from friend. But Alex and Leo and I managed to stay together. We found a little floor space in one of the buildings and staked out our claim.

Among the many invalids at Bilibid was an old friend, "Chick" Fowler (USMA '20). We had served together in the Philippines many years before, and we had shipped together from San Francisco for this return tour of duty. I had not seen Chick since our arrival in October 1941. It was sad to see him now, almost blind, largely helpless, but determined to project no image other than his cheerful, headstrong dash. He was an encouraging friend to the other invalids, some of whom were missing an arm or a leg, or were racked with dysentery, malaria or beri-beri.

There had apparently been some sort of organization at Bilibid before our large group arrived to upset things. So , after a few days, a little order began to replace the chaos. We were numbered, catalogued and assigned officially to the building into which we had squeezed ourselves. The two daily meals of rice were occasionally suplemented by some vegetables or some strong-smelling fish. A prison camp routine, including a few perfunctory chores, gradually took shape. But it was a miserable existence, even as compared with the meagre satisfactions of Cabanatuan. There were no trees, no bushes, no grass - just concrete and gravel. This dismal situation was not helped any by the constant awareness that, at any moment, we might be lined up and marched down to the bay to get on a ship headed for Japan.

One day, it must have been towards the end of November, all hell broke loose in the direction of the harbor. We didn't see any planes, but for ten or fifteen minutes there was the sound

of explosions - bombs and anti-aircraft fire - coming from the dock area, there, where Pier One stood - or maybe used to stand - where, in 1925 and again in 1941, I had disembarked from an Army transport. Pier One, where I had welcomed the arrival of many friends, and waved farewell to many others after an all-night, boisterous "despedida" party. Pier One, a place of sentimental memories. But now I hoped with all my heart that it would be completely demolished, along with all the other docks and piers. And, to judge by the terrific racket coming from that direction, that's exactly what must be happening. We were elated. They'll never get us out of here, now, we kept telling ourselves and assuring each other.

But the docks and piers were not demolished. And on December 13, 1944, long before dawn, the guards came hollering in to roust us out of the buildings and line us up. There were 1,619 of us (I learned later) and we were going to the waterfront. It was a pitiful column struggling along through the deserted Manila streets; every prisoner who could walk, and many who could just barely walk, were included in this last desperate attempt by the Japs to hang on to their hostages. Those who could, carried a few sorry possessions: an extra pair of shoes, a bundle of clothes, a can or two of food saved from the long-ago Red Cross packages. One poor, superannuated lieutent colonel even had a small trunk that two devoted young fellows were carrying for him. This naive effort was ridiculous, but too sad to be funny. Some prisoners had nothing. Chased out into the pre-dawn darkness, they had not had time to gather their few belongings. As for me, I had my small knapsack with the letters from Sophie and the snapshots of her and the girls, some articles of clothing, some POW notes, a

mess kit and spoon and a canteen full of water.

Arrived at the dock area, we could see a great deal of destruction, but it seemed to be mostly of various vessels lying broken and half sunk alongside their piers. And "my" Pier One, where we now halted, was almost intact. Neither the Japanese in 1942, nor our own returning forces, now in 1944, had wanted to destroy the docks which they expected soon to be using themselves. Alongside the pier lay a handsome, undamaged ship, the Oryoku Maru. It seemed a miracle that she had been able to steal in without being detected. But could she get out again? And would we be on her? And would she, this time, sneak safely through the tightening American surveillance?

Unfortunately, we were going to be on her. After a few hours wait in the growing heat of the day, we were urged up a gangplank by the shouting guards, now suddenly in a great hurry. "Speedo! Speedo!" Alex, Leo and I were near the head of the column. We were pushed along over a forward deck, and down into one of the holds. There was a makeshift wooden staircase, more like a ladder, leading steeply down some sixteen or twenty feet into the darkness below. The first prisoners were slow in descending those rickety steps, and slow in moving out of the way down in the dimly lit hold. The guards were under pressure to get this job done quickly. "Speedo! Speedo!" And the gun butts, swinging into the small of our backs, propelled us forward into the prisoners ahead of us. So the column moved a little faster, and miraculously nobody fell down the stairs. When I got down there, I could see in the gloom that this was a small hold, intended perhaps for baggage rather than for heavy cargo. The only access seemed to be the square, steel shaft down which we had clambered. A single electric bulb

hung from a wire strung along the steel beams just above our heads. I could reach the beams with my hand. The floor was steel.

The dark hold seemed uncrowded at first because, in spite of the guards' shouts and the rifle butts, the prisoners simply couldn't descend very fast. We early arrivals selected places not far from the air shaft, against the hull of the ship, where we would have a back rest and, we hoped, be able to stretch out full length. Among those close by were Alex and Leo, Dennis Moore and Zero Wilson (both USMA '24), and Captain Cleveland, Chaplain of the 59th CA. The prospect of a long sea voyage, in this position, was not cheerful, but it was the best we could do. The prisoners kept coming down, however, urged on viciously, by the guards. All the available space against the hull, or against the steel bulkheads, was soon taken. Those coming down, now, had to squat on the deck, wherever they could find a space, with nothing to lean back against. And still the guards kept forcing more prisoners down. We lucky first arrivals, who had thought we would at least be able to stretch out our legs, now found that we had to draw our knees up under our chins to make room for the others. But finally, when it seemed that we would soon be stacked one on top of the other, the flow of bodies stopped. A Japanese interpreter, from the top of the airshaft shouted some orders, the gist of which was that, if any prisoner tried to climb the stairs, he would be shot, and the hatch, our only source of light and air, would be closed. A guard stood up there with his ready rifle.

It was murderously hot and stifling down in that hold. The sweat of our closely packed bodies vaporized and rose to the steel beams just above our heads. There it condensed and dropped back down on us. It was now afternoon, and we had had nothing

to eat or drink since early morning, except the water in our canteens. And by this time, most of the men, believing that our basic need for food and water would eventually be met, and unable to resist the temptation, had emptied their canteens. As for me, I am fortunate in not feeling thirst as strongly as most people; so, although I suffered, I was able to limit my drinking to an occasional sip. Soon, from back in the dim depths of the hold, there began to come calls for water. These eventually grew into a general clamor of yells, cries, screams and curses. Thirst is maddening. Major "Bo" Ridgely (USMC), who found himself near the foot of the ladder, sensed the danger of a general stampede; that would have resulted in some deaths and in the destruction of the rickety ladder, our only means of exit. So, at the risk of being shot by the guard, Ridgely moved a few steps up the ladder and tried to calm the prisoners. He also tried to make the guard understand that we must have some water. Maybe it was his appeal or maybe it had been scheduled; in any case, a supply of water was brought to the top of the steps, and several men were appointed to distribute it. This was done by having the prisoners pass their canteens up to the supply where they were filled and passed back again, from hand to hand. It was a confusing and slow system; but since nobody could move about in that tightly packed place, it had to do. There was a continued chorus of loud complaints and petty quarrels, but in the end everyone got some water and, as far as I know, everyone got his canteen back. I didn't risk mine.

An hour or so later some baseball-size balls of rice were distributed in much the same way.

Evening came, and the daylight from the open hatch faded away. Soon, the only light we had came from that single bulb hanging from

a loose wire over our heads. A noise of chains and winches let us know that the Oryoku Maru was going to try slipping out of Manila Bay during the night. So now, to our physical misery was added the probability of being torpedoed by one of our own submarines. But even that unpleasant prospect continued to be overshadowed by the heat, the stale air and our cramped legs. Here and there a man would stand up for a while to ease the pain in his knees. One man lost his balance as the ship began to roll a bit. He made a grab for something to keep from falling, got hold of the electric wire which came down with him, breaking the bulb and leaving us incomplete darkness.

I, too, found that sitting thus for hours, with my knees drawn back against my chest, was finally unbearable. I, too, stood up to try to restore some circulation in my legs. But the air up there was hotter and more lacking in oxygen than down near the floor. I lost consciousness for a moment, and coming to, found myself lying across the knees of my friends. But I had lost my place; not because someone else had taken it, but simply by the natural expansion of those over-squeezed hips and buttocks. Now they all had to re-squeeze a little to get me off their knees and let me push my rear end back into place. It was a very tight fit.

The long night was cruel, terrible, hot, stifling, full of groans and curses. Some of the men were delirious and raving, driven half mad by the heat, thirst and lack of air. I slept, off and on. But whether I was asleep or awake, the constant murmur mixed with yells, of hundreds of human voices, seemed to be coming from far away, in some vast cavern filled with a great multitude. And when dawn came, and some daylight came weakly down from the open hatch, I saw the people around me as of enormous size, like

ghostly giants. I thought for a moment that I must be hallucinating; but it was most likely an optical illusion. It cleared up very quickly.

During some of my waking moments, and amidst the sound of those many voices, I could distinguish that of Freddy Saint. He had relieved Bo Ridgely, for a spell, in the effort to avert a panic. He and some of his engineer crew had apparently managed to stay together; and he was using them, now, as moving trouble shooters to help keep the touchy situation under control. His voice could be heard, from time to time, calling them by name, and telling them to "get over there where that fellow is hollering and see what the trouble is". It seemed a miracle that his flying squad could move at all in that total dark where every foot of space was covered by a body. But the disturbances were quieted, and there was no panic. When the morning light came, it revealed the real miracle: there was no flying squad of trouble shooters, and it couldn't have moved, anyway. It had existed only in Freddy's inventive mind; and in the blackness of that explosive night he had used its imaginary actions to prevent a riot.

But daylight brought something else: a loud bang that made the steel hull quiver, a rapid succession of bangs, the roar of diving aircraft, lots of machine gun fire, some heavy explosions, more hull-shaking bangs, for a while, from our anti-aircraft guns, and then silence. Our anti-aircraft guns? Whose side was I on anyway? Well, it was impossible to be sitting in the hold of that ship, a target of the angels, and not to be, for that one wild moment, on the side of the devil.

The strafing of the Oryoku Maru had lasted only a few minutes.

I had felt some splinters of hot, flying metal, but I was still alive. Indeed, I was not even wounded. None of my friends appeared hurt. No bombs had hit our hold. No machine gun bullets, it seemed, had penetrated to where we were. As far as I could tell, nobody in our hold had been touched. Maybe the attack had been a lot of "sound and fury, signifying nothing". But no. Very shortly there came from topside the urgent order that every doctor among the prisoners was to report up on deck immediately.

The doctors were gone a long time - all morning, or maybe most of the day. Our hunger, thirst, weariness and even our sense of time had been displaced, for a while, by the relief at finding ourselves unscathed. There was some hope, now, that this death-trap voyage would have to be abandoned. We could feel, though, that the engines were running and that the ship was moving. Headed where? we wondered.

When the doctors finally returned to the hold, they described the upper decks of the ship as "running in blood". Many Japanese women and children were aboard, apparently the last to be evacuated, and it was they, in the passenger areas, the worst devastated by the attack, who had suffered the most casualties. The ship had turned around, we were told, and was headed for Subic Bay (just north of Manila Bay). There all the civilians, and the wounded and the dead would be taken ashore. What would happen to us? The doctors had not been told.

In spite of the death and destruction in the passenger areas, and perhaps in recognition of the great help given by our doctors, we prisoners were not forgotten. Late in the afternoon a ration of rice balls and a supply of water were sent down to us. That night was less brutal than the previous one. Perhaps knowing of the

suffering of the Japanese women and children made us feel less sorry for ourselves. Then, too, the hope persisted that the ship might be too damaged to resume its course.

In the morning we learned that the ship was in Subic Bay, that all passengers had left the ship during the night, and that only the crew, the guards and we prisoners remained aboard. We didn't have time to find out anything further. The shattering noise of the ship's AA guns going into action again announced another attack from the air. This time the dive bombers seemed to be more accurate. I thought I could distinguish, amidst all the racket, some direct hits, heavy booms that shook the whole ship. "Oh, Lord, let them get this damn ship - but not me!" And then all was quiet again. And again, none of the prisoners in our hold had been hurt. But we had learned from the doctors that there was another hold full of prisoners, and we wondered how they had fared.

Considering our entrapped situation under the two air attacks, we were very lucky to find ourselves still whole - not drowned, not burned to death, not ripped apart. So when the order was passed that we were to leave the ship, the feeling of relief was like being reborn, being completely libefated; and that feeling blotted out all other thoughts and emotions. So much so, indeed, that the strict conditions of the order did not worry us at the time. They were: strip to your undershorts; take nothing with you - no clothing, no shoes, no packs, nothing; you will go to the island (Fort Wint); use the life rafts or swim, using a life preserver; if you do not obey these orders you will be shot; if you try to escape, you will be shot. The loss of our clothing and our pitifully few other belongings seemed a small price to pay for getting out of there - and quickly.

There was no wild scramble of prisoners to get up on deck, but everyone was anxious to get a breath of fresh air; so there was a bit of a traffic jam at the foot of the ladder. I took my time, waiting for the exit to be less crowded. When almost everyone was out of the hold, and I was about to leave, the AA guns went into action again. Those damn Navy planes were coming back to finish the job. I sat down again. Chaplain Cleveland was sitting beside me. He said, "Colonel would you mind if I said a prayer?" And I said, "Padre, if there was ever a time for it, this is it." So he quietly asked God to spare us, or if that couldn't be done, to give us the courage to die like men - or words to that general effect. Then we heard the planes come in - but nothing happened - no strafing, no bombs, and the roar of their motors faded away, and the AA guns stopped firing. I learned later why we had been spared that third attack. As the planes were coming in for the kill, the hundreds of men on deck waved and yelled and jumped up and down - anything to attract attention. The lead pilot got the message, tipped his wings in recognition, and veered off and away followed by the others. The prisoners shouted as though they had won a victory, and the youthful Japanese guards were pretty happy, too.

Cleveland and I and the few remaining prisoners from the hold went up on deck. As ordered, I left my clothing, my shoes, my knapsack behind; but, contrary to orders, I kept my pistol belt, to which I hung my canteen and my mess kit and spoon. Keeping them, I risked being shot; without them, I'd probably die of thirst or starvation. It seemed best to take the chance.

On deck the fresh air and the cool breeze were wonderful. Most of the prisoners were still milling around, looking for life-jackets,

of waiting to slide down ropes into the life rafts; some were in the water, swimming or clinging to floating debris. Some of the rafts were moving towards the Fort Wint island which was only a few hundred yards away. The Oryoku Maru appeared to be partly sunk, or aground in shallow water. There was a fire somewhere aft of where I had emerged. I heard a few shots, and thought that the guards must be firing at prisoners who were swimming in the wrong direction. I learned later that Chaplain Cleveland, whose prayer may have saved the rest of us, had been shot and killed. (I also learned later that at least one prisoner did escape - a young Navy lieutenant whom I had known at Cabanatuan. He was sheltered by a Filipino family and was later recovered by the American forces and shipped home. The Navy sent him to various parts of the country to talk to the families of POWs and to give them such information as he could. My Cincinnati cousin, Grace Schoelwer, was able to talk to him. He told her that I had been with him on the Oryoku Maru and that I was one of the survivors. She telephoned that news to Sophie. But I am getting ahead of my story.)

I didn't need a life preserver or a life raft; the ship appeared to be burning; the water looked enticing. So I just jumped in and started swimming towards Fort Wint. Oh, wonderful water, cool and refreshing. Never had any swim given me so much pleasure. I knew that there were sharks in those waters, but I was in no hurry to get to shore. The physical and psychological relief of being out of that hell hole was overwhelming. Well, almost. It didn't make me forget those trigger happy Jap guards, standing there on the deck with watchful eyes and ready guns. So I was careful to swim in the prescribed direction. Soon I was wading ashore with other prisoners, and being urged along by the shouting guards.

There were some concrete tennis courts at Fort Wint. With their high fence they made a convenient place to round up the wet prisoners; so that became our pen. We were so crowded there, I couldn't tell how many of us there were. I estimated a thousand or more. It was hard to move around. I was lucky enough to find Alex, but we couldn't locate Leo. And I hadn't seen Jean Harper since leaving Cabanatuan. But there was an operating water spigot, and I was able to push my way between or over the closely packed bodies to refill my canteen.

We had had very little to eat since we had left Bilibid, early in the morning of December 13. It was now about noon on the 15th. It was reasonable to think that the Japanese would have a small garrison at Fort Wint, that the garrison would have to be fed and that, therefore, there would be a supply of rice and some cauldrons to cook it in. But no. Nothing was forthcoming. So we spent the rest of the day crowded together on the hot concrete, unprotected from the relentless sun - and famished. But it was better than the stifling hold, and there was water. Then, when night came, the air grew chilly. Since most of us were almost naked, we felt this sharp drop in temperature, and were glad to be close together and to have the heat-holding concrete under us.

The next day there was an issue of uncooked rice - a few handfuls for each prisoner. I put mine in my messkit with a little water to soak, hoping that if given time it might soften up. But I couldn't keep from eating it, a little at a time. And when I ground the last grain between my teeth, it was as hard as the first. Well, I thought, raw rice is more nourishing than nothing.

We stayed there three days, getting a little raw rice each day. This corral, it turned out, was not quite as crowded as the

hold had been. You could stretch out full length if you were careful not to get your feet in someone else's face. And you could move around, sort of; it was a little like using stepping stones to cross a river. So we did move about, stepping gingerly, and pushing our way, looking for friends, or at least, for information about friends. I learned that some men had died of suffocation during those two terrible nights in the holds; and that a bomb had exploded in the after hold, killing nobody knew how many. Had any wounded been left behind in the hold? Nobody knew. (Some seriously ill prisoners were later sent back to Bilibid. Were they the wounded from the after hold? And were they all the wounded? I don't know.)

Our great hope, now, was to be sent back to Manila, or maybe back to Cabanatuan; just any place far from still-functioning Japanese ships. So when we were ferried from the island, and crowded on to trucks, luck seemed to be with us. The open, standing-room-only trucks took us some 50 miles across the mountains to San Fernando in Pampanga Province. There some of us were confined in the provincial jail, the rest in the SanFernando movie theater. We had almost closed a circle. We were now only 20 or 30 miles from Cabanatuan Camp #1 which we had left two months ago. Maybe the Japs had given up trying to get us to Japan. Maybe we were going back to Cabanatuan.

I didn't know how many prisoners had survived the ordeal of the past week. I only knew that some had died and some had been killed. In the truck-loading process, Alex and I had again been separated. But here in the San Fernando jail cell I had found Jean Harper. He was in very bad shape - feverish from malaria, and almost incoherent. The cell was lined with tiers of wooden bunks, three high.

We put Jean on the lowest bunk of one of the tiers; and when some rice balls were issued, one per man, we saw to it that Jean got his and we tried to make him eat. But his fever grew worse during the night and he became delirious. He kept calling for his family - Cecile, his wife, and Jean and Shirley, his son and daughter. And interspersed with these cries were loud pleas for me to pour water on him. "I'm burning up, Hop," he kept yelling. "Pour on some more water. More. More." There was plenty of water there at the jail, but I was reluctant to use too much on him, for the air was chilly, and I was afraid he might get pneumonia. And along with his shouting, he kept thrashing about on his bunk. I tried to keep him from falling to the floor, but his wild tossing was too much for my weakened body, and he fell to the concrete floor in spite of me. One of the prisoners, from somewhere in the darkness shouted: "For Christ sake, keep that guy quiet so we can get some rest!" Another fellow and I managed to get Jean back on the bunk. He was exhausted, and fell asleep - or perhaps became unconscious.

When I awoke at dawn, I climbed down from my bunk to check on Jean. He was silent and motionless. He had died during the night. He was still wearing on his finger his West Point class ring, the one that, two years earlier, had been lost and later recovered. I took it from him and put it, along with my own class ring and my wedding ring, on a shoestring which I hung down inside my shorts (since I had no shirt under which to hide the rings). Some time later that day several prisoners and a guard came in and took Jean's body away. Later we learned that some of the sick prisoners were being sent back to Bilibid. Maybe Jean would have been among them if his malaria-racked body had only been able to hold out a little longer.

We had been told that we would get some clothing to replace what we had been forced to abandon on the Oryoku Maru. And we did. But there was not enough to go around, and most of the prisoners got almost nothing. I was one of them. My portion was some ragged denim shorts and a torn khaki shirt. No socks. No shoes. This, it turned out, was our wardrobe for a new attempt to ship us north. The Japs must have thought very highly of us to take so much care not to lose us. We were not flattered.

On December 24th we were again loaded into boxcars. Word got around that our immediate destination was another San Fernando, this one in La Union Province on Lingayen Gulf. It was an extremely difficult train ride. We were so tightly packed into the boxcars that nobody could sit down; and as there were no straps to hang on, and as the train kept jerkily stopping, and jerkily starting up again, all day long, we were constantly losing our balance. Every few minutes some fellow would be thrown against someone else, who in turn would fall against another. Impossible to steady oneself by moving one's feet, but impossible to fall down completely. So we kept teetering against each other, sending through the car alternating waves of squeezing and unsqueezing.

We heard airplanes several times during the ride. So, the first time the train stopped, the guards, who were riding on the roof, ordered several prisoners to ride up there with them. "You see American planes, you wave." The guards were no more anxious than we were to be strafed. It was a mutually agreeable arrangement.

It must have been after midnight when we arrived in San Fernando. We were permitted to unload and to lay our painfully weary muscles along the platform and the tracks. At daylight we were

marched to a warehouse - some to the schoolhouse - where we were to spend Christmas day. It being a holiday, we had two meals that day; that is to say, we had a rice ball in the morning and a rice ball plus a cup of water in the afternoon. When night came we were moved to the waterfront, where we spent the night on the beach. It had been a memorable Christmas.

The next morning, before dawn, we were each given a rice ball and some water, and told that we were going to board ship. But the order to move didn't come, and the hope again arose: "They can't get a ship in here." So we spent all that day and another night on the beach. On the morning of the 27th, however, our hopes were dashed again. A freighter had sneaked in, and we were hustled aboard.

The loading was difficult as we went down some narrow iron stairs to the next deck. This was a sort of mezzanine surrounding a large square opening into a second, lower deck. There was no sort of guard rail around the opening, but another metal ladder went down from the "mezzanine" into the darkness below. There was some straw scattered about, and I had a feeling that this ship had just brought in a whole herd of Jap youths to make a last stand and to die for the Emperor.

We had received no orders as to which "accommodations" we were to use; so when I got down to the "mezzanine" deck, I decided to stay there unless forced lower by gun butt or bayonet. Some other prisoners made the same decision, but others kept on down to the deck below. There was some question as to the relative advantages of staying close to the escape route versus being deeper within the ship, hence better protected from strafing. Moreover, though we were not as crowded as on the Oryoku Maru, there was some danger of getting too close to the open hole and falling to the deck below.

I found some space against a bulkhead, and laid claim to it by sitting down. I had not seen Alex or Leo since our sojourn at the Subic Bay tennis courts, so I kept looking for them as the ragged file of prisoners clambered down the ladder-like steps. They were together, I caught their attention and they came over to squeeze in beside me. The ship got under way that night, and we hoped that she would be far out to sea, well away from prowling submarines, by daylight. She did that, apparently - got far enough out in the China Sea to start rolling heavily. And I became seasick. Couldn't eat the morning riceball. Bitter irony, to be starving but too seasick to eat. Fortunately, I got my sealegs after a while, and my stomach ceased trying to throw up what was not in it.

My recollection of the next three or four days is almost blank. What did we do except sit there against the wall? What did we talk about? How did we defecate and urinate? I don't remember. Only two aspects of that trip come to mind now. One of these is the plight of many of the prisoners who, having abandoned to the burning Oryoku Maru everything they owned, now found themselves with nothing but their bare hands to receive the daily half-cup of rice and four ounces of water. Most managed to scare up, from somewhere, a battered tin can; but one, Lt. Charles Roper, a reserve officer from a small town in Kansas, had nothing. He came to me a ragged skeleton, almost too weak from dysentery to move, and begged me pitifully to get him something to put his food in. His faith that I might still have any authority, that I was anything other than he - a starving, almost subhuman thing - was touching. But he was a friend, had served well and loyally with me at Fort Hughes and was going to die if he didn't get some help. So I moved around, asking, and finally found someone with an extra tin can that Roper could have.

My only other recollection of that stage of the voyage is the occasional submarine scare. There would be an explosion, and one's first, momentary, thought was: "Torpedo!". But it was the deck gun firing at a submarine, real or imagined. The Japs knew, now, who commanded the seas, and they were nervously quick at pulling the lanyard every time they spotted a suspicious bit of flotsam. As for us, our feelings were certainly mixed. There could be little doubt that, if a torpedo struck, we would be trapped and drowned like rats. So, however glad we were to see the Japs on the run, we could not help wishing that the advancing American forces would concentrate their activities farther to the south.

After about four days, the ship's engines stopped, and we could hear the winches turning, and chains clanking along the decks above. We had arrived somewhere. It turned out to be Takao harbor, Formosa. What next? Maybe a prison camp here? We had heard that the eagle colonels and the generals had been sent here, so there was some reason to hope the desperate attempt to get us to Japan would be abandoned. But we didn't disembark. We just waited and waited in the hold. It was a dreary, brutal prison, but better than being out on the submarine-infested ocean.

The ship sat at the dock (or so we pictured it, for we could see nothing) almost a week; and we sat, cramped, in the hold, awaiting what might be a reprieve, or what might be a death sentence. Then one day word was passed around that we were to be allowed to go up on deck and sit in the sun. We were told not to take our belongings (belongings?) with us, as we would be coming back down to the same place. So it wasn't a reprieve. Even so, the joy of getting out into the fresh air and the sunshine made this seem like an outing in the park for a bunch of poverty-ridden kids from the slums.

When the time came for us to go below, we were not returned, as we expected, to the hold from which we had come, but to another and quite different one. It was very deep, with wide hatches, high above, partly open to the air and daylight. But the steel deck and the bulkheads were covered with a thin layer of coal dust, wet and cold. As in the previous loadings, the lucky first arrivals were able to find spots against the bulkheads; the rest spread out as best they could over the damp, grimy floor. My two friends and I had the good fortune to be among the early ones. And we had had the good sense to keep with us, on leaving the other hold for our topside "outing", ~~to keep with us~~ our vital belongings: canteen and messkit. We all tried to clean up, with our bare hands, the space we had laid claim to. But we couldn't help but get smeared, hands, face, beard, clothes and bare feet, with the black, wet dust.

January 9, 1945. The early morning daylight is beginning to show in the big hatch openings overhead. I'm awake because I hurt all over from my bed: the steel floor. I wonder how long it will be before the rice ball and bit of water will be sent down to us. I wipe my coal-blackened hands on the seat of my coal-blackened shorts. Other prisoners are stirring, stretching, moving their stiff arms and legs. Like me, they are surely thinking of food, that persistent preoccupation. Suddenly a deafening air attack bursts on us, engulfs us, overwhelms us: anti-aircraft fire, roar of diving planes, chatter of machine guns, the heavy boom of exploding bombs. We seem to be surrounded by falling things, flying fragments, hot splinters, ricochet bullets. Everybody hits the deck, flattens out as flat as can be. And in a moment the attack is over. The silence, for a brief second, seems more complete than complete silence.

The sudden weight and fury of that assault had left me dazed. I stood up and sort of checked myself. I seemed to be still in one piece. Alex was standing, too. He appeared to be unhurt. Leo, still sitting against the bulkhead, said: "I think I've been hit." He opened his shirt. There was a small cut on his chest, but very little blood. It didn't look serious.

While we were busy taking check of ourselves and looking at Leo's wound, I took some hasty glances at the rest of the hold. Things looked very bad. The steel beams and heavy wooden planks of the open hatch had been blown loose by exploding bombs, and had fallen on the prisoners below. It looked like a lot of men had been crushed, and many others wounded by bomb fragments or machine gun bullets. This scene of carnage was mostly towards the center of the hold. Around the perimeter, where we were, the bulkheads and the steel deck above had given some protection.

Leo slid down from his sitting position, but kept raising his head to look at his wound. He said: "It hurts when I breathe." He didn't seem to be in great pain, but he was worried. We tried to comfort him with words that we didn't believe, and with an effort at confidence that we didn't feel. All we could do for him was to give him a drink of water and to make him lie still. Alex sat down again, and held Leo's head in his lap. I set out on a tour of the hold, hoping to find a medico.

Already the other prisoners were busy doing as we had done: checking themselves and their nearby fellows to assess the damage. There must have been hundreds of seriously injured, some being attended to by friends, others just lying there, silently, or groaning, or unconscious, or dead. I didn't see any of the doctors I knew. If there were any still alive and able to function, they surely had

their hands full trying to give first aid without any equipment. I rejoined Leo and Alex, pretty shaken and frustrated. Leo, now that the first shock was over, was beginning to feel, more and more, the pain of his chest wound. We tried to reassure him, but in our minds we couldn't dismiss the unspoken probability that a bomb fragment had torn deep into his lung, that he was bleeding internally, and that, unless he had surgical attention very soon, he wasn't going to make it.

It was a long, cruel day, even for those of us who were unhurt. I could imagine how the painful hours must be dragging for the injured. I kept looking up at the opening where the beams and planks had been. Several times I saw Japanese peering down at us from the edge. But they went away, and no help came. Alex, who was about five years older than I, and had had a heart attack, was patient and practical. He had no illusions about the seriousness of our situation. He realized that we were completely helpless and that we must conserve what little strength we had left until our captors got around to giving us some attention. He stayed put, tried to make Leo as comfortable as possible, and said nothing. Within our group of three, Alex was the wise and fatherly one.

I reacted differently. To this complete inability to do anything for ourselves or for our wounded friends, my frustration and impatience showed. I couldn't just sit there, but got up, now and then, to move about the hold looking for a doctor, or for friends, or at least for somebody I might be able to help. I had to step carefully not to kick against some suffering victim. One of the wounded was flopping around, uncontrollably, like a big fish out of water. I saw that it was Lt. Cdr. Pete Welsh who had been with us at Ft. Hughes. He had been hit, I suppose, in some nerve center, and confused sig-

nals were being telegraphed to every muscle. As I came closer, Pete's wildly jerking body bumped against the broken leg of another victim. The poor fellow cried out in agony: "For God's sake, can't somebody keep that guy still!" Several of us tried to control Pete, but he was too heavy and too violent for us. So we moved the injured man out of Pete's radius. I never saw Pete again. I guess his body (Pete himself was no longer in it) kept tossing wildly about until the electric current of life finally switched off.

As the painful day wore on, I made more excursions about the hold. On one of these, I found Capt. Bob Cooper (USMA '40). He was sitting against the opposite bulkhead, pinned down by a steel I-beam that lay across his crushed thighs. His eyes were open, staring straight ahead. At first I thought he was dead, but then I saw that he was breathing. I had known Bob at Ft. Monroe, when he was a teenager, and later I had taught him at West Point. He had graduated near the top of his class, and was a fine young officer with great promise. Seeing him now, frightfully hurt and probably doomed, and being entirely powerless to do anything for him, I stupidly offered him a cigarette. He gave no sign that he saw me or heard me. His wide open eyes continued their stare, and he continued to breathe. I thought he must be unconscious. I hoped so, with all the power of hoping that I had left. I went away.

Most of the wounded men were lying quietly, and not getting much attention from their unhurt neighbors. The fact was that everyone, injured or not, was in a sort of stupor from so many days of privation. As I went around, I would stop to talk to a man here and there, and ask if I could help. It was sort of a dumb, futile question, but at least it let him know that he wasn't abandoned. One such chap was a Lt. Col. Wilson, a tall red-bearded fellow who had been

hit in the right eye. The wound was ugly and bloody, but Wilson's chief concern was that he had to defecate and was afraid he might soil himself. He suggested that maybe I could find him a tin can or something to use. So I looked around and found a can, part of the pitiful "belongings" of some poor devil who would have no further use fof it. I helped Wilson lower his pants, helped support him as he relieved himself, got a rag and cleaned him up, and helped him readjust his pants. He was apologetic. Strange. Like the young fellow who was embarrassed to be sentimental about his parents, or the chaplain who was embarrassed to say a prayer when violent death seemed imminent. Now here was Wilson, more embarrassed at being ministered to for his toilet needs than he was concerned with his destroyed eye. After making him as comfortable as possible, I went back to wait with Alex and Leo.

Sometime in the afternoon a ration of rice and water was lowered to us. We managed to get it distributed, and made sure that the wounded were helped if they couldn't feed themselves. There was no further indication that anybody topside knew or cared that there were badly injured human beings down in that hold. When the daylight faded, the darkness became absolute. Not a glimmer shone through the opening above us - not a star, not even the beam of some guard's flashlight. Alex and I took turns sleeping and ministering to Leo, trying to shift his position once in a while to ease the pain.

Sitting near us, but unseen in the blackness, was a fellow whose occasional movements would bump Leo and bring forth a groan. I yelled at him, angrily, for his selfishness, lack of consideration, etc. Out of the dark came a young man's voice, mild, tired, bitter, expressing surprise at being called inconsiderate. And when that interminable night finally did terminate, and daylight began

to show, I saw that the lad at whom I had yelled had, all through those long hours, been caring for a wounded buddy. He had been doing, alone, the wearisome task that Alex and I had been able to divide between us. God, how I regretted that show of temper! I said so; but it was a small matter in the midst of all that suffering.

We spent two more days and two more nights in the hold. We were given some rice as before. The severely injured died. The rest of us, wounded or not, clung stobbornly to life in spite of the terrible conditions and the unpromising future. I found that, after all, I had not entirely escaped the flying pieces of bomb. I had a few small flesh wounds in my left leg and, in my left cheek a little piece of something that I couldn't get out. It didn't hurt.

The second day, Leo continued to grow weaker. Internal bleeding must have been filling his lungs. His heart simply wasn't getting enough oxygen to sustain life. His breathing became faint and erratic. Sometime in the afternoon it stopped altogether, and Leo's life slipped quietly away.

Wilson, whom I had been looking after - though there was nothing I could do for him except to be there - died, like Leo, from internal bleeding. I took his pants, and his shirt, and his shoes, and put them on me. They were much too big, but as I had been almost naked, I was grateful to have something on my bare feet, and some additional rags for my back and legs. I believe that my survival is due, at least in part, to these poor garments inherited from a fine, red-bearded lieutenant colonel named Wilson.

Some Japanese, apparently medical fellows, came down into the hold. They wore white surgeons masks as though entering a dangerously contagious area. I didn't see them give any medical aid. They

seemed to be there only to assess the situation. A huge rope cargo net was lowered by crane. The prisoners who had any strangth left were ordered to throw the dead bodies into the net. The tumbled corpses were hauled up and away. We heard later that they were cremated on a huge pyre.

After the dead were disposed of, we remaining prisoners, about 800 I believe, were transferred to another ship. It was a freighter that had served as a makeshift troop transport. The hold had been fitted with three-tier sleeping platforms: wide, wooden shelves, with enough space for the occupants to lie down, or sit up, but not to stand. Alex and I found some room on the "ground floor" of one of these, near the rickety wooden stair-ladder down which we had come from the open deck some fifteen feet above. When we were all down, "Mr." Wada stood at the opening and screamed his orders.

I have not mentioned "Mr." Wada before. He was the civilian interpreter who accompanied our group from Bilibid to Japan. He was a sort of chief herder. His incompetence for the job would have been evident even in normal times; the vicissitudes of this particular voyage overwhelmed him. He was in a constant state of extreme irritation, and he was wild with fear. He hated the difficulties and the dangers of his job, and he hated us because we were the cause of it all. Now, in a frenzy of fear and frustration, he screeched out the rules: there would be two issues of rice and water a day; water was in short supply; we must not come up on deck except to relieve ourselves, and then only one at a time, etc. We tended to blame "Mr." Wada, of course, for all the brutality of our treatment. But as I look back on it after forty years, I think he was almost as much a helpless pawn in these events as we were.

In any case, he was later tried as a war criminal, I believe, and executed.

It was now January 13, 1945 (exactly one month after our departure from Manila). The next day our ship left Takao for Japan. That meant we were going north; and going north in January meant cold weather. And here we were, half-starved, skinny and getting skinnier, our blood thin from our years in the tropics, clothed only (if at all) in light cotton rags. I should add also that we were unshaved, filthy and lousy. The prospects were not promising.

I have pondered about the many "discomforts" of this voyage. There were five principal ones, each so obtrusive at times as to make us forget, for a moment, the others. They were: cold, hunger, filth, fear and thirst.

Being cold was a new hardship, now added to the many others we had endured. As the ship sailed northward, our hold grew very chilly. With no fat on our bones, and only thin garments on our backs and our backsides, we had to huddle close together to conserve our feeble body warmth. Alex and I slept spoon fashion, knees bent, belly and chest against the other's back, and arms around him. And every half-hour or so, bones aching from the hard floor, and one's back and the other's belly bitterly chilled, we would both turn over. One day Alex, rummaging around in the depths of the hold, found a torn piece of dirty tarpaulin. It just barely covered us both, but it served as our blanket for the rest of the trip. This way of sleeping, two men close together, their arms around each other, must evoke in the reader a suspicion of homosexuality. It certainly aroused in us no such thoughts or feelings. Our whole concern was to get warm and stay alive.

As the days passed and the temperature dropped, another unor-

thodox practice, in our efforts to stay warm, became common. Every morning we found that several prisoners had died during the night. The bodies had to be carried up to the open deck and cast into the ocean. Their poor, dirty garments, too valuable to be lost when so many of the prisoners were still half-naked, had already been removed and distributed. I, like everyone else, was eventually wearing two shirts and two pair of pants, thanks to my less fortunate comrades who had no further use for clothing.

This recycling of the clothing calls to mind Father Duffy, who had been, I believe, Catholic chaplain at Clark Field. It seems that, shortly after we left Takao, the death rate was unusually high - no doubt because some of the seriously wounded had been forced into the freighter along with the rest of us. Anyway, a few mornings out of Takao, I saw a tall, gaunt fellow, naked to the waist, and barefoot, going from sleeping bay to sleeping bay, anointing the dead and blessing them - the last rites. It was Father Duffy. He told me he was giving them conditional absolution; and apparently his concern was for all of them, Catholic, Protestant or Jew. He was a tough Irishman, and like many a good Irishman he was a good two-fisted drinker. He seemed, now, totally unaware of himself, or of the cold, the hunger, the thirst; his only interest was in making sure that these poor, dead lads got to Heaven. I'm not sure whether Father Duffy ever got any clothing, or lived to get to Japan; but I'm pretty sure that he got to Heaven, along with the Catholics, Protestants and Jews whose souls he so determinedly sent in that direction.

If you've been almost constantly hungry for several years, you get sort of used to it. It's always there; and when there is nothing else bothering you too much, you bring out your hunger and play with it; you do some mental gourmandizing; you create

visions: a golden brown roast chicken, for example, bursting with spiced stuffing and dripping with rich juices. But our hunger was now past that fantasizing stage; it possessed us as a permanent bodily affliction, to be dealt with medically, not gastronomically. Mr. Wada had told us that we would be fed twice a day, and we were: one rice ball in mid-morning, one rice ball in mid-afternoon, and occasionally a spoonful of bean curd or a few strands of pickled seaweed. It was not with appetite that we looked forward to this twice-daily distribution, but with the grim, practical understanding that this was, at least, a temporary halt in our gradual approach to death from starvation. For many of the prisoners, it was not enough. Ecery day, more and more bodies were being carried up the ladder to be dropped into the cold waves.

I have mentioned fear as one of the discomforts of our passage from Takao to Japan. It came only a few times, with the occasional firing of the deck gun. The first shot, shaking the deck and the bulkheads, always caught us unaware. And each time, for an instant, we thought the ship had been hit by a torpedo. It was a thing you never got used to. But it was a good thing for us to be thus scared once in a while. The momentary prospect of finding ourselves struggling and drowning in that cold ocean, hundreds of miles from land, made life, even in that filthy hold, seem quite desireable.

But it was a filthy hold, nevertheless. Some of the men had diarrhea, and didn't always make it to the oil drum, which served as a latrine, or to the shaky wooden platform built out over the water from the open deck. I tried that open air latrine a few times. With each roll of the ship it seemed that the platform, with me on it, was going to be dunked in the briny. And, in any case, the wind and the spray were icy. So mostly I used the oil drum.

As a matter of fact, I had little call to use either, there being rarely anything in my alimentary tract to need evacuation. Anyway, to get back to the problem of dirt: we had no access to any water except the pitiful cupful twice a day. That was less than enough to quench our thirst, so certainly not to be used for washing. Therefore, to get our hands somewhat clean, before eating, we simply urinated on them. Our own urine was surely more sanitary than the diarrhetic feces and other dirt we may have contacted while crawling into and out of our "sleeping quarters". This sort of ablution was the only one we knew during the trip.

On one of the occasions when I went up to the open deck, I found it covered with an inch of snow. I thirstily scraped up a handful and crammed it into my mouth, and I was about to gather some more to put into my almost empty canteen. But the Jap sailor on watch, there, yelled at me, and made a threatening gesture with his gun. He may have been under orders to permit no loitering; or maybe the water distilling machine was broken and the crew, short of water themselves, didn't want to share the snow with us; or maybe they just hoped that we hated Americans would all die of thirst and could all be dumped into the sea.

The deadly thirst of some prisoners was greatly aggravated by diarrhea. One day, Chester Johnson (USMA '37), a friend from Cabanatuan days, came to me to ask if I had any codein. It seems that codein had been the standard camp remedy for diarrhea and, as we were leaving there for our long trip, our doctors had distributed their supply among us. I had received two tablets. Now Johnson and another friend, Alva Fitch (USMA '30), were both suffering from diarrhea. And to judge by Johnny's haggard face, he was in a bad way. I still had the two codeins which I had been

able, somehow, to keep dry during the swim in Subic Bay. I gave one to Johnny. He went back to where Alva lay suffering with cramps, and they shared the one pill. They recovered. Whether it was the pill that did the job, I don't know.

Several days out from Takao, the slight wound in my left cheek became infected, began to swell and to throb painfully. There were still some doctors among us, but they were as helpless as I. They said that the body's curative powers would probably, in time, overcome the infection. But in view of my weakened condition and the unsanitary state of our hold, I doubted that my body still had much capacity for curing itself. The cheek continued to swell, until the skin outside and inside seemed stretched to the bursting point. And it was. One day, the skin inside my mouth gave way, and a flood of pus poured into my mouth along with a tiny piece of jagged metal. The swelling disappeared and the pain subsided.

Our doctors, subject to the same impartial mistreatment as the rest of us, had not been able to take with them any but the simplest tools of their profession - pills, bandages, tape, that sort of thing. But when they were called to give first aid to the Japanese passengers after the strafing of the Oryoku Maru, they had access to the ship's medical supplies, and were able to add a few items to their medical kits. Much of this they had been forced to abandon the next day when we left the burning ship. So, one day, about two weeks out of Takao, I was surprised to see several of the medicos hurrying towards a dark corner of the hold with some articles that had a surgical-ward appearance. They were going to try and give some blood plasma to Freddy Saint. Freddy had been wounded during the strafing in Takao harbor, and had bled considerably. A few friends had nursed him along, but under our impossible condi-

tions, he had lost strength and was now unconscious. The doctors had managed to scare up, whether among their prisoner colleagues or through Wada, the makeshift paraphernalia for a transfusion: plasma, tubes, needles, boiled water, or whatever. It was a noble effort, but in the dark of that unsanitary hold, it had little chance of saving Freddy's life. Unhappily, it didn't succeed. Freddy Saint, like several hundred others since our departure from Takao harbor, was buried at sea.

Most prisoners didn't move around much down in that hold. Hunger and thirst had not only weakened us physically, but was gradually draining away our spiritual vigor. We became torpid, apathetic. Alex and I mostly just lay there in our dim corner, trying to keep warm and to husband what little strength remained. There were about twenty men in that section with us. We didn't know any of them, and in the pale light we could scarcely see their faces. Neither we nor they had enough energy to get acquainted.

Some of the younger prisoners, however, remained fairly active and curious, and they made an interesting discovery. The deck on which we lay was not steel, as on the previous ship, but wood - heavy wooden planks. And somewhere, back in the depths of the hold, a couple of fellows found some planks that were removable. So, of course, they removed them. There was an unlighted freight hold below. It was stacked with gunny sacks, and the gunny sacks were filled with raw sugar. The discoverers and their friends were soon making frequent raids into the sugar hold, and after a while anybody who wanted a handful of sugar could get it. But it wasn't something that could replace real food, and its use tended to exacerbate our thirst. So most of us could eat very little of it. But even those few extra calories helped.

It was taking a cruelly long time to get from Takao to Japan. The ship, with us penned in that filthy hold, had now been at sea for over two weeks. The daily death toll was increasing, chiefly because of the shortage of water. Alex and I, like most of the prisoners, had very little strength left, and we realized that our shriveled bodies might, some morning soon, be among those tossed into the sea. There were, however, a few younger and more active men to whom was assigned the twice-daily distribution of rice and water. Since their job put them in contact with the Japs who controlled the supply, it seems likely that they were able to get a little extra for themselves. In any case, one of them, whom I knew slightly, came to me and said that, in exchange for a West Point class ring, one of the Japs would give him two canteenfuls of water. I now had two canteens, both empty, and I had two class rings: mine and Jean Harper's. Since my life and Alex's were in the balance, the risk of losing the ring and the canteens was worth taking. So I gave my class ring and the two canteens to the young entrepreneur. And we waited. Towards the end of the day, true to his word, he came back with the two canteens full of water. Now Alex and I would be able to hang on for a few more days, at least. We drank a little, sparingly, then hid the canteens under our piece of tarpaulin.

As we lay there, somnolent, in the almost darkness, two ragged scarecrows had been creeping towards us. I spotted them as they tried to steal our canteens. Like a starving dog protecting his bone, I lashed out at them, ridiculously, my weak, skinny arms flailing the air. They slunk away into the gloom. What a pitiful business! A West Point graduate, lieutenant colonel, on his hands and knees, swinging his fists wildly at two kids, enlisted men, young enough to be his sons, on their hands and knees. It was not my most noble moment.

Those two canteens of water, tucked under the piece of canvas with us, renewed our hope that we might, after all, make it to Japan. We slept well that night. Too well, for we awoke next morning to discover a major calamity. One of the canteens was gone - half of our water supply, half of our hope, half of our lifeline. And, of course, there was no way to find the thief or recover our loss, even if we had the strength to try. It was a severe blow to our hope, but somehow or other it stiffened our determination to hold out. And then, towards the end of the day, the ship's engines stopped, the ship stopped, the noise of winches and chains let us know that we were in port. We had arrived somewhere in Japan.

More precisely, the ship was in the harbor of Moji (now Kitakyushu) on the northern coast of the island of Kyushu. On this last day of January, 1945, Kyushu was cold. There were a few traces of snow on the ground. But for us 500 survivors (of the 1900 who had embarked in Manila a month and a half before) land, any land, cold, land, enemy land, was like a bit of heaven. Besides, our arrival was expected, and some preparations had been made to receive us and even to keep us alive. Some trucks had arrived with crates of military overcoats, and as the crates were opened, the guards made bonfires with the wood. We crowded around the fires, trying on and swapping overcoats, and squinting our eyes to try and see, in the darkness, beyond the fires, what Japan looked like. But we couldn't make out anything except that we seemed to be in a big field.

After everybody had received an overcoat and had been given a cup of hot tea, we were herded into an empty schoolhouse for the rest of the night. We slept on the concrete floor, in our new overcoats, full of curiosity, but no longer worried, about tomorrow.

What the morrow brought was another move, this one overland about fifty miles to Fukuoka, also on the north coast of Kyushu. The manner of this move, whether by truck or by train, is strangely blanked out of my memory. What I do recall, however, is that our arrival at Fukuoka Camp #1, in full daylight, was witnessed from a distance by a large number of previous arrivals. They seemed to be American or British.

We were assigned to barracks not unlike those we had occupied at Cabanatuan in the Philippines: there were sleeping platforms, about a foot high, along a central alley with a dirt floor. These sleeping decks were covered with mats, woven, I supposed, of rice straw. The walls and roofs of the buildings, instead of being of thatched palm leaves, as in the Philippines, were of rough boards, tight enough against the rain and snow, but not fitted well enough to keep out the cold wind. There was no heat.

After moving into these well-ventilated quarters, we lined up to get blankets - one per man - and to be weighed. The reading for me, without the overcoat, but with the clothing I had inherited from Wilson and others - big shoes and two layers of chino cotton - was 45 kilos. That put me at about 95 pounds, some 40 pounds below my normal weight of 135.

Those procedures accomplished, we were free to explore the compound and get our bearings. As we left the barracks, we were soon surrounded by British officers and men, full of curiosity, and quite sympathetic in their experienced understanding of our sorry condition. Short on necessities themselves, they nevertheless managed to produce from their carefully laidaway supplies, candy bars, cigarettes, soap, razors and other precious gifts. I gathered that these helpful fellow-sufferers were from British forces