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THOMAS W. HOUSTON

A RECORD  
(PERSONAL AND TRIVIAL)

OF  
EVENTS  
OF

CONSEQUENCE & IN CONSEQUENCE

CONNECTED WITH

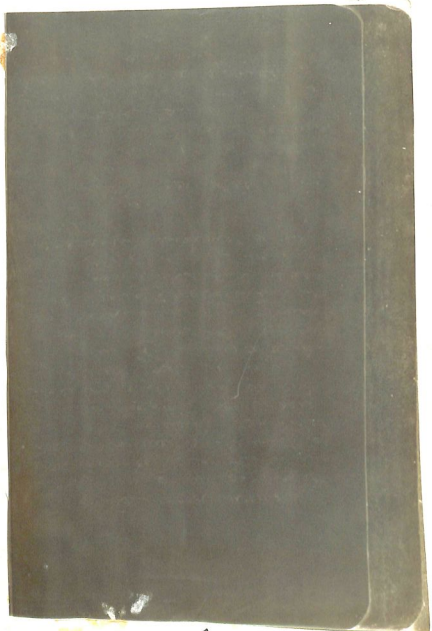
THE WAR IN THE PHILIPPINES

STARTING 12/8/41 ENDING ?

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## RESUME

JAN. 6, 1941

This record being opened practically a month after the outbreak of the war, the government contained in the opening resume, leading up to the daily records, must be of necessity recorded from memory.

But the time has been so short, and the impressions so vivid (and first-hand), that even this initial review can be reasonably considered to be an accurate compilation of facts.

So, the diary starts on Dec. 8, 1941, early in the morning, and, with the past month's summary connecting with the day and the days to come, herewith is one man's history of a segment of War.

Dec. 8, 1941:

3:00 A.M. = On duty at the receiving office. At ten, an ambulance driver, came in on a call with the story that the short wave radio reported the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. Naturally the story was discredited. That the Japanese would do such a thing was incredible. Especially due to the fact that the peace party in Washington was still in progress. And, to heighten incredulity, Skermer was always a great one to manufacture improbabilities.

6:00 A.M. The morning Manila Bulletin arrived, carrying scare headlines on the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the casualty list of 3000, and the catastrophic destruction of property. Then, starting

to stir about in the early morning, and hearing the news, were more quiet than talkative in their stunned amazement.

9:00 a.m.: I wanted to get the reactions that would be apparent in downtown Manila, so, being off duty and anticipating a "restriction to post order," I changed into "civies" (for the last time, I knew) and hailed a cab. On the Escolta there was subdued excitement, frequent interchanges of understanding glances. But business was at that hour more or less as usual.

Dropped in at the Lyric and saw the picture, Sergeant Yack. A fitting prologue for the things to come.

11:30 a.m.: Out of the theatre and on to a new Escolta.



The subdued excitement of two hours previously had given to a breathless hurrying, and I wondered what events have occurred in the meantime to accentuate the suspense and strained anticipation.

The doors to the banks were closed, and their street entrances were thronged with impatient Manila citizens.

Walking to the Plaza delti, the eyes of excited on-lookers, hankering for the most unusual news, caught my attention. I bought a four-page Manila Bulletin having the front page headlines in glaring red ink. "BAGUIO BOMBED" - "AIR RAID IN PAMPANGA" - "STUTSEN BURG" & "SAN FERNANDO ATTACKED" x

This started for me the American-Japanese War in the Philippines. There are other names for the

war, and the war involves  
more peoples and territory  
than implied by the notes  
that I see. But it being  
beyond my capacity to present  
more than a few im-  
pressions of a small phase  
of the local conflict, the  
above name is the most  
apt.

That noon time of our  
first day of the war, was  
distinctive to me because  
I was the only soldier visible  
on the streets, in the Plaza,  
in Louis Bar and in the  
Plaza Lunch. And the new  
spirit of fraternity was apparent.  
The conventional barrier be-  
tween a waiter at the Plaza  
Lunch and a soldier was  
gone. Three of the waiters  
appropriated my extra, and  
a girl selling flatter, tickets  
and over my shoulder in  
order to read the news.

A waiter spoke of his mother and brother in Pampanga. The girl called me "soldier" with an impersonally-affectionate intonation of the word.

1:00 A.M. Casuals from Zambales and Pampanga.

Back at the hospital to hear three things. 1. Everyone restricted to the post. 2. The wearing of civilian clothing prohibited. 3. Trainloads of battle-casuals were due in from the north.

And late that evening and all the following night the entire hospital staff, from the colonel on down to the youngest buck private, was overworked with the rush of incoming injured.

The field in Zambales was practically destroyed what planes were there were wrecked by bombs and 50 or 60 millimeter machine-gun fire before they

could take to the air. Twenty-five or thirty young fellows, lieutenants and pilots, all, were shipped down to Stenbury to recover or to die from their wounds. Others, enlisted men, made up the living casualties from 2nd Field. There was no accurate report secured as to the number of dead there.

Clark Field and Stationburg were both bombed, and casualties from both stations swelled the influx to Stenbury.

Nichols Field was bombed that night and Ft. Wm. The Kirby was threatened. The C. & O. rooms at Stenbury, its blackened windows shielding all light from the outside, blackout darkness, was a terribly busy place, for all first-aid and admissions to the hospital.

passed through there.

Monday afternoon (the 8<sup>th</sup>)  
 about fifty officers, runner  
 and selected personnel left  
 for Statenburg by bus to  
 check out at the station  
 hospital there.

Dec. 9, 1941 - 10:30 a.m.

The first squadrons of  
 enemy bombers passed over  
 the downtown portion of  
 Manila.

Aircraft seemed to fill the  
 air and anti-aircraft shell  
 explosions caused myriads of  
 tattered blossoms to dot the  
 blue. We ventilates to war  
 clung close to sides of  
 buildings, in fear of bomb  
 explosions, but the ~~the~~  
 drumming of the A's was  
 unpunctuated by the volume  
 and heavier shells of bombs.

Not until the enemy bombers were over Nichols Field did we hear head quaking booms of ~~at~~ "egg" exploding. Nichols Field caught hell.

But that day and the next the military objectives that were in the path of the most terrific destruction were Pearl Harbor and the naval ships in the bay. Bombs rained upon that area with terrific effect. Several ships were sunk (destroyers, mine sweepers, and the U.S.S. Pillsbury, an old light cruiser). The navy gunk, in those two days, was virtually wiped out. But the fops came back, day after day to complete band emphasize their destruction there.

The first five days of the war, for the Sternberg personnel were days and nights of toil, ceaseless and seemingly inadequate. Surgeons with their knives and forceps, nurses with medicines, antiseptics and bandages, corpsmen helping and cleaning, office staffs buried under an avalanche of sew-fused records.

False alarm air raids at night, with patients and staff groping in dark shadows for themes in tired but strained wakefulness and suspense.

(The Colonel + I)

The occasional sporadic of enemy bombers patrolling over the daytime with the noon raid occurring with clock-like regularity. Anti-aircraft bursts, the distant boom of bombs at Nichols and Calet's. Vehicles of all types, night and day,

bring new victims from Nichols  
and Cavite ferry landing, from  
incoming trains and direct  
by highway from Pampanga.  
Other vehicles, not so carefully  
but more heavily loaded,  
crowding with their burdens  
the capacity of the army  
morgue.

X

In the twelve days  
that passed between the 12<sup>th</sup>  
and the 24<sup>th</sup> of December  
(Christmas Eve) there occurred  
constant repetitions of the  
events and conditions already  
reported, with various new  
developments that will be  
noted here without detailed  
or chronological order.  
Stories of the fops in boats & barges, the  
capture of guards and  
midway dealings by the  
fops, and the sieges, the  
blatant defiance and the



eventual fall of Wake Island.

Hong Kong was besieged and taken sometime flat in December during these days.

Saps landed troops at Davao, Luzon, Batangas and Northern Luzon and were engaged by Americans & Filipinos.

getting a two hour pass from the hospital on the afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup>, I went out to Lasby and found Tony Raana and her boy in of certain and apprehensive. Their transportable personal belongings were in bundles, crowding the floor space, but the two did not <sup>know</sup> whether to evacuate with the throngs of refugees rushing to the provinces, to seek refuge with Tony's brother-in-law Oct on Alameda Rizal or to stay put and brave the dangers of

bombs, fire and looters in  
 lovely desperation. I reacted  
 them the best I could and  
 counseled them to wait until  
 I could contact Sgt Kaum  
 at Fort Mills by phone. I  
 reached him by phone that  
 night and learned that he  
 was much upset in his  
 concern over Tony and  
 Junior. I took the liberty  
 the next few days of leaving  
 the post occasionally to  
 see that Tony + Junior  
 to moved, with all furniture  
 and property to a new home  
 just a few doors from  
 Tony's relatives out on  
 Kizal. I was able by  
 means of several phone  
 calls to Kaum to keep  
 him in touch with develop-  
 ments and to reassure  
 him of their comparative  
 safety. I wonder how they  
 are getting along now?

The military hospital facilities of Manila were greatly over-taxed and there was instituted a previously planned program of rapid expansion. The Fai Aldi building on Lopez Avenue became the Manila Medical Center, with its headquarters staff of Sterubers forming the nucleus of a larger staff.

The buildings of Estado Mayor, La Salle University, Philippines Women's College, and other educational units were taken over to form (with Sterubers) eight or nine annexes to Medical Center.

Richer Filipino field supplemented office and ward staffs. Native nurses came to help the AHC.

Medical officers of Filipino branches of the USA 77E augmented the

ranks of the American medical corps. McKinley was abandoned and Nichols evacuated. The navy medical staff at Cebu left their empty hospital and came to Stenberg with their patients.

(Some days later the navy personnel and navy patients moved to the New Navy Hospital at Zamboanga, beyond Zamboanga City.)

The major invasion of the Philippines came when 80 top transports carried an army of perhaps 50,000 Japanese, with munitions and supplies, across the China Sea to the Lingayen Gulf, and the army proceeded to disembark and line up for its southward drive.

The Japanese invasion

units in Legaspi and  
Batangas were strengthened  
and 140 jeep transports  
unloaded their human and  
mechanical freight in  
Layabao. Then began  
the major struggle in the  
Philippines.

At Stenoery we waited  
for news of American  
re-inforcements for fighting  
forces. We watched the  
skies for American bombers  
and fighting planes. Nothing  
came.

Came tales of individuals  
American and Filipino becoming  
one Filipino airman brought  
down more than his quota  
by American captain in  
his P-40 bagged 4 jeep  
planes. All of the Filipino  
airway men and pilots  
praised for their behavior. And  
the Filipino ground  
troops, especially the

Scouts & the Constabulary fought with courage & stamina equal to the Americans. The untrained and unseasoned Philippine Army faltered at times under punishment or opposing threats.

Fox-holes & V-trenches to shelter patients and hospital personnel were dug in all the corners of the hospital. Gas masks were supposed to be always ready for use at all times. Steel helmets prevailed.

For the first two weeks officers & non-coms vied for the possession of pistols confiscated from patients. Sentries patrolled the streets and intersections, and guarded public buildings.

Many random shots, fired by various sentries, punctuated the night noises and brought fear and

troubled to peace-loving  
citizens who were forced  
to leave the streets at night.

Flares sent up by un-  
discovered persons, were  
frequent. And the bursts  
of machine gun fire, re-  
sulting out the ~~perpetrators~~ <sup>perpetrators</sup>,  
endangered the lives of  
all persons within range.

A not inconsiderable  
number of new patients came  
to the hospital as a result  
of traffic collisions and  
spills occurring in the  
darkness of the continual  
nightly blackouts.

Dec. 24, 1941:-

The day before Christmas  
marked the introduction of a new  
phase of the war for Sterenberg.  
Came to us the censored reports  
that the Japs were gradually clos-  
ing in on the bay area from  
Ligaya, Batangas and Sagapas,  
and that the main force of the  
Japs had pushed back our lines  
at Lingayen Gulf, down through  
da Unib and back into Pampanga.

Forward now, Major Gillespie  
C.O. at Sterenberg since Col. Correll's  
move to Qui Dai, came to me  
at the Receiving Office. He  
personally passed to me and my  
P.O. staff the hospital orders that  
all fire arms, bayonets, knives  
and any other weapons, even  
billy clubs + black jacks, should  
be turned in to medical supply.  
This was done so that Sterenberg  
could be proven to be a strictly  
non-combatant establishment.  
He also told me that if any



Japanese detachment was to pass  
or enter the hospital, we were  
to do nothing to interfere with  
their <sup>its</sup> purposes.

This gave us a good idea  
of what was impending.

On the same morning Manila  
was declared an open city by the  
U.S.A.F.F.F. But the Japs did not  
so recognize it. For Peck area  
was blasted by bombs.

Christmas Day - Dec. 25, 1941.

Peck area of Nichols Field was  
again pounded by Jap bombs.

By Christmas afternoon  
we of the R.C. were unusually  
crowded with work. The night  
crew was given - called on  
to assist. So until 4:30 we  
were almost oblivious of the  
new turn of events.

It is true that we had casually, about mindfully noticed members of our detachment passing and re-passing with field equipment, barracks bags and what not. But we merely assumed that another detail was being dispatched to field duty. (Sojourn had been sent to "somewhere" just two days before).

But at 4:30 the fever of mysterious activity invaded when the Rec. Office. And, acting on a hunch, I took a quick pascar drive to Estado Mayor to see First Sgt. Sadler. And the orders he gave me caused me to grab a phone and pass on the word to my crew. For the order was that all white personnel were evacuating Sternberg, and pronto!

It was grab a pack, roll it up, and throw a few things

into a barracks bag. "Might  
leave any moment." In the  
excitement, the P.O. crew had been  
forgotten and they we had gone  
there for hours, typing 550's  
that would never be processed.

Having learned the knack of  
field maneuvering quite some years  
before, it did not take me long  
to catch up with the others. I had  
my pack rolled and equipment  
ready, had had a bunch of  
chow, and was idling with  
many others were still in  
the throes of rolling their first  
pack.

I came near to breaking  
my half Scotch heart to leave  
behind a wall locker of new  
civilian clothing and a foot  
locker of other clothes. But -  
"c'est la guerre!"

Christmas Night -

Daylight waned and twilight found us white, medical, cultured men beginning to be accustomed to the new order of things. The transportation seeking slow in coming, we composed our selves singly or in groups on the grass quadrangle at Estado Mayor, to wait with rather admirable philosophy for whatever was to come.

I found a mattress and put it out on the tennis court. Lying there prone and looking up at the silvery moon, the bright stars and the white, billowing clouds, memories, thoughts and anticipations passed through my mind with a slow lagness akin to the gradual drifting of the tenuous, snowy clouds in the blue-black vault above me. Their edges were silvered by the radiant moon, and

if the odd simile be permitted, the description fitted my thoughts as well. For they were truly things with a romantic brightness. At last, after 40 years, I was actively, unreservedly, engaged in, and a wholly unhesitant part of a vitally necessary program. What the dangers contingent to war were impending, and oblivion was the possible ultimate end, there was no sense of divine or futility. No sense of gradual, inevitable atrophy of my powers, insignificant though they were.

### Our Our Way to Somewhere -

Finally lists of names were called, and groups were segregated. The first group was to return to Sherehly to re-empower the staff of Filipino and civilian personnel who had been left there. The rest of us, in bus-load lots, were beached down to Piri #1.

We arrived there at about  
 mid-night, ~~to~~ to find the  
 two Ft. Mills ferries awaiting  
 us. There were the officers  
 and crews and the Hai Lai  
 group.

and the confusion and  
 hurry of loading processes  
 went on under the shadowy  
 light of moon and stars.

To add to the tension,  
 two huge oil reserves were  
 dynamited & set aflame across  
 the bay at Cavite, away while  
 we were hurrying aboard. The  
 thunder of the great explosions  
 came rumbling across the  
 decked waters, to be followed  
 by the view of pillars of  
 flame shooting to the heavens  
 and the blood-red light  
 grimly illuminated the bay  
 about us as we set our  
 course for Corregidor. At  
 times the great fires would  
 blaze up, and we were in  
 a flame of light for

many miles around.

But the excitement was insufficient to keep me awake for long, and, curled up on a pile of huge harpers, I drifted off into untroubled sleep. I awakened in the first gray light of dawn, to find our boat tied up at the dock at Concepcion.

Dec 26, 1941 -

A swell. A stretch, a visit to the washroom to refresh myself. Back on the pile to rope. Another man gave me a third of a can of beer: my breakfast, another, a drink of rum: a stimulant.

About 8 a.m. the lines were cast off and we headed up the bay <sup>east</sup> for ~~San Diego~~ <sup>San Diego</sup> ~~San Diego~~ <sup>San Diego</sup> near the ~~town~~ <sup>bay</sup> of ~~San Diego~~ <sup>San Diego</sup> in Batavia. Reached there about 11 a.m., and no sooner had we started to disembark than the drone of

Japan bombers overhead caused a scramble and a scuttling up the quarter mile long "dike" pier ~~head~~ heading for the camouflage screening of acacia trees and the welcome shelter of fox holes.

Sanaq Point (I use the name because I know no other) was a focus of hurried activity. On the road passing there trucks loaded <sup>with</sup> men or supplies roared back and forth. Boats arriving byes our had caused the pier head and the base of the pier to be piled high with heterogeneous stores. Gangs of laborers were directed here and there to shift and load the stores on to trucks. Our own busy process of unloading our boat added to the hullabaloo.

at possibly 20-minute intervals a squadron of bombers would pass over and our locality became blank of person or sound as we creaked



between spreading tree roots, or  
laid ~~in~~ in dry drainage ditches or  
for holes.

But the Sons of the Rising Sun  
at the sticks of the bombers led  
more important business than the  
extinction of a few assorted  
troops at a pygmy pie. They  
roared over with hundreds of  
bombs scheduled for the Rock,  
that Gibraltar of Manila Bay.  
Some of the bombers braved the  
storm of anti-aircraft shells  
to unload their eggs over  
Corregidor, others veered off  
from the blasting fire, to  
wheel about like vultures  
out of range, later to vent  
their spite on sea craft  
in the bay. An oil tanker  
was set ablaze. An American  
submarine answered us with  
its gun coming, as it alternately  
submerged to "duck" the bombs  
that came splashing down  
in its deep water and rose  
to figuratively thumb its

were at the grey silver ~~light~~  
dividing in the air we distance.  
an american destroyer was  
cruising through the gate  
into the bay. A streak of  
six bombs sent six great  
geysers into the air close  
astern. That grey heron  
of the sea took to in a  
frightened speed full speed  
ahead, that sent ~~back~~ high  
flying spray from her bow and  
quickly changed the range  
finding of the Jap air men.

Several of the Jap planes  
were shot down. They in their  
turn, inflicted some damage  
to the fleet and sunk two  
tankers.

That afternoon, after most  
of us medical detachment men  
had left the vicinity, a detail  
left behind to finish unloading  
the boat had the questionable  
thrill of having one squadron  
of bombers unload their deadly

burst at them. All but one bomb  
fell harmlessly into the water about  
the pier head and boat. The one  
fell onto the roadway atop the  
pier, digging out about one  
third of the roadway.

I was in the first truck  
of evacuated men to leave the locality.  
The nurses + some of the officers  
had already left.

The pier was at Kilometers  
Post #155. We drove to about  
#135, and the truck was stopped  
at a point where a narrow, little  
weed long joined the highway.  
Up this lane we hiked by  
twos, spaced six paces apart,  
for about half a kilometer.

We then arrived at a  
comparatively level spot cover-  
ing perhaps two acres, shielded  
from the view of bombers by  
the spreading branches of  
great, aged acacias.

Through a detachment of the 12<sup>th</sup> Medical Regt, Philippines Scouts had established a temporary field station, and there we found our "vanguard" of officers and nurses. Other trucks and buses brought the remainder of our men and equipment.

At one-thirty we had our first meal of the day, and it was by the grace of the mess of the 12<sup>th</sup> Med. Regt's boys. So we ate their rice and stew and liked it. I did notice, though, that the nurses' officers were eating canned beans that had been pilched from the stores for the boat.

That evening we had rice and hash and the following morning we had hash and rice. There was always a sufficient quantity of strong, hot coffee.

The evening and the following morning were broken occasionally by air raid alarms but there happened not the slightest cause for real alarm.

That night the nurses slept on cots and mattresses in an arroyo under one acacia, the officers bedded down in another space, and the enlisted men, white & brown, scattered about at their individual pleasure. It was no hardship. I undressed and slept under a mosquito net, on an air-spring mattress held from the earth by a letter, and was rolled up in a new gray blanket.

To wash in the morning we wandered for several hundred yards along a winding foot path, down a hillside to a piped spring where warm water from hot springs gushes forth. A "Fuente de la Cruz"

lazily followed his larger  
cabin in the field nearby.  
Our brown prokes-in-arms  
stopped to their sheets and  
sliced water over their  
glistening coppery bodies. They  
were cleaner in their habits  
in the field than we were.

Strutting back up the  
hill I encountered a party  
of nurses heading down  
toward the spring. I warned  
them to raise their voices to  
steer of their coming. Otherwise  
they might run into a scene  
where they would be forced  
to pretend shocked modesty.  
So they laughingly started  
singing as they heard the  
spring. That same morn-  
ing - - -

Dec. 27, 1941

We loaded up again on  
to trucks and hill, and  
split up for two different

destinations. One group of about twenty-five selected men went to go to a newly established medical depot. The rest of us, forming a much larger group and including all of the officers and nurses were destined for Camp Limay, Barain of Limay, at Kilometer Post 04147, where Gen. Hospital #1 was to be established.

Camp Limay, built in 1941, had been occupied by the 45th Inf., Phil. Scouts, since Aug 19, 1944. They had vacated their site at the outbreak of the war to take to the field. It consisted of perhaps 35 structures all but the frame of native material. Floors, steps, and framework of "Filipino mado-ang," walls of woven split buri too and roofs of thatched nipa grass. Most of these were long and narrow, to serve as barracks. Another long one probably had been

the administration building. This last became the new hospital's operating pavilion. The others like it became the wards. The latrines were shorter, smaller structures, while the several mess-halls were of intermediate size. A group of ~~can~~ 4 comparatively small, square buildings became the administrative center of the hospital.

The longest buildings, two in number, formerly officers' quarters, at the ~~eastern~~ southern side of the camp, became bed officers + nurses quarters.

The camp was between the highway and the bay shore directly adjacent to the southern side of the Barro of Lima.

Along the beach stood large storages, sheeted



galvanized iron over a wooden  
 framework, that housed the  
 quartermaster and utilities,  
 and two medical supply  
 warehouses.

This supply depot had  
~~been~~ been installed and equipped  
 some weeks and months before,  
 in anticipation of the war.  
 In the center of the grounds, lined  
 by the barracks and wards-to-  
 be, was a large, spacious  
 rectangle shaded by large  
 acacia trees.

Thickets and woods to the  
~~west~~ north; thickets and woods  
 to the west between the camp  
 and the highway. The beach  
 and the bay on the east; and  
 the woods, seemingly, against  
 bamboo & nipa stacks of Linyang  
 on the north, separated from  
 our grounds by a narrow,  
 shaggy layover.

The camp's electricity was furnished by its own rather inadequate power plant, which also pumped our water into the reservoir atop the water tower.

Cool breezes generally blew off the bay to lessen the heat that melted, and to necessitate a blanket at night. It seemed a healthy spot, but it was malaria country. They forced a daily dose of quinine on to every individual.

Still Dec. 27, 1941

And back to the record.

We came into camp about the middle of the morning to find already established there the 80 men, mostly McPinley "medics", who had left Sternberg two days before we had no patients, no beds set up. The buildings

that were to be wards cluttered  
up with personal belongings, &  
members of the 45<sup>th</sup>, besides locks,  
trash and dust.

For the next few days we  
all labored mightily. The mess  
was re-organized. Offices open-  
ed up. The operating room  
was equipped. Wards were  
emptied, cleaned and re-filled  
with beds and all of the usual  
ward paraphernalia.

All corps men were driven  
out of their barracks and ordered  
to make their beds in pup-tents  
in the woods. Preparations  
were being made for a great  
influx of war-injured patients.

and the first trickle started  
on the first night I was here.  
The trickle grew, daily and  
mightily. It swelled in in-  
creasing proportions so that  
work as hard as we might,  
we could hardly get beds

into the wards fast enough to accommodate the broken and lacerated bodies. Today, Jan. 8, 1942, after 12 days of expansion, 15 wards of nearly 50 beds each have been crammed full, two warehouses have been emptied of stores and filled with beds for more patients. And now they are roofing over the spaces between ward-buildings, to make new space for the victims.

Shortly after our group came here, the remainder of the staff at St. Mary's followed us, bringing their patients with them. A loaded hospital ship has gone to Australia. Hospital #2, to have the same capacity as this one, has been opened near Mariville, here in the same province and is rapidly filling. And the field stations at the front lines are begging for us to take their accumulations more rapidly.

The operations pavilion, with a constantly growing staff, is slaving night and day. The burial spread is always busy.

and the casualties keep coming. Some to be buried here, a few to develop gas gangrene and die the most horrible way. Some to be evacuated to Hosp.

#2. Two wards here are filled with men with one or more amputated limbs. I walked through Ward 8 this morning and saw that over half of the beds were supplemented by frame works to accommodate pulleys, ropes and weights to apply <sup>traction</sup> for fractured arms & legs.

We seen a 72 year old chap that a few months ago was an Iowean farm hand, simple and in an opinion. Today he has several wounds in ankle, thigh, side, wrist and cranium.

Bus loads of "reconstructed"  
fighting men are leaving here  
every day, to be returned to the  
front. Soldiers with deeper wounds,  
I know that their time to return  
will come.

And the hospital staff continues  
to work. Ours is not the battle  
that there on the front line engage  
in. We have no guns. There are  
no blood-sucking heroes. But the  
work is a good job to be doing.

White and brown surgeons  
& physicians, nurses & Corps men  
are leaving lives patching up  
battered bodies and restoring health  
to shattered systems. And the  
deaths are not of one doing.

In the last two weeks Manila  
has been abandoned by the  
USAFFE and the Japanese  
have moved in. Corregidor  
has taken an awful pounding  
but in turn has brought down  
between 20 or 30 Jap bombers,  
and the Old Rack is still

impregnable.

Before any good word reached the same British reports that the Japs were occupying all of the Philippine archipelago save this province of Batavia in which we are located. This 30 or 40 mile wide by perhaps 60 mile long arm of Luzon embracing the outer, ~~the~~ northern shelter of Manila Bay is bounded (by our present perspective) by our fighting line on the north, China sea on the west, Manila Bay on the east and Corceidor island on the southern point.

Whether or not we win in the Philippines, whether or not we extend the "Battle of Batavia" until reinforcements arriving will be the ~~answer to~~ "decided" here in the land about us.

Day by day the battle draws closer to the time of decision, one way or the other.

Innumerable rumors are  
rife. "Wake, Midway + Guam  
are retaken by the U.S." "That  
is a fake rumor." "Russia  
has declared war on the Japs  
and her submarines are hunting  
the Jap navy." "That's Tommy-  
rot." "Soot of our planes are  
perched in West Borneo,  
awaiting a signal for a big  
push." "We have many  
planes here in Batavia,  
Indon., waiting for the big  
push." "We have practically  
no planes west of Hawaii."  
"A huge convoy, bearing men,  
munitions and planes is  
50-100 miles long is  
10-30-72 hours away."  
(That fabled story has  
persisted for ever a week.)  
"No convoy is coming."  
"The Marines have landed."  
"The Marines are landing."  
"The Marines will land soon."  
"No Marines will come."  
—and a hundred greater  
and lesser variations!



But not everything is dismal and foreboding, moored and war-scarred.

The bay ripples in peaceful serenity. The sky is blue and the surrounding hills continually invite one to gay explorations of their green thickets and blue canyons.

Officers stroll betimes with the Andaman nurses and none seem to care that all are clad in heterogeneous garments - whatever comes to hand we wear, and nurses beg, entreated men for their khaki.

We enlisted men try our luck with the Filipino nurses, and an attractive lot they are in the main.

Nurses have put aside their dignity, doing exact work that in peacetime they would scorn to think of. And there is a pleasant camaraderie betw.

all ranks and grades.

We have grown tired of ducking for a fox hole every time a Jap flies over. It is within the realm of possibility that we may one day regret our carelessness, notwithstanding, there is no breaking of the law that familiarity breeds contempt and indifference.

The only time they came close with bombs was about a week ago. One morning two Jap observation planes came over, and flew very low. They banked, circled and returned, in perfect position for machine-gun strapping. Again and again they zoomed low and roared across our rooftops, and we covered in our trenches. They obviously were "inspecting" our place and verifying the authenticity behind the

huge red crosses we had  
plastered about the grounds  
and on roofs.

They made not the slightest  
threat of firing in spite of their  
terrifying zooms, and all would  
have gone well, I believe,  
had not one lone tripleman, in  
very close proximity to the hospital  
grounds got an itchy trigger  
finger. His one rifle shot,  
cracking the true immobility  
of hundreds of persons, set off  
the fireworks. In 30 seconds  
scores of rifles, then or four  
machine guns and any number  
of automatic pistols, were  
being emptied into the air  
about the two planes. I say  
into the air about them, because  
to all appearances the planes  
were untouched, and they  
continued for several minutes  
to cross and re-cross the  
compound. Nearly all of the  
furious fusillade came from  
Constabulary, Scout and  
American troops in the

barrio, in the woods and along  
the highway. Perhaps half a  
dozen guns within the hos-  
pital grounds were used.

My conception of the  
attitude of the Japs, and of  
their motives in the second  
part of the story is as follows:

They returned to their  
landing field and looked over  
their planes, undoubtedly find-  
ing bullet holes in wings and  
fuselages, they were revenge-  
ful. Here they had deliberated  
withheld all fire in their routine  
examination of an enemy  
hospital, and their forbearance  
had been repaid with  
spiteful deadliness.

Anyway, the following  
morning, when all was peace-  
ful at the hospital, without  
the slightest warning, 17  
car-splitting explosions  
resounded, and 12 black  
and brown clouds spouted  
from the earth skyward.

So great was our fright and surprise it was several minutes before we realized that the bomber crews themselves had not been touched. What must have been two planes had come from an extremely high altitude, shutting off their motors before their long glancing dive. Then, catastrophe silently, down through low hanging clouds, they had loosed their death dealing sticks of bombs and roared on away before any one knew of their presence.

In about ten minutes, when we were just about to catch our breath again, the roar of sound was repeated, but only one stick (6 bombs) were dropped this time. But our fright was unlimited.

Again the ground crew members were not hit. But the survivors of the day before paid a very price for their reckless use of the day before. And the women and

children still living in the barrio were less in number after the Japs' stern punishment. The rest of the operating room and wards was augmented. Soldiers, civilian crew, women and children were brought in a sudden stream.

That afternoon of the same day all traps in close proximity to the hospital were given ~~absolute~~ <sup>absolute</sup> orders to withhold their fire from all planes flying over the hospital. All civilians had evacuated the barrio by night fall.

The only other startling sounds to break the hum-drum day & nights were the sudden cracks of small arms & machine guns of nervous or inexperienced guards & sentries. A patrol was assigned to kill off all the stray hogs.

left behind by evasions, and the popping of rifle cartridges and squeal of pigs was a frequent diversion.

Dec. 9, 1941 -

To review the last three days and then to establish my daily record -

Not until three days ago did there come to us any truly heartening facts (or what we accept as facts) to lift our spirits and revive our shaken faith that the Philippine struggle would be settled victoriously in the Philippines.

None of us has ever had the slightest doubt as to the eventual outcome of the war. We knew that America could and would whip Japan in the Orient.

But the deplorable lack

of organized preparedness here in the Philippines, the criminal negligence in having so few air planes here, and the determined, large scale invasions by the Japanese at all points, and the seemingly unavoidable delay in in any further aid for our troops and planes for our pilots, have caused most of us to consider the possibility of complete American evacuation of the Islands and the settlement of the War elsewhere. Even the bare possibility killed me, for, next to America, my attachment to these Islands is greater than any other soil.

In turn the Japs won dominion over Ibabao, northern Luzon, the Visayas, Southern Luzon. The time came when we evacuated Manila and the Japs moved in. Now, of all the Philippines



Archipelago, we retain only  
the islands of Bataan, that  
small arm of Luzon north of  
the entrance of Manila Bay.  
Possibly our troops are still  
holding a narrow strip of  
Kampanga, directly north of  
Bataan.

and works of convoys  
seemed only empty works, and  
disparagingly few of Uncle Sam's  
eagles were seen in the blue,  
while Japanese bombers &  
pursuit planes soared about,  
unmolested in their death  
dealing business.

The boys at the front,  
both white and brown, have  
been fighting gamely against  
superior numbers, and the  
enemy planes bombed and  
strafed them with 50 + 60  
millimeter machine gun  
fire with very little danger  
to themselves. For the top  
at the front it was a

heart-breaking defenses; for us behind the lines it was "keep all we could & hope for the best."

But now, the prospects seem brighter. Our fighting line has held against great odds for such a period as to greatly weaken the Japs' prospects for a quick victory in the Islands (and that is the only kind of a victory they could have hoped for).

And reason tells us that there has to be some foundation for the many good rumors that have been sprung into being during the last 72 hours. Following are some of the most persistent rumors:

400 American planes in Philippine waters.

Upward of a score of Jap bombers caught napping on the ground at Stalderburg.

and destroyed by our bombers  
60 Jap planes destroyed  
at Davao.

Mindanao retaken by  
the American forces.

The 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry thrown  
full force into action on  
our northern battle line for  
the first time since the war  
started.

The Jap line is pushed  
back a few kilometers.

Japanese planes destroyed  
at Nichols Field by our bombers.

A force of Marines landed  
at Lingayen Gap and are  
now applying (with the aid  
of our original line) a  
pincer movement.

An American land movement on southern Luzon, with a spear head of Negro troops, are bringing Americans back close to Manila.

— and so the story goes on.

It is true that practically no ~~four~~ bombers have flown over this peninsula for close to 72 hours. The guns of Corregidor have remained silent for that length of time.

But this morning two ~~four~~ planes did fly over, ~~and~~ ~~and~~ came back. Both they and ourselves were startled when a newly placed anti-aircraft battery, about a mile to the south, opened up on them. The ~~shots~~ came very close to the ~~four~~ ~~planes~~. They wobbled, veered, and ~~shed~~ ~~added~~ for home.

The only guns engaged in the front line battle that we have heard are what are reported to be 4 "155's", situated about halfway between us and the front line, which is about 40 kilometers away. They must have moved into their present spot only recently, for their explosive backs have been heard only the last two or three days. We are told that they are throwing their shells only our forces and on to various selected points in enemy territory.

And this is the end of all reviewing. Henceforth there will be interest in this record daily, current observations.

Jan. 10, 1941.

Incidentally, I am 41 years old today.

Gen. McArthur, Commanding General of the USAFFE, packed & his staff rode by the Medical Supply warehouse when I am working this morning. I was told that he and his staff moved in here last night from Corregidor. Upon his arrival into the "battle area", routine inspection though, it may be, people immediately began to conjecture if "the Big Push was on."

That battery of "55's" was pounding again last night. They seemed nearer.

It irritates me vastly to contact such a number of pessimistic trouble-festers about the camp. (Interrupting my dictation)

"wet blankets," I pause to announce that an unidentified plane just passed overhead. The warning signal sounded, a few men scuttled for fox holes. I tried to train some binoculars on the plane but it had passed on before I could focus the glasses. The anti-aircraft is sounding us off now off to the south, so it must be an enemy craft. I believe it to be an observation plane.  
(Now it is coming back overhead.)

To go on with my remarks about floor-spreaders. While a good majority of the patients & personnel of the hospital are optimistic and "abiding in faith" like good Americans in this time of perversity, it is bitterly disappointing to discover the number of men "abiding in fear & trembling" and almost imbibing the word with their ugriid

pessimism. In the last two days, three or four privates, two technical sergeants, an air corps lieutenant (a patriot), and a chaplain have voiced dismal improbabilities into my unwilling ears. I've been told as M.C. captain is preparing a banca for instant flight and spouting off about his courageous facing of realities. He goes around beriding the optimists as being "whistlers in the dark."

A nurse told me that a captain spoke of deserting, running up into the hills, and asked her to go with him.

(The air raid signal has sounded again, and that lone plane is buzzing around. The A-1's have been backing at him all the time.)



All the blatant cowardice and  
 pessimism so upset my pre-  
 conceived ideas of the good  
 old American spirit in battle  
 success that I have been existing  
 about in my own mind for  
 such an explanation as might  
 suffice.

And I have concluded as  
 follows:-

Some men becoming wounded  
 or sick in battle are bound to be-  
 come morbid. That element is  
 concentrated in a hospital. Some  
 men join the medical department,  
 a non-combatant branch, because  
 they are cowards. That element  
 becomes concentrated also in a  
 hospital. Doctors + surgeons  
 are of the intellectual type of  
 humans, and the so-called  
 "intellectuals" of the species  
 are generally the more apt to  
 take a disillusioned view-  
 point of things. Momentarily,  
 disregarding the "good majority"  
 of aggressive spirits, good-  
 hearted Americans on our staff,

there is undeniably that element  
of self-called realists who  
are prone to accept the pes-  
simistic view.

Because of this explana-  
tion that I have fabricated,  
it is possible that of all the  
human forces scattered over  
this beleaguered peninsula,  
right here at this hospital  
may be centered the most  
pessimistic element. I freely  
believe that every where else  
the spirit of Galt Boone &  
Francis Scott Key is still  
lifting the hearts of the Yankees  
and causing the spirits  
of our little brown allies to  
keep shoulder to shoulder with  
the white protectors. Amen!

Another thing. It may  
seem factually romantic and  
dangerously fool hardy, as  
well as selfishly insensid-  
erate, of the crippled boys  
who scanned thru food  
in spite of all that, I miss

the presence of Old Glory. I  
can't help but feel that the place  
for the Stars & Stripes is at  
the peak of the flag pole in-  
stead of a packing case filled  
with muth balls.

Even to hear

"When broad stripes &  
bright stars  
through the perilous fight"

might lift the spirits of the  
despondent.

I know: - a flag flying  
gives an enemy bomber crew  
its target to shoot at. And  
I know a bad ridden victim  
cannot dash for a fox-hole.  
Sail, damnit, I want to  
see the flag. And maybe  
some of these calamity how-  
lers might be ashamed to  
silence if they were stand-  
ing up in the colors  
unfurled in the breeze.  
Almost better some were  
casualties than the mass

of the past infected with  
the insidious "looking for  
the worst."

Personally, in spite of  
all our retrenchment, I never  
beyond believing that the  
spirit of many generations  
of courageous Americans  
can stand the buff +  
lacerated test without  
dishonor. The "bear" was  
bigger than Davy Crockett, but  
Davy killed - his "bear".

There has been many less  
patients brought to the  
hospital the past two days.  
Perhaps, due to the recent  
inactivity of enemy bombers, the  
number of ~~skrapnel~~ cases  
has decreased.

A Jap patient was a  
prisoner here last night.

The operating room crew  
is hunting boxes to be used  
in packing its equipment.  
What goes forward?

Jan. 11, 1942. Sunday.

First to answer the  
query of the last entry in  
yesterday's notes. The operating  
room crew brought back all  
the boxes they took away ~~last~~  
yesterday. The personnel here  
are "subject to whistles." I  
believe that yesterday some officer  
or senior nurse at the operating  
room got a slight case of  
jitters & suggested that  
preliminary packing be under-  
taken "just in case" we  
might have to flee before the  
big brown monsters crawling  
in from the north.

A mild panic pervaded the  
camp when the word got  
around that the operating  
room was planning to  
evacuate.

But the slight case of  
jitters was dissipated. But  
Comparative peace reigned once  
more.

Last evening some of  
the boys were playing + field-  
ing a soft ball. Others (including  
a Captain) were fishing (not much  
luck). Certain of the personnel,  
both masculine + feminine, were  
strolling thru the barrie (in  
mild defiance of an order to the  
contrary).

1st battery of "15's" was  
grawling again last night.  
Air planes passed over the  
camp twice before daylight  
this morning. Top planes  
are flying up and down the  
peninsula this morning. Oc-  
casionaly, when their growl  
became threateningly close,  
we mentally reserved space  
for ourselves in the nearest fox-  
holes, but they left us alone.  
One of the planes was a huge  
four motor job. The A & S  
had a field day, but no top

came tumbling down.

I'd wager that with the increase of Japanese bomber activity we will have an increase in the number of sheep not wounded.

I walked lengths across the hospital compound last evening (going to the south) and from that boundary could look across an open field to the quarter-mile section of the highway. I could also get a good view of the southern and south-eastern slopes of the mountain peak that towers to the west of us. <sup>300 ft. over our</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>see over. It is directly</sup> west of us.

The traffic on the highway was all military and heavy. Trucks, loaded with men, stores, or munitions, "water-wagons", staff cars + messengers on motor cycles.

On the mountain slopes

could be seen stray wisps  
of smoke that indicated small  
camps of mysterious parties,  
probably supply dumps,  
AA's + machine gunners.

A herd of caribou  
browsed peacefully in a field  
nearby + a couple of "Huan  
de la Cruz's" were flabbering  
calmly at something or other  
in a neighboring patch.

I caught a glimpse of  
a mica roof half hidden in  
a bamboo thicket. A flock  
of what looked like wild  
pigeons came out of a  
clearing, flew over the  
patch of jungle, and settled  
again in another open space.

A little later, when  
dusk was gathering and the  
cone of the mountain top  
was shrouded with rose cloud  
wisps touched by the fingers  
of the setting sun in the China  
Sea beyond, the bright stars



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of beams became visible directly above the cave top. An Indian played drum experimental fingers across the strings of a banjo.

Five native women were brought to a nearby ward last night from a native hospital in Baluga, a town or barrier up near to the front lines. They had been wounded in a bomber raid occurring there almost a week ago, and ~~had~~ were brought here for better + more sanitary care.

One of them, a brown girl in her teens, had severe ~~thoracic~~ lacerations of the thigh and scap. After the surgeon here had unwrapped the bandages from the girl's head, ~~but~~ were found to be crawling about in the great wound.