

WAR PRISONERS, RECOVERY FROM JAPAN P.O.W. CAMPS

TEAM #9

BOX 1518, ENTRY 1122, PHILIPPINE ARCHIVE COLLECTION, RECORD GROUP 407, NATIONAL ARCHIVES, COLLEGE PARK, MD

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Log of  
Recovery Team

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## LOG - RECOVERY TEAM #9

Pfc. J. F. Giagos

12 SEP 45

We pulled into Nagasaki Harbor this morning. The coastline as it came into <sup>sight</sup> was rather pretty and not unlike that of California with its rolling green hills and forest growth. I've been sitting on the edge of the flight deck of the Chenango taking in the sights of the harbor. The devastated, or atomized, area lies in a valley which is obstructed from our view by a hill, so I haven't seen that yet. The harbor itself is quite beautiful, being rather narrow but about a mile long, and closed in by terraced green hills which terrace gently down to the waters edge or in some places end in forbiddingly abrupt cliffs. The shores are lined with neat little shacks, and here and there a large and quite modern edifice rears upward above the otherwise drab surroundings. The place seems very dull and desolate and shows little activity tho we can see Japs here and there on shore, and now and then a small boat or one or two larger craft manned by them goes by. The shore is lined with hundreds of small craft, most of them wrecked. There are about a dozen large ships laying around quite sunken, and a few that seem untouched. All the warehouse and shipyard installations are burned out. One ruined shipyard still holds the hulls of what looks like two unfinished tankers. Firebombs must have been used exclusively, as all evident damage seems to have been caused by fire and lacks the twisted, grotesque ruin and rubble produced by "HE" missiles. Oh, oh! There's our call to go over the side. Be back with you shortly.

Well, we just set foot on the soil of Japan—the first American infantry soldiers to land in Nagasaki. Boy, what a thrill! We are leaving here tonight for POW camps in the interior. It seems peculiar to think that the five of us will be alone & somewhere deep in Japan. There were a bunch of Jap soldiers on the docks when we landed. Boy, what scrawny little specimens. The building we're waiting in is several miles from the scene of the atomic blast; yet the windows are all gone and plaster is laying all over the place. The building is intact, tho. We had supper on a hospital ship docked here; probably our last good meal for some time to come. I felt rather funny this morning watching Japan come up over the horizon. The "End of the Road!" A lot of swell fellows gave their lives to see that the rest of us got here, and that includes some personal pals of mine, so it kind of takes the edge off of our enthusiasm.



13 SEP 45

We had an interesting trip last night, by train mind you. Not much sleep, so we're pretty much pooped. We entered our first POW camp in Omuta at Fukuoka Camp #17 today, and also camp #25. It's quite beyond my capacity of expression to describe to you the feelings of these men when we pulled in. All I can say is that it was a moving experience. God, what they've been thru. Food was from one to seven spoonfuls of water a day and a quarter-cupful of watery rice of very poor quality for each meal. Punishment when inflicted was quite horrible, believe me, and it required little or no provocation to move the Jap guards to that extreme. These fellows, to whom we owe so much are real men, and their spirit seems really indomitable. They had taken over the town when we arrived, & had everything lined up & functioning smoothly. They even had vehicular transportation all set. If you wonder how the Japs are reacting to the presence of a small group of Americans, I can tell you that the situation is really amazing to me. I had expected to find a sullen, passively defiant people, but such is not the case. These folk are not merely frightened, they are practically numb with fear. I can't really get over it. The area where the atomic bomb hit is awe-inspiring. For about three miles, nothing remains, and nothing rises over a foot & one half high, and everything is charred black. Some of the prisoners who saw the explosion from a great distance said that even tho it was a sunny day the flash lit up the sky and a great pillar of smoke billowing with all colors of the rainbow arose, and for miles the area was blanketed as if with fog. What had been a well populated area simply vanished. They say that they heard from several sources that the people in close by affected areas reacted peculiarly in that their hair came out & they shortly died. A party of Jap soldiers searching for survivors in the area shortly after the blast are said to have met a similar fate. It must have been a terrible thing. I've seen & heard of death in many forms, but this leaves one with a blank feeling. I've been having a great time with the POW's, and have answered so many questions that I'm dizzy. The questions cover everything — When are we going home?, Is it true that Roosevelt is dead, what did he die of, is Joe Louis still champion, is it true that Big Crosby & Shirley Temple are dead, where are you from, and so many other queries that I lost track. Our uniforms, rifles, & other equipment were also objects of much examination & interrogation. Our carbines in particular



captured their imagination & fancy. One of the fellows, a former Marine sargeant-major & now acting as provost marshal, gave me a Jap luger pistol & a dress saber. These boys will get anything for us. We have been dining in the palatial (by comparison) residence of Baron Mitsui, one of the most powerful men in Japan. Boy, what food, and the beer is limitless & ice cold. Little Japanese boy servants hover attentively over us & our slightest wish is their command. One never reaches the bottom of a glass of beer or cup of coffee. Everyone of us from buck private on up gets saluted all over the place. The people are practically bending over backwards being nice to us, and are so damn polite it seems funny as heck. I was surprised, but the POW's harbour no resentment towards the Jap civilians. According to them the civilians were more inclined to be friendly than not, but were too afraid to do other than follow the dictates of the military, who are the core of inception of all the hateful actions and atrocities that were perpetrated.

We have been going all day and should have everyone ready to leave by tomorrow noon. Quite a few had taken off on their own, before we arrived, seeking any kind of transportation home, and who can blame them. So far we have run across Dutch, British, Australian, and American personnel. There are a number of Chinese here in this area too, but we have no connection with them. These camps are well organized having camp commanders, etc., & their military discipline & courtesey puts our own to shame. They are really good soldiers. Seeing guys like these makes one proud of being an American, and the Stars & Stripes floating over Japan looks good to us all. I was highly amused by the Marine sargeant's witty remark that the atomic bomb was "a tonic bomb" for the Japanese. Incidentally, I've been riding around in a late Buick running on paint thinner. It works, too.

I had one of the most interesting experiences of my life to date. Several of the POW's "persuaded" the manager of the mine they've been slaving in to throw a party for the whole gang of us. It was really a memorable occasion. We ate Jap food & smoked Jap cigarettes, both of which were lousy. There were gallons of beer, which is not bad stuff, and Saki, which one swiff of sufficed me for from then till the gates of Hell freeze over. It was quite a jolly gathering with toasts, speeches, introductions, & all with general nonsense thrown in. The manager of the mine gave a speech that required all of my self-control to



refrain from guffawing at. I'll have to tell you about it some day. He also sang some Jap songs, and then Dixie & Home Sweet home. He was definitely lousy, but then our singing wasn't exactly up to standard either. The Britishers stood up and sang "God Save the King" and "There'll always be an England." The Australians & Dutch chimed in with their national anthems, and we all sang "God Bless America" & others. Last of all a toast was drunk in memory of the boys who died in imprisonment. Practically all of these Americans are veterans of the Bataan "Death March." Of the very last group, which was 1600 in number, to be sent here from the Philippines, and that was on last Dec. 8, only 500 men survived the crossing, and now not much over two hundred of that group remain.

14 SEP 45

Routine so far today. Sleepy as heck. We have processed all the prisoners in one & one-half days and will probably start getting them on their way to Nagasaki tomorrow. We toured the guardhouse today and were shown how the rough stuff was dished out & the implements used.

Army planes have been dropping supplies into these camps for a month now. A fighter flew over & dropped a note telling everyone to "take it easy—the Marines have landed." That tickled me, as only two platoons of them came in with us, & they're sitting in Nagasaki policing the dock & one block adjacent to the dock. Haven't done much else today than knock around & take in a few sights. I certainly get a kick out of inspecting Jap installations, or searching trains for concealed weapons. Every Nip snaps to attention & either bows deeply or renders a salute. We have complete command of the area. The way I'm treated around here leads me to believe that I'm the first one-stripe general in Japan. Being the first Americans in here is quite an advantage. When the occupational army moves in they won't nearly have the fun we're having.

Fukuoka Camp #17 is the largest, and so far as conditions, the worst in Japan. It contains 1108 military personnel & 16 civilians. Of these 100 are hospital cases. The breakdown of military personnel is 343 American (31 of which are hospitalized), 225 British (19 of which are hospitalized), 266 Australians, (26 of which are hospitalized), and 305 Dutch, (24 of which are hospitalized).

There is a news correspondent from Chicago here who has



been working night and day on the wealth of material to be covered here.

Camp #25 has 299 British & two Americans. This camp did not fare too badly comparatively.

15 SEP 45

The first group left this camp for Nagasaki this morning. It consisted of Dutch & British nationals, and Australians. The Americans leave tomorrow. I visited the hospital & wished all the guys on the stretchers good luck on their way home. I met one fellow who lived only four blocks away from me in Oakland. It was quite a sight to see the rest lined up in formation near the main gate in front of the guardhouse where at one time or another all were beaten and many of their pals killed. After a briefing on conduct in boarding the train and a stirring speech by one of their members who was a padre (who incidentally was a great factor in maintaining morale), they all stood with bowed heads as the crates containing individual boxes of the ashes of some of their buddies were brought out & loaded on the truck. Other than that they were certainly a happy bunch of fellows.

We moved into Baron Mitsui's clubhouse as permanent quarters so long as we stay here. I had my first bath in a tub & with hot water that I've had since leaving home. What luxury! The old Baron came in today, and I was introduced to him and had an interesting talk with the little s.o.b. As I understand, the Mitsui, Mutsubishi, & Sumimoto families are three of the main families who rule in Japan. This scrawny little shrimp owns 1/7 of Japan, which makes him a pretty big man in any country's language. He speaks excellent English, and well he might as he studied at Dartmouth University. Yeah, — there I was, sitting next to one of the men who helped start this damn war & who was responsible for a lot of the misery our people suffered both in these camps and on the battlefield, asking him questions & shooting the breeze on pertinent issues. It gave me a feeling that I can't put into words.

16 SEP 45

Well, we saw our boys off this morning. I guess I have about fifty guys who are going to write to me. We pull out tomorrow morning for Osui. One more team pulled in tonight. The Chinese in the prison camps is



this area have been raising bloody hell, and I mean bloody. Sort of getting out of hand, so we're putting the crimp on them tonight & disarming them. The Japs hated to see the Americans go because they're afraid of what these Chinese will do to them, and no wonder too—some of these Chinese have been here for eight years. I've been driving around in a packard and a Buick today, getting to feel more like a general all the time. I'm sure it would amuse you to see a lousy Pfc getting all the attention I am. I know it hands me quite a laugh. It's really quite ludicrous. The war correspondent left for Osui today. We are wondering when the army will catch up to us. We are the only yanks here, although it is perfectly safe to walk around by yourself at night even. There's just nothing to it.

17 SEP 45

Got up early this morning & had fried eggs & bacon for breakfast. All packed and ready to go forward. It's raining like heck & has been all night. It took us three hours to reach Osui. All our gear is soaking wet. Osui is another mining town and sure is what we call a "sticks". We took Fukuoka Camp #23 tonight. It is all American & has 156 inmates, 16 of whom are civilians from Wake Island. Most of the military were in Cabanatuan to begin with. They were sure happy to see the first American soldiers they've seen in about 3½ years, and fell all over us. They're full of questions the same as the other camps & are intensely interested in our "new-type weapons & equipment". We got here about 1530 and worked until 0300 the following morning and finished processing everyone. The rest of our teams went up to Camp #26 which contains 153 British & 198 Australians.

18 SEP 45

Everything finished up okay this morning. The two camps will leave for Nagasaki at 0709 tomorrow morning. The fleas & mosquitoes are a rotten nuisance here. I drove a Jap jeep around today. It was pretty terrible & so were the roads. I was presented with the Jap flag that flew over Camp 23. This is not a bad camp, being well laid out & clean, and the fellows don't seem to have had too bad a time. We caught the tail end of a typhoon last night & it really blew things about somewhat. The lights were out & an observation tower teetered on the verge of toppling all night.



19 SEP 45

Got up early and loaded on train. We transfer at Tosu & go back to Omuta. I'm looking forward to taking a bath and getting some sleep before we move on. This has been quite a grind & I can hardly hold my eyes open. Had some delay in making the transfer, but here we are back in Baron Mitsui's clubhouse. The flag has been raised over it and really looks swell; the first one over this city. The clubhouse is now Allied Headquarters. I had that tub bath, even tho it was cold, shaved, changed clothes, and feel lots better now. All I need is some sleep. The situation here between the Chinese & Japanese is more serious. We had to arrest several Chinese today. This may prove to be interesting yet.

Well, let's see, I'll go over a few points of interest that I've missed so far. For one thing a Japanese officer told us that the atomic bomb was not the cause of the sudden ending of the war. He said that the entry of Russia into the war is what decided their headquarters that the "Co-prosperity Sphere's" jig was up. Even if we hadn't used the bomb, they themselves figured they could last only two or three months more. They had only 50 capital ships left when the war ended. We sank 25,000 craft of all types in the Philippine campaign. The railroad stations are jammed with bombed out people moving elsewhere & soldiers returning home. I got a good look at the countryside today, and have to admit that it is a beautiful sight. The valleys & hills are sharply defined and rice paddies seem to cover every foot of the earth. As far as the eye can see, everything is a lovely shade of green. The rice paddies give the floors of the valleys the appearance of an enormous expanse of well-kept lawn.

20 SEP 45

Feel swell this morning. Had a good night's sleep for a change. Capt. Lawrence & T/3 Nagano left for a short official visit to Nagasaki at 0400 this morning. We're all pulling two-hour guards over these Chinese who are being held. Other than that we have not much to do. Slept all afternoon & am going to bed early tonight. Haven't seen anything of occupational forces yet.

21 SEP 45

Very routine day. Finished bringing this diary up to date in this



journal of our team activities, and also entered statistics on the camps in regard to number of POW's, nationality, and rate of evacuation. Capt. Lawrence & Chuck returned today with details on our future operations. Getting packed as our plans call for our team to leave for Fukuoka at 1028 tomorrow. Our work as teams for liberating POW camps is finished. From now on our work will consist of a general check up & clean-up of the island and paper work - such as alphabetizing our records & typing rosters. All the Allied personnel present will accompany us to Fukuoka.

22 SEP 45

Shoved off from Omuta at approximately 1100 this morning. The trip was routine & without incident. Arrived at Fukuoka at 1330. It is quite a large city & fairly modern, and the first real civilization we've seen. We are quartered in a fairly nice hotel situated only one block from the station. We each have a separate bedroom with wash facilities. Bath & toilet facilities are located in various other parts of the building. They have some regular western style tubs, but what quite caught my interest was the bath I used this afternoon. It was built like a sunken seat of large dimensions & very unique & elaborate. The chow here is not as good as at Omuta, but not altogether too bad. Sgt McGill will make improvements on that in short order. When we entered this hotel I noticed that tho the structure itself was intact, all the ceilings which are simply lathe & fibreboard had been ripped out. This, I was told, had been done so they could more easily spot any incendiary fires. A large portion of Fukuoka has been burned flat. This city was raided only once & then only for one hour & forty minutes. Firebombs were used exclusively, and they certainly did a good job of it. The city is loaded with Koreans trying to get out of Japan & back to their homeland.

23 SEP 45

Got up at 0700 this rainy morn, ate breakfast, & then attended mass with Capt. Lawrence. Yep - there is a nice, well-built church here. The father is a frenchman who has been in Japan some eight years. He used to speak English, but has long since forgotten it, and now speaks only Japanese & French. This was the first time I've heard Japanese & Latin combined but it certainly was done very well & the mass was a phonetic treat. Several teams arrived here this afternoon so there are about thirty-five of us here now. Most of our own group is leaving tomorrow. There were several camps that



We had listed which were closed by the Japanese prior to the end of the war & our arrival, so small elements are leaving to check up on these various locations in case there might be any records or personnel to be found. Capt. Lawrence & Chuck are going to check up on Beppu. Sgt. McAllan, of the Australian army, and myself are journeying to Nagasaki to turn in our duplicate records of recovery and rosters, and all the Japanese camp records turned over to us in Fukuoka. Sgt. McGill is remaining behind to keep the mess situation in hand. Lt. Krumholtz and Pvt. Andrews are checking Sasebo. Lt. Christison and Sgt. Savage will check Ube (sub-camp #7) and Moji. Lt. Eastman & Sgt. Nagagawa will check on Kurume. Everything is in readiness & we will take off tomorrow morning.

24 SEP 45

Left Hakata station in Fukuoka at 0912 this morning. I was assigned a Mr. Yoshida from the District Governor's Office as an interpreter. We darn near missed transferring at Tosu. Mr. Yoshida was definitely not on the ball. We are supposed to arrive in Nagasaki around 1430. This route to Nagasaki, I am sure, is comparable in scenic beauty to anything I have ever seen. It goes through mountain-lined valleys, along the seacoast, thru tunnels, over sharp ridges, and thru deep narrow gorges. Everytime I travel across Japan I can't help but admit that it is one of the most beautiful landscapes I've ever seen. This island has the most abundant natural irrigation I've seen. There seems to be water everywhere. We didn't arrive in Nagasaki until 1600. When we reported to Headquarters to dispatch our duty of turning over our records, we found them busily finishing packing and preparing to entrain for Fukuoka which we had just arrived from, so it seems our trip was needless. The place is really flooded with Marines now. I understand they came ashore in full battle dress in a regular landing operation manner. I can just see the headlines back home complete with pictures announcing the "taking" of Kyushu by the Marines. Pardon me while I give vent to a hearty horse-laugh. They are even taking credit for sending these POW's home. That is highly amusing. We all left on the 2212 train for Fukuoka tonight. My interpreter came in very handy indeed for getting all the baggage moved from the trucks into the train. This has been a long tiresome day & we will be riding until 0500 in the morning. These cars make for very uncomfortable sleeping.



25 SEP 45

Arrived on schedule at Fukuoka at 0500 this morning. After everything was moved over from the station I went to bed and slept till 1100. Everybody is busy getting rooms, or shifting, and getting settled. I took a short walk around this part of town, and visited a department store just to see what their stock was like. They don't seem to have much left worth purchasing. There is nothing of unusual interest to report today.

26 SEP 45

Another rainy day, tho the temperature is just right. Everyone is busy today. The POW rosters are being broken down as to nationality, alphabetized, and then typed. I understand that most of our group and all the Allied personnel will leave for Manila within a few days, and that two teams only will remain behind. Tentatively it seems that our team will be one of those to remain. A beer party was arranged for EM's last night, and tho only about a score of us turned out, a swell time was had by all. I must say that the Australians were the life of the party. The lot of us, Aussies, Marine flyers, & G.I's sang loudly & lustily far into the night. Boy, did I get sick!

27 SEP 45

Another day of routine work on our records. Spent all afternoon typing up a roster. Capt. Lawrence & Sgt. Nagano arrived back tonight around 1830. It is now definite that our team will be one of the two to remain here for approximately two more months. We are all wishing that some of our mail would catch up with us. Seems like a long time since we've had any.

28 Sep 45

Routine day. Worked on typing of records, & rosters, etc. More & more transient personnel are in evidence daily about the hotel. Nothing out of the ordinary or of unusual interest to report.

29 Sep 45

Typed up copies of some records & various pertinent orders for Capt. Lawrence. Spent part of the afternoon taking a second look at the department stores. Found nothing worth buying, as usual.



30 SEP 45

Moved from Western style quarters to Jap rooms to accommodate transient Air Corp personnel. Went to Mass again with Capt. Lawrence. Immediately after returning from Mass, Andy & I were taken along with six others to accompany Capt. M<sup>o</sup>Mahan on a "secret" mission. It seems there is a doubtful situation involving the Bank of Japan's having taken over the Bank of Korea, and the current paying off of discharged Jap soldiers. All banks in Japan are to be taken over at 1600 today & held under strict guard until the appropriate units can take over, to conduct proper inventory & audit. We left approx 1100 & went by train to Moji. There we found that the train we would transfer to would not get us there in time, so we rode the rear platform of an electric engine thru one of the undersea tunnels which are about two miles long & connect Kyushu with Honshu. We arrived at the station in Shimomoseki & were met by the Civil Police & driven at once to the bank. We made the deadline with only minutes to spare. We closed the bank and established a four on & four off guard watch. Andy & I were on till 2000 & will go back on at midnite. It's a bit rough but won't be for too long.

1 Oct 45

Stood guard until 1600 today. Were relieved by a group of Marines with attached Finance officer & interpreters. We immediately withdrew and returned to the hotel in which we're staying. Sgt. Nagano is making arrangements for a train for tonight. Left 2015 for Fukuoka & arrived approx. 2330. Capt. Lawrence spent day checking with Jap army camp staff on a PW camp at Sakaida. He was accompanied by Lt. Christison & Sgt. M<sup>o</sup>Allan. Lt. Christison, I might add is one of the finest, hard-working, & efficient fellows I have ever met. There is no one whose respect he does not command. Very tired so shall hit the sack.

2 Oct 45

Resting today after that "strenuous" hitch at guarding. Captain Lawrence, Lt. Christison, Sgt. Savage, Sgt. M<sup>o</sup>Allan, & Cpl Fujita of IWA went to Itazuke airfield today to complete our information on Sakaida PW camp. Routine day otherwise.



Log - Recovery Team #9 (Cont'd)

3 Oct 45

All team personnel present who are to return to Manila went down to the airfield today but had to return as the airstrip was unusable due to being undermined by the frequent rains we've been having of late. Capt. Lawrence, Cpl. Fujita & myself left for Sasebo this afternoon at 1703. Train trip was routine. Met at station by Sgt. McGinnis. We will all sleep in the Hqs office building tonight. Capt. Allan, Sgt. McGinnis, and Pvt. Beck, who just got out of the hospital, are the only recovery team personnel here. Another man, Pvt. Berman, is still in the hospital. Found out tonight I've been a Cpl. since 7 Sept 45.

4 Oct. 45

Capt. Allen & Sgt. McGinnis left this morning aboard a destroyer for Okinawa. I went over to H&S. Bn & made arrangements for our quarters & where to go to get cots for our members. Lt. Baranski, Sgt. Scherlie, Sgt. McGill, & Pvt. Andrews, arrived at 1330 accompanied by a group of Allied personnel & our three Nisei interpreters all of whom are enroute to Tokyo. Due to bad weather the transient personnel will have to remain here overnight. Capt. Lawrence has been busy all day contacting the G-1, G-2, G-3, & G-4 sections, checking in & making arrangements. He has requisitioned a jeep & trailer for our use in making our check-up of the Island, and a Marine Corp combat photographer to accompany us. I saw to it that our quarters were set up & also turned in a requisition for some badly needed clothing. The POW's about cleaned us out.

5 Oct 45

Pvt. Berman returned from the hospital today. Only duty so far has been a little typing. The Allied and Nisei personnel left by train at 1430 bound for Tokyo. Capt. Lawrence & Lt. Baranski are working on details of the southern check-up which Lt. Baranski, Sgt Scherlie, Cpl Fujita, & the Marine photographer will conduct. The weather is turning very cold here. We all went up to the Army Finance Office & got information on making up a payroll so we can receive last month's pay. Had our service records brot up to date by the AG Dept. Attended a movie.

6 Oct 45

Received our pay for September this morning. I received a wad of yen about 1/2 inch thick. We were allowed to go in during "closed" hours to the PX



and buy many articles which we were out of and needed badly. We received about one-half of the clothing & equipment we requisitioned. All arrangements for the southern trip are completed. I typed up the itinerary today. We turned in laundry today & had it back dry in about four hours. Some service!

7 Oct 45

Sgt. McGill left this morning to take Pvts. Beck & Berman to Omuta. To our dismay we received a message that all personnel at Omuta had left there & were on their way up here, which necessitated our telephoning to Tosu to turn them back. I left at 1522 for Omuta with mail we received for personnel there. Sgt. McGill met the group at Tosu, discharged his duty, and returned to Sasebo from there bringing Pvt. Brand with him to pick up the mail which I was already on my way to deliver. I arrived Omuta at 2200, delivered the mail, ate a late supper, and retired.

8 Oct 45

Left Omuta for Sasebo at 1039. This traveling all alone is a unique experience. Lt. Baranski & his complement are leaving this morning for their check-up trip. They will be gone twelve days. I duly transferred at Tosu and arrived Sasebo 1630 without incident. It's raining all along the island today.

9 Oct 45

Capt. Lawrence, Sgt. McGill, & Pvt. Andrews left for Nagasaki this morning to check on Sgt. Nagano's duffel bag which was purportedly sent there and the evacuation of 18 nuns & 2 civilians. They were accompanied by Marine Cpl. Miller. I remained behind at hqs. to look after things, however nothing came up & I spent a dull day writing a letter, typing two letters for the Captain, and arguing with some fellows on when we'd be going home. The Captain & the two others arrived back from Nagasaki at 2045, and I picked them up in the jeep. It has been blowing hard & raining all day & the full force of the typhoon in this area is cutting loose tonight.

10 Oct 45

Another routine day, but a nasty one. The typhoon is going strong. It's so bad this afternoon that we've had to postpone our trip to Miyata to check on the nine flyers who reportedly crashed there a few months ago. We received



10 Oct 45 (Cont'd)

a message that due to bad flying conditions, planes were grounded & Lt. Boesch and teams 22, 24, 33, & 39 are still in Omura. We have been receiving numerous requests concerning the status of Koreans & Chinese. There are 1288 Koreans in Sasebo area, but only 500 to 600 desire repatriation, and only about 35 of those desire immediate repatriation, so it seems as if there should be no cause for immediate concern in that situation. Capt. Lawrence gave personal information along recovered personnel files in regard to Edwin Parker, British subject of Nagasaki. The weather is even worse tonight. We got thoroughly soaked just going to our quarters. We ate chow & went to bed about 1730 as it was cold & miserable, no lights, & nothing to do.

11 Oct 45

Spent the day in the office. Received first report from Lt. Baranski from Kumamoto. Made arrangements for Capt. Lawrence, Sgt. McGill, & Cpl. Giavos, (that last bloke is me) to go to Fukuoka to check on the disposal of ashes of nine flyers shot down at Miyada during the last week of April this year. We received a wire concerning the disposal of these ashes by a Jap camp commander to a Navy pharmacist's mate. Received a radio on two Canadian POW. Brought Sgt. McGill's Service Record up to date. Typhoon abated, but rain continues.

12 Oct 45

It has stopped raining and it looks as if we may have a spell of dry weather. Did a little typing this morning besides packing my bag for our trip to Miyada. We went to the supply warehouse after dinner & drew woolen pants, fleece-lined vests, heavy undershirts, and winter issue caps. It seems unusual to be wearing a complete suit of O.D.'s after having worn nothing but sunbats since coming overseas. We left Sasebo at 1525 bound for Fukuoka. They now have one car reserved for military personnel on all trains, which makes it a lot easier and better for us. The trip was routine, altho the train was one hour late and didn't arrive Fukuoka until 2045. We went directly to the hotel and retired for the night.

13 OCT 45

After chow this morning we traveled to the building where the prefecture police are situated and after hours of hunting, explaining, and



## Log - Recovery Team #9 (Cont'd)

13 Oct. 45 (Cont'd)

exasperating mixups we succeeded in securing our objective; namely an automobile and an interpreter and driver. We had lunch at the Yamamoto Hotel where, incidentally, we picked up some information from CIC regarding the disposal of the ashes of 13 dead from Camp #1. At 1245 we departed from the hotel bound for Miyada. That was about as rough a trip as I ever care to experience. By some great stroke of good fortune we had secured an unusually good driver and it was not as bad as it might well have been. We reached Miyada approximately 1445 and went to the Police station, where thru Capt. Lawrence's quizzing we found that no one knew anything about anything. After eliciting a few vague leads, Capt. Lawrence obtained a policeman as a guide and left for the PW camp site. I made good use of my inactivity to grab a few winks of sleep while waiting. About 1700 one of the "flatfoots" awakened me and escorted me to an awaiting fire truck which proceeded to wind its way up thru the hills, stopping finally at what proved to be a mine clubhouse. About this time I was wondering what was going on, as I could see no other members of the team. However, Sgt. McGill showed up in a short time having been fruitlessly trying to convey to a party that they should go down & pick me up, not knowing meanwhile that they had already arranged for that. Anyhow, all ended well. The Sgt. & I fixed up our 10 m 1 supper augmented with jap beer & some sort of stew they cooked up and had a "delectable" meal ready when the Captain came in with the interpreter. It seems we had no success in regard to the mine flyers' ashes who were reportedly shot down near Miyada other than to obtain the name of one witness, & one "witness from far off". The Captain arranged to have the actual witness of the crash brought to Sasebo for questioning, this Monday. The Capt. did discover the ashes of 48 British and Dutch PW's in a temple and picked up an unusually large amount of records which had either been hidden or overlooked. It seems that when he was in the mine office his attention was drawn to two Canadian Red Cross boxes stacked in the corner of the office. Upon examining them, he found the bottom box full of records of Fukuoka camp #9. The mine office workers almost immediately tried to explain that these were only office records. Heh, heh! We wound up our business, had an equally rough trip back to Fukuoka, arriving at 2300, and immediately hit the well known sack.



14 Oct 45

Had breakfast and they went out to the Jap army barracks to find out the address of Camp #9's Jap Commander, and found that like the Arabs they had "folded up their tents & silently stolen away." Anyway we could find nothing but empty bldgs, and no one who knew whether they had gone, so we drop that quest. The Captain & I attended mass, and then went back to the hotel, picked up our equipment and boarded the 1129 train for Sasebo. One of our fellow passengers was a General Burke of the Marine Corps. We arrived in Sasebo around 1630, were picked up in a jeep by Pvt. Andrews, and returned to our quarters. Ate supper, attended a movie and went to bed.

15 Oct 45

Spent entire day typing reports & letters. Pvt Andrews reports that nothing came up during our absence. Received news of Chuck's, Tec 3. Charles H. Nagano, commission thru the mails, forwarded same to Tokyo; commission dated 31 Aug 45, finally came thru dated 7 Sep 45. Got additional information about the B-29 from three Japanese from Nogata: Can only account for 8 crew members out of 11. Saw a good movie tonight, and am just finishing bringing this journal up to date right now.

16 Oct 45

I am staying behind today while Capt. Lawrence and the rest of the team go out on a bit of investigation in this area. I typed up two lengthy reports this morning, one on what we found out about the nine flyers, and one on the ashes and records we found at Miyada. Nothing else came up during the day. Capt Lawrence returned late and we worked till 2300 preparing and typing reports and subsidiary reports. The following is an account given me, by Capt. Lawrence, of the team's activities in the field:

Left for G-1 office at 5th Marine Division Headquarters to meet Div. GRO. Arrived at 0845 for 0900 appointment, finally met Lt. Eveland, GRO, at 1150, much too late to do any checking at Yukimara Soto cemetery. Took ashes of 6 British POW located at Fukuoka City and turned them over to Lt. Eveland; gave him all existing information on ashes and graves that I had. Made plans to go to the Ainoura Police Station at 1300 in the afternoon. Obtained Tec 4 Ray Nagata from G-2 section to act as interpreter. Left in two jeeps



## Log - Recovery Team #9 (Cont'd)

16 Oct 45 (Cont'd)

at 1330 for Ainoura, obtained police guide and proceeded to Yunohi. Located Yukimura-Soto cemetery containing 53 graves; 50 of these were clearly identifiable, and 3 unidentifiable. Found a former camp guard of the Yunohi Soto POW camp and quizzed him about the camp and graves. Took quite some time questioning the Japanese and checking the old camp site. Upon arrival at 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Div., made an appointment to meet Lt. Eveland, and Lt. Scott, at 0900 on the following morning at Ainoura Police Station. Prepared reports & letters for forwarding to Kyoto and Manila.

17 Oct 45

Spent a quiet day. Taped up seven boxes of ashes securely and turned in a requisition for a box to crate them in, and also a box to crate the records in that we found on our trip to Miyada. We should receive the boxes tomorrow. I called a Capt. Barrett at Nagasaki and found out from him who the GRS officer was & how to contact him. Due to a poor phone connection I couldn't make much headway thru conversation with this officer, however I did impart the information Capt. Lawrence wanted me to give him & told him I would ask the Captain to call him tomorrow morning. The day here was pretty dull otherwise & I went to bed early due to a bad cold. Capt. Lawrence's report for the day is as follows:

Last evening plans were made to meet at the Ainoura Police Station at 0900 this morning. Lts. Eveland and Scott could not make the appointment, so Capt Lawrence, Lt. Leffler, Ray Nagata, and the guide, Inouye Ichigoro, finally took off at 1100 for Emukae. Checked in at the Sumitomo Mine Works and inquired about the ashes of the deceased from Fukuoka camp #24. Procured a blueprint of the POW camp from the mine manager, and checked the vault where the ashes were originally placed after cremation. Also looked in at all the buildings of the camp. Found out that Lt. Anderson evacuated #24 and took the ashes out of the vault. Had lunch at the mining club nearby, and left on return trip at 1430. At 1100 the Captain left Sgt. McGill and Pvt. Andrews at the Ainoura Police Station to check the names of the deceased located yesterday with the Japanese "List of The Dead." At 1545, upon returning to Ainoura and 5<sup>th</sup> Div. Hq. he located Mac and Andy and found out that they had not had much success <sup>checking this list.</sup> At 1200 Sgt. McGill located Lt. Eveland to tell him about Capt. Lawrence's departure for Emukae. Mac and Andy assisted 5<sup>th</sup> Div. Red Cross during afternoon. At 1600 a note was left for Lt. Scott by Captain Lawrence on events of the day.



## Log - Recovery Team #9 (Cont'd)

18 Oct 45

Spent most of the morning typing. I went over to the QM warehouse accompanied by Sgt. McGill, and talked them out of a few more winter issue items, such as winter combat jackets, Eisenhower jackets, foul weather pants, and one winter cap for Mac. Mac & Andy got haircuts this afternoon; Something I had better do before I'm forced to shop about for a violin. I made arrangements thru the Army Rail Transportation Office for passage for Capt. Lawrence and myself to Nagasaki tomorrow. I had one lengthy report in letter form, and one list of complete data on six deceased PW to type tonight after supper. Finished about 2000.

19 Oct 45

We spent the time until our train left getting letters signed and on their way. Our train left at 1006. The car was at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of Navy personnel taking a sight-seeing tour to Nagasaki. The trip was without incident. We arrived at Nagasaki shortly after 1300 and walked over to 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Div. Hqs. I waited for Capt. Lawrence in the Red Cross office while he went upstairs to conduct his business. He and a Marine officer came down at about 1415 and we went over to a warehouse where a small mountain of ashes of deceased PW are being kept pending shipment to Manila. We were given a small black suitcase containing the ashes of 40 Dutch from Camp #9. We just had time to catch a train leaving at 1520 so we got a jeep ride and boarded the train. We arrived back at Sasebo at 1830. We were picked up in a jeep and went back to Hqs. We busied ourselves a while getting some chow and coffee warmed up. The Captain showed Sgt. McGill how he wanted the Dutch we brought back checked and listed. We went to bed early.

20 Oct 45

Sgt. McGill and Pvt. Andrews are busily engaged in the exhaustive task of checking lists of ashes of deceased POW against the Japanese "List of The Dead". This is proving to be a lengthy but thorough job; we are attempting to record any and all information on allied POW. Informed Lt. Scott, GRC of 5<sup>th</sup> Mar. Div. about the cans of ashes of 40 Dutch we procured from Major Hughes in Nagasaki, and turned over all available info with the ashes to him upon his arrival at VAC Hq. Informed by Col. Stafford that a Lt. Semrad would be the officer safe hand courier to the CG, Base X, Manila. Arranged for his air transportation and indoctrinated him upon his arrival. He decided that he had better come down from 5<sup>th</sup> Mar. Div. and bunk with me in case an early call came through from the air strip.

AJL



21 Oct 45

At 0030 two messengers arrived at shack #20 with the word to be at the Custom House Landing at 0430 to meet an LCP from the air strip. Lt. Gemrad and I, after securing the ashes and records from VAC Hq. arrived at the wharf at 0415. The boat finally arrived at 0545 and took Gemrad out to the strip. Went to 0800 Mass at VAC Chapel. Finally attended to some long overdue personal matters. Gave the men the day off. Found out they moved. gll

22 Oct 45

Continued checking and rechecking typed lists of the allied ashes at Nagasaki against our Japanese "List of the Dead". Worked with Sgt. Mc Gill after evening chow attempting to make some headway, feel that we are finally collating some real necessary information, something that will answer a multitude of questions and requests that are sure to crop up in the future. Spoke to 2<sup>o</sup> Mar. Div. Provost Marshal about Sakamoto, and to Major Hughes about the lists. gll

23 Oct 45

Checking finally accomplished, typing started. Received call from Lt. Baranski in Kumamoto, expects to return sometime tomorrow evening. Spoke to Capt Chandler G-3 FOF, gave what information I could in answer to his request. (Some like duplication of effort all around: i. e., CIC in Tokyo, Kyoto, Fukuoka, and Manila?). Gave what opinions I could to Col. Linder concerning a C. Tam, who calls himself a British subject. gll

24 Oct 45

Spent entire day typing up lists containing all information available on deceased POW. Finished the task about 1930 this evening. Lt. Baranski arrived this evening. Sgt. McGill and Pvt. Andrews will take copies of the lists we just completed down to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division at Nagasaki tomorrow.

25 Oct 45

Sgt. McGill and Pvt. Andrews dispatched to Nagasaki on 1000 trains with complete lists of 537 POW, whose ashes are to be forwarded to Manila or in the case of British subjects, buried locally. This information was turned over to Major E. Hughes, Asst G-1, 2<sup>o</sup> Mar. Div. Corp. Fujita left on the 1525

Continued



25 Oct. 45 (Continued)

train for Fukuoka to establish his current status. Left him with instructions to contact Capt. Chandler, G-2, FOF. Decided to take Mc Gill and Giamos along on the journey north, leaving Andrews at VAC Headquarters. Assisted Col. Finck with travel instructions for a naval commander. Mc Gill & Andrews returned 1845, trip and mission accomplished.

A.J.L.

26 Oct 45.

Received wire requesting action concerning cremated remains of deceased POW dtd. 25 Oct., from CG, SIXTH ARMY, referred Col. Griffin to my reports dated 16 Oct. and forwarded on 17<sup>th</sup> Oct. Spent complete written report to the Col. of all POW information accrued to date. This forwarded by VAC. same reference. Continuing arrangements for evacuation of St. Baramski and Sgt. Schelie, and leave-taking next Thursday. Started making these arrangements yesterday. Established Mc Gill as an official photographer.

A.J.L.

27 Oct 45.

Finally made arrangements for a decent jeep thru St. Gould and Studt. Received copies of orders from the adjutant for our coming trip to the hinter lands. Fujita returned from Fukuoka with names and addresses of all camp commanders of Kyushu POW camps. Ran up to 5<sup>th</sup> Mar Div. to contact St. Scott, GRC, nothing new so far. Filled out current payroll and pay vouchers. Went to the Port Authority on a "wild goose chase" concerning a report on 43 POW. Giamos and Andrews are zeeving in the jeep at the main tenance shop, Mc Gill is getting practical experience as a photographer. Conferred with Cooke i.e. Higano. A.J.L.

28 Oct. 45

Giamos and Andrews continued more required work on the jeep, they now have it in pretty good running condition. Dispatched reports to APO 442 + 500 concerning recapitulation sheets on the Kyushu dead, and the names and addresses of all the POW camp command ants. Mc Gill and I did some reciprocating on the picture snapping detail. No further word about the 43 POW originally reported by Port Authority. Spoke to Major Hughes about ashes of POW. A.J.L.

29 Oct. 45

Took St. Baramski and Sgt. Schelie down to the loading platform to get the boat for the seaplane tender, left him at 1730. Ward now signed for a jeep, trailer, and complete camera equipment to use on our trip. Should receive a message from Air Oper. Off. informing me of departure date & time.



29 Oct. 45 (Continued)

Has informed by Col. Stafford of an incident at Yamakawa & Yohio which may implicate some Recovery Personnel, we are checking to determine responsibility. Fear that my suspicions on the matter <sup>maybe</sup> ~~are~~ correct. Spoke to Dr. Williams about Evans' foot conditions, report unfavorable. A.L.

30 Oct. 45

Received reports from Col. Gregory about allied personnel eligible for recovery, passed this information on to the following: G-1, VAC, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Divisions, and to the AMG Sections, respectively, including a copy to AMG, FBC. Had an opportunity to go over this in detail with Maj. Powers from Fukuoka, and Lt. Gilbre from Saeki. Spoke to Cdr. Lynch and Maj. Hughes by phone, and told them Sgt. McMill would zero them in on the details tomorrow in Nagasaki. No call received as planned from Lt. Szramski on departure time. A.L.

31 Oct. 45

Sgt. McMill and Andrews succeeded in processing Edwin Facker and EB Muech at Nagasaki, forwarded required processing forms to ADVANCE. Major Powers told me that he had received overtures from quite a few people in Fukuoka claiming allied citizenship, plan to see all of them when I start on my checking assignment tomorrow. Left instructions and forms with Cdr. Lynch to process C. J. Ram, a British claimant from Kagoshima. A.L.

1 Nov. 45

Received word from Col. Stafford this morning of incoming wire dispatch ordering return to Manila, just as we were due to start for Fukuoka. Spent a rather hectic day zeroing in various parties in and around VAC Hq, including the AMG section, with the required processing forms. Called up or wrote letters, and included copies of the forms, to the following: Col. Stafford, Col. Smith, Lt. Gilbre and Capt. Harper, Cdr. Lynch, Major Hughes, Capt. Sobel, and Lt. Davis; Major Fitchet, Major Powers, and Capt. Chandler; Col. Sigger, and Lt. Scott. Sent a wire to FBC to investigate common grave site in Fukuoka. Feel that all this recovery and allied recovery business will literally snow all these parties under. Dispatched Fujita to Fukuoka with copious information for the G-1, Major Fitchet. Rummaged in all Marine equipment drawn previously for our proposed trip. Ran out to the 5<sup>th</sup> Mar. Div. to see Col. Sigger. Col. Stafford's query to the wire was "Now who is going to investigate the numerous requests we receive from Fifth Army and the work still to be done on Fukuoka?", all I could do was to refer him to Col. Gregory. A.L.



2 Nov 45

Departed vac Hq. at 1130 after answering a thousand and one questions from parties at Nagasaki, Fukuoka, and Amoyama. Feel that there is still a lot of work to be done on Kyushu, and that now moons will bother about it. Leaving the Marines with mingled misgivings. Got along famously with all.

ATL

3 Nov 45

Spent night of 2-3 on the seaplane tender "Coron". Left for Okinawa at 0900 by ABN. Arrived at Okinawa at 1115, finally reached the GTC transient camp at 1700, told to await word for air transportation.

ATL

4 Nov 45

Still sweating it out.

ATL

5 Nov 45

Received word at 0945, departed Ganton Airfield for Nichols Field at 1030, arrived Manila 1500, pretty rough trip. Reported Recovered Personnel Attachment at 1700.

ATL



AGO GHQ AFPAC Recovery Team #9

Capt. Lawrence

Left 694<sup>th</sup> Co., 29<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot at 0700, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1945.

Arrived at 33<sup>rd</sup> Div. Hq. at approx. 1830, Bauang, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1945.

Assigned to 130<sup>th</sup> Regt., arrived 2015, Springay, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1945.

Nagano, Mc Gill, Simon, and Andrews assigned 1<sup>st</sup> En. Hq. Co.

Nagano used as instructor by Sn. S-2 section, 30<sup>th</sup> August, 1945.

Motor School for C/M starting Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1945.

Left 130<sup>th</sup> Regt. at 1010, 5 September, 1945.

Arrived at 11<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, at approx. 1530, Sambran, 5 September, 1945

+ Turned in jeeps: #20159435 + 20535944 and trailers #0271922 + 0829243,  
to 318<sup>th</sup> Ord. Dep. at 1800, 5 September, 1945. \*Receipt in record book.

Recommendations for promotions (3 copies) turned over to Capt. Reigle, I  
Corps liaison officer at 0900, 6 September, 1945. \*File copy in record book.

Requested Capt. Reigle to check on officers' commissions for Rec 3  
Charles H. Nagano, 17 145 548, at 2000, 5 September, 1945.

Left 11<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot at 0430, 8 September, 1945, for Clark Field.

Left Clark Field for Okinawa at 1025, 8 September, 1945.

Arrived Okinawa at 1520 on 8 September, 1945.

Left Okinawa (Brown Beach) for U.S. Okinawa, 1045, 9 September, 1945.

Spilled at 0545 for Nagasaki on 11 September, 1945, arrived 1503 on 12  
September, 1945.

Left Nagasaki for Now at 1023, 12 September, 1945; arrived 0430, 13  
September; left Now 0530, arrived Omuta at 0715, 13 September, 1945.

Usual "ring-around-the-roy" commenced at 0735, 13 Sep. 1945, at Camp #17.



## PARTICULARS FOR PERSONNEL HANDLED IN PW CAMPS.

CAMP #17

	<u>DUTY.</u>	<u>ON ARRIVAL</u> <u>HOSP.</u>	<u>AWOL.</u>
AMERICAN	324	36	372
AUSTRALIAN	267	26	126
BRITISH	228	17	5
DUTCH	307	22	2
	<u>1,126</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>505</u>

SHIPPED

	<u>MILITARY</u>	<u>HOSP.</u>	<u>CIVILIANS</u>	
AMERICAN	312	31	16	
AUSTRALIAN	266	26		
BRITISH	225	19		TOTAL EVAC. SEP 15 865
DUTCH	305	24		SEP 16 359
	<u>1,108</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>1224</u>

CAMP #25

	<u>MILITARY</u>	<u>HOSP. &amp; MED.</u>	
BRITISH	389	5	
AMERICAN	2		
	<u>391</u>	<u>5</u>	TOTAL EVAC. SEP 16 396

CAMP #23

	<u>MILITARY</u>	<u>HOSP.</u>	<u>CIVILIANS</u>	
AMERICAN	140	19	16	TOTAL EVAC SEP 18 156

CAMP #26

	<u>MILITARY</u>		
BRITISH	153		
AUSTRALIAN	198		
	<u>351</u>		TOTAL EVAC SEP 18 351

Recovered before our arrival by Capt. Conners Rec. Team.

DOCTORS	2
ORDERLIES	4
PATIENTS.	33
	<u>39</u>

Non-recovered Personnel

Self evac.	5	Deaths - 2.
A.W.O.L.	6	
	<u>11</u>	