

HISTORY OF BOAT TRIP (POW)  
FROM 13 DEC 44 TO 30 JAN 45  
(LT. COL. JACK W. SCHUMETZ)

Box 147, Entry 1069, Philippine Archive Collection, Record Group 407, National Archives, College Park, MD

Ref file  
16004  
P.A.

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Authority NND883078

PLAIN  
May 1, 1945

AMLEGATION,  
  
BERN.  
1649, First  
Legation's 2011, April 6.

From the Special War Problems Division  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO:  
*War Gen. Benedict*  
Date: **MAY 1 1945**

Inquire of Swiss if they have as yet received the lists of prisoners of war transferred from Philippines during October through December 1944. If no lists have been forthcoming, request urgently that Gorge again press Japanese Government in this regard.

At the same time, Department desires that Gorge make representations with regard to the feasibility of obtaining Japanese permission for a spokesman of each prisoner of war camp, branch camp and sub-camp to compile roster of names of prisoners currently held in camp, giving Army serial number and prisoner of war number. Failure of Japanese Government fully to report names of Americans in its custody necessitates Department exploring every means of securing such data.

Request Swiss to telegraph outcome of representations with regard to foregoing.

GREW  
(Acting)

711.113114A/3-1345



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Regraded UNCLASSIFIED  
order Sec ARMY  
by [Signature]  
O. PAULSEN  
Captain, AGD  
AGPO-CFEB 9 1949  
(date)

Authority PHD 883078  
DECLASSIFIED

28 Sept. 1945.

Memo for Col. Pasco,

I have given you from time to time lists of officers whose deaths resulted from the shipment of 66 prisoners of war that the Japanese rushed from the Philippines on 13 Dec. 1944.

The story of this shipment is one of horror. Of several accounts the most complete is that by Lieut. Col. Jack Schwartz, a medical officer of the Regular Army. I am attaching a copy which you may find of interest.

Jay L. Benedict,  
Maj. Gen.

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Authority: PHD 883078

*Original is in Casualty B  
CINCPAC has given  
copy to War Crimes Office*

Graded UNCLASSIFIED  
order Sec ARMY

[REDACTED]

14 September 1945  
29th Repl Depot, APO 238

by O. PAULSEN  
Captain, AGD

FEB 8 1949 I certify that the following facts are correct and true to  
AGPO-C the best of my knowledge.  
(date)

/s/ Lt. Col. Jack W. Schwartz - 017823

We sailed from Manila at dusk of 13 December 1944 on the ship called ORYOKU MARU. This was a luxury liner also being used to evacuate Japanese civilians. There were 1619 officers and enlisted men in our prisoner draft, about 300 being enlisted men and male civilians. We estimated that there were about 5,000 total passengers on the ship. We, the prisoners, were placed in three holds, which were about six decks down, very small, their only source of ventilation being the hatchway in each. Sanitary facilities were good when we first entered the holds, but the only provisions made for human wastes were a few small buckets. The heat was extreme and the air most insufficient. A few moments after we were placed in the holds, Lt. Col. Conaty, QMC, who was subject to bronchial asthma, developed a severe attack. This was brought to the attention of the Japanese sentries at the entrance of the hatch, and repeated requests were made to permit Col. Conaty to return to the deck. These were denied, and the officer died within about an hour.

The crowding was so extreme that we were forced to huddle in sitting position all through the night. Shortly after boarding the ship, we were fed a small ration of rice and fish, which was the first meal we had had since early morning. Lights were extinguished in the holds, and the darkness was intense in the daytime and complete at night. About 0700, 14 December 1944 American naval bombers attacked the ship. These bombing and strafing attacks continued most of the day. Several prisoners in the forward hold were struck by ricocheting fragments. During the day we were neither fed nor watered. The heat continued to be intense, and many were in collapse from dehydration and on the verge of suffocation. At about 1700 I was called on deck together with Lt. Cols. W. D. North, Manning, J. E. Sullivan and Louis Barnes, all of the Medical Corps, to administer first aid to Japanese wounded. The ship's salon was packed with dead and dying Japanese troops, women and children. Medical supplies available were meager, and as soon as darkness set in we were forced to discontinue our work because there were no lights due to blackout restrictions. We were soon returned to the hold. (Lt. Col. North and I are the only two of the above mentioned officers still alive.) Through the night the Japanese crew and passengers evacuated the ship.

As a result of the lack of water and the great heat a large number of the prisoners became maniacal during the night. Many murders were committed, and evidence the following morning was seen of slashed throats and wrists presumably from which blood

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was sucked. It was reported to me that some individuals drank their own urine; however, I saw none of this. Approximately 40 deaths in the three holds that night were ascribed to suffocation and murder. (I was in the forward hold.)

About 0700, 15 December 1944 a direct hit on the after hold was sustained from an American naval bomber, killing about 250 American prisoners. We then received instructions to evacuate ship, being told to take with us only shoes and mess kits besides the clothes we had on. We swam ashore off Olangapo beach, a distance of about 250 yards. The American bombers discontinued their attacks during our evacuation, but after we reached shore the ship was sunk by several direct hits. Nearly everyone was so weakened by exhaustion that shoes, mess kits and even clothes were discarded. Some non-swimmers boarded rafts and were machine-gunned from the shore by the Japanese whenever the rafts strayed from a direct line to shore. One raft, bearing a group of officers including Capt Cleveland, Army Chaplain, was machine-gunned and all were lost. Those who were able assisted the wounded ashore.

We were then marched to a concrete tennis court on the coast of Olangapo where we remained five days even though bombing attacks occurred each day in our vicinity. No shelter from the sun was provided and the heat was severe. A water hydrant was available to us on the tennis court, but the water supply was insufficient. Severe dehydration continued. Repeated appeals were made to the Japanese officer in charge, Lt. Toshino, and the Japanese interpreter who accompanied our detail, Mr. Wada, to evacuate our wounded and exhausted patients to Manila, but these were denied. At least six Americans died while we were at Olangapo. One enlisted Marine, who had suffered a wound through his left elbow region, developed a moist gangrene of his forearm. Medical supplies and instruments were meager; I amputated his arm through the elbow joint using a mess kit knife and wrapped the stump in a dirty towel. This man died three or four days later. For the first 48 hours on the tennis court we received no food; on the next three days we were issued raw, uncooked rice, which was rationed to us at the rate of about 1½ tablespoons per man per day.

On 20 December 1944 our group was divided into two sections; I was assigned to the first. My section was moved to the municipal jail in San Fernando, Pampanga by truck, where we were confined in the jail yard. The other section was confined in a cock-fighting pit in San Fernando. Water supply and food, consisting of rice and sea-weed were adequate at both places. Three men died in the jail yard. About the third day we were there, after repeated requests to evacuate our wounded and sick--which in the jail yard numbered about 75--we were permitted to send three to the Bilibid hospital. I understand the other section evacuated nine of their serious cases. Adequate medical supplies and instruments were then delivered to us from the Bilibid hospital.

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At 0900, 24 December 1944 both sections were marched to the San Fernando railroad station, and 187 assigned to ride in each small, all-metal boxcar of the special train. About twenty of each group rode on the top of the car; the remainder were squeezed, standing position, into the cars. Our destination was not disclosed. We arrived at San Fernando La Union at 0200 Christmas morning, and lay the remainder of the night on the station platform, from where we were marched to a schoolyard on the edge of town. We received a small amount of rice twice that day. Muddy water gotten from a nearby well was chlorinated for drinking purposes. Dysentery had developed among the prisoners, about 50% suffering from this condition. On Christmas night we were marched to the beach where we slept in the sand that and the following night. We were subjected to the intense rays of the sun during the day of the 26th, and nights were unbearably cold. Water was rationed to us by tablespoonful doses. We were fed dry rice once during the 26th. During that day small groups were permitted to bathe in the surf. Several deaths occurred at this place, including that of Lt. Col. Edmonds.

On the morning of 27 December 1944 we boarded a ship of about 8,000 tons (name unknown) which had just unloaded a cargo of horses. About 20 of our most serious cases were permitted to remain on deck; the rest of us were placed in a large, roomy two-storied hold. Horse manure and straw littered this place. Ventilation was much better than on the previous ship; however, the crowding was still bad. The food was more palatable and abundant as was the drinking water, but both were still insufficient. On the first day out we were subjected to a submarine attack; the ship was not hit. Our patients on deck however were made to be lowered into the hold. What medical supplies we had were in cases on the deck and were looted by the Taiwan guards that accompanied us. Dysentery at this time became general and evidences of starvation were apparent. The death rate mounted from day to day, and the dead were hoisted on deck and heaved overboard. The death rate rose from two or three per day at the beginning of our trip to from 10 to 20 per day while we were at Takao.

We arrived at Takao, Formosa on 31 December 1944. We remained anchored in Takao bay until 13 January 1945. Sanitary conditions on the ship were deplorable. It was quite cold at this time and all of us were very sketchily clothed. Daily raids by American planes were being conducted over the city of Takao. On 9 January another freighter of the same type was tied alongside our ship on the starboard side. On that day about 450 prisoners were moved out of our hold into a forward hold. That afternoon we were attacked by American bombers, one bomb hitting the water opposite the forward hold on the

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port side. This side of the ship was smashed in, and about 300 prisoners were killed outright. Some of the fragments entered the middle hold, in which I was, and killed about 25 of us. There were a large number of severely wounded and practically all of these died. There were a number of compound fractures and intestinal perforation, but there were no facilities to treat these cases. Splints and dressing material were not available for the fractures and wounds. Repeated appeals were made to Lt. Teshino and Mr. Wada to get medical supplies for us, but nothing was done until three days after the bombing, when a group of Japanese Medical Department officers and enlisted men entered our hold and dressed the minor cases. No attempt was made to treat the serious cases and they did not enter the forward hold where the majority of the wounded were. They left us a small amount of dressing material and medicine. About three days after the bombing, also after repeated requests, the dead were removed from the ship. By this time the stench was terrible. The bodies were hoisted out of the hold in nets and lowered to a barge alongside. There were around 500 bodies taken ashore.

On 14 January 1945 we were transferred to a third ship, a small freighter of about 3,000 tons (name unknown) and again crammed into a filthy, small hold. This ship had a cargo of sugar, and we were told that anyone taking any of the sugar would be immediately executed. However, the men ignored this warning and raided the sugar holds at will. It was this additional food which permitted as many to survive as did. For the next two weeks we were at sea under deplorably unsanitary conditions. Everyone had diarrhea, buckets were insufficient and were permitted to be emptied at uncertain intervals, and the deck on which the wounded lay was a sea of liquid feces. On some days we received food and water twice, but more often only once. Rice was rationed four men to a level mess kit (US) and water six men to a canteen cup (US). The cold was severe, we had very little clothes (that salvaged from the dead was usually so filthy and full of feces that it could not be used, because even sea water was not obtainable to wash them), the surface decks were ice covered, on many days snow dropped through our hatches, and many prisoners froze to death. A contraband trading existed between our guards and those prisoners who had anything with which to trade. Many West Point class rings were traded for empty rice sacks to be used as covering--one ring per sack. Because of the water shortage, mess kits were not washed at any time on this ship, and the men themselves were filthy. I saw several prisoners urinate on their hands to cleanse them of filth. Repeated appeals to our Japanese officers for alleviation of our plight were ignored. At the time these appeals were made we were treated with the utmost

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discourtesy. All of the wounded were of necessity neglected medically, and none suffering severe injuries survived. Dysentery and exhaustion also took their toll.

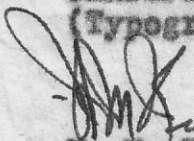
We arrived at Moji, Japan on the 30 or 31 of January. Quarantine officers appeared on the ship, and I was interviewed by them. When I entered the cabin for this interview I was severely reprimanded by Mr. Wada for my dirty appearance. Fearing that we might be quarantined and held on board ship, I denied the presence of any infectious diseases among the prisoners. We were then marched in single file onto the icy deck and issued Japanese army woolen clothes. We were made to change clothes on deck, and one prisoner, much weakened from exhaustion and cold, fell dead at my feet. Lt. Col. North was alongside me at this time. We then debarked and those who were able assisted those who were not to proceed to a large theater-building near the pier. We remained here for about five hours, were fed and were divided into four groups, one a hospital group of the serious patients and the other groups to be sent to different camps. The sick prisoners were removed by ambulance from the building. While in this place, six patients died.

As near as it was possible for us to determine, 550 prisoners debarked from the ship. The group to which I was assigned, consisting of 193 officers and men, was marched to the railroad station, placed in comfortable coaches and taken to a prison camp at the outskirts of Fukuoka, Japan. We remained at this camp for three months, and 53 of our group died during this time.

It is now believed that there are about 300 people left alive of the original 1619 who embarked in Manila.

/s/ Jack W. Schwartz  
JACK W. SCHWARTZ  
Lt. Colonel, MC

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY  
(Typographical errors corrected)

  
H. N. KREMEN  
1st Lt AGD

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