there are many, many blanks that I will never be able to fill. I promised myself that I would not let the same happen to my children, and more importantly my grandchildren who will have absolutely no understanding of what people suffered through during WWII. I pray they understand some of the problems that gave us WWII and cost the world millions of deaths. I am not sanguine that such will happen, but can only pass my experience as a child on to my grandchildren and any other interested party.

I have procrastinated for years now on sitting down and recording some of my memories. It has not been because I do not have enough material, nor because my memory is so impaired.

As far as the former is concerned, let's see, before I was 13: I spent three plus months on Bataan, seen the Death March, met General King and the Japanese Officer to whom General King surrendered; been bombed (close that is) about 5 times, machine gunned once; almost drowned; kept in a cell for ten days while my parents were interrogated; provided free rent and room at two Civilian Internment Camps; seen many dead as well as hideously wounded soldiers and civilians (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and American); and been part of a movie-like rescue by paratroopers at Los Banos Internment Camp.

I do think I could come up with a story or two. My memory insufficient? Still clear enough! In some cases almost eerie. I swear I can still bring back many scenes in my Mk1 Mod 0 video processor installed somewhere in my cranium. The trouble is that the pictures are never very crisp and clear, are in slow motion and are fleeting in nature. Sort of like watching one of those lantern shows of my childhood: Grainy, silent, flickering so fast that you cannot savor any details. I am not claiming to remember every detail, name, place, time, but I assure you that at the time of drafting this narrative I am not quite out of it, yet. So what was my problem? Trying to figure out how I could satisfy my penchant for detail, background, and message, while not boring those among the readers who are glued to the Smart Phone or I-pad, and abhor reading more than half a page at a time.

I finally decided to share my experience growing up in a strange world where I was a minority and my experience in World War II in the Philippines.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

My grandparents, your great, great grandparents, came to China from two completely different directions and under completely different circumstances.

Fritz and Ella Trendel came from Germany in the old tradition that the "Not First Born" was given a stipend and shoved off to sink or swim as best they could.

Fritz went into the Hotel and Restaurant business and if one is to believe a Kulmbach, Germany Editorial of _____had a rollercoaster career to the heights of affluence and millionaire status in China (probably in Chinese currency) to abject refugee status in post WWII Germany.

The Ekaterina Wentzel and Peter Assonov Russian branch took a more, much more, indirect route to settling in China. Her father was an Engineer building the Trans-Siberian Railroad and the family relocated frequently as the tracks moved eastward toward China. Grandmother married Peter, an Officer in the Czar's Imperial Army at the age of 18, had my mother, and divorced a year later after deciding that Army life was not for her. She then married an engineer, _____, who was also building the Trans-Siberian. He somehow got (bought?) a Chinese passport to add to their Russian passports. When things went south in Russia with the Bolshevik Revolution they parlayed the two passports to get to, then cross into China with my mother, Nina Ruth Assonova, at age six months. Grandmother's husband had two sons from a previous marriage who were studying in Paris. He went to fetch them from the impending war and was never heard from again. Later Grandmother married a Mr. Lavroff who had a successful fur business. That is until Communism raised its ugly head. When she came to the States after his death she wore two fur coats and had two suitcases with her valuables. She never had to work in China and always said that if she had to she would learn. She landed a staff job in the "White House", that is on the cleaning staff in the Department store in San Francisco. She took care of herself and managed to slip $5 into every letter she replied to mine, if I wrote in Russian.

The Early Years

It seems that at ST. Francis Convent for Girls mom met my future Aunt Gretchen (Trendel then later Boschen).She introduced mom to her brother Rheinhold.

I was born on 11 June 1932 in the busy fishing seaport town of Chefoo, now called YENTAI to my Russian Mother (Nina Ruth Assonova) and German Father (Rheinhold Trendel). Then I was raised by an All American stepfather (Coleman Arien Meukow).

I started my odyssey as a 10.75 pound baby brought into this world by a Chinese doctor in a clinic to my parents. The only time I saw my mother cry was later when she missed a period in Los Banos Internment Camp and when she told me of the surroundings I was born into. For whatever reason, the only Christian Hospital would not take her in even though the Trendels were upper crust society in Chefoo. My step dad (Coleman Meukow) told me much later that a Jewish businessman who had contributed heavily to the Hospital had also been denied entrance when he needed it. Probably nothing more than the signs of those times?

One perhaps interesting note: I never heard anything about Peter Assonov other than his name. However he did attend my Christening. What happened to him thereafter I have no clue. One of those questions I should have asked.

We lived in large house on the main road (there were not many) that paralleled the foreign national beach. Catty corner across the street was mom's Tennis Club and a mile towards town was Grandpa Fritz Trendel's restaurant and Watering Hole when the Asiatic Fleet called. Across the street from Grandpa's restaurant was a huge hotel where I later had an interesting adventure. After that the road took a ninety degree turn to the right then left on the Bund (essentially a road alongside the sea) and at the end were apartments with a lot of White Russian emigres. My Maternal Grand Mother (Ekaterina Lavroff/aka BOOTIE to my children) was ensconced there when she visited Chefoo.

The house was large but severely wanting in some of things we now take for granted: The Honey Bucket was the Go To place; heating was by pot -bellied coal stove; hot bathing water was carried in by buckets; the kitchen was in a separate building due to the dangers of charcoal cooking. There were only four rooms: two bedrooms upstairs, a living and dining room downstairs. They were joined by a grand staircase. Each room was about forty by forty, with a cheery fireplace in the living and dining room. Alongside both floors was a glass lined veranda facing the sea, sort of? The whole lot was walled in and the wall was topped with broken glass shards. The garden was beautiful. Rose bushes were almost six feet high (well fertilized I am sure).

Perpendicular to the main road that ran in front of the house was a narrow alley heading to the beach, but becoming a proper, if narrow, road heading in the other direction into the hills and Indian Country. I call it that because kidnapping of foreigners was hardly a unique, if not, frequent event.

My folks gave up the Amah when I was three and I was often unsupervised, thus susceptible to getting into mischief, nor were treading into No land unknown to me.

My first adventure, verified by my mother that I was three and a half years old, was seaborne. The beach had a very shallow gradient so a large raft, dubbed the WHITE ELEPHANT was rigged with high and low diving platforms for those so inclined. But, it had to be anchored almost a mile out to provide adequate water for the

divers. The beach had various types of small boats available for fun or just to get out to the White Elephant. The armada included a number of kayaks. So, I pushed one into the water, clambered aboard and slowly stroked my way to, and around the White Elephant. Just about the time I had the bow pointed back to the beach I saw at least 20 boats heading out in my direction. Mom was directing traffic and they were out to rescue me. I did not need rescuing but that did not save me from a spanking and a tongue lashing.

My next adventure occurred when I was about five. By then I had explored all the rocks and coves on the beach both sides of our alley and even gone down the main road away from town, past the beach, past Aunt Gretchen's house, up a hill and into the next cove that had a long stone pier jutting into the sea. I found cats-eye shells and strange driftwood that I proudly brought home only to find that my effort was hardly appreciated... This was another area close to Indian Country. So I decided to explore the area up -hill from the main road. I spent the day talking with the Chines shop keepers, being treated to various candies, and had a fun day. On returning I was again met with disfavor and a world class tongue lashing. I just could not seem to get things right, as in correct. But I was learning. I wish I had thought of it at the time, but I did have some of mom's genes.

Things I clearly remember during those first 5-6 years is that my propensity to eat Chinese food whenever and wherever available brought about frequent visits by a Japanese Doctor with his small packages of arsenic, or the like, to deworm me. My record was a four foot Tape Worm. I also remember with distaste the Cod Liver Oil jammed down my gullet.

One time when my Maternal Grandmother was visiting I had a Double Disaster week. First, when my Father (Trendel) was taking me to see her on his bicycle with me on the back seat I inadvertently stuck my left foot into the spokes and tore a piece of flesh out that left a memento to this day. Then while running up some stairs to the next floor I ran smack into a lady with a tray of very hot coffee the contents of which scalded the left side of my face to the extent that skin was flopping off my face. I recall the following sequence when a half dozen, God Bless, well-meaning people attacked my face with one remedy after the other. Unfortunately, it neither improved, nor thankfully detracted from my original countenance.

My treks down the beach road (about a mile and a half) to the far end where a pier jutted out into the sea was good for fishing. Immediately after the pier the point rose and on the other side was pretty rugged territory, but that beach had all kinds of pretty shells, including some I called Cat's eyes. For whatever reason that trek did not draw the same attention from my parents as my route up the hill had done.

My first movie, in a Chinese Movie Theater, was TARZAN OF THE APES, with Johnny Weismuller. I must have been six. I sat next to an elegantly dressed Chinaman who asked me if I understood the Chinese. We then had a long conversation after the film ended. He commended me on my accent I also saw a few German News Reels and

movies at the German Club. One I recall was a German version of A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

By late 1937 it did not take a rocket scientist to see signs of trouble brewing. The local scenario in Chefoo gave ample hints in the form of increasing numbers of Japanese convoys carrying wounded, and hundreds of Chinese bodies floating down rivers. But to a boy of 9 ½ who at the time could speak decent street Chinese, it was a ball.

Late in 1937, as best I can recollect, my mother and father went to Harbin and left me with my paternal grandparents, Fritz and Ella Trendel.

I know I was there for at least a year because I remember experiencing the four seasons. The spring when I slept in the bright side of the Summer House and the winter when they put hot bricks at my feet with heavy comforters covering me in the darker/fancier part. This side had a lot of old antiques that must have cost a fortune before the war.

My Grandfather restaurant/bar, "FRITZ"s PLACE", was mentioned in Ferdinand Micklautz's FACES ALONGTHE WAY with a picture of Fritz Trendel and a bunch of sailors around his desk. Across the street was a huge hotel, which the Japanese used to billet their troops. The trucks, tanks, troops were like having your own movie stage, which I could watch from the safety of the glassed in veranda of my grandfather's restaurant fronting the street. Once, while viewing a convoy of wounded, a Japanese soldier with his ever present bayonet, came to the door and made it clear that I was not to view the scene.

The main entrance to the restaurant opened into a glassed in veranda with small cupboards filled with all kinds of spices. At least 400 such individual niches. The aroma was worth a trip, although the fleet preferred the Watering hole in the back. Walking towards the rear one immediately ran into two private dining rooms, one on each side, then into an open air courtyard with a long kitchen and a three story smokehouse on one side. Then there was another small dining room and a private room before entering the Great Hall. Twenty foot ceiling and at least 60 feet long, 30 foot wide, with Fritz at his desk at one end presiding over his guests. At the opposite end from Fritz was the loo. No running water and" the facility" consisted of a Honey Bucket emptied daily. Nothing strange about that at that time, and those conditions existed at many locations in the Orient even in 1958.

Fritz was no Nazi and not an anti-Semite. I received letters from some of his Jewish friends after the war with glowing references, and he once took me to dinner with Herr Weinglass who lived in an old Light House. But he certainly was a German and proud of its military. Close to his desk, or "throne" perhaps, stood a large cruise box with at least four trays housing an enamel badge for each and every German unit in existence at that time. Fritz also loved my mother. The opposite could be said of my grandmother on all counts, except she also doted on me.

During this time I also learned to shoot a BB gun from Japanese soldiers bivouacked at the hotel across the street. They let me use their BB gun to bag "big game". I remember having sparrows I shot roasted for the "great white hunter" by my grandfather's cooks. I do not recall how they tasted, but do not recommend them to you.

In 1938 my mother returned without my father whom she had divorced. And we moved back into the previous house.

Just before I turned six mother tried to place me in the English Boy's Boarding School without success. I have no doubt the trouble brewing in Europe had something to do with their decision. In retrospect that was a blessing because I doubt it would have been fun for a German/Russian foreigner. There were a number of Missionary schools in town, but for whatever reason mom did not explore that option. Probably because they focused on the Chinese students? So, that left me mom's Alma Mater, St Francis Girls Convent as a day student. I was one of three boys.

The Kindergarten teacher was a friend and Classmate of my mother. Svetlana (if my memory serves me) tutored me personally for my 2.25 years in her class. I cannot remember what language was used. Probably Russian, certainly not German. One day shortly into my third year in her class the Mother Superior walked in, stated I was too old for that class and dumped me in the Third Grade.

By that time my mother had married Coleman, a retired Navy Chief Petty Officer (Quarter Master) who with his son George (born in 1934) moved into our house. His first wife had died in childbirth. To this day I think of him as the most honest, ethical, disciplined person I have known. He was also clever and self-educated having enlisted after the 8th Grade.

By 1939 only the denizens of Washington, D.C., and perhaps MacArthur's staff in the Philippines, did not realize that trouble was brewing. For reasons I have no idea about the first step was in late 1940 leaving Chefoo and joining my Grandmother (Ekaterina) in Tientsin. We moved into a rented apartment shared by the Shapiro family. They had two boys slightly older than us.

My parents again went hunting for a school. Again the English school had no vacancies (in 1939-40 was that surprising?) but the German school gladly accepted me. That lasted two weeks till I came home and said I needed some money for uniforms (Brown Shirts). I was immediately dis-enrolled and that started a year-long vacation and plenty of time to get into a modicum of mischief.

Getting out Of Dodge was not a simple matter since my mother and I were stateless. Dad got a ride to the Philippines, got a job at the Cavite Navy Yard, and started working on the paper work to have us join him.

Mark Shapiro and his younger brother were likewise not enrolled in a school while striving to immigrate to Canada. Mark was our leader in mischief. Along a main thoroughfare for rickshaws and cars were a number of one or two story flat roof buildings. So in summer we clambered on to the roof and pelted the passing traffic with clay marbles delivered by slingshots. In the winter the missiles were snowballs.

Tientsin was by treaty carved up into various national enclaves (Japanese, Italian, British, German, British, and so on). What I remember best about Tientsin was the Victoria Restaurant and Kieslings confectionary. The former was English and sported a rooftop restaurant with a grand view and fine deserts. The latter was German and had every conceivable chocolate treat imaginable packed into a wood paneled European style setting. The wonderful scent of chocolate created a boy's heaven. Their marzipan animal shaped sweets, chocolate elephants and rabbits were simply scrumptious. Sorry Hershey, absolutely no contest.

August -December 1941: Shanghai Short Stop

The first step after Tientsin was to get to Shanghai amidst an increasing tempo of war. There we cooled our heels for three or four months and finally managed to book passage for Manila on the Marshall Joffre (a French liner). On 4 December 1941 we sailed for the Philippines.

Except for a bad storm on the second day it was fun. As an added attraction we had a Japanese Zero (no one else had them) tail us all the way down the Tawain Straits (then Formosa). A group of children on board waved and yelled at the pilot, not having a modicum of information as to the meaning of that overflight. Why should we have had?

Some one knew more than we did because we arrived in Manila a bit ahead of schedule on the evening of the 7th of December. There was no one there from our family to meet us or most of the passengers, so my mother, step-brother George and yours truly, along with the wife of a marine stationed at Cavite, piled into a cab at close to midnight and found our own way. I remember palm trees, small barrios, and the strains of "Maria Elena" played on the taxi radio, and sung by what struck me as the most beautiful voice I had ever heard. It really made an impression on me. I still love that tune.

CAVITE

We finally linked up with dad who had the night shift and he settled us into the rented house, and then went back to work. Later in the morning when he came off his shift he told us that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. The talk was straight: "This one will be over in a couple of weeks"; "Those bandy-legged apes will have to be taught a lesson".

I doubt if any civilians had the slightest idea of just how badly hurt we were.

Our house was only half a block from an ancient Spanish fort that boasted some heavy-duty walls and we were instructed to repair to that fort if we heard the air raid siren. A couple of bags were packed with clothes and papers and we thought we were ready.

On the evening of the 9th we heard the drone of a highflying airplane. Then saw a man with a flashlight across the street that he was aiming skyward.

Dad immediately called in a security alert to whatever.
Never found out what happened to him after the MPs responded to dad's call.

The 10th was a special day. First it was my mother's first ever attempt at cooking a full meal. A lunch, most of the work consisted of opening cans. She botched it. An extremely punctual man and knowing that he was already way past his lunch break, dad stalked out of the house considerably upset with my mother. Almost immediately after his departure the air raid siren sounded. Dad had just reached the Navy Yard gate and was happy to accept the Marine guard's suggestion to get into the air raid shelter with him. Meanwhile, Mother grabbed the two suitcases and her two children and we dashed across the street `to the fort. Fifty-four Japanese bombers casually made run after run bombing the hell out of the Navy Yard and environs. Our Marines futilely fired their 50 caliber machine guns and antiquated 3" AA weapons and did not have a chance. But the din of antiaircraft shells and bombs bursting was somewhat disconcerting and frightening to say the least. The Japanese scored multiple hits on dad's office building and one errant bomb found our house. No one was left alive in dad's Supply Department section, and our belongings could now be easily transported in the two suitcases we had packed. As a side note, Coleman never, ever again complained about mother's cooking or tardiness.

ON THE RUN

Still, hard to believe the mood appeared to be that all would be over soon. But we needed to get out of Cavite, which was burning fiercely. A Mrs. Ford, wife of an officer who was not present had a car she could not drive, so she came to our rescue and we to hers. Dad the next day drove south and we finally found a small barrio called Negrito to spend the night. The next day we were told there were American Troops in the next Barrio by Manila Bay, so we went further south (to the best of my recollection a barrio called "Timaland" or sounds like) although I am sure the spelling is wrong. There were no American troops.

The small fishing barrio was nestled alongside a small river directly across from Bataan. From here we had a beautiful view of Cavite burning. I have to admit that my time frames get a little confused at this point.

I know we spent Christmas there in "TIMALAND", and that some time before Christmas a threesome of US army personnel arrived in the barrio. Their job was to spot Japanese airplanes on their run from our former Clark and Nichols Field to Corregidor and Bataan. This was about as good as it could get for a 9-½ year old. Camp out, play soldier, listen to sea (army) stories, look out for enemy planes, and not have to go to school. We used to sit for hours with this threesome watching for the planes to come in sight, at which time they would call in a warning to Corregidor. That was the routine until we found out that my mother could hear the planes before we could see them, and thus we gained a few precious minutes of warning.

We celebrated Christmas Eve 1941 with a Filipino style barbecue, including a pig roasted over charcoal. Guitars played and everyone sang Christmas carols. It was as if nothing was wrong. George and I finally pooped out and went to bed. To this day I do not know whether I just had a bad dream that woke me up or if I actually saw the face of a Japanese soldier looking in on us. All I am certain of was that I sure raised a hell of a ruckus and had the whole village unsuccessfully searching for quite some time.

I cannot recollect when our car owner decided to head back to Manila; or why we did not go with her. I think she left the very next day after our arrival at Timaland. The rigors of camping out in a native Nipa Shack must have not appealed to her. Regardless, we were stranded in the boondocks awaiting the end of the war I guess.

Right after New Year's we got the word that the Japanese were closing in and the trio of soldiers were pulled out. What to do? A Filipino advised that the safest place would be Bataan, where MacArthur was pulling his troops into a defensive position.

Just about that time an Army Air Corps Captain joined us in trying to evade the Japanese. I seem to recall that he had been shot down and had been practicing his E&E skills for a number of days. All I clearly remember is that he was quite aloof, and he had some disconcerting news regarding the military situation on Luzon. I guess if I had been shot down I might not be too communicative either. To illustrate the irrationality of thinking during this time, there was genuine fear that he was a spy. Nevertheless we included him in our plans. Since there was absolutely no way of escaping by land we devised a rather rash plan. Simply put, we would sail across Manila Bay to the safety of our troops on Bataan. It was not really an irrational idea but did not accurately predict the weather. We had nothing but faith in the ability of our forces to withstand the Japanese onslaught and we still did not appreciate the severity of the mess that MacArthur had made of his supplies. However, the equipment, logistics, and operational facets of our plan left much to be desired.

We finally bought the services of two Filipino fishermen from the barrio, with their Banca (outrigger canoe) well
suited for 3-4 people. We piled in our two suitcases, family of four, the Army Air Corps Captain, and of course our crew of two.

George and I were thrilled with this new adventure and could not understand why no one else shared our fun. I suspect that by this time we were under some duress, and had to get going, because there certainly was no consideration of tides or weather. I say this because we set off rather speedily due to the current from the river, amid cheers from the locals in a beautiful bright mid-afternoon, with Manila Bay in all its splendor. However, after two hours of "sailing" we were only about 100 yards off the beach. I would surmise that the small sail could not offset the pretty strong current and overloaded conditions. Later in the afternoon we finally started to make some headway as the wind picked up. However, with the increasing speed and wind, we started to take on water and had to bail. I distinctly recall that our freeboard could be measured in fingers, like we would order a whiskey. Unfortunately we had nothing to bail with except our hands.

Then the wind picked up, the skies darkened, the waves increased, the rains came and the sail was ripped off and put a nasty and deep cut on the cheek of one of our crew. After we jury-rigged the sail our progress restarted but at a reduced speed. We also had to increase our all hands bailing effort. In addition, the light rain had everyone soaking wet. We must have been about half way across when night fell. I swear I remember the Banca creaking like my bones do now. I also remember being tired but I do not recall having fun at this stage. The rain became a heavy downpour. Pitch black darkness and a strong wind did a magnificent job of limiting visibility.

Then unexpectedly, we heard the dull throb of a diesel engine and a dark, barely discernable, smudge materialized. It was the U.S.S. Finch (AM-9) that floated by about 100 yards ahead of us without sighting us. Dad, muttered something about a flashlight and my step brother George innocently asked "would this help?" and proffered a flashlight given to him by one of our Army "Coast Watchers". Dad, a retired Chief Quarter Master, grabbed the flashlight and signaled an S.O.S.

She did not immediately see us, or perhaps was just being cautious. However, our sinking hopes were restored when a very short time later she came creeping back and this time we got her attention.

George and I were hauled up first, then my mother and dad, the Army Air Corps Captain, and the crew. As the last crewmember stepped on deck the overloaded Banca gave up the ghost and broke up. I do not know whether the hull of the FINCH damaged the Banca, or the constant battering of the wind and water damaged the outrigger, all I know is that it broke apart. Of course the matter did not even register at the time, but years later the thought of being tossed into Manila Bay's shark filled waters sent chills down my back.

I remember the sense of warmth, and appreciation for clean sheets offered by the FINCH but was asleep before they covered me. While we were asleep, the Commanding Officer requested permission to land us on Corregidor. This request was disapproved, and he was ordered to drop us off on Bataan at Cabcaben.

A poignant side note, the Captain of the Finch had earlier been my mother's tennis partner at a Tennis Club affair in Chefoo.

At dawn, an instant later it seemed to me, we were awakened, hastily fed, and put into the whaleboat for a short ride to the pier at Cabcaben on Bataan. As we approached the pier at flank speed an Army Sergeant came screaming down the pier waving us off. The whaleboat coxswain had other orders, and certainly was uncomfortable being exposed to air attack in daylight. He rather unceremoniously dropped us off and headed back to the FINCH.

BATAAN

All that time the Sergeant was hollering; only now he was ordering us to get the hell off the pier. He grabbed George and me and unceremoniously dragged us off the pier and into a dry creek bed just off the pier. Mom and Dad followed. We barely got to cover (the edges of the jungle) when a couple of Japanese airplanes dropped a dozen or so bombs (without the permission of the EPA or a valid EA), all misses. All of sudden my mother screamed, and oblivious to the still circling planes, ran out of the jungle onto the pier. She was in shock and could not be persuaded to return to the relative safety of the jungle canopy. It seems she had made her decision given a choice between what she thought was a five-foot crocodile (reinforced by the MP who told her not to worry it was only a baby and probably more afraid of us) and the Japanese bombs, she decided to risk the Japanese. Mom was simply in a state of shock and it took her some time to recover. Later we heard that the Japanese bombed Cabcaben daily throughout the siege, and allegedly never hit it.

More amazing, the FINCH was not sunk until mid-April 1942 when Japanese airplanes finally got enough close hits to sink her at her anchorage just off Corregidor.

The immediate issue; however, was to get us into some kind of quarters and under some sort of authority.

We took over an abandoned Nipa hut close to Hospital #2 on the eastern side of Bataan, and were attached to that organization for food and marching orders. Coleman drew truck convoy duties at night and mother did some volunteer typing (one finger skill level). I cannot find the citation, but still have the campaign ribbon she received for her well-intentioned but limited volunteer work.

By now even George and I were not enjoying this prolonged camping trip. We had few clothes, even fewer than when we left Cavite. The food was becoming a bit boring as well as scarcer, and the noise created by exploding bombs and shells was getting to be somewhat disconcerting. We did not realize that things could, and would, get worse. Much worse.

I spent most of the time playing chess with the wounded at Hospital #2, until one of Elizabeth Norman's "Band of Angels" kicked me out. A Colonel Sullivan (USA MC) took me under his wing for a while. In late 1945, after we were situated in Port Orchard, Washington we heard some of his family was situated there. He did not survive the war.

We spent quite some time fashioning a crude bow and arrow and a slingshot, unsuccessfully trying to catch a wild rooster that was never in danger. In hind sight I wonder why we never asked one of the soldiers to join us with a rifle for barbecued chicken dinner.

The story of Hospital #2 was extremely well told in Elizabeth Norman's "We Band of Angels". I'll unabashedly tell you that when I read the book I cried-- and also strengthened my emotional dislike for the American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur.

During our stay at Hospital #2 a spent 3" shell fired from Corregidor penetrated the chest of one of the cooks. I thought he died, but in the book referenced above I read he survived. At least the immediate wound. There were a number of bombs that fell close enough to shatter anyone's peace and quiet, and the rumbling roar of Corregidor's 16" shells on their way to pay a call on the Japanese could not be ignored. At least in the latter case we could be proud that we were fighting back. Too often our Antiaircraft weapons could not reach the Japanese airplanes; so they virtually had practice runs with live ammo. However, while the bombers stayed high enough to be safe, they often were ineffective. Once in a while we sneaked a shell in and downed an airplane, which made me suspect we had mixed quality ordnance to deal with.

One evening we heard a sound like a washing machine might make on its last legs, but a louder and deeper noise. It actually was the sound of one of our last P-40s with an aircraft engine on its last run. Then there was suddenly almost no noise and then a loud crash, followed by a ball of flames about 200 yards away. The pilot walked away from that crash. By this time I think we were down to about 5 aircraft out of a jungle strip a few miles away.

In February 1942 we were assigned an old school bus with the whole left side of the body missing. This was our home on Bataan till the end in April 1942. Through February we parked the "mobile" home in a valley and were really out of the line of fire. There were troops in the vicinity, but it was relatively peaceful. The biggest excitement I can recall was seeing 20 terrified Filipino soldiers trying to bring a huge green snake out of a big tree. Their obvious fright I can still feel, and it did leave me with a truly unsympathetic view of snakes.

We moved again to another location, but I have not the foggiest idea where it was. I only know the move was related to Dad's assigned duties. Our parking spot was under some trees, out of sight. But mostly George and I lived in a spacious bunker

dug 10 foot deep and covered with coconut and banana palm trunks. We even had ventilation ducts.

Highlight of that era was the visits every few days by a motor cycle riding Sergeant named Daugherty (I think that was his name) with a strong desire to speak with someone not directly in the military, but best of all always with some hard candy. How or where he found such I never found out. That was the good part.

The worst event during this period occurred one day when one of our AA guns hit a Japanese bomber (their pattern on the way to Corregidor passed virtually directly over our position). He turned back and jettisoned his load. It was one of the few times we were away from our bunker. As soon as we heard that peculiar screaming whistle a bomb makes on its way to the target we knew we were going to be pretty close to ground zero. We took shelter behind a huge tree with my mother laying over both George and me. When the string of jettisoned bombs landed just across the road, less than 200 feet away, and the whole world shook. I got a nose bleed from the concussion and to say the least was a bit off my feed. Mother had a large solitaire pearl set in a three pronged setting. The shaking of the ground must have spun the pearl right out of its setting, because it was gone.

When we returned to our bunker we could not use it because of the smoke. Everyone was commenting on how lucky we were because the bombs were pronounced to have been 500lb incendiary bombs and not High Explosives, but no one could have gotten agreement on that matter from me. A Master Sergeant with over 30 years of service drew his 45 and blew his brains out. I guess it is not hard to understand why I did not even wake up one night when a rather severe earthquake rolled me out of my cot.

I remember one Sunday when a Sergeant Castro of the 57th Scouts, who was in charge of a burial detachment, took us for a ride and showed us the cemetery located on top of a hill. It happened to be a day with no air activity and the scene was about as tranquil as could be.

We had a beautiful view of Manila Bay, Corregidor, the pier at Cabcaben, banana palm and other vegetation covered rolling hills and a small naval vessel far below us (The Finch?) serenely at rest as if there was not a care in the world. The great number of dirt gravesites also made an impression and somewhat painted in some gray into what otherwise would have been a beautiful, bright tropical panorama.

By mid-March things were tightening up. I recall eating my share of some of the best Cavalry horses the US Army ever owned, as well as “C” Rations which varied, but general consisted of chicken, turkey, biscuits, chocolate bar, fruit, soluble condensed coffee, and packs of cigarettes; many bombings; talks with soldiers who always seemed to have a smile for kids; and no problem maintaining a diet. I also remember many wounded and sick without proper care, but things were frankly blurring a bit (or is it just me now?).

That the end was near, we could discern. Things happened more frantically, and there was obvious panic. Then the word came that the Japanese were breaking through. We still had that idiotic sense of being able to forestall whatever it was we did not want to happen. At the time we were still on the eastern side of the peninsula, just south of Hospital #2.

We headed south on clogged roads, got to Mariveles, and headed north up the west coast.

Headed for what I do not remember knowing. Just running from the Japanese, but of course right into the Japanese. Panic is frightening thing to experience or even to recall. I remember driving past the location where a Marine Corps Antiaircraft Battery was located, and being told they were the most, probably the only, effective unit on Bataan. The rumor had been that they hung their laundry out in the open to lure Japanese planes. (Probably a Marine PR job).

I remember being scorched when the convoy was stalled on a dirt road between two gasoline dumps that were being destroyed. But we finally broke through and into fresh air.

The next day we realized the futility of our scampering. It was decision time. Mom suggested we take to the hills and join the natives. Dad vetoed this on the basis that the first time mom would refuse to eat roast dog the hill country natives would have us in the pot. Our decision was made for us that day because we got the word; Bataan had capitulated. These poor, starved, diseased, and extremely brave and resourceful soldiers, American as well as Filipino had finally exhausted themselves. General King knew they could no longer hold out. General Wainwright also recognized that it was a mission impossible. From the comfort of Australia, MacArthur exhorted the men to continue the fight.

We turned the bus, hoisted a full bed sheet on top of the bus to signal our surrender and started for Mariveles, the surrender point. On the way we picked up a couple dozen members of the 57th Filipino Scouts, certainly the best of all the Filipino regulars. On the way George and I had the duty of breaking up the rifles and pistols and throwing each part into the dense jungle or deep ravines. For a moment it was kind of fun for us kids, but I also learned a lesson: when the right things are involved, it is not a shame for grown men to cry.

On the way a SOB Japanese Zero pilot saw us and calmly made a pass straight in our faces and gave us a few long bursts. He may not have seen the bed sheet, although I do not know how, but at least he did not hit anyone, only put a few holes in the bus. I can certify that April is the dry season in that part of the country, because when we all jumped out of the bus and flattened ourselves as close to the ground and behind the bus as we could I landed in at least 6" of dust.

It was a terribly depressing sight of our dejected, tired, hungry, sick and frightened troops that greeted us when we arrived in Mariveles. Our military hitchhikers were marched off to one or another grouping of new Prisoners of War. A couple of Japanese officers came by, then General King and a Japanese General (for whatever reason for years I believed it actually was General Homma, but that is impossible since he never visited Bataan) arrived. After only a few minutes discussing what to do, they put a dozen Filipino civilians on board our bus, threw on some cases of canned food, and ordered us to report to Manila. We moved out very slowly. Weaving our way through masses of our troops squatting wherever they could find space in the brutally hot open fields and hard top areas. Of course we in the rattle trap bus were hardly any better off. Certainly all on board were as tired from the two or three days of driving or walking in a state of panic in our vain attempt to evade the advancing Japanese. We also were every bit as hungry, and frightened. Further, I suspect most of us had malaria in some stage or another. Dad had it pretty bad and was running a high temperature, but was the only one on board who could drive.

We had barely cleared the surrender muster site when we came upon a large contingent of our troops slowly moving north on the dusty road. We actually recognized a couple. I do recall a few brave flashing smiles through the fatigue, anguish, despair, confusion, and disorganization that showed clearly on the faces of the defeated and broken army. We broke out one of the cases of food and passed out almost all of it before a Japanese soldier menacingly waved us on. This was the vanguard of what later was dubbed the "Bataan Death March". Up to this point we had seen no sign of the brutality and deprivation that was facing these troops. I feel comfortable in assessing the feeling of all of us on the bus when I say that the abject and total specter of defeat, as much as the menacing looks of bayonet wielding Japanese, sent shivers of fear through all of us on the bus. In later years, and to this day, I get pangs of conscience for not doing a better job of getting those can goods out faster. We lost all of the food anyway.

Once we cleared the marchers, we proceeded as fast as the traffic allowed, which was not too fast since the road was choked with Japanese troops moving into the Mariveles area to take positions in their continued siege of Corregidor.

We were stopped at least a half dozen times. Each time we had to explain our situation, wave whatever papers we had, including my German Baptism papers; and talk our way on. Luckily mother and I both spoke decent Chinese at that time and some of the Japanese spoke English.

We finally broke clear of the Japanese troop movements and were able to make some decent speed. We thought we were on our way, although given dad's state of health I now am not sure how long he could have continued to drive. Regardless, disaster waited in the approaches to a town on our route. It was the town of San Fernando and I remember there was a railway line that came up to a long loading dock with considerable warehouses. That, and the fact that there was a barbed wire

surrounded field about half the size of football field for our troops confirms for me that we were indeed in San Fernando, which was a way station for the Death March, and the terminal where they finally got transportation.

As Dad slowed down to pass through the town, a number of bayonet- wielding Japanese met us. With them was an Army (theirs, not ours) Captain who jumped on board cursing and shouting, accused us of everything and anything under the sun, then physically tore us off the bus, and even threatened to shoot us. Then he waved the Filipinos through. None could drive, not that is until he gestured with his pistol, at which time one of the braver (or more frightened) Filipinos jumped into the driver's seat and lurched off. The course taken down the road by the new driver resembled something out of a Three Stooges movie.

Unfortunately, I for one was so scared out of my wits that I could not possibly have enjoyed the farce I was witnessing. Again, we lost some of our few bits of clothing and of course all the food that the Japanese General and General King had given us just a few hours ago.

After a great deal of posturing, and further threatening the Captain simmered down a bit and dragged us to a small Nipa hut a half block from the main road, and adjacent to the aforementioned barbed wire enclosed "holding pen" (there were no amenities in that area). The Captain then grilled us for a few minutes and calmed down.

He noticed dad's uncontrolled shaking from a bout with the Malaria bug and called in a Japanese military doctor who dispensed some quinine and other powders. Had we not been forced to stop Dad would have been in serious trouble shortly thereafter. The Captain then gave George and I each a gallon sized tin can, took us by the hand, and led us to an open field mess. The meal consisted of boiled rice and boiled shrimp. The shrimp were the tiny kind that are first dried then boiled. As hungry as I was, the stench of that shrimp drying, cooking, still left a truly indelible mark on me. I can still remember that it stunk to high heaven.

That evening the Captain showed up with a large tin of cookies and some tea. We talked for quite some time, mostly about family things. I honestly cannot remember whether we spent two or three evenings at that location. I think only two. Regardless, on the last evening he came in with his tea and cookies, told us he had been in China the past three or four years, showed us some pictures of his family and again started telling us about his family and told us he had not seen them for all of that time. Then he started to cry. My mother put her arm around him and said something to the effect that "this too will end".

Take this account in context of the situation: An officer in the Japanese Imperial Army, at the very zenith of their military successes (having beaten the Americans, the British, the Dutch, and conquered much of China) was shedding tears because he loved and missed his family. The incongruity of the situation did not escape me.

To this day I recall that event and ameliorate any hostile thoughts about the Japanese people. In retrospect, I am sure that he would have himself been severely dealt with if his superiors had known. After he regained his composure, without any bravado or regrets, he told us that he was sending us to Manila on the next day. He further told us we would be taken to the Fort Santiago, an old Spanish fort used by the Japanese as an interrogation and detention center, and assured us all would be well as long as we truthfully answered all questions. This Captain's actions explain why I have answered the question "You obviously hate the Japanese considering your experience?" With a resounding "No", even though I certainly learned to hate one of our future Los Banos Internment Camp masters.

The next morning before we got on the truck for the final leg to Manila, I saw the "holding pen" filling up with the first contingent of our troops. I could easily discern that they were considerably worse off than when we had last seen them. Most were lying on the ground, dysentery and diarrhea were obviously prevalent, and of course virtually 100 % had malaria. When I said there were no amenities, and tell you they had little in the way of privy privileges, I do not believe I need to finish the picture. I was again frightened. We left shortly after I had taken my one close and long view of the caged area and the sad state of affairs.

I have yet to read anything that fully captures the full extent of the misery our troops were subjected to during that infamous "Bataan Death March" and the aftermath. Sadly few today even know about it let alone care.

FORT SANTIAGO

Upon entering Manila we saw a number of details in which our troops served as laborers. It most assuredly punctuated the fact that we had lost!

Our family of four, and a Filipino family of four was kept for over a week in a cell that measured some 15 by 18 feet in Fort Santiago. The amenities were "primitive", consisting of a trench at the back of the cell with water sloshing through. There was no furniture, no blankets, and no mats. My mother and dad were interrogated twice. During that week George and I were let out to run and play in the dank hallways at least once a day. Another teaching moment to remember. The Filipino children were not granted that privilege. Our food consisted of a piece of bread and some hot cocoa passed to us through a small opening next to the door twice a day. I cannot recall any other food being served by the chef.

MANILA

After our story was corroborated, or perhaps only accepted, we were released and turned over to the Jesuits, who operated a small hospital at Ateneo de Manila, to recuperate from malaria and sundry other ailments. Another decent act on the part

of the Imperial Japanese Army to file in my Mk1 Mod0 computer. Dad was truly in bad shape and we ended up staying there for over a month.

I was immediately immersed in Catechism classes and was very much ready to become a Catholic. My mother wisely suggested I wait till I was more mature.

Then, during this period I also developed a world class repugnance of the matter of a double standard, this I have yet to overcome, and veered away from any commitment to any religion- at the age of 9 ½?.

There was another family at Ateneo de Manila, I never knew why they were there, but Tony Lippee had a bicycle. He shared same with me. But one day we had an altercation about something I cannot recall. Doubt it was anything serious, but it ended in heated words exchanged. Up comes Father King to break up the argument. Tony lies. I scream "he lies, he lies". Father King admonishes me for losing my temper (justifiably so) but then assigns me the penance of writing Rudyard Kipling's epic poem "IF" 50 times. In addition, I had to write some other poem 50 times "I remember, I remember" ……but I do not. All in long hand without benefit of computers or copying.

It must have been July 1942 when we finally were taken to Santo Thomas Internment Camp in Manila. We rode in unceremoniously on the back of a large Stake truck.

SANTA TOMAS INTERNMENT CAMP (STIC)

My continuing narrative again does not purport to be a history wherein all details have been "Fact Checked". I am just trying to resurrect from the distant past what I perceived to have experienced as a ten year old ….going to thirteen child. In Dr. Elizabeth Norman's documentary on the Army and Navy nurses that served on Bataan, Corregidor, then STIC and LBIC, "WE BAND OF ANGELS" you can find riveting details not only on the personal interactions of the Angels, but also on many details on life in STIC during those tumultuous times. Some details not quite matching my recollection.

Those internees that had been whisked from their homes and privileged status and exalted positions in Manila's society during the initial sweep by the Japanese and interned in STIC were most assuredly traumatized by their sudden changed status. This must have been especially true for the women and children with members serving in the armed forces fighting in beleaguered Bataan or Corregidor. By the time we joined them they had been able to somewhat acclimate themselves into the atmosphere of an incarcerated people with all the inconveniences of family separation and living in different, cramped, "suites". The women in classrooms in the main building, most men on cots placed in the University gym.

One family comes to mind because I later spent some time with them in Los Banos Internment Camp (LBIC). Mrs. Blackledge and her two boys were in the drag net that filled STIC in its early days. The elder Blackledges were both teachers in Manila at the onset of hostilities. He was also a Reserve Army Officer by way of Indiana University ROTC. He was called to serve, fought on Bataan, was in the surrender party that endured the infamous Bataan Death March. He was eventually, shipped to Japan, survived the tenacious efforts of our superb, unquestionably heroic, submarine offensive only to succumb to the starvation diet, illnesses, and TLC of the Japanese pro tem conquerors. I can only imagine the additional anguish that Mrs. Blackledge and her children suffered.

But, even among these early internees there were differences. We noticed the difference in interned life immediately on our entering STIC. Contrary to Dr. Norman's depiction of the Shanty town being built from odd scraps, tin sheets, and whatever could be scavenged, these edifices were quite nice and were only built by those that had the financial wherewithal to purchase the requisite materials. That is, had cash or had credit lines still working in Manila, could afford to create that "shanty town" in one corner of the camp. The "shacks" were made of bamboo and Nipa fronds and gave those folk privacy and other amenities not available to the rest. I do not recall whether they were allowed to spend the nights in those dwellings.

In addition, a few smarter folk in the first sweep brought with them kitchen and dining utensils. So did most of the other group of "latter day" internees, those that were not originally rounded up and incarcerated, for whatever reason (ranging from not being identified or misidentified to "just because"). These folks must have been living in constant dread, but they also had time to prepare themselves for their inevitable internment?

Our family arrived with our two suitcases but also with some knives and forks, but no plates, food containers, pots or whatever. We had to scrounge some empty cans for our plates, bowls, and containers.

Some of the nurses from Hospital #2 on Bataan, our neighbors during our Nipa Shack period, were also in STIC, and later in LBIC.

Having spent four months in the steaming jungles of Bataan: first living in a deserted Nipa shack that leaked when it rained, and then in a school bus with one side torn off; without running water; primitive latrines; daily bombings around our location; hearing the whistling/rumbling sound of heavy artillery (including 16" shell) hurtling overhead from Corregidor to some unknown Japanese target; frequently dealing with uninvited strange reptiles, or insects bearing malaria; and with acute food shortages; we were simply relieved and somewhat happy to be in STIC. I have always liked to say that everything in life is relative.

While attached to Hospital #2 (the Nipa shack period) I often visited the makeshift wards (essentially field tents) and played chess with the seriously sick or wounded. Thus, at a tender age I got acquainted with the consequences of war. At STIC there were no wounded and the few sick (at that early period) were out of sight. Later, after we had left for the new Los Banos Internment Camp (LBIC) things got much worse for the STIC internees.

I, as a near 10 year old, did not immediately recognize, or appreciate the impact of imprisonment, the future food shortages, or the deprivation of privacy. We now could take a shower without worrying about slithering, creeping, sucking creatures attacking us in the streams and backwaters of Bataan.

STIC was entrenched in what had been the buildings and grounds of a University. It essentially could be compared to a crowded, poor, part of a City with its own appointed leaders, messing facilities, dorms, and a lot of open ground for sports (Soccer, Basketball). Dad, my brother George, and I were assigned cots in the gym. Mom had hers in a crowded former classroom in the main building.

STIC had its share of the normal bumps along the road to growing up, such as bullies. To this day I cannot recollect what brought it on, but two twelve year olds took a distinct dislike to me. I happily do not recall their names. Whenever they saw me alone they would chase me to instigate a fight. Since I have no recollection of a beating I can only assume that even at the time I was a faster runner than most. A possibility supported because I managed to hold my own in our "Capture the Flag" games with older boys.

The first major event in my changed situation was my placement into the STIC school system. I have no idea as to the decision making process, but I was thrust into the 5th Grade. You may recall that I spent two plus years in kindergarten, then two months in the third grade, and never spent time in the fourth grade. Now I was in the fifth grade using my fourth language.

Classes were about three hours long every morning. Taught by eminently qualified teachers, most probably attracted to the pre WWII Manila for the good pay, romantic environment, and in some cases, as with the aforementioned Mrs. Blackledge, following her husband. These were real teachers. Subjects taught were "American History", Math, English, and Geography. The same half day curriculum was followed later in LBIC.

After three years of such "deprived" teaching, bereft of social indoctrination/feely good and useless gobbleygoop; when we landed in Port Orchard, Washington after being rescued from LBIC my mother made me repeat Seventh grade. No need, I was ahead of my contemporaries. Thank you Mrs. Blackledge and company.

I have been totally scared out of my wits only two times. Not on Bataan where I once got a bloody noise from the concussion of a string of bombs landing too close for

comfort, not crossing Manila Bay in an overcrowded "banca" (outrigger canoe), not while incarcerated in a cell with eight people while dad was being interrogated after Bataan, but in STIC one morning.

As an indication of how bad things may have been in the city of Manila, two young teenage Filipinos had come over the fence into STIC and tried to steal something from one of our Internees in Shanty Town. They were caught and turned over to the Japanese. The buzz went out that the Japanese were being rather strict with the two erstwhile thieves and were interrogating them inside the main gate. The main gate to STIC had a long, two hundred yard driveway leading to the main building. The Japanese had covered the fencing with Sawali mats to keep people from looking in and us from looking out. I was and still am a curious person so I strolled up the driveway to see what I could see through the Sawali covered fence Pushing a couple of the fronds apart I clearly could see the two teenagers strapped to chairs being force fed water from a garden hose and then had their stomachs pummeled with a large stick. I was so terrified that I turned and ran down the driveway away from the fence. I do not know what the record for the 200 yard dash was at that time, but although I cannot prove it, I swear I must have broken any record.

Once in a while we had movies outdoors. I do not remember any specific movie but seem to recall mostly the Marx Brothers and the like. Also we had some Japanese propaganda movies. One plot I do recall had a noble Japanese soldier who fell in love with a Chinese girl who started out as a member of a Guerrilla band but then saw the light and goodness of the Japanese soldier and saved his life. Funny how the really bad things stick to you.

During the year we were in STIC I had one small cup of Ice Cream. The occasion was when they removed my tonsils by inserting a fine wire with a loop that when pulled neatly snipped the tonsils.

One could still buy food from Filipino venders to supplement the rations. The rub was if you had the wherewithal, namely "cash". Unfortunately our family had none.

During the first year at STIC we received a care package, from the South African Red Cross. I recall the contents included a tin of Corned Beef, Vienna sausage, Spam, a piece of cheese, a Hershey Bar, toothbrush and tooth paste, a pack of cigarettes and instant coffee. Other small packs of whatever, but I simply cannot recall. I have read in some accounts that a bar of soap was included. I did note that no mention was made of cigarettes. That I found interesting since I am certain that cigarettes were included in the package. In WWII they were included in just about everything. I remember the reaction to receipt of that item by smokers and that of some of my contemporaries who stole some packs for themselves. Before that I had watched as Dad and the other smokers had gone scrounging for anything that could possibly be made into a cigarette. It was for me a learning moment. Because of that recollection and later being into sports, I never smoked a cigarette. True confessions: in later

years I indulged and puffed on a cigar without ever inhaling. It was so much fun blowing smoke rings.

During our stay at STIC (repeat during **our** stay) things were really not that bad, especially for us after our Bataan experience. They later fared worse as the Japanese Army took over the administration of the camp.

There was one case of an "atrocity" in the early STIC history. I have to check out the dates. Three British internees escaped. But where could they go to? Circumstances unknown to me, but obviously they were either betrayed or stumbled into a Japanese guard station. They were brought back to STIC, shot and thrown into a grave. Some of them were not quite dead. They were nevertheless covered with dirt while still alive. A single example of the worst side of the Japanese. There are many, many more such accounts.

For the teenagers or younger children there were games (Basketball, Capture the Flag), to keep us entertained. I could not compete with the older boys in Basketball. After an ill-fated attempt at heading a soccer ball that left me with a headache that was out; but in Capture the Flag I could keep up with the older boys.

As more internees were brought in to STIC from other camps throughout Luzon STIC started to get a bit crowded. So, on 14 May 1943 800 men were selected to proceed to the former Los Banos Agricultural College to build the barracks, associated toilet, shower and kitchen facilities at the new Los Banos Internment Camp (LBIC). The 11 Navy Nurses from Bataan's Hospital #2, who were interned at STIC also volunteered to join that "Building Battalion" in LBIC.
I do not remember whether it was just before or just after the departure of the "Building Battalion" that there was a noticeable reduction in the quantity and quality of daily rations. I noticed the change but never knew how and why. Years later, in reading Bruce Henderson's "RESCUE AT LOS BANOS" I found that a Warrant Office named Sadaaki Konishi had taken over as Second in Command at STIC, and had cut rations. We of course would get to know him more intimately when he later assumed a similar position at LBIC.

There was another, small, transfer of single women without children to LBIC in December 1943. Then in April 1944 our family was in the final contingent that included married couples with children.

I know, or always believed that the total number of internees that finally settled into LBIC came to about 2400 and included internees from many, many countries. However, no amount of reading has allowed me to correlate the reported population with the number of reported transfers. But then again "What Difference Does it Make".

LOS BANOS INTERNMENT CAMP (LBIC)

As previously stated, there is no attempt to be chronologically accurate, nor unnecessarily concerned because of a lack of proof or corroboration. This is simply vignettes of what I recalled or think I experienced as a 12-13 year old in LBIC. After reading a number of accounts by professional or supposedly more knowledgeable persons I feel even less inclined to be concerned over such academic niceties. That is because I found errors on subjects I was certain about.

As previously stated, LBIC was created by our Japanese Imperial Army hosts out of necessity due to severe crowding at STIC.

The biggest incentive for the Meukow family to volunteer for the new camp was the fact that we could live together as a family. Thus, no coercing was required for us to volunteer because although our new spaces were hardly luxurious they were better than the open space "just surrounding a cot" and mosquito net in the STIC gym for dad and George and I, and mother's equal spacing in the Admin building. In addition we now had some privacy provided by the thin Sawali mat partitions that separated each cubicle. Those partitions were not sound proof.

The 800 volunteers and "selected" male internees that went as an advance party to build the infrastructure required housing the future augmentation of internees, (sanitary system, water, kitchen, electricity, and quarters) were accompanied by a Doctor and the Navy nurses from STIC accompanied this advance party.

WELCOME TO LBIC

As best as I can recall, we arrived at our new camp in April 1944.

After being transported from STIC in a rather uncomfortable truck, I can still vividly recall the first event upon crossing the gate and being dumped in our new home: The charge at the Pomelo tree as we disembarked from the truck and saw the tree laden with fruit. The horde of youngsters descended on it without the necessity of a Starting Gun. The older lot got the most, as expected, but I did manage to grab two. Since we had not had access to money at STIC we could not take advantage of the food being sold by the locals in Manila and thus had not had fresh fruit for quite some time. Actually, I have a vague recollection that that source of supplemental food had been cut just before we left STIC. There was no such option at LBIC until later when a sort of "Barter Gate" was unofficially established where internees could trade personnel items of value (Parker fountain pens, diamond rings, and such) for a meager return of rice, Japanese cigarettes, vegetables and the like. When our turn came we traded mother's diamond engagement ring for two Kilos of rice and two packages of Japanese cigarettes.

Shortly after our arrival, the Commandant, an elderly peg legged Lieutenant Colonel (I had to research for his name, which was "Norusawa" "invited" mom and me to a meeting: It seems that Grandfather Fritz Trendel, still in Chefoo, had used the Red Cross to find me and make contact. The Commandant simply asked whether I

wanted to stay with mom or take a trip to China. No brainer for me? Or perhaps just a lucky call because I can in retrospect view what a hazardous trip that would have been. Evading our submarine packs alone would have made my safe arrival problematic. However not staying with mom and Coleman did not occur to me for even an instant.

Of just tangential interest, reference my suspicions of information presented in "factual accounts", in one book the author listed three commandants, all Majors. In another the author mentioned a LTCOL Norasawa. I, without further ado used that name because, as stated above, I sat across a table from an LTCOl, with a peg leg, shortly after we arrived. My recollection of the short time he was over us is that Henderson got it right when he described the LTCOL as interested in his charges and a reasonable, kind person.

LBIC QUARTERS

I have read accounts that purport to define our LBIC accommodations. But have found them not to correlate with my recollections. One source alleged that the "barracks were divided into sixteen cubicles measuring 20 feet by 15 feet, open to the center but cut out by Sawali partitions only two feet high; There were 6 beds to each partition and 96 internees per barrack".
I never visited the Bachelor's quarters; however, I can assume that the account I referenced above might have been for their barracks.

Perhaps, but it was not what I recollect for our quarters, since I know that we had two partitions (roughly 12 by 15 each (24 by 15 for our family?) but there were only four of us in it, and there was a full wall Sawali partition between our two units and the adjacent cubicles. George and my section was just big enough to place a cot along the long side and the second cot across the top in an inverted "L" shape.

Further, there was an access to the other side, that is away from the center facing toward where the shower, crapper, food serving structure was situated**.**

The plot of ground the width of our two cubicles and about 20 feet outward, almost to the aforementioned shower, etc. structure was also ours, and was capped by a simple open hut with a frond, or something like, roof for cooking. Cook what? Scavenged matter, bartered food was just about it until the last when uncooked rice was doled out. But do not recall what fuel was used, but probably char coal.
In that plot also was a Banana palm, but unfortunately it had already borne its fruit which had been whisked away by someone in "the 800".

SCAVENGING

I do not recall any severe rationing problem when we entered LBIC. The food was certainly above any starvation level. But shortly after LTCOL Norasawa departed a Major took over command, but left Camp operations to his newly arrived Second in

Command. Our nemesis, Warrant Officer Konishi had arrived. Rations were cut in half. Now we were slowly starving, and scavenging became more than an avocation; however, potential food sources became rarer each day.

Meanwhile the menu did not deviate much from day to day: Lugao (rice boiled to become almost a paste/soup) with veggies, (but not too many, despite a thriving garden next to our own barracks), Lugao with different veggies; Lugao with apportioned pork (one pig for 2400 people spreads pretty thin).

Perhaps even before, but the impetus for a Camp-Wide hunt for the GABI plant (Elephant Ears) was someone's advice that the extremely caustic root could be parboiled, that is boiled then the water discarded and the process repeated 3-4 times, would result in a cassava like starch (similar to a potato). It was. However, it did not take long for the GABI to be an extinct plant. There was always the "Pig Weed", a succulent that was not only edible, but tasty. That soon became a real treasure hunt.

When we arrived in LBIC we had been given an 8/12 plot to cultivate. We were provided Tomato, eggplant, peanuts and other seeds. George and I did our best. The only harvest we received was a handful of peanuts. Nobody came around to explain what was going on. Funny enough it did not take me or my 10-year-old step brother too long to figure it out! Meanwhile, my roaming took me to a remote corner of our camp. In a veritable corner of the camp I discovered a squash plant. No squash but many risers. That is succulent starters as the plant spreads. I then visited my hoard every day and snipped the new shoots. Hardly a sufficient diet, but at least an augmentation for relative vitamin deficiency issues. It was not enough to forestall a severe case of Beri-Beri in my stepdad's case. That was probably because both my parents skimped to let George and I have a larger portion.

As things got grimmer the Banana palm fell. We ate the heart and the root ball. Hardly tasty, probably not even nutritious, but filling and assuaged our hunger for a couple of days.

THE GUAVA TREE

I have no recollection of the precise time frame involved, sometime toward the end of our stay at LBIC I believe. However, the following is starkly imbedded in my memory!
By this time one of the peripheral gates at the Camp had become the "BARTER Gate." People with any desirable possessions could come to the gate and offer them to the guards who probably had no understanding of the value of the offering, but would contemptuously offer the Filipino vendors displaying their wares some Japanese Script for the transaction.

Some 20 yards from that outpost was a lone Guava tree. It had been picked pretty clean by the older boys, but there remained a few out laying branches with fruit.

Against any intelligent logic, but considering my hunger, and hopefully having the intellect to understand that the weight of my emaciated body could compete with a Large Monkey I progressed to an extreme branch of the almost denuded tree. There I perched myself and munched on a couple of ripe Guavas. I was no more than 20 Yards from the gate (give or take 5 yards) when I observed a frightening scene. Most assuredly for a 12-year-old (regardless of the fact that I had witnessed Japanese war casualties trucked into Chefoo, our patients on Bataan, and the Bataan Death march).

There appeared to be a disagreement between the Guard and the Filipino vendor as to the value of the basic transaction? The guard threw some Japanese script to the vendor and turned to leave. The next thing I saw was the Filipino drawing his bolo and striking the guard with his bolo. It looked like he only chopped off the side of his head. The Japanese response was quick:

Within ten minutes a platoon/squad or whatever of Japanese was going at a double out of the Barter Gate and into the community. Although I did not witness anything further it can readily be assumed that there were reprisals. Needless to say I was somewhat frightened and took my time descending from the tree quietly so as not to be noticed by the remaining guards.

HAWKEYE

Our quarters were almost directly across from the food serving table. I often saw dad taking a station close by and watching the serving process. A retired Chief Quarter Master, dad was without a doubt in my mind the most meticulous person I ever knew. A self-taught man with an Eight Grade formal education, later when we moved to Idaho Falls, Idaho he was placed in charge of the City Engineering Department under the Chief Engineer a Mr. Black.

I am not sure I ever knew just what he observed and complained about to deserve the sobriquet “Hawkeye” I only know that I was then put on the serving line staff, so there must have been a valid reason for his complaint. My reward was to be allowed to use my finger to scrape the pot and eat the last film of Lugao. By the time the main serving was completed, then a “squeegee” used to scrape the pot, the finger deal did not amount to much, but was still better than nothing.

ROUTINE

Our routine was quite simple, even from the start that is for me and my age group. Three hours, or thereabout, of school then free time to scavenge, loaf, read or whatever. Not like STIC where there were some organized sporting events, here in LBIC I just do not remember any such affairs. We must have had a pretty extensive library inventory because I recall reading all the NANCY DREWW, HARDY BOYS, TOM SWIFT books; and TERRY AND THE PIRATES, the PHANTOM Comic books that came in a different format than the usual Comic Books. But then I progressed to

Kenneth Roberts' Trilogy: ARUNDEL, OLIVER WISWELL, and RABBLE IN ARMS, which helped me immensely in High School American History Class, as well as made me question the "history" as presented by our teachers later on. I also discovered Richard Halliburton, who wrote about his travels to exotic places in the word. His presentation on PETRA still resonates in my mind and makes me appreciate how wonderful the ancients were. Also leaves a question as to how they disappeared. To be provocative, let me propose that many civilizations disappeared due to the inability to conquer Mother Nature, namely….Climate Change.

As things progressed and energy levels lowered the routine included more and more time spent with our Bard, David Blackledge, a couple of years older than most of us. We would gather round and he would concoct exiting version of SUPERMAN, BATMAN, and other stories based on known Comic Book heroes of our time.

DRESS CODE

Well non- existent. Different levels of shabby, near tatters, but easy for boys, just pull on a pair of shorts. We were still living out of the two suitcases we had escaped with from Cavite. There were no "White" people; all were shades of "Brown). Shoes, or rather Flip Flops were made out of rubber tires, but many went barefoot.

THE NEW YEAR 1945

The 1944 "Holiday" season was as dreary as the previous months had been. Small token gifts were exchanged. Usually some handicraft out of available material. A small extra helping at the chow line.

Everyone constantly hungry and some trying strange things for a substitute for food. One rumor was that someone had tried to cook his belt. Bottom line? No Happy Hours.
And then we ran into January 1945.

First: The good news:

We started to frequently see U.S. aircraft flying over or close to the camp. Someone identified some as Carrier based aircraft among the early sightings and then land-based
P-38s which signaled our forces were getting closer. On 4 January 1945 (I looked it up) the Japanese suddenly took off and left us to our own devices. Our Camp Committee declared us FREE. British and American flags were broken out of hiding. There was jubilation and cheer all around. What to do? Nothing! Hunker down and wait. After all, where would we go?

Of course, we looted their barracks. I did not find more than a half tin of biscuits, but liberated a number of light bulbs that were sorely needed for our dark middle hallway. The Camp officials found plenty of food stores. Our rations were increased.

We savored meat (pork and caribou) for the first time in ages. I seem to recollect that we were also doled out some uncooked rice to cook for ourselves.

On the first day many strolled outside the camp into local barrios and traded for fruit and eggs and such. George and I, ever curious, crawled under a barbed wire fence went a short piece up a hill into a residential area. We came back with our gunny sack half full of vegetables and fruit. We were in "Hog Heaven".

Then the Bad News:

On the thirteenth (I had to do some research to pin down the date) The Japanese came back. I had, for whatever reason, probably just for fun, returned to our previous route to the residential area again looking for fruit and vegetable. This time with absolutely no luck. Returning to camp I had just passed under the wire and was about ten feet inside the camp when I heard the stomp of boots on the ground and watched Japanese soldiers double timing to man their posts. At the time it never occurred to me to worry or be afraid, but later developments now remind me how close I was to being shot on the spot. Ten feet made a difference!

Things can always get worse and they sure did quickly. Our friend Konishi slashed the rations another 50% and things just got worse rapidly.

By the end of January, the grave diggers were busier and people now were on a true starvation diet. The meager Freedom respite, previously doled out Freedom Week uncooked rice, and our trading missions did much to sustain us; but the inexorable slide downward in health pointed to an obvious, scary, conclusion. All this with not only plenty of food in the store rooms, but a bountiful source of vegetables and fruit just beyond the barbed wire. From one spot you could see stalks of bananas ripening.

So, everyone was staggering around. Some did venture beyond the wire and some came back. I heard that George Louis and Pat Hell (hard to forget that name) ventured out once too many, miscalculated their return time, and died. Hell was shot and killed just outside the fence while returning; George was shot and wounded while crossing the wired fences, dragged in, then executed by either Konishi or one of his troops. Those remembered oral stories at the time have been corroborated in a number of books covering the rescue mission.

I must have been, maybe still am, a slow learner. Neither the Louis nor Hell incidents, nor my moment of fright when coming back from that last trip outside, managed to make a sufficient impression on me to overcome the real desire to augment our food. Sometime in the last week George and I lamented how close our barracks was to acres of fresh vegetables. Literally just 20 yards from the end of our barracks. So, very late one evening he and I armed with our trusty gunny sack sneaked out of the barracks on the garden side (the other end was just across from Japanese HQ), crawled across a footpath that paralleled the Garden and crawled

further about ten yards into what we dubbed “The Japanese Gardens”. Of course, even we knew it was the Camp Garden, but recalling our failed garden plot experience we continued. We had just started to make headway and had a dozen nice eggplant and some tomatoes in the sack when we suddenly were struck with sheer panic when we heard a Japanese soldier staggering up the footpad between us and the barracks, with a beer in his hand and singing lustily at the top of his lungs. I must thank God that he was dead drunk because otherwise he would have had to have seen us hugging the ground so hard we probably, unknowingly, actually dug a fox hole. As soon as he was out of sight we scurried back to our bunks scared out of our wits, but were asleep in a jiffy.

The next morning, we received a rather light spanking and a rather heavy lecture. It started to dawn on us that we had been utterly stupid and played a dangerous game for what amounted to 2-3 meal augmentations. But on the other hand, who can say it did not make a difference for dad and his Beri Beri. The sack was shoved under the barracks.

Somewhere along the way I started a diary. Lost it, but it does not matter because all it recorded for the last month was the menu, and that did not change much, if at all. Sometime during that week of 18 February I must have had an out of body experience because everyone told me I was dreaming and Dave Blackledge, who knows more about Los Banos than most of our scholars, told me that no such thing happened. Neither my mother the next day nor Dave years later can/will dissuade me from what I experienced. I had a late-night call of nature and was doing my thing at the urinal when a man in olive drab uniform walked in and said: “Hi Kid”. As I stated before, mom laughed at me and told me I was dreaming. Despite the naysayers and lack documentary evidence, there had been escapees who had joined the guerrillas and we did have people from outside come in to brief our committee, so I will stick to my guns.

Things can always get worse? You bet, and on 22 February it got as bad as could be. We were issued a tuna fish can (I assumed) of uncooked rice and told there would not be any more food issued. We knew there was plenty of food available. This telegraphed pretty severe intentions and lowered what possible optimism we had from the knowledge of approaching friendly troops

THE ANGELS

For those who do not believe in heavenly beings, let me personally assure you there are such. This particular group includes Company B, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, its Recon Platoon, and the supporting 672nd Amphibian Tractor Battalion, as well as the brave Filipino Guerrillas that were crucial to the successful execution of the raid.

It was the 23rd of February 1945, A Day That I Will REMEMBER ALL MY LIFE, when I met the Angels. With our last ration cooking on our wood fire, we prepared for the morning roll call. Just before the 0700 roll call I told mom I heard some strange low rumbling noise. Again, I was laughed at.

I had just crossed the threshold of the passage opening on the street end of the barracks when I heard a yelp and at the same time saw a flight of C-47 Dakotas straight in front of my vision sight. They were flying at and jumping from 500 feet. Pretty damn low; then small dots were seen and that elicited cries of "they are bombing"; immediately we could make out arms and legs, and cries of "OMG they are parachutes". However, our attention immediately turned to the sound of gunfire from it seemed all directions as the Recon Company and Filipino Guerrillas attacked the Japanese guards who mostly were caught, literally with their pants down while doing their ritual morning calisthenics clad in their very brief "loincloths".

George and I scrambled back to our cubicle and assumed a position as close to the floor as we could get. But George was more curious than I and scuttled back to the doorway for a peek. He scurried back a lot faster when a sliver of wood, detached by a stray bullet, embedded itself just inches from his face.

I too crawled back to the doorway just in time to see the street doorway almost completely obliterated by this hulk of a paratrooper who shouted "Any Japs Here?" Well he was lucky there were none, because that Angel was mobbed by the nearby internees who smothered him with their gratitude and exuberance.

Depending on whose account you read the supposed number of guards is reported as 75-245, I recall the 75 number. Further reports state that all guards were killed and we only suffered two Filipino dead and one Paratrooper injured at LBIC. We were later told we had lost two KIA in our diversionary land forces in support of the jump. Well, all guards were not killed. Konishi for one escaped to render further atrocities on the poor Los Banos Barrio residents who were blamed for helping the Guerillas.

To the harmonious clanking of their threads into the camp came the AMTRACS of the 672nd Tractor Battalion. I gleefully pointed out to mom" See I told you I heard a strange noise!"

Then our attention was turned to embarking on the AMTRACKs the women and children and the weaker folk who could not make the short walk to Laguna de Bay. The first problem was getting the internees attention to the fact that we were behind enemy lines and had to move out. Mom screeched "My Rice" (which was cooking in our shed) and turned to enter. She did not make it. A large Angel grabbed her and turned her towards the AMTRAKs rather unceremoniously. To stop this madness of returning for any meager belongings the Angels torched the barracks.

Throughout the raid P-38 Fighter Aircraft flew over, and sometimes it seemed right through the camp because some passes were rooftop low. One P38 flew over our sister barracks and waved. He was so low, if one were so inclined one could have checked if he had shaved properly that day.

Of just passing interest, in Bruce Henderson's great book he cites a Dwight Clark as the Assistant Driver on one of the AMTRACs who used the 50 Caliber machine gun mounted on the AMTRAC to silence some sporadic enemy sniper fire as the first contingent of internees started across the bay. From Henderson's narrative, it seems that only Wright had fired at the snipers (I doubt it); however, if so, I can be sure that my position in the AMTRAC was directly under that machine gun. The noise was frankly horrendous as the sound was amplified by the AMTRAC's hull, and shells were spewing all over the place.

I was oblivious to the drama occurring above me. Apparently, to get into firing position he had to push a woman with her bundle and then straddle them to fire. Not till after the short firing period did he realize the bundle was a newborn baby and some of the hot shell casings had hit the poor child.

The word got around that Mrs. XXXXXX, the only internee casualty, had been hit by a stray bullet. In retrospect, given the total bedlam of disorganized, exuberant but confused internees milling around or scurrying to whatever shelter they could find, that was a near miracle as the bullets were whizzing all over the place and the barracks were often hit.

MAMATID/NEW BILIBID

We landed on the beach at Mamatid and had to wait for the trucks. A good chance to stretch our legs and bother the soldiers with our profuse and heart felt gratitude. Some had to be thanked for sharing their C-Rations and chocolate bars on the cruise to this beach.

One learning moment to remember the rest of one's life was the absolutely wonderful reception from the locals at the beach and upon arrival at New Bilibid. They came to us bearing food, with smiles and "V" for Victory finger signals. I have since wondered just how the USA squandered that well of goodwill, and for what purpose? The majority of the Filipinos stood stoically with us during bad times. They also bore the brunt of Japanese cruelty starting in Bataan and past the Battle for Manila. God Bless those people.

The truck came and we were transported to our temporary home at New Bilibid prison. But, everything was wide open. I do not remember just what sleeping conditions were. Who cared?

I do recall with great detail the mess kits and food lines serving pork and beans. I laughed when I read one article that incredulously stated that "some liberated

internees" went through the chow line four times". OK, I cannot prove it, but I went through 12 times. I was assisted in accomplishing my feat by attempting to drink a cup of KLIM (MILK spelled backwards) which was powdered milk, since that richness brought up most of the first six helpings. After all, each helping was only one ladle full.

The planners thought they had ample supplies for a couple of weeks. Boy were they wrong. I am not sure whether it was two or three days later, but they had to parachute additional supplies for the internees. In the MacArthur Memorial site they staged an exhibit a few years back. "BEHIND BARBED WIRES". One aerial photograph showed the supply parachutes descending with a view shot between two buildings at the landing area. Smack dab between these two buildings is the figure of a lone boy. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that that person was YOURS TRULY.

I again reverted to type and visited the adjacent hospital wards for our wounded soldiers. Played chess, listened to their tales, some bordering on atrocities by our soldiers. On one day I ambled down the corridor (the wards were huge and so was the distance between them. As I approached the second ward I could hear a low moaning and smell a pungent, sickening sweet odor. When I opened the huge doors, I was shocked. These were the very serious wounded. The moans were those of abject pain, the smell came from blood and pus soaked bandages. One patient, a Filipino boy not much older than me, was sitting up in his bunk with a pained, terrified, expression on his face. That is the half a face he still had. I turned and bolted back outside. It does make me think of just how wonderful our military nurses, or civilian nurses working Emergency Room must be.
The rest of our vacation at New Bilibid was uneventful for me. We all gained weight. Our spirits were high as we prepared for the next stage: Stateside bound.

USS ADMIRAL EBERLE
The EBERLE was a new APA (Troop Ship), manned mostly by Coast Guard personnel, had plenty of room for all, but the bunks were stacked five or six tiers high. By our standards the food was great. We had a Jeep Carrier and a screen of Destroyers as an escort across the PACIFIC to San Pedro, California.

Everything was fine until we hit a pretty stiff Typhoon. There was one large opening on the side of the ship (regret I cannot recall what that area was called) but from this vantage point, when we could not go topside because of the weather, we not only had fresh air but also had a great view of our escorts. The Destroyers tried to emulate submarines with heavy water cascading over the bridge. Even the Jeeps were taking water over the bow. The mess lines were very sparse and those few of us who made it to the mess hall had our choice of what and how much we wanted to eat. They had to make an extra batch of Ice Cream.
It was on 12 April 1945, while squatting at our airing spot that we heard that our president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had passed away.

On 2 May 1945, the EBERLE steamed safely into San Pedro, California harbor. We were disembarked. Given First Class compartments on a train to Seattle and then by Ferry to Bremerton and Port Orchard, Washington to stay with Uncle Harold and Aunt Clarice while things sorted out.
Dad got all his retirement pay updated, got a job driving a bus and we ended one Odyssey and began another.

EPILOGUE

I want you to put matters in perspective**:**

My favorite expression has always been "Everything in life is relative.

Never more appropriate then when contemplating the treatment of military POW and Civilian Internees. Given that the STIC/ LBIC incarcerations made for unhappy and uncomfortable circumstances, at the latter end near starvation; and finally almost ending in downright "final days" but for the arrival of our ANGELS; The plight of our military at the hands of the Emperor's Imperial Army was far more horrific.

While we in LBIC may have skirted death, our military POW at Palawan in the Philippines went beyond that point. Many were thrust into trenches and had gasoline poured on them and ignited. Most that temporarily escaped the inferno were machine gunned. How do we know? Because miraculously a few did manage to escape to tell the story.

At Cabanatuan and Camp O'DONNELL the troops were forced into slave labor, beaten, and starved. The number that died at O'Donnell far exceed the Death March toll. Any escape from there or subsequently from Cabanatuan POW Camp, rather a difficult matter so far behind enemy lines, was met with execution, not only for the errant POW but for a number of his fellow POW who had not attempted to escape.

The treatment our military received in Japan was simply brutal.

Meanwhile, our POW in Germany received reasonable treatment and more or less was treated under the Geneva Convention rules. This makes the Nazi attempt to exterminate all Jews even more perplexing. A study of history will show you that "pogroms" against Jews was not a new thing. Noblemen borrowed money from Jews then burned or killed them to wipe out the debt. I suspect the Soviet Union vied with the Nazis as to who could oppress/kill more Jews, and throw in a few "dissenters" into the mix. It is with this background music that I simply cannot understand the propensity for our intelligentsia, educators, and "socialists" vying to steer the United States into the wake of such failed societies. I suspect that one reason is the lack of interest in history and the lessons learned.

Confederate and Union POW camps during our Civil War probably could vie with the Japanese for cruelty, abuse, and generally inhumane treatment. I know not enough to pontificate, but just want to steer you to some research to better understand human nature.

Our allies in the Pacific (British, Dutch, POWs from the fall of Singapore and Java, etc.,) were treated worse by far than we at STIC/LBIC were.

Do not misunderstand me, we did not have a Sunday Picnic, but others fared worse.

Lesson to be learned? Whatever the cost, do not lose a war.

MacArthur

I cannot resist this opportunity to pontificate. MacArthur's decision to rescue the internees at STIC and LBIC, and the POW Camp at Cabanatuan most assuredly saved lives. My step dad was on his last legs with a bad case of Beri-Beri and lung problems. None of us could have withstood the ordeal much longer. For this I will salute the General and light a candle in his honor.

However, his arrogant decision not to follow the established Joint Staff battle plans for withdrawal to and defense of Bataan; stupid disposition of our aircraft on the airfields; and wishful thinking about the capabilities of most of the Filipino forces balances the scale and I still believe he should have been sacked. No, our forces could not have withstood the Japanese forever; but even a couple of months more would have made an impact on future operations in the Pacific Theater. Further, it might only be my opinion, but I believe he acted petulantly and disgracefully in the matter of General Homma's trial and execution. He simply was vindictive!

Bataan Death March

Yes it was a horrific event. Most of the victims were Filipino soldiers who had fought well on Bataan. Yes there were instances of barbaric treatment, unnecessary killings, major health issues, and inexplicable shortage of food and drinking water along the route. However, I do not believe it was a matter of systematic planning on the part of the Japanese Imperial Army.

They were surprised and overwhelmed by the number of POWs suddenly on their hands, they were mounting the attack on Corregidor, command and control was confused to say the least, they themselves were on short rations and medical supplies wanting. They simply could not handle the logistics?

That does not specifically answer why they did not take advantage of available American transport, but comparing the situation with what little I recall about the chaos after in the Cavite attack aftermath, I can understand. Somewhat.

No one, as far as I know, has bothered to study the influence of the Main Stream Media (MSM) of that time, or injected our propaganda initiatives into an honest appraisal of the history of that time?

Rehabilitation

When we descended on Uncle Harold and Clarice in Port Orchard George and I were in “Hog Heaven”. Our routine was simple: Each day we were given a princely dole of $5. We walked down the hill to the Bremerton Ferry area. Stopped at the adjacent Drug Store and ordered a Milk Shake, Sundae, Banana split or such. Checked out the Port Orchard Movie House and either took it in or took the ferry to Bremerton. There we went through the same routine with more movie theaters for us to choose from. Finally taking the Ferry back to Port Orchard we stopped at our favorite Drug Store, ordered something today dubbed as unhealthy, bought a dollar’s worth of Comic Books and trundled back up the hill to our temporary abode.

Some thirty days later, mom declared we were

“REHABILITATED”

And we swung into a normal routine.

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