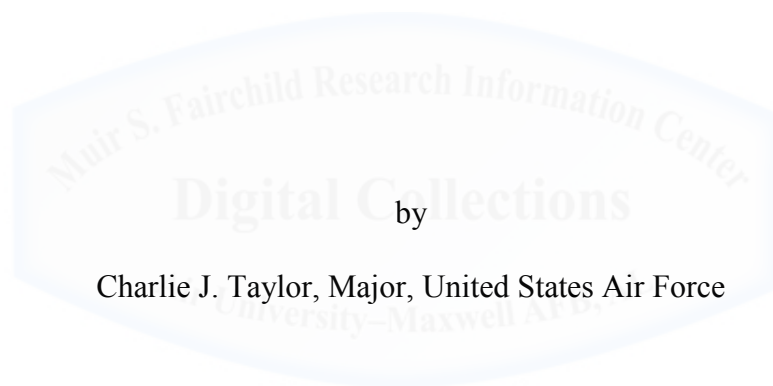


AU/ACSC/TAYLOR, C/AY15

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
AIR UNIVERSITY

PRIVATE ROGERS L. TAYLOR: PRISONER OF THE JAPANESE



by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty
In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF OPERATIONAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

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Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

April 2015

| Report Documentation Page | | | | Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. | | | | | |
| 1. REPORT DATE APR 2015 | | 2. REPORT TYPE | | 3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2015 to 00-00-2015 | |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Private Rogers L. Taylor: Prisoner Of The Japanese | | | | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5b. GRANT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) | | | | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5e. TASK NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Air Command And Staff College,,Air University,,Maxwell Air Force Base,,AL | | | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER | |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) | | | | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) | |
| | | | | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) | |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited | | | | | |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES | | | | | |
| 14. ABSTRACT | | | | | |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS | | | | | |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR) | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES 52 | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| a. REPORT unclassified | b. ABSTRACT unclassified | c. THIS PAGE unclassified | | | |

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Preface

As a child growing up I knew little about the past life of my grandfather other than to understand that he was a prisoner of war in Japan during World War II. I developed a passionate interest in his World War II experiences when, as a gift, my uncle, my uncle's wife, and my father presented my grandfather with a custom-made shadow box showcasing some of his war memorabilia. Included in the three feet by two feet shadow box was an old army wool coat adorned with medals, unit patches, rank, and ribbons on the sleeve; a tattered bible sticking out from one sleeve; a set of dog tags; a Western Union telegram from 1944 (and the associated newspaper article highlighting its message to the local town); an impersonal 'thank-you' letter from President Harry S. Truman; several war-related photos; an American flag patch; a POW/MIA patch; and other miscellaneous paraphernalia. The fires of curiosity were stoked, and I was more and more intrigued with the story speaking out from behind the pane glass of that oak time capsule on the wall. After my grandfather passed away in 2005 I was entrusted with his shadow box, as if given a personal challenge to rediscover who my grandfather was, to tell of what he experienced, and finally, perhaps puzzle it together to suggest how he survived it all. If forty-four percent of his company did not survive World War II, what was unique about Pop that allowed him to return home safely?¹ The puzzle was not easily pieced together since there were so few surviving details; however, his shadow box, coupled with a few shared memories, enabled his story to finally be revealed.

What I discovered was that my grandfather's experiences were anticlimactic in that they were not very different from the volumes of other stories told by fellow POWs. Furthermore, my grandfather's story does not change the generally understood narrative of POW life in the annals of World War II in the Pacific. However, I also discovered that ultimate survival as a prisoner of

war rested on three very significant variables: luck, will to survive, and how/where you grew up prior to World War II. The first two variables are easy to grasp; however, my grandfather's story and his experience suggests that rural boys who grew up during the Great Depression working hard in the fields and witnessing the hard knocks of life at such a young age were perhaps more prepared for the Bataan Death March, imprisonment at various prison camps, hard labor in the fields and in industrial centers, and an overall lack of sustenance.

Introduction

Rogers Louis Taylor [REDACTED]. As the fourth child of thirteen (three of his siblings died as young children and one more as a young adult), Rogers found his required place among his family of sharecroppers. As sharecroppers making their living in the fertile soil of east central Texas, the Taylors were dependent on the harvest and local landowners willing to lease their land, which required the Taylor family to move frequently, often living in shacks.

He was drafted into the Army National Guard on March 20, 1941 as Private Rogers L. Taylor.² Taylor was ordered to report to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for basic training.³ He was assigned to 8th Battalion, Company B, 1st Platoon for initial training at the Armored Force Replacement Training Center.

In the summer of 1941, after finishing basic training at Fort Knox, he was sent by rail to Camp Polk, Louisiana, for advanced training. Soon after arriving at Camp Polk, the Army issued an order that anyone twenty-eight years old or older, married, and with children were able to get out of



their military obligations and return home. The single men such as Taylor filled the ranks of those men that were released from their service obligations. His first tank battalion was the 753rd (Medium), and he was later sent as reinforcement to Company B, 192nd Tank Battalion.

On October 20, 1941, Taylor's tank battalion left Camp Polk by train and headed for Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, California. Then seven days later, the *Hugh L Scott* (formerly known as the *President Pierce*), which another soldier referred to as "an old rusty sea-going crate,"⁴ departed San Francisco Bay. After making a stop in Honolulu and one in Guam, the *H.L. Scott* arrived in Manila Bay, Philippines, on Thanksgiving Day (November 20, 1941). The following day a contingent of the tank battalion returned to Manila to unload the equipment and supplies from the *H. L. Scott* and then bring it back to Fort Stotsenburg via a little narrow-gauge railroad. Captain Alvin Poweleit, the battalion surgeon, recalled, "The equipment was covered with cosmoline for overseas shipment. The cleaning of this equipment occupied the tank battalion up until December 7."⁵

War Against the Japanese

Then it happened. Around noon on 8 December, approximately ten hours after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Taylor was in one of the hangars when the guys outside yelled, “Hey, come look at this!” Fifty-four bombers flew in perfect formation over the airfield when the men saw what they believed were leaflets dropping from the bomb bays. It was not until the bombs fell closer to the ground did the men realize the planes were indeed dropping bombs, not leaflets, and those bombers were not American planes, but Japanese. Poweleit recalled, “Bombs, glistening in the sunlight like tinfoil, fell with determined accuracy on field installations and on grounded airplanes, lined up like soldiers for a drill. The scenes of ruination and horror that followed were terrible and almost unbelievable, even though they took place before our eyes.”⁶ Taylor, like all the men in the tank battalion, ran for the slit trenches nearby and stayed protected while the Japanese Zeros bombed and strafed the airfield. Sporadic bombings and strafings continued over the next several days. Then on December 22, Major Theodore F. Wickord, the battalion’s commanding officer, under orders from Major General Jonathan Wainwright, commander of the North Luzon Force, pulled out from Clark Field moving north towards Lingayen Bay.⁷ Later that day, five tanks from Company B engaged the Japanese Army in the first United States tank battle of World War II.⁸

The first tank battle on December 22 marked the end of the American and Filipino advance, thus initiating the withdrawal strategy of War Plan Orange III (WPO-3). The tank battalion’s mission was to control and protect the withdrawal of troops into Bataan by providing cover for all of the American and Filipino forces. Another private assigned to Company B, Lester Tenney recounted, “First to leave was our infantry, then our artillery, and last to leave before [Company B, 192nd Tank Battalion] was the Corps of Engineers, whose job, [along with

the Philippine Army engineers], was to blow up any bridges after we crossed them. ... The purpose of this strategy was twofold – first, to delay the enemy’s advance as much as possible and, second, to ensure the safe withdrawal of all of our troops.”⁹ The M3 light tanks and the halftracks (armed with 75mm guns) were the only mobile defense available to the retreating defenders. The tanks formed roadblocks as the remaining forces moved south towards Bataan. Corporal William Hauser, Headquarters Company, 192nd Tank Battalion stated, “There wouldn’t have been no Bataan if the retreat hadn’t been covered by the tanks. You can’t say anything derogatory about the Philippine Scouts. Those guys were excellent. But the Filipino Army troops were something else. Once a line had been set up with Filipino troops, you could forget it. Those guys would bug out and the only thing keeping the [Japanese] back would be the tanks.”¹⁰ Unfortunately though, the communication between the Philippine Army and the American defenders was often lacking, in some cases, with dreadful results. As Taylor was withdrawing in a tank column south of Moncada (southwest of Lingayen Gulf), he and fourteen other tank crews had to abandon their tanks when they discovered the engineers destroyed bridges over impassible streams before they could cross it.¹¹

With nowhere to maneuver and an advancing Japanese unit, Taylor abandoned his tank among a barrage of Japanese small arms fire, with no possible time to destroy the tank so the Japanese could not use it against the American and Filipino forces. As he was leaving the driver’s seat of the tank, he grabbed the crew’s Thompson submachine gun to thwart a possible ambush. However, after jumping off the tank he realized that in the crew’s haste to abandon the tank, another crew member grabbed all of the ammunition for the machine gun and was now beyond arm’s reach as the fifteen tank crews hastily swam the stream to an awaiting friendly force. Knowing his Thompson was woefully inadequate without the ammunition, and with the

advancing Japanese Army closing in fast; Taylor submerged the submachine gun in the mud of the stream and stepped on it, further burying it before scrambling up the opposite bank wet and mud-soaked.¹² With this last engagement, the combat nature of this campaign was beginning to wear on the tankers. The battalion surgeon wrote in his diary, “Our tanks dropped back. Apparently, we were the only unit operational in this area. I could see when we serviced our tankers medically, that our men were in poor condition physically. This was due to lack of sleep, insufficient food and constant alertness.”¹³

Defending Bataan Peninsula

The next few days the 192nd Tank Battalion continued to withdraw towards the Bataan Peninsula with the other American and Filipino soldiers. Once on the Bataan Peninsula, the 192nd Tank Battalion, along with the remaining American and Filipino troops continued to fight with extremely limited food rations, without adequate supplies or medicine, and with only half the original 108 M3 light tanks.¹⁴

Upon entering the Bataan Peninsula, Taylor’s tank battalion was assigned shore duty covering from Abucay to Lamao on the eastern coast of the peninsula, an area that bore the brunt of the shelling, bombing, and strafing. On January 17, Companies A and B covered a further withdrawal to south of the Bagac-Orion line, a defensive line running east/west across the peninsula, effectively cutting the peninsula in half between Mount Natib to the north and Mariveles Mountain to the south. During this move the men were subjected to constant shelling and strafing from the Japanese. With the health of this battalion always on his mind, Poweleit wrote in his diary on January 21, “Our men are beginning to show signs of malnutrition.”¹⁵

The end of January 1942 experienced some of the most intense combat of the war in what became known as the Battle of the Points. The battle began on January 22 when Japanese General Homma Masaharu, Commander of the 14th Army (responsible for the Philippines campaign), landed Japanese soldiers south of the Bagac-Orion line at Caibobo Point. The fierce battle continued until mid-February as the last remaining pockets of Japanese forces were defeated. MacArthur's men, through a combined tank and infantry operation, successfully thwarted the invasion and destroyed two of Homma's battalions.¹⁶ A tanker from Company A, 192nd Tank Battalion, Sergeant Forrest Knox recalled, "Most of the time we were hub to hub, maybe ten feet or less between vehicles. The combined fire of all machine guns and cannons was fierce. The brush lay right down and would straighten back up as the fire slackened. We gradually cut down all the trees and brush about the size of a football field."¹⁷ Private Joseph Lajzer, another tanker from Taylor's company remembered the following regarding the Battle of the Points, "I believe the [Japanese] commander in the outfit that was attacking us committed hari-kari because we killed so many of his attacking soldiers. Our stubborn defenses threw a monkey wrench in their plans. The Philippines were supposed to fall within a month so the troops could be used later in the year for the invasion of Australia. Instead, the Japanese Navy had to move additional soldiers from Singapore to the Philippines for three more months of fierce fighting."¹⁸ Poweleit's diary on January 31 details the aftermath of one important battle, "Our tanks did a bang-up job. Viewing the battlefield was pretty ghastly. Bodies were bloated, rotted and covered with flies and maggots. The ground was strewn with our grenades, mortar shells and 75MM duds."¹⁹ And again on February 8, "The remainder of the Japanese pulled out of the pocket. We counted 550 Japanese bodies in varying degrees of putrefaction. ... I walked

over the battlefield. It was horrid, but I realized that grass would soon grow over this place and cover its offenses.”²⁰

Unfortunately, the food and logistical dilemma was getting only worse on the Bataan Peninsula. Limited food rations, coupled with plunging morale had a tremendous effect on the men’s ability to wage war against a more prepared enemy force. On March 9, 1942, Poweleit wrote in his diary,

After several hours of work, I had arranged our medical records, so that I would have first-hand knowledge of the capabilities of our men. I reported to General Weaver [recently promoted from Colonel] that in the 192nd alone about half of our men were unable to do a good day’s work. A similar situation existed in the 194th Tank Battalion. The overall weight loss for the Provincial Tank Group was thirty-five to forty pounds. The rations that our men were given were little better than a fourth of what a person should normally have. The protein count had dropped to about 30 grams per day, per man.²¹

Taylor, who was normally a healthy 148 pounds on a 5’ 8” frame, was close to 110 pounds, not to mention likely suffering from malaria, dengue fever, and dysentery, as were many of his fellow soldiers at the time. Regardless, the men did what they could to supplement their limited food rations, especially when it came to ingesting protein. An excerpt from Gavan Daws’

Prisoners of the Japanese: POWs of World War II in the Pacific states:

Real American beef was disappearing. Filipino beef was *carabao*, water buffalo, the skinny overworked peasant beast of burden. MacArthur had forbidden his troops to shoot at carabao as targets of opportunity. They were supposed to eat only official carabao, quartermaster issue, livers inspected for disease. But close to the front [where Company B was assigned] it was amazing how many fierce wild Filipino carabao attacked Americans and had to be killed in self-defense.

Next came *calesa* pony. Company A of the 192nd had one cowboy. He always swore he would never eat horse. He was eating calesa and trying to convince himself it was real beef, or at worst carabao, when Forrest Knox said, for the fun of it, Shucks, I got proof, I just bit into a saddle gall. The cowboy threw his meal away and washed out his mess kit. But on two meals a day, less than twelve hundred calories, he was the only one who did that.

Next came the mules and horses of the 26th Cavalry. The horses were in the last American cavalry charge in history, at Morong on January 26, but there was no

forage left for them on Bataan, or for the mules. They had eaten all the stacks of rice straw, they were down to the last of the oats, they were starving. But so were the troops.

An officer ranked mule as succulent and tender; calesa pony better-flavored than carabao, if a little tougher; iguana fair. Most men would not balk at wild boar, or even python meat and python eggs. Rat was excellent with mongo beans. The big worry was monkey. Not so much the taste, more that when a man peeked into the pot and saw the little bleached hands and the little scrunched-up face, like a boiled baby's, it tended to take away his appetite.²²

Monkey was the one, and only one, thing that Taylor refused to eat. He recounted in nearly every conversation regarding the war, and there were extremely few conversations, that monkey was the one thing he could not eat because when the monkey was skinned prior to cooking, its body closely resembled that of a human baby. Other soldiers recall their memories regarding the local fare on Bataan. Lajzer recounted, "Horse meat stunk so bad it was revolting. The cooks would boil it and then fry it over an open fire so it could be eaten. ... Believe me, mules make the best burgers you will ever eat. When you are starving and if you don't think about what you're eating, you can learn to eat almost anything."²³

Up to the very end, the 192nd Tank Battalion fought with tenacity and dedication, regardless of physical and mental condition, not to mention a woefully lacking inventory of food, ammunition, medical supplies, and equipment. "Our tanks were bombed on and off the trails; we were severely punished without an opportunity to fight back. Our stamina was gone, our food was gone, our health was deteriorating, and our ammunition and gas had just about ran out. We were helpless."²⁴ Lajzer exasperatingly recalled, "We were beaten down by hunger, lack of medicine, and the [Japanese] naval blockade. We fought and were bombed from December 8, 1941, to April 1942 while defending Bataan. The men who were at Pearl Harbor cry and complain because they were bombed one day, but, hell, on Bataan we got it every day for four months."²⁵

On April 8, 1942, King sent the following message to the commanders of the tank units:

“You will make plans, to be communicated to company commanders only, and be prepared to destroy within one hour after receipt by radio, or other means, of the code word CRASH, all tanks and combat vehicles, arms, ammunition, gas and radios, reserving sufficient trucks to move our forces to the rear echelons as soon as everything is accomplished.”²⁶

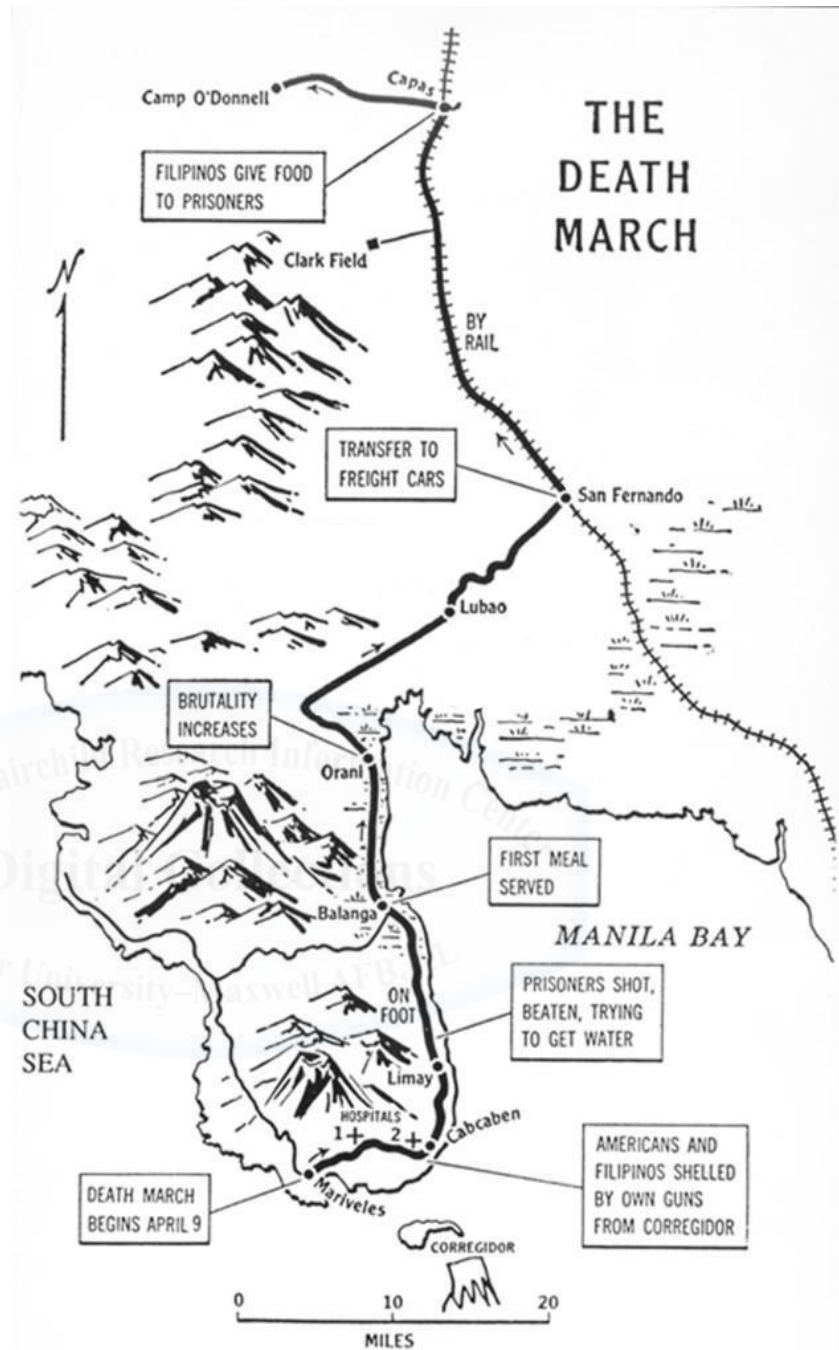
Then, at ten minutes to midnight on April 8, ordnance was instructed to begin destroying all equipment and supplies under their jurisdiction. That night and into the morning I had the radio in our tank tuned to General King’s command post frequency, and at 7:00 in the morning, we heard the words, loud and clear: ‘CRASH, CRASH, CRASH.’ ... We did what we were supposed to do. First we lined up the tanks one behind the other and then fired rounds of 37mm shells from one tank into the engine and body of the tank in front. Then we threw away our guns and ammunition.²⁷

Taylor remarked to his son when discussing the war, “Hell, we threw working guns and all of its ammunition over a nearby cliff in an attempt to keep them out of those sons-of-bitches’ hands.”²⁸

Though King surrendered the Philippine forces on April 9, Company B, 192nd Tank Battalion did not encounter their Japanese captors until the following morning. Before defeat brought the Japanese captors to the American tankers, the men removed all tanker insignia from their uniforms since the tanks had done such tremendous damage to the Japanese Army. Private John Franklin Ross, Company C, 192nd Tank Battalion, recalled that during the time he was a POW in the Philippines, Japanese guards asked, “You tanker?” Though this author found no recorded incidences of Japanese soldiers specifically punishing tankers for their role in the battle for Bataan, according to Ross, anyone found with a tanker insignia or admitting to be a member of a tank battalion disappeared or was killed.²⁹

Bataan Death March

Taylor and the men of Company B, once faced by their captors, marched to the main road and began their horrendous trek on the infamous Bataan Death March at kilometer marker 167, about three kilometers east of Mariveles.³⁰ For these men beginning at marker 167, the Bataan Death March was a constant dance with death for six nights on an arduous ninety kilometer march to San Fernando and then an additional fifty-five kilometers by rail car to Camp O'Donnell.



The unbelievably harsh and, at times, barbaric treatment the American and Filipino soldiers endured at the hands of an unforgiving enemy on the Bataan Death March has been written about in a number of books and remembered through countless interviews over the last seven decades or so. Taylor's experiences do not greatly differ from the vast majority of stories told: he too was provided

extremely limited amounts of water and even fewer chances to consume food on the long trek north. He was also subjected to torture for no apparent reason at the hands of his captives.

Perhaps the most accurate narrative (and fear) regarding the initial American sentiment of the march to the prison camps can be related by the following excerpt from Tenney:

We had thought that the first few hours of captivity would probably be the most dangerous, but the horrors we witnessed continued well after the surrender. For the Japanese, their sweet taste of victory should have overshadowed the bitterness associated with their strenuous fighting on Bataan, but it was obvious to us that the Japanese soldiers were committing acts of revenge. Many of them had witnessed the death of close friends only days before, and they wanted to get even with those who killed their comrades. Emotions ran high during the battle, and now their elated feelings of victory, coupled with their vengeful reactions associated with close physical contact with their enemy, made many of the Japanese soldiers barbarians. The warrior philosophy associated with the traditional Bushido code was reawakened when the victorious Japanese achieved the surrender of the forces of Bataan. All Japanese soldiers were indoctrinated to believe that surrender was the coward's way out, and a soldier who was captured was expected to commit [hari-kari] at the first possible opportunity.³¹

During one of the extremely rare instances when Taylor shared his war experiences on Bataan, he lamented the following with one of his grandsons in the late 1990s:

We were ordered to begin marching, to where, we had no clue. We were eventually rounded up like cattle. We marched on. I had never been so scared in all of my life only because we had heard stories of what the Japanese had done to other captives. I remember marching east from Mariveles, on the southern tip of Bataan, the Japanese were shelling our men still on Corregidor and those same American men were shelling the new Japanese emplacements behind us. The artillery was passing over our heads. I also remember men, two feet in front of me, were being murdered for no damn apparent reason, and those Japanese hated the Filipino soldiers. They were killing more Filipinos than they were us. Guess I just got lucky and made it to the end. As we were walking no one was allowed to speak or else you chanced getting hit with the butt of a rifle, bayoneted, or worse, shot. At first, the Japanese would just shoot POWs but then they started running low on ammunition. That's when they started in with their bayonets. It was pure hell! I remember we were all shuffling our feet. I saw prisoners helping each other as best as they could all along the road. We were given very short rest periods but they were never enough. I owe my life to a man I had never met before. As we were walking, my body was too exhausted to go on and my legs just seemed to collapse underneath me. I fell to the ground and thought to myself that my life was surely over because I just knew a Japanese soldier saw me fall. I mean, I watched other men fall and they were unable to get up. Their fate was

sealed and the Japanese were relentless on us weak and tired prisoners. But I was not down for more than a few seconds before I felt someone's arm wrap around my body and lift me from the ground as quickly as he could. This whole event went unnoticed by the Japanese guards, for a true friend prevailed during that terrible time. He almost seemed to hold me up, although I was standing on my own two feet. After a while, I calmly whispered my deepest gratitude toward the man who saved my life, for there was no one I owed more thanks to than the man standing beside me. You know, I never saw him again nor do I know if he made it home to his family. I like to think he did. (Pause) I just remember being thirsty, so thirsty. It was a thirst I never experienced before, nothing like being in the cotton fields back home. What little water I drank seemed to evaporate in my mouth. We were in bad shape. But as I walked on I couldn't help but think about what had happened in those past couple days leading up to our surrender, thinking of my friends and those I fought next to for the last four months.³²

One of the most horrific acts Taylor witnessed during the march was when an American deuce and a half truck carrying Japanese soldiers and equipment to support the shelling of Corregidor purposely swerved into the marching prisoners. "I just remember the bodies, some writhing from the pain, all dying. What makes someone do something like that? I still don't understand it." Prisoner stories like this were not uncommon. Colonel Glenn D. Frazier recalled in his book, *Hell's Guest*, "A convoy of Japanese trucks was coming. When a body fell into the road, the first truck driver would see it and swerve his truck to run over it. The crunch of breaking bones made me want to throw up. The following trucks would do the same. The body was pounded into the road like a dead dog – just another thing that added to the rage of hate flowing through us."³³ Another prisoner remembered, "As these trucks passed American soldiers, they would hit and club Americans on their head and shoulders. Many fell and died under the wheels of [Japanese] trucks."³⁴ "At one point, I was marching through an area at night and it felt like I was walking on rags. Then I realized they were human beings that had been run over by tanks and crushed. It was impossible to make out what or who they were."³⁵

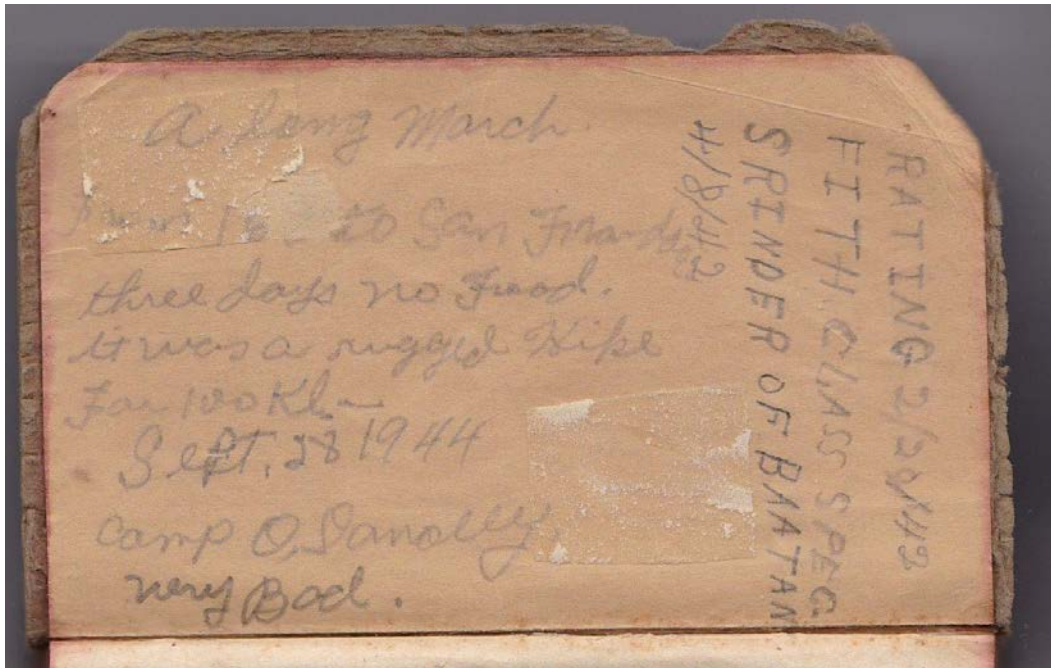
At the end of the ninety kilometer march from Mariveles, the men entered San Fernando, where they slept for the night. The next morning they were marched to the local railway station

to board railcars to finish the death-defying trek. Taylor was one of the fortunate ones, as prisoners were loaded in wooden or steel enclosed boxcars, Taylor was loaded on an open boxcar, meaning he and his fellow POWs were permitted to breathe fresh air to finish the remaining fifty-five kilometers to Camp O'Donnell. Regardless of the type of boxcar, all prisoners were crammed into the available space, often at the point of a bayonet. He recalled when they finally arrived at Capas and the prisoners were off-loaded, several men were dead, they died standing in place, unable to fall due to the crammed nature of the boxcar. Other men had similar stories.

At the siding were small, metal box cars. We were pushed by bayonets into these cars. About 100 prisoners in each car...could only stand up...and no room to sit down. The door was locked by the guards. Again the temperature reached 95 degrees. The metal sides of these box cars became so hot, we could not touch them. The ride lasted until dark when we unloaded. During the ride many prisoners became uncontrollable from the heat with no water or toilet facilities. Everyone had dysentery, and everyone went on the floor and over prisoners lying on the floor. These prisoners had passed out or were dead. I believe 10 or 15 men died in each box car during the eight hour trip.³⁶

Taylor's personal New Testament Bible that he carried with him throughout the war had the following penciled on the back of the second page:

A long March.
From 16? to San Fernando
three days no Food.
it was a rugged Hike
For 100 KI --³⁷



Camp O'Donnell

At Capas the prisoners were taken off of the boxcars and forced to march about thirteen more kilometers to their first concentration camp, Camp O'Donnell. Taylor arrived at the camp on or about 16 April. Camp O'Donnell was a Filipino Army training base finished just before the war started and was approximately nineteen kilometers north-northwest of Clark Field.

Lajzer remembered: "Camp O'Donnell was a stinking hellhole of a place with primitive sanitary conditions, insufficient water supplies, poor drainage, malaria-carrying [mosquitoes] and other insects."³⁸ Upon entering the camp, all of the prisoners were subjected to a thorough shakedown for any items the Japanese thought useful, among items that were looted were pens, watches, pocket knives, etc. If an American was found in possession of a Japanese item – perhaps a battle souvenir or war token – that prisoner was quickly executed because to possess such an item, the Japanese believed; the American stole it off a dead Japanese soldier. "The quick scuffed a hole in the dirt, or just stood on whatever they needed to hide, hoping the Japanese would not slug them for nothing and knock them off of it. One man with some Japanese paper yen managed to

chew the bills and swallow them without gagging.”³⁹ Not all prisoners who were in possession of Japanese items had plundered them, yet regardless of circumstances, death was still his reward for merely having it. “A captain had a Japanese fan, given to him by a guard to fan a sick man, one of those rare small Japanese acts of kindness on the march; at O’Donnell it got the captain killed.”⁴⁰ After the shakedown, every group of prisoners got a speech from the camp commander. Another American prisoner recalled the Japanese commander in this manner, “I did not pay much attention to what he said except to hear him say that if you did this, you would be shot; if you did that, you would be shot. I wondered what I could do without being shot.”⁴¹

One aspect about Camp O’Donnell that stuck with Taylor all of his life was waiting in long lines for drinking water. During the Filipino-American retreat in December, the soldiers attempted to destroy the water system so the base could not be used by the Japanese.⁴² Unfortunately, they failed to completely destroy the system and now had to deal with the devastating consequences of a limited water source. Taylor exhaustingly waited in a “line stretched and curled around for hundreds of yards”⁴³ for hours at the one water faucet as the prisoners in front of him filled canteens at an agonizing pace as water slowly dripped from a single faucet. “What water there was came into camp through half-inch pipes. The line at the spigot was endless. Twenty-four hours a day the noise of clanking canteens filled the air like mournful cattle bells at a dried-up carabao wallow.”⁴⁴ In fact, Taylor told of fellow prisoners dying while waiting for their turn to fill their canteens.

Another prisoner in Camp O’Donnell recalled the utter aftermath of a camp plagued with such a horrendous epidemic: “...the stench was something else that was always with us. It was everywhere – inside, outside, on you and everyone else. There was no way to get away from it. It came with the dysentery and by now dysentery was also causing the deaths of many, many

prisoners. They were dying by the hundreds. We heard that as many as 400 [American and Filipino] were dying each day, and I remember I looked around and tried to determine how many of us were still alive.”⁴⁵ Another O’Donnell prisoner recounted, “As everyone had malaria and dysentery, everyone just lay on the ground. We also found out that a toilet problem existed. This meant large holes had to be dug and used for toilet facilities. The next couple of days men were found lying dead in the holes. They were too weak from dysentery and fell into these holes. Therefore American soldiers had to stand guard and try to help the weaker ones from falling into this waste water. Because of unsanitary condition, about 40 to 60 Americans died each day and had to be buried outside of camp.”⁴⁶

Work details were formed for various types of activities; among them were gathering wood and water for cooking but the worst was the burial detail, which Taylor begrudgingly performed. This is not a detail he spoke of except only in passing and then it was about picking up bodies in the waste water of the latrine. Hearing the stories of other survivors who performed the grizzly task one can understand how some prisoners locked the memories from their minds. When remembering his time at Camp O’Donnell, Frazier stated, “The whole area was covered with the sickly sweet smell of death. Dead human bodies have a very different odor from that of other dead creatures. Once you have been exposed to it, you will never forget it.”⁴⁷ The bodies were buried naked in mass graves about a half mile from camp with as many as fifteen to twenty bodies in each grave.⁴⁸ All corpses were picked of its clothes since they were more valuable to those still living. Ross was also part of the O’Donnell burial detail. He later recalled,

...the bodies were put into a metal shed until they could be buried. The bodies stacked up faster than they could bury them. The POWs on the detail worked in teams. They would carry the body in a sling on a pole. The pole rested on their shoulders. When selecting a body, John would climb the pile and select the smallest and least ripe body that he could find. Some of the dead had had wet beriberi and were swollen and very heavy, so he did not choose those. If the body

had been dead for awhile, the skin would come off in the hands of the two men while they picked it up. To get the skin off their hands, the POWs would rub their hands together and roll the skin into balls. They would then put the body into the sling and attempt to standup at the same time.⁴⁹

Another prisoner recounted, “When we reached the graves, we just dumped them in the open holes. You could hear the bones crack as bodies were dumped on bodies. This seemed like a terrible way to treat our dead buddies, but since they had all died of dysentery, it was wise to handle the bodies as little as possible. When the hole was full, it was then covered with dirt, but no prayer or religious service was given.”⁵⁰ An American officer remembered, “At first we would stand at attention and salute. Soon it became so commonplace that no one seemed to notice. This bothered me for a while, but soon I became indifferent, too. In retrospect, I know it had to be that way.”⁵¹

However, the worst part of the burial detail was not just burying your fellow comrades but having to perform the daunting task in areas saturated with water. Gavan Daws described the situation, “Mass graves were dug in rice-paddy land, and once the rainy season came the soil was soaked. The bodies would come floating up, and they would have to be held down with a rake or piled with rocks while the shovelers covered them again. A man could go mad working down in the hole, straightening bodies with more bodies forever falling on top of him.”⁵²

In the almost sixty years Rogers Taylor lived after being liberated as a prisoner of the Japanese, the memories tattooed in a young man’s mind undoubtedly played havoc on the inside; however, there was a physical wound that he carried to his death – and that wound was delivered by the hands of one particular Japanese captor while Taylor was interned in Camp O’Donnell. It was at this first camp, only two and a half months into a three and half year imprisonment that Taylor was severely beaten on a number of occasions with the butt of a Japanese rifle. The exact circumstances surrounding the “punishment” are unknown. As thousands of POWs attested,

they were beaten, and some murdered, for fairly insignificant transgressions, if any were even committed at all. Taylor was likely beaten for something menial yet lived with the scars of brutality for decades. This back injury handicapped him throughout the remainder of his internment, yet he had to bury the pain in the deepest pockets of his soul if he was to make it home. And bury it he did, with not even a sheer mention of it when he was back in his first hospital in America.

Inside Taylor's bible were scribed these words:

Sept. 28 1944
Camp O'Donolly
Very Bad.

Cabanatuan

Two and half months after the first American and Filipino POWs walked into the gates of Camp O'Donnell in mid-April, conditions in the camp were getting worse as more and more prisoners succumbed to disease, malnourishment, and unfair treatment. In early June the Japanese command decided to send those Americans well enough to move to a trio of camps near Cabanatuan. Most of the prisoners from Camp O'Donnell were sent to Cabanatuan Camp #1, including Taylor.⁵³ The first prisoners to move from O'Donnell were shipped by rail on June 2.⁵⁴

The island fortress on Corregidor fell on May 6, 1942, and rather than send those American prisoners to the overcrowded and diseased Camp O'Donnell, the Japanese decided to intern them at Cabanatuan as well. Those that were captured on Corregidor were among the first to be the new tenants of Cabanatuan and were relatively healthy upon their arrival since food was better and more plentiful on Corregidor, malaria was absent on the island, and this group of prisoners did not experience the horrors of the death march. These "healthy" prisoners were at

Cabanatuan to witness the first wave of American POWs arriving from Camp O'Donnell.⁵⁵ One American captured on Corregidor, Corporal William Garleb, recalled,

The shock of seeing the guys from O'Donnell coming in was like something sticking in my throat. I couldn't believe the horror I was seeing. There was Sergeant Nance. He had been a big guy, lifted weights. He was so skinny now that he looked like a skeleton. Everyone looked the same. That thin, everyone lost their facial characteristics. It was like watching a horror movie. These guys from O'Donnell were like walking zombies. Skeletons walking towards you with skin hanging on the bones. You could hide your hand behind a guy's shoulder blades, they were sticking out that far. It was almost impossible to believe. Heads looked like skulls. Then there was the color – yellow, white, grey. Their eyes were just yellow. It was enough to make you want to lie down and die. Everything was so different from what I was brought up with. There was just too much reality at one time.⁵⁶

A diet so dependent on rice had health implications, namely this high-carbohydrate fare was deficient of vitamin B₁. When the Japanese captors turned the American prisoners into rice eaters without supplementing the needed B₁ vitamins through other foods, the Americans developed beriberi. There were two kinds of beriberi, wet and dry. The dry beriberi was extremely painful, while wet beriberi caused the body to swell up with fluids of edema.⁵⁷ While at Cabanatuan, Taylor experienced a number of debilitating diseases and sickness – beriberi (though it is unknown if it was wet or dry), malaria, dengue, and malnutrition.

Regardless of disease or sickness, the work details did not care how well Taylor was feeling and called for his services every day. Like life at Camp O'Donnell, he was again on the ghastly burial details, which were a daily ritual. He estimated that approximately 30-40 Americans were dying every day with malaria, dysentery, and starvation the main causes. Taylor, along with the others of the burial detail reported to the hospital area and carried the dead on *behai* (living huts) shades to the makeshift cemetery outside of camp. However, it was not the burial detail that Taylor recalled while specifically at Cabanatuan, it was the farm detail.

Rogers Taylor was a sharecropper with his family in eastern Texas during most of his adolescent life, growing and picking cotton. It was strenuous work but working on a farm detail in the Philippine Islands was far different and more difficult. Late in his life he talked about picking rice in the hot and humid rice patties south of the camp. He was required to work barefoot and had to work in the erect position, only allowed to bend at the waist; they could not kneel or bend at the knees. If they did not work as told, they faced the consequences from the watchful eyes of the Japanese guards.

What made this work so memorable wasn't that I was fond of it, exactly the opposite; it was the torture I put myself through. My back had been severely beaten by this one particular Japanese captor at the O'Donnell who had it out for me for some damn reason. I cringed every time one of those Japanese rifle butts caught my stare. It hurt so badly. But being in the rice fields got me away from burying the dead bodies; what an awful duty that was, and staying in the prison camp was not an option. I had to keep busy or I would have ended up in that pile of dead bodies. They would only let us bend over at the hip, putting all the strain on my lower back. But handful by handful I would continue grabbing the rice straws working my way down the line, sometimes with tears streaming down my cheeks from the pain. And it was quiet work, they wouldn't let us talk.⁵⁸

One day, Taylor smuggled some rice into camp in a dirty sock to increase the meager amount of food the POWs were eating. He recalls there was a pipe in the prison camp in which hot water flowed through. He struggled to "cook" the rice as best as he could, if for no other reason than to soften the hard grains in order to make it more edible. It was not long though until he was caught cooking the rice and he paid dearly for it. He remembers other prisoners were killed for lesser transgressions and he was just lucky to only be beaten.

Voyage on the Tottori Maru

Nearly four months after being assigned to Cabanatuan, Taylor, along with approximately 1,600 to 2,000 fellow prisoners, marched out of the prison camp back to the

Manila railway train station and boarded freight cars to Manila. There were rumors the men were headed to Japan with promises of better living conditions, more abundant food, and cooler climates. In reality, the men were being sent to Japan only to provide slave labor, augmenting a warring industrial complex attempting to maintain combat strength against a growing American threat in the Pacific. On October 6, the debilitated, pale, malnourished and filthy men marched from the train station in the dark single-file to the port district of Manila and slept for the rest of the night in a large, empty storage warehouse. The next morning, they were then marched onto Pier Seven. As the men made their way towards a ship, they were provided rice and at least one prisoner reports that the Philippine Red Cross was there handing out several small loaves of bread to each prisoner as they boarded the ship.⁵⁹ They slowly made their way up the gang plank onto an old, rundown Japanese troop-ferrying ship named the *Tottori Maru*⁶⁰. The men were then directed to the

two holds at the rear of the ship. Here they climbed down a vertical ladder until the holds were filled beyond capacity.



Some prisoners were extremely fortunate and were allowed to remain on the deck of the ship. Taylor had no such luck; he was one of the hundreds of men stuck in the hole. Joseph Petak recounts in his book, *Never Plan Tomorrow*,

The holds were jammed. There was only room enough for the men to lay next to each other. When one man moved or turned over, he had to push apart the men

on either side of him. There was no light except that which came in from the open hatch above. Johnny and I managed to find space in the center, directly below the open hatch on the bottom deck. There was a little more light and air at our spot. The areas near the ship's steel sides were hot, humid and stuffy. The air was stale since there was no forced ventilation. In no time at all the hold was filled with the stink of sweating men. Soon everyone was coughing and complaining about the stink.⁶¹

The latrines resembled primitive outhouses that hung over the sides of the ship and with many men suffering from diarrhea, long lines formed needing to use the toilets. With no time to wait, many men defecated on the deck of the ship, but for those unfortunate souls in the holds at the rear of the ship, they were forced to use buckets in the darkness.⁶² A survivor of the 803rd Aviation Engineer Battalion said of the conditions,

The Japanese officers provided no sanitary measures. Rats were running all over the hold area where we were imprisoned in and the place was also infested with lice.

There were no toilet facilities during our anchor periods. Toilets consisted of five gallon cans and were only emptied while the ship was again underway. There was no drinking, bathing or washing water. Only after we were at sea could we go on deck where the three latrines were set up, which was far from adequate for 1500 men. We were not allowed to exercise in the open air, just to go to the latrine and back to the hold.⁶³

The *Tottori Maru* sailed from Manila Bay on October 8 and turned northward towards Japan. The next morning Taylor moved to the top deck to escape the heat and stench of the two aft holds that had become his new dungeon. At about 9:00 a.m., the ship's whistle blasted long and loud. He made his way to rail and noticed in the distance two objects just below the wave tops making wakes as they proceeded towards the *Tottori Maru*. An American submarine, the *USS Grenadier*, fired on the Japanese vessel not knowing she was carrying approximately 2,000 Allied POWs. The quick thinking Japanese captain quickly turned the ship to maneuver out of the way of the inbound torpedoes, with both narrowly missing the stern of the ship.⁶⁴ One prisoner reported that a third torpedo in fact hit the ship but did not cause any major damage.⁶⁵

In the midst of confusion and panic, the prisoners were frantic and their Japanese captors raised their weapons, threatening to shoot them all if they did not calm down. Needless to say, the POWs received the message and no shots were fired.

On October 12, the *Tottori Maru* docked in Takao, Formosa, to offload most of the Japanese troops and to take on coal and water. The ship then proceeded back on its northern route but returned to Formosa two more times due to warnings of American submarines in the area and then again because of storms and rough seas. Upon the third docking, a crew of Korean laborers boarded the decrepit vessel to scrub and fumigate.⁶⁶ While the men were on the open dock in the chilly air, they were also subjected to a thorough cleaning through the use of a fire hose. American prisoner James Bollich said of the situation,

They made us strip completely and then blasted us with water from fire hoses. The force of the water hurt and stung but it felt good.

We had no soap but that was all right. This was the first water I had on my body since we left our bivouac on Bataan. We were also stomping on our wet clothes hoping to work out some of the dirt and crud there as well as that on our bodies. ...

When the hoses were finally turned off, we put back on our still dripping-wet clothes. Apparently, it was taking a long time to clean out the ship because we stayed on the dock for some time.

By then we were getting extremely cold and uncomfortable and were anxious to return to the ship. ...

When we finally did get back to the ship we found our so-called quarters still dripping wet and now very cold. Even after we were all back, it still did not feel warm. By now, because of the number of prisoners that had died, there was a little more space for everyone.⁶⁷

On October 30, *Tottori Maru* finally pulled out from Formosa and docked at Pusan, Korea, where a majority of the prisoners, approximately 1,300, disembarked for the prison camp at Mukden, Manchuria. Taylor, along with about 580 other Americans were put back on board the *Tottori Maru*. After a short stop at Moji, Japan, Taylor and his fellow prisoners reached

Osaka, Japan, on November 11, a sea voyage of thirty-four days. The prisoners were then sent by rail to Kawasaki and Omori to work in the chemical plants and steelworks.⁶⁸ Taylor was sent to Kawasaki Camp 2-B.⁶⁹

During the voyage on the *Tottori Maru*, Taylor was busy again with a work detail he was extremely familiar with, burial of dead POWs. It was reported that the *Tottori Maru*, during its thirty-four day voyage lost about thirty prisoners.⁷⁰ The dead were pulled up the vertical ladder from the lower holds. Once topside, they were wrapped in canvas and scrap metal was tied around their feet. Once prepared, the bodies were lowered into the ocean.

Taylor lived in and experienced this hell for thirty-four days. Since the worst situations happened in the holds, perhaps he was witness to them, maybe even being the one on the burial detail to drag the corpses to ship's rail and being the last person to touch them before the dead were entombed in their watery graves. The conditions were so bad that the ships were dubbed "hellships" by the POWs. Indeed, in Gregory Michno's well-researched and widely acclaimed book, *Death on the Hellships: Prisoners at Sea in the Pacific War*, he opines,

Can a story of the hellships be written? No, according to Preston Hubbard, former prisoner.... Hubbard believes the unrelenting horror of the hellships does not lend itself to a book. Novels or movies need points of contrast, moments of relief, different viewpoints. The hellships, says Hubbard, have no contrasts. Their damned, dark world lies buried beyond the reach of imagination or memory. It was a world unrelieved by humor, light, setting, or routine. Such a story, he claims, would collapse into itself like a black hole, shedding no light and yielding no understanding. Indeed, the hellships may represent a kind of depravity, a supreme form of evil beyond the scope of history (*Hubbard, Apocalypse Undone, 164*).⁷¹

Kawasaki 2-B

Once on the docks in Osaka, the men were divided into groups of seventy men. When they boarded the train after four hours waiting in the freezing air, they were provided a box lunch

consisting of, “rice, pickled dikons, and one small fish. All the blinds on the train were ordered drawn down and the train began its journey to our final destination. The passenger cars had no heat, and being without proper clothing, the trip proved to be uncomfortable because of the cold.”⁷² Once the men arrived at the train station they were lined up in columns and walked nearly five kilometers to their new prison camp, Kawasaki 2-B. Edward Jackfert recalls in his memoirs collected in *Service to My Country*, “As we walked down the street, crowds of Japanese men, women, and children gathered on the sidewalks. They yelled *horyo* (prisoner of war), jeered and gestured at us, and at times threw small stones toward our column as we marched by.

Everyone held up their heads and marched by ignoring their actions.”⁷³

Once the prisoners arrived at the new camp, they were met by the camp commander who boldly stated, “You are not prisoners of war, but guests of the Emperor. Do not try to escape, or you will be shot. You will be treated well and if you cooperate you will be able to go home soon.”⁷⁴ It was shortly after this boastful speech by the commander that the American prisoners were assigned a POW number.⁷⁵ Taylor remembered his POW number until he died and when asked boldly stated it, almost as quickly as he remembered his name. Prisoner 498! He proclaimed it as if it was a badge of honor. The prisoners were provided a small piece of cloth with their number written on it. This small piece of cloth was to be attached to their clothing at all times for identification purposes. If the physical and mental torture were not enough, being assigned a number further dehumanized the American and Allied prisoners. The numbering system farther removed the men from their individual and natural identities, rather grouping them all together as herds of cattle with perceived insignificant lives.

Kawasaki 2-B was located in the heart of a heavy industrial area, approximately five kilometers from Tokyo. There were plenty of local industries the prisoners were utilized in, to

include: the Mitsui dock and warehouses, a refinery, the Showa Denko chemical conglomeration, an electrical power manufacturing facility, a brick manufacturer, railroad yards, and the Nippon Steel Mill. One prisoner that arrived at Kawasaki with Taylor recalled that they all began working at the steel mill first, starting work on November 18, 1942. The prisoners' duties included assisting with the manufacturing of steel, mostly with moving dirt and trash though some were later entrusted with air hammers to remove impurities from the steel ingots.⁷⁶ Jackfert remembered "The steel mill was very crude and old. Our work started at 7:00 a.m. and lasted until 5:00 p.m. There was a short stop for lunch and perhaps a very short rest period during the afternoon. We would then march the three miles back to our quarters, clean up the best we could, have the evening meal of rice, watery soup, and [green] tea, gather in the halls for a conversation session, and then head for our wooden slat sleeping quarters. Roll call was held at 8:00 p.m. and then lights out at 9:00 p.m."⁷⁷ Though Taylor likely worked in a number of the local industries, as did most prisoners, the only one he spoke about frequently was working in the steel mills, though details were void in his conversations.

Then in December the weather turned noticeably colder and the barracks were freezing since they did not have a heat source to make the living quarters more adequate. The prisoners wore as much of their wool clothing as possible, plus one or two blankets over their shoulders just to make the cold air and cutting wind more tolerable. Jackfert's memoirs recount, "It was miserable, and we complained to the Japanese that we needed some heat. Their remark was that it is not officially winter until the first of January and then the Emperor decreed it so. Then they light up the stoves. However, this day they did set up three coal stoves upstairs and three downstairs. Although we could not light up the stoves, the psychological effect was there, we

then huddled around the stoves and held our hands out over them to absorb a heat that was purely imaginary.”⁷⁸

Two significant events in December 1942 raised the spirits of the imprisoned Americans and the other Allied troops. In mid-December the prisoners were allowed to pick from one of six prepared messages to send home. If Taylor sent a post card home at this time it is unknown but it is presumed he did as he spoke of previously sending one letter and two cards in a message penned and sent home to his parents in 1943. The second event occurred on Christmas Day.

Jackfert said of the day,

[It] was rather cold and cloudy. As we gathered in the hallway to converse, we talked about Christmas of 1941.... Now a year later, we were prisoners of war of the Japanese military. Our morale was soon given a great lift. Sergeant John Britton, who was liaison officer between the Japanese camp officials and all the camp POWs, announced the immediate distribution of a British Red Cross parcel to each of us. This was probably one of the greatest Christmas gifts that we ever received. Hunger was one of the greatest problems we had while a prisoner of war. Now, at least for one day, we were receiving an additional supplement to our diet. The box contained one box of service biscuits, one can of stewed beefsteak, one can of tomatoes, one can of plum jam, one can of sweetened condensed milk, one can of apple pudding, one can of gelatin, one can of margarine, one can of bacon, two small can of processed cheese, a 1/4 lb. bar of chocolate candy, one small box of granulated sugar, one package of lime drops, a packet of tea, and a bar of soap. In addition, the Japanese camp officials gave each of us an apple, a tangerine, and a package of Japanese Army issue cigarettes. We were utterly delighted with the supplements to our diet and at least for a few days, hunger would not be our greatest problem.⁷⁹

After January 1, 1943, the prisoners noticed the living conditions began to deteriorate as the amount and quality of food worsened. They were provided three meals a day with each meal consisting of rice, watery soup with limited vegetables, and green tea. The food was not enough to sustain the prisoners in the colder climates and working seven days a week in manually-intensive work. The prisoners began to lose weight and also started to suffer again from malnourishment. In early March the Japanese camp officials had the stoves removed even

though it was still considerably cold as the “end” of winter had been declared by the Emperor. The prisoners again returned to bundling up as much as possible to survive.

The next few months passed on much the same, except the weather was warmer and more comfortable. Then in June the food quality began to deteriorate again. Due to effects of the war on Japan, food was scarce not only for the prisoners but also for the Japanese residents. The prisoners of Kawasaki 2-B noticed red millet was being substituted for rice since the rice was being reserved for the Japanese populace beyond the prison camp fences. The prisoners’ spirits were raised again when they were permitted to send home another post card, except this time the prisoners were allowed to scribe ten words of their own back to their families. It is presumed Taylor sent one home as this was likely the second of the two cards he referred to in a POW letter his family received a few months later.

Omori

Between June 1, 1943, and August 31, 1943, Taylor was moved from Kawasaki 2-B to Tokyo Headquarters Area, POW Camp at Omori, Tokyo.⁸⁰ The reason behind the move is unknown though he likely moved alone or in a small group by way of the railway system. Three possible scenarios for this move include: 1) he or a small group of prisoners with certain technical skills were required in the construction of Omori, 2) while at Kawasaki 2-B he was assigned on a work detail to one of the local Kawasaki industrial areas and when the work was finished, he was moved to Omori to provide further assistance, or 3) he was injured or became sick enough to be moved to Shinagawa hospital camp for treatment. (The Shinagawa hospital was located in close proximity to Omori and was likely the camp a recovered prisoner returned to after treatment was finished.) There were examples of such moves of sick patients to

Shinagawa, specifically from Kawasaki 2-B.⁸¹ Evidence of the move from Kawasaki to Omori is manifested in a surviving POW letter Taylor sent home, dated August 30, 1943. The letter was sent from “Tokio No. H.Q. Camp,” which was another reference for Omori.

DEAR MOTHER DAD AND ALL

BEST WiSHES to EVERYONE AT HOME. I WISH I KNEW HOW YOU ALL ARE DOiNG. THiS is MY SECOND LETTER ALONG WITH 2 CARDS AND A RADiO MESSAG. NO WORD FROM YOU YET, ALTHOUGH SOME MEN GOT RADiOGRAMS FROM HOME. WE EXPECT U.S. MAiL VERY SOON. HERE is A PiCTURE OF MYSELF. TAKEN AT THE OLD CAMP. WE MOVED TO A NEW CAMP. MUCH NiCER THAN THE OLD ONE. WE SPEND LOTS OF TiME TALKiNG AND THiNKiNG ABOUT LiFE iN PEACETiME. W HAVE LOTS OF PLANS AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE. KEEP UP YOUR COURAGE, THiS WAR CAN'T LAST FOREVER. TELL THE REST I'M O.K. ESPECiALLY THE FAMiLY.

LOVE TO ALL

Rogers⁸²



TOKIO No. H.R. CAMP

DATE AUG. 30 1943

DEAR MOTHER DAD AND ALL

BEST WISHES TO EVERYONE AT

HOME. I WISH I KNEW HOW YOU ALL ARE

DOING. THIS IS MY SECOND LETTER

ALONG WITH 2 CARDS AND A RADIO

MESSAGE. NO WORD FROM YOU YET,

ALTHOUGH SOME MEN GOT RADIOGRAMS

FROM HOME. WE EXPECT U.S. MAIL

VERY SOON. HERE IS A PICTURE

OF MYSELF. TAKEN AT THE OLD CAMP

東京
俘虜
收容
所

TOKIO No. H.Q. CAMP
DATE AUG. 30, 1943

WE MOVED TO A NEW CAMP. MUCH
NICER THAN THE OLD ONE
WE SPEND LOTS OF TIME TALKING
AND THINKING ABOUT LIFE IN
PEACE TIME. WE HAVE LOTS OF
PLANS AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE
KEEP UP YOUR COURAGE, THIS WAR
CAN'T LAST FOREVER. TELL THE REST
I'M O.K. ESPECIALLY THE FAMILY
LOVE TO ALL Rogers

東京
俘虜
收容
所

Before the war started with America, Japan started a long-range program of dredging the channels along the western bay of Tokyo Bay but the initial hostilities prevented the program from continuing. Regardless, Japan created islands of that material from the dredgings. One

such island was located just offshore from the town of Omori, which was several kilometers south of Shinagawa. It was this man-made island that became the prisoner of war camp at Omori. During the Fall of 1942 and Spring of 1943, other Allied prisoners from Shinagawa were utilized in shoring, enlarging, and stabilizing the island. Japanese carpenters built the long bridge linking the developing island with the mainland and also constructed various buildings and the wall surrounding the building. The prisoner of war camp at Omori was opened on June 20, 1943, receiving most of its prisoners of war from Shinagawa.⁸³ Taylor was one of Omori's early residents and spoke to his eldest son that one of his early work details involved construction activities enlarging the camp for additional POWs.

Taylor alluded in his August 30, 1943, letter home that conditions in the camp were nicer than the previous camps. It is quite possible morale was also improved since the camp was specifically built to accommodate POWs, not like the other prisoner of war camps that were occupied after serving some other war-time purpose and not meant to house thousands of Allied prisoners. The fact that the camp was an island some distance from shore also meant it was protected from the resulting fires that engulfed Tokyo during the intense American strategic fire bombing campaign that began in 1944. The fact that Omori was also the Headquarters Camp made it the "show camp" for all senior Japanese military and government officials. Therefore, the Japanese captors ensured the Allied POWs were better cared for, if only immediately prior to a distinguished visitor arriving at the camp.

In addition to enlarging the camp, Taylor and other enlisted men worked as clerks, cooks, cobblers, tailors, medical assistants, storemen, and in some other minor capacities; however, most of the enlisted men worked outside the camp in warehouses, docks, and railroad yards in the Tokyo area. The Japanese government had contracted with local private companies to

provide slave labor to help combat the Japanese labor shortage due to the ongoing war effort.

Lieutenant Lewis Bush from the British Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, also a prisoner at Omori, commented, “The men of this camp were employed on the railways and wharves and on reclamation work connected with expansion of Tokyo Port. Camp work was carried out chiefly by the sick.”⁸⁴ The work details were undoubtedly hard and included long hours with often no days off. However, the strenuous work also provided the prisoners with a prime opportunity to steal food during their details. The rail yards at Shiodomi and Sumidigawa and the Mitsubishi warehouse (where Taylor performed duties) were particularly rewarding as the men were responsible for handling sacks and other containers full of edible contents.⁸⁵ In fact, an imprisoned B-24 co-pilot, Robert Martindale, writes in his book, *The 13th Mission: The Saga of a POW at Camp Omori, Tokyo*, “The greatest morale booster was the availability of food that could be stolen from the various work sites.”⁸⁶ Gavan Daws provided additional insight into the ingeniousness and adaptability of the prisoners when it came to acquiring additional food,

The best waterfront work was yahooing bulk food, because of the opportunity to scrounge. Scrounging from the Japanese was called *liberating*. Anything and everything in cans was liberated, especially white man’s food – beef stew, pork and beans, tomato soup, sweet corn. And sugar – stick a sharp-pointed bamboo tube into a burlap sack without being spotted, run it out, gulp down huge amounts, lick the last grains from around the mouth, and smuggle some more back into camp.

The best smuggling clothes were coveralls with pockets and long legs that could be tied at the cuff. The Americans in the Philippines called them *lootin’ suits*. Next best were British tropical-issue shorts, known as Bombay bloomers, baggy around the bottom and with wide legs buttoning at the knee. Next best, hand-sewn cloth sacks to hang concealed under the armpits of a shirt or down the inside of leg trousers. Next, hats, the empty space under the crown, or a double-deck inside. Last and not least, but still handy, oversize boots and hollowed-out heels.

For men with no pants – and as time went on that came to be as many as one in four, in some camps one in three – there was the Japanese-issue G-string, the *fundoshi*, known to the Australians as the *jap-happy*. Everybody used the fundoshi crotch method for smuggling canned goods. There was an American

known for his ability to carry duck eggs safely, and an Englishman who brought in a radio transformer.⁸⁷

It is important to note that as the war waged on, especially in 1944, the Allied POWs were eating better than the Japanese population as the pressure of the war caused the Japanese food rations to drastically decrease. The POWs took advantage of the situation, especially since they had surplus with all of the “liberating” they were doing in the docks and in the warehouses. The POWs knew the Japanese were in need of more food and, thus, they were susceptible to bribery. Therefore, the prisoners often got by with minor infractions that otherwise would have resulted in physical and painful punishment. Among prisoners of war hungry for international news and war status updates, the POWs found the Japanese captors were inclined to divulge news in return for food. At Omori, the Japanese provided verbal reports in exchange for a half cup of sugar or some cigarettes.⁸⁸ Even then, in some cases, especially at Omori, the POWs took pity on their Japanese residents and showed great compassion by providing them food in their time of need. In fact, the official investigative report on the POW Camp at Omori, dated June 10, 1946, states, “It is only fair to state... that from the spring of 1944 onwards, POW’s were undoubtedly receiving more than Japanese civilians and the men would often out of pity for the latter share their rations with them when they came into contact at the various work places.”⁸⁹

In addition to the stolen food, which was much better quality than they were being fed in the prison camp, the opportunity to periodically write letters and send radio messages home was another significant morale boost. The letters were sent by the International Red Cross and the radio messages were broadcast through Radio Tokyo. POWs read the messages on the radio, which were then picked up by ham radio operators in the United States and other parts of the world constantly monitoring the Japanese radio frequencies. The messages were then relayed by mail to the addressees, or sometimes, they were recorded and the recordings sent out.⁹⁰ One of

Taylor's messages was received on September 25, 1944, and then sent by Western Union to his parents in Texas. The message read,

SJ F Govt NL Wux Washington DC Sept 25 1944

Mrs Lena Taylor
Rte 1 Easterly, Texas

Following enemy [sic] propaganda boardcast [sic] from Japan has been intercepted quote dearest Mother I am in Good health and hoping you are all the same I have received several letters and hope to hear from you soon tell all my relations and friends that I said Hello your loving son Rogers Pvt Rogers L. Taylor unquote this broadcast [sic] supplements previous official report received from international x red xxxxxxxxx cross stop

Lerch provost Marshall general⁹¹

Taylor never knew if his messages and letters were getting out of Japan and then if his family was receiving them in Texas. Two of his younger sisters, Mildred and Evelyn sent him letters and

school pictures

to keep his

hopes up. They

only sent him

good news and

happy

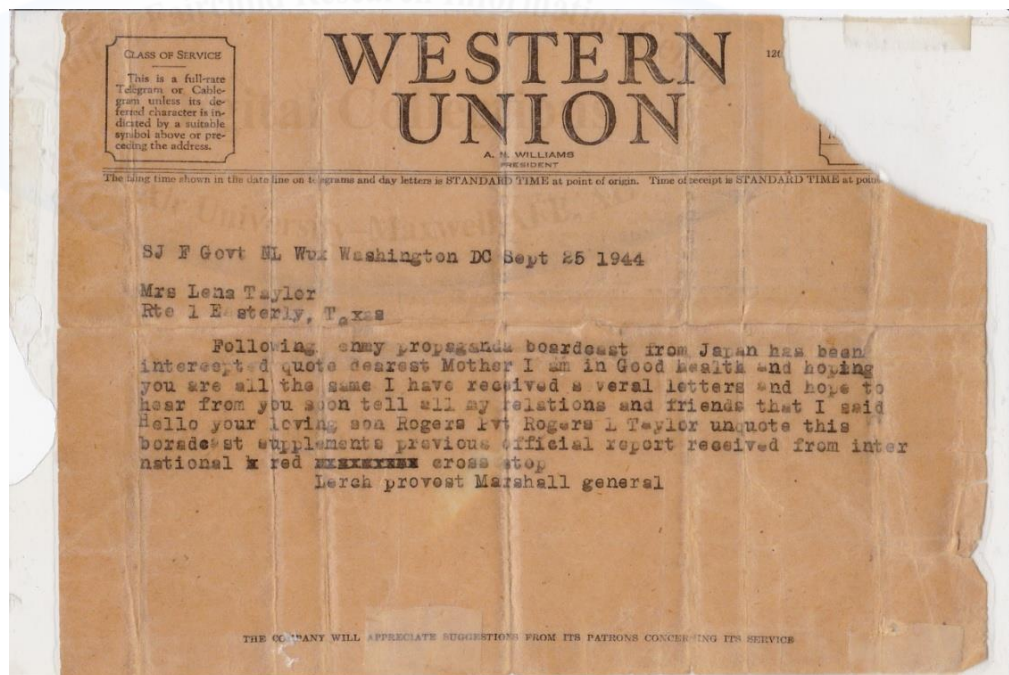
memories, being

very careful not

to include

anything that remotely mentioned bad luck or hard times that had perhaps fallen on the family.

His sisters hoped their letters to their brother somehow made him feel closer to home and loved ones. However, they too did not know if their letters were getting through to him. Though



Taylor only spoke of receiving “several letters,” his family did not know exactly which ones. It was not until he returned home that both he and his sisters learned that the letters had indeed made it through to their respective audience.

The bombing campaign of 1944-45 was an intense spectacle that those interned at Omori, much less the other camps in and around Tokyo, had a front-row seat to observe the death and destruction delivered straight from America. On one night, after large formations of B-29s had just come off their bomb runs over Tokyo, Taylor recalled witnessing a B-29 take a direct hit by either encircling Japanese Zeros or heavy anti-aircraft fire. His only words regarding the occasion was merely to say that he remembered the aircraft breaking into two distinct pieces and tumbling merciless to the ground, he was unsure if he saw parachutes or not. Taylor’s memory of the one B-29 falling from the sky does not adequately recall the magnitude of the bombing campaign as hundreds of American B-29 bombers were lost over the skies of Tokyo in an effort to bring the Japanese to their knees and declare surrender. As the bombings intensified and the death and destruction amplified, Taylor recalled the Japanese civilians became increasingly violent towards the POWs at Omori. When the prisoners were on their work details in the surrounding areas, the Japanese captors often provided protection from the angry mobs seeking revenge.

Fearing Omori was susceptible to the American bombers, the prisoners pleaded with their captors to allow them to paint “PW” on the roofs of the barracks but the request was denied since the guards stated they did not have the approval from higher headquarters. The prisoners wished for luck and hoped the Americans bomber crews knew the location of the POW camps, thus not dropping their bombs nearby. Taylor recalled it was a close call some days as the industrial area around them took direct hits and quickly became engulfed by flames.

The news the POWs had all been waiting for arrived on August 15, 1945. On a rebuilt radio smuggled into camp, one of the Navy commanders heard the Emperor's surrender speech and the word spread quickly. Martindale remembered the day, "Most of the men in camp spent the rest of the day and evening in happy, but subdued, elation. Surprisingly, there was very little of the uncontrolled exuberant behavior which was normally expected at a time of such tremendous news. It was a relief to have the past trials and tribulations lifted from weary shoulders. What had been subjects of dreams and idle talk now began to have more meaning. Rescue, home, families, food, and women now assumed realities in conversations. Survival was no longer paramount nor of importance. We had survived. The sick and faint at heart had received new vitality."⁹²

The prisoners quickly painted "PW" on the roof of the barracks in hopes that the liberators hastened the rescue knowing where the POWs were being kept. Not long after the Emperor surrendered, an urgent Japanese Army telegram went out instructing guards that mistreated POWs to vanish. Some of the guards remained and those that did were often not treated very well. At Omori, some guards were allowed to keep their rifles in order to help ward off angry and retaliatory Japanese residents, but there was no one shouting directives at the prisoners any more, they were free. "The Japanese colonel at Omori made an official complaint to the senior POW officer that someone had urinated in one of his boots and defecated in the other."⁹³

Camp Liberation

The dream of freedom, so vivid in minds and imaginations for the last few years, finally became a reality when on August 29, 1945, the prisoners of war at Omori watched with tears in

their eyes as the Allied fleet steamed into Tokyo Bay. Martindale described the emotions, “It was hard to accept the fact that these were not Japanese ships but the ships of our dreams. Pandemonium broke out in the camp. Cries of joy were mixed with tears of relief. Shortly, three landing barges could be seen as they left the ships and made their way toward the island. ... Photographers aboard the crafts were having a field day in shooting pictures of the men crowded on the pier and along the shore. One picture was to get worldwide attention, for it showed men waving American, British, and Dutch flags.”⁹⁴

Immediately after the U.S. navy landing party arrived at Omori, the camp came alive with activity as the liberators and former prisoners alike began preparations for evacuation. A portable radio was set up in the camp to communicate with Admiral Halsey’s flagship. Taylor can be seen in a picture that a



photographer captured of the event. He is bent over admiring the activity before him, reflecting that his hell was finally over.⁹⁵

Sometime on August 29 or August 30, Taylor walked out of Omori for the last time and onto the landing craft that took him one step closer to freedom and a return home to America. He was taken from the shores of Tokyo Bay and transported onto the recently commissioned

hospital ship, *USS Benevolence*. Once on board, the prisoners were treated to a hot shower, brief medical inspection, clean clothes, and all they wanted to eat.⁹⁶ Martindale explained, “Some of the men gorged themselves. I saw one fellow consume two large steaks with all the trimmings topped off by a large serving of apple pie a la mode. All I saw another man eat was ice cream, ice cream, and more ice cream. Each POW had his particular craving. Needless to say, many meals did not stay down. The more prudent individuals ate sparingly.”⁹⁷ Perhaps the man Martindale described as eating so much ice cream was none other than Rogers Taylor. After the war, Rogers recalled the food bonanza onboard the *USS Benevolence* just as Martindale described. Taylor exclaimed that the prisoners could have anything their hearts desired but that all he wanted was ice cream, and lots of it!

Concluding Thoughts

What causes someone to have such strong negative emotions towards another? In Taylor’s case, it was three and a half years of brutal and barbaric treatment for seemingly no reason or, at worst, minor transgressions. However, why did the Japanese act with such disgrace towards the Allied POWs in World War II? Editors Robert La Forte, Ronald Marcello, and Richard Himmell summarize it most appropriately in *With Only The Will to Live: Accounts of Americans in Japanese Prison Camps: 1941-1945*:

While disparity of treatment and individual discernment make it difficult to generalize about what it meant to be a Prisoner of the Sun, in general what Americans suffered was dreadful. Many writers have provided explanations for the savageries visited upon them by the Japanese; the best explanations combine the evil side of human nature, racism, and the Code of the Bushido, or the Way of the Warrior. During basic training, Japanese soldiers were taught that the greatest honor was to die for the emperor and that the ultimate shame was to surrender to the enemy. [A. J. Barker, author of *Prisoners of War*] points out that ‘soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army were brought up to believe that military honor dictated no surrender, and training manuals of the Japanese fighting forces

contained the warning that ‘Those becoming prisoners of war will suffer the death penalty.’ Moreover, capture not only disgraced the soldier but it also dishonored the family.’⁹⁸

Roger Mansell provides a different perspective in *Captured: The Forgotten Men of Guam*,

To excuse the massive abuse heaped on the prisoners, revisionist historians choose to say that the Japanese were unprepared for such a huge number of POWs. The simple reality is that the Japanese society had become extremely racist and considered all other human beings as inferior. For almost seven decades, they had been indoctrinated in the belief that the emperor was a god, a fiction created by the feudal shoguns in order to retain their control over the peasants. This was the mythology deliberately created in the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Japan’s heinous behavior in the conquest of China was essentially ignored by the world, further emboldening Japanese hostility toward others.⁹⁹

Sixty-nine of the 154 men (44 percent) of Company B, 192nd Tank Battalion died during the war. (Taylor would share Kawasaki 2-B with three other tankers from the 192nd and another three when moved to Omori.) Were those losses representative of other units fighting the Japanese? No, they were not. Most units did not lose as many men. Gavan Daws claims the average American death rate for prisoners captured during the Pacific War was 34 percent.¹⁰⁰ That suggests Taylor’s company fared worse than the average, but why? The answer is surprisingly simple, because its men, though a small and cohesive unit, were forced into O’Donnell, Cabanatuan, and in the holds of numerous Japanese hellships. (Gregory F. Michno suggests the American death rate on hellships alone was upwards of 40 percent. This statistic is alarming but sadly accurate given numerous hellships were torpedoed by American submarines, often losing a majority, if not all of the POWs onboard.¹⁰¹) When looking at it from an individual perspective, why did Taylor survive to be reunited with his family? When asked this question before his death he said it was because he was so young and relatively short at 5’8”. According to stories told by Rogers to his son, Robert, the tall POWs were tormented because the Japanese soldiers did not like looking up at anyone. Though those were absolutely factors

contributing to his survival, there were more relevant reasons he survived when others did not. Taylor's family were sharecroppers in east Texas. The climate in that general area is typically hot and humid during the summer planting season, not too different from that of the Philippines in January and February. He was accustomed and conditioned to work in the cotton fields for long periods of time performing back-breaking work. He was also one of thirteen children and learned to survive during the Great Depression in a large family. He understood what hard work was about and exercised a strong work ethic. He also witnessed shocking and horrendous events before leaving the fertile fields of Texas. He lost one very young sister when she fell into a fire and succumbed to her injuries. One brother did not survive birth, and Rogers also lived with a mentally handicapped brother. Though youth, strength, and a smaller physical stature were undoubtedly significant factors in Taylor's survival, his internal fortitude and conditioning born and nurtured among the demanding farm fields of east central Texas unequivocally prepared him for an appalling three and a half years as a prisoner of war in the Philippines and Japan.

Rogers Taylor's prisoner of war experience was not unique among the generally understood POW narrative of World War II in the Pacific; however, his story suggests that each prisoner of war lived an individually distinctive ordeal, each person being a one-of-a-kind brick in the wall of understanding. Though Rogers' account provides an overall general understanding of life as a POW, it is critical readers do not generalize; such a mistake would reduce the profound impact this chapter in American history had then, today, and even into the future.

Taylor's three and a half year torment at the hands of a warring enemy has leadership lessons for the modern citizen-soldier, especially in today's irregular war environment. To the point, after he was liberated in 1945, Taylor, along with thousands of fellow POWs possessed an extreme hatred for the Japanese, an unbridled emotion that remained untamed until his death in

2005. Undoubtedly this hatred would have resulted in him and many more like him rushing to the call to arms had the Japanese again waged war against the United States, however, this time, Taylor's hatred and disdain would have stoked a raging race battle far more primal, barbaric, and determined than was experienced during the initial combat experience in the Philippines. The reverberations of Taylor's captivity suggests the United States should reconsider how it treats captured enemy combatants, especially in the long, dark shadows of national embarrassments at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib that resulted in strategic consequences that continue to echo twelve years later. It is no secret that numbers of prisoners from war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan returned to those lands and continued fighting an insurgency against the United States and its Allies, perhaps with an energized spirit and resolve after leaving American-led prison camps on foreign lands. One explanation for their return to hostilities against the Allies is perhaps due to the treatment they experienced while captives. Would it be too hard to imagine Taylor doing the same had the war continued to wage after he returned home?

It is important to remember that prisoners of war, regardless of which side they fight for, are a victim group that are not universally recognized. Therefore, it is the responsibility of nations to protect its prisoners of war and not abuse them in any way, shape, or form even though it may not be in its best interest. Doing so not only demonstrates common humanity but it is simply the correct moral and practical action any respectful nation can make towards its enemies, regardless of emotions and perceived injustice. It is completely plausible had Rogers Taylor and thousands of other POWs been treated with common humanity by the Japanese, Taylor's story captured in these pages would have been entirely different and more humane. Undeniably, the world would be a better place today had prisoners of war in World War II been treated more fairly. Let us not continue to make the same mistakes in today's war on terror that the Imperial

Japanese did during World War II. Let us recognize the past injustice for what it was and take the moral high ground now as not to repeat the profound atrocities of a bygone era. Let us make Rogers Taylor's POW experience relevant almost seventy years to the day and save someone else's grandson the agony of having to learn their grandfather's painful and disturbing story long after their loved one passed on; finally able to escape the painful memories and unspeakable nightmares.

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see bibliography.)

1. Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, 290.
2. President Roosevelt and his staff understood that world affairs were in turmoil and knew that the United States would likely engage in war with Germany, not to mention Japan's aggression in China could not be ignored. Therefore, he and Congress reinstated the conscription in September 1940 with the Selective Training and Service Act, the first peacetime United States draft. All males between the ages of 21 to 35 were required to register with their local board in October. Then a lottery was held in Washington D.C. at the end of October, and the order in which men were called into service was established. (Martin, *Brothers from Bataan*, 19.)
3. Groups of young draftees were sent to the new Armored Force Replacement Training Center (AFRTC) at Fort Knox for further sorting. Tankers were in fact a small minority within an armored division – out of a total strength of over 10,000, only about 15 percent were actually tankers. On arriving at the AFRTC in Fort Knox, the young draftees were sent to the classification office where an officer evaluated the recruit on the basis of tests and an interview. This data was written on a small card and led to the recruit's assignment to a military occupational specialty based on his aptitude. The Armored Force favored men who had some familiarity with mechanical equipment, for example, farm boys familiar with tractors rather than city boys with a better education grade. The recruits were then subjected to two weeks of basic training followed by about two months of more specialized training. ... At the end of this training, the young recruit would be assigned to an armored unit, or selected for more advanced training at the Armored Forces School (AFS), also located at Fort Knox. (Zaloga, *US Army Tank Crewman 1941-45*, 8-9.)
4. Lajzer, *3.6 Years of Hell in Japanese Prisoner of War Camp*, 12.
5. Poweleit, *Kentucky's Fighting 192nd GHQ Light Tank Battalion*, 22.
6. *Ibid.*, 31.
7. *Ibid.*, 37.
8. Tenney, *My Hitch in Hell*, 23.
9. *Ibid.*, 25.
10. Knox, *Death March*, 46.
11. Chun, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 54-55.

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12. It is important to note that it is unknown what role Taylor assumed after losing his tank though it is fairly certain he continued to remain with Company B, 192nd Tank Battalion as a vital member until its surrender on April 9, 1942.
 13. Poweleit, *Kentucky's Fighting 192nd GHQ Light Tank Battalion*, 43.
 14. Young, *The Battle of Bataan*, 261.
 15. Poweleit, *Kentucky's Fighting 192nd GHQ Light Tank Battalion*, 58.
 16. Chun, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 69, 78.
 17. Knox, *Death March*, 77.
 18. Lajzer, *3.6 Years of Hell in Japanese Prisoner of War Camp*, 27.
 19. Poweleit, *Kentucky's Fighting 192nd GHQ Light Tank Battalion*, 60.
 20. Ibid., 62.
 21. Ibid., 67.
 22. Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 68.
 23. Lajzer, *3.6 Years of Hell in Japanese Prisoner of War Camp*, 28.
 24. Tenney, *My Hitch in Hell*, 32.
 25. Lajzer, *3.6 Years of Hell in Japanese Prisoner of War Camp*, 29.
 26. Tenney, *My Hitch in Hell*, 33.
 27. Ibid., 33.
 28. Interview with Roger D. Taylor.
 29. Proviso East High School Bataan Commemorative Research Project. "Pvt. John Franklin Ross." <http://www.proviso.k12.il.us/bataan%20web/Ross.htm>, 3.
 30. Tenney, *My Hitch in Hell*, 46.
 31. Tenney, *My Hitch in Hell*, 50.
 32. Taylor, "The Infamous Death March of Bataan", 2-3.
 33. Frazier, *Hell's Guest*, 76.
 34. Martin, *Brothers From Bataan*, 78.
 35. Lajzer, *3.6 Years of Hell in Japanese Prisoner of War Camp*, 37.
 36. Martin, *Brothers From Bataan*, 79.
 37. Taylor, "Memoirs", Bible.
 38. Lajzer, *3.6 Years of Hell in Japanese Prisoner of War Camp*, 49.
 39. Knox, *Death March*, 83.
 40. Ibid., 83-84.
 41. Bollich, *Bataan Death March*, 87.
 42. Knox, *Death March*, 153.
 43. Ibid., 162.
 44. Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 85.
 45. Bollich, *Bataan Death March*, 92.
 46. Martin, *Brothers From Bataan*, 81-83.
 47. Frazier, *Hell's Guest*, 85.
 48. Bollich, *Bataan Death March*, 92-93; Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 87.
 49. Proviso East High School Bataan Commemorative Research Project. "Pvt. John Franklin Ross." <http://www.proviso.k12.il.us/bataan%20web/Ross.htm>, 4.
 50. Bollich, *Bataan Death March*, 93.
 51. Lawton, *Some Survived*, 27.
 52. Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 87.

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53. Martin, *Brothers From Bataan*, 83.
 54. Knox, *Death March*, 199.
 55. Ibid., 198-200.
 56. Ibid., 202.
 57. Ibid., 121.
 58. Interview with Roger D. Taylor.
 59. Jackfert, *Service to My Country*, 73.
 60. The *Tottori Maru* was a 5,793 ton vessel built in 1913 by Russell and Company in Glasgow. When Private Taylor boarded the vessel it was owned by the Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK) Line and operated out of Dairen, China. The 423 foot long ship was powered by a coal-burning power plant and could generate a cruising speed of eleven knots. (Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, 48.) Naval records indicate that the *Tottori Maru* was later sunk by the U.S.S. *Wahoo* on March 19, 1943. (Jackfert, *Service to My Country*, 72.)
 61. Petak, *Never Plan Tomorrow*, 128.
 62. The American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, Inc., *History of the Defenders of the Philippines, Guam and Wake Islands*, 75.
 63. Ibid., 92.
 64. Jackfert, *Service to My Country*, 74.
 65. Boisclair, *Walk With Me*, 39. Perhaps Private Taylor, along with the remaining prisoners on the *Tottori Maru*, owe their life that fateful day on October 9, 1942 to inefficient American weaponry. During the beginning stages of the war, American torpedoes failed to work, often with the submarine's commander being blamed for poor tactical execution. However, it was later discovered that the magnetic device designed to make the torpedoes explode under enemy ships rarely functioned. Additionally, the contact firing pin, designed to explode by direct hit, was too delicate and direct hits jammed the firing mechanisms without causing an explosion. It was not until the navy's Bureau of Ordnance was provided with enough irrefutable evidence that the navy redesign the torpedoes' firing mechanism, thus making them significantly more lethal in 1943. (Doughty, *Warfare in the Western World*, 818)
 66. Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, 53.
 67. Bollich, *Bataan Death March*, 110-111.
 68. Machino, *Death on the Hellships*, 53-54.
 69. Mansell, Roger. "Tokyo #2 Branch POW Camp – Tok-02B-Kawasaki Rosters of Yanks." http://www.mansell.com/pow_resources/camplist/tokyo/kawa2b/Tok-02B-Yank%20roster.html, 7.; Defenders of the Philippines. "Kawasaki Prison Camp Roster." http://philippine-defenders.lib.wv.us/pdf/rosters/kawasaki_prison_camp_roster.pdf, 9.
 70. Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, 54.
 71. Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, xi.
 72. Jackfert, *Service to My Country*, 77.
 73. Ibid., 81.
 74. Ibid., 81.
 75. There is some ambiguity as to when the POW numbers were actually assigned. In Adrian Martin's *Brothers From Bataan: POWs, 1942-1945*, he believes the numbers were assigned while the prisoners were interned at Cabanatuan since documents from that prisoner of war camp were the first to associate specific numbers to individual POWs. It is believed that the assigned numbers corresponded to the prisoners' rank. [Martin, *Brothers From Bataan*, 84]

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76. Jackfert, *Service to My Country*, 84.
77. Ibid., 84.
78. Jackfert, *Service to My Country*, 86. (Note: The formal investigation report of Kawasaki 2-B, dated January 19, 1946 stated, "During the winter of 1942-3, there were two stoves to each floor in the POW's billet and they were burned for one hour in the morning from January to March. ... There were no stoves in the building during the winter of 1944 and 1945...." (General Headquarters, Supreme Commander For The Allied Powers. *Re Investigation of Tokyo Prisoner of War Camp No. 2-B (Kawasaki 2)*. Tokyo, Japan: G.H.Q. SCAP, 19 January 1946. Document is now declassified, 3.))
79. Ibid., 87.
80. Mansell, Roger. "Roster of American POWs in Omori."
http://www.mansell.com/pow_resources/camplist/tokyo/omori/omori_yanks.html, 8.
81. Jackfert, *Service to My Country*, 94.
82. Taylor, "Memoirs", POW Letter.
83. Martindale, *The 13th Mission*, 77. Shinagawa was then renamed the Shinagawa Sick Ward (aka the "Hospital Camp" on August 1, 1943. Martindale, *The 13th Mission*, 77.)
84. General Headquarters, Supreme Commander For The Allied Powers. *Report of Lieutenant Lewis M. Bush, R.N.V.R. (H.K.)*. Tokyo, Japan: G.H.Q. SCAP, 1946. Document is now declassified, 3.
85. Martindale, *The 13th Mission*, 90.
86. Ibid., 84.
87. Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 112.
88. Martindale, *The 13th Mission*, 131.
89. General Headquarters, Supreme Commander For The Allied Powers. *Tokyo Headquarters Area, POW Camp at Omori, Tokyo*. Tokyo, Japan: G.H.Q. SCAP, 10 June 1946. Document is now declassified, 2.
90. Ibid., 128.
91. Taylor, "Memoirs", Radio Message.
92. Martindale, *The 13th Mission*, 227.
93. Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 337.
94. Martindale, *The 13th Mission*, 238.
95. Private Taylor admitted that he was extremely upset at the prisoner standing on the other side of him in the picture choosing to wear the Japanese G-string, *fundoshi*, rather than change into the more appropriate shorts that the American B-29s airdropped days earlier.
96. Martindale, *The 13th Mission*, 242.
97. Ibid., 242.
98. Himmel, *With Only The Will to Live*, xxxii-xxxiii.
99. Mansell, *Captured*, 130.
100. Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, 282.
101. Martindale, *The 13th Mission*, 282-283.

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