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Title: HELL IN THE PACIFIC: AMERICAN CIVILIAN WORKERS, WAKE ISLAND, AND JAPANESE INTERNMENT

Abstract approved: Christopher Lowe

For over two weeks in December 1941 a small American atoll in the Pacific, Wake Island, valiantly resisted attempts by the Empire of Japan to subdue it. Captivated by its defense, the American public found something to cheer about in those early days of the war. While several literary works have focused on the defense of Wake, virtually all end after the capture of the island by the Japanese in late December 1941. Current books and articles on Wake Island focus on the role of the American military during the defense of the island. Most of these works practically ignore the fact that the when the island was attacked it contained 1,200 civilian construction workers . Likewise, all virtually disregard what happened to these civilians workers once they were captured. For the next forty-four months these civilians were interned in Japanese prison camps where they were used as labor for the Japanese war effort. Though a few of these civilians have written about their captivity, the purpose of this thesis is to incorporate these works, along with other previously unpublished experiences, into a more comprehensive work. The result will not only be an important chapter in the history of Wake Island, but also the efforts of Americans in World War II.

HELL IN THE PACIFIC:

AMERICAN CIVILIAN WORKERS, WAKE ISLAND, AND JAPANESE INTERNMENT

A Thesis

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I am greatly indebted to my wife, daughter, and son who had to sacrifice so that I would have time to research, organize, and write. Although my daughter claimed I would never get done, this is one time I am glad I proved her wrong. My wife Tracy not only served as a supportive spouse, but also as a confidante, editor, and the person who provided push when I needed it. For four years she lived and breathed Wake Island with me and probably knows as much as I.

This thesis would not be possible were it not for the Wake Island survivors themselves. Not only were they gracious enough to respond to my letters, and phone calls, and to allow me to stick a tape recorder in front of them, but they made me feel comfortable in their presence. I have thought a lot about what you went through and how lucky you were to come home. At the same time I also realize how lucky we have been as a country that you came home. Your willingness to share your experiences with other generations is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

When I sat down to interview Wake Island civilians or read their correspondence, they often stressed that what I was about to hear or read was an individual's take on what happened, and that it represented a single experience. People were separated into small groups and had little knowledge of what went on with other groups. When civilian survivors gather for reunions they continue to learn about what happened to each other. I hope that my efforts do justice to the lives of these brave civilians who suddenly found themselves thrust into war.

Preface

> Yesterday, December 7, 1941 --- a date which will live in infamy --- the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by Naval and Air Forces of the Empire of Japan.

The above quote is from one of the most famous speeches ever given in American history. On December 8, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his request to Congress for a declaration of war between the United States and the Japanese Empire. During an afternoon session, Congress not only declared war, but did so unanimously.

When the speech is heard today it reminds many people of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. However, most people fail to realize that the attack on Pearl Harbor was only part of a coordinated Japanese offensive against a series of land areas throughout the Pacific and Asia. At the same time Pearl Harbor was being attacked on December 7, 1941, across the international date line British positions in Malaya and Hong Kong were also being attacked. American bases in the Philippines, Guam, and Midway were nearly simultaneously assaulted by land, sea, and air. Suddenly thousands of families were thrust into the war. These included not only families who worried about their loved ones in the service, but also civilians caught in the middle of the conflict.

The American possession of Wake Island was also targeted for occupation by the Japanese. Early war reports from the Pacific stated that Wake had been captured by the Japanese. For most Americans this report meant little, mainly because most Americans had never heard of Wake Island, and fewer still could understand why the Japanese would want it. Although the public wondered about Wake Island's significance, American strategic planners knew the value of the island. Prior to the outbreak of war, it was known that Japan wanted Wake for a staging area for attacks on Midway and Hawaii. When hostilities began, Japan set into motion its overall strategy, part of which was the occupation of Wake Island. However, contrary to early reports, Wake had not fallen. For

sixteen days, as United States Marines stubbornly defended the island, it would continue to serve as an early inspiration of the American fighting spirit.

Many accounts have been written about the defense of Wake Island by military historians or by officers who were actually on Wake. On December 8, 1941, when the first attack occurred, Wake was occupied not only by U.S. military personnel, but also by nearly 1,200 civilian construction workers. These civilians who came from all over the United States and performed a wide variety of construction tasks on Wake, shared one thing in common; they were thrust into one of the first battles of the United States in World War II.

The role of the U.S. military on Wake has been glorified, but few have recognized the vital roles those 1,200 civilians played in the Wake Island defense. Even more neglected is what happened to these civilians once Wake fell to the Japanese. Using firsthand accounts of military officers and civilians on Wake, this paper will help tell the story of the civilians on Wake Island.

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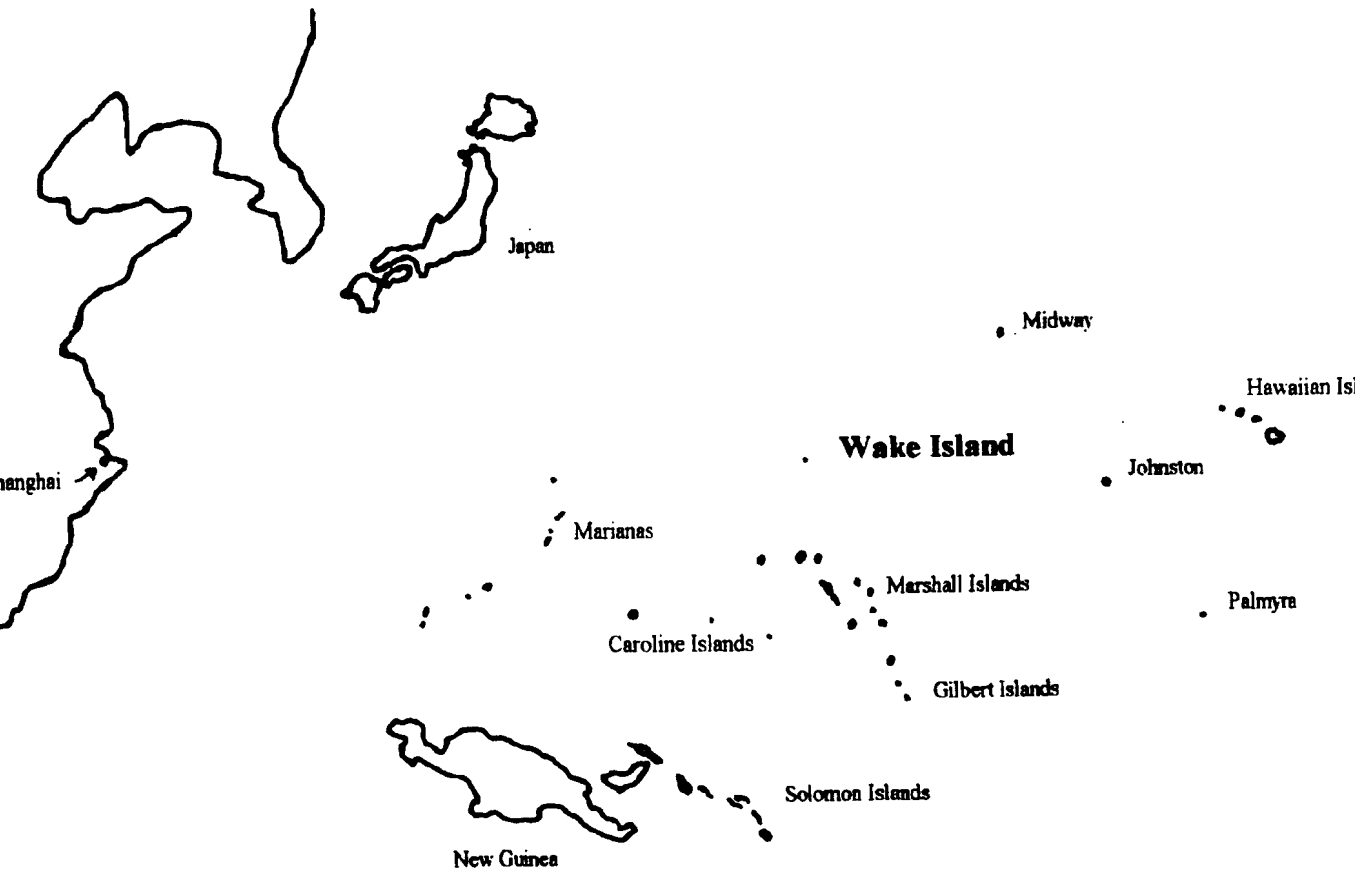
Wake Before the War

For most of its history, Wake Island had been an obscure spot in the Pacific, noted for uneventfulness. Located at 19°18'40" north latitude and 166°35'20" east longitude are three islands known as Wake. When someone uses the term "Wake Island," it describes the largest of three islands. In fact, Wake Island is not really an island at all, but a coral atoll. The portion of land that is often referred to as Wake Island is nothing more than the top of an inactive volcano. The average height above sea level is a mere twelve feet, and its maximum elevation is only twenty-one feet. Although most atolls tend to appear circular in appearance, Wake Island is more horseshoe shaped. The atoll occupies slightly less than four square miles of total land mass and roughly a circumference of ten miles.[1] The atoll is surrounded by a coral reef that in most places hugs the shoreline. The lagoon, formed by the horseshoe, is too shallow to allow large ships to enter. Even using the name "Wake Island" is inaccurate. The proper terminology for this area of land would be "Wake." (For purposes of simplicity "Wake Island" will be used to describe the total land mass unless stated otherwise.) For all practical purposes Wake Island is an isolated spot on the surface of the globe. The closest land is slightly over 300 miles away, another atoll like Wake. The next appreciable land area, Midway or Guam, is over 1,000 miles away. Key locations such as Hawaii, Japan, or the Philippines are over 2,000 miles away from Wake. Considering its location, it is accurate to say that Wake is truly an island to itself.

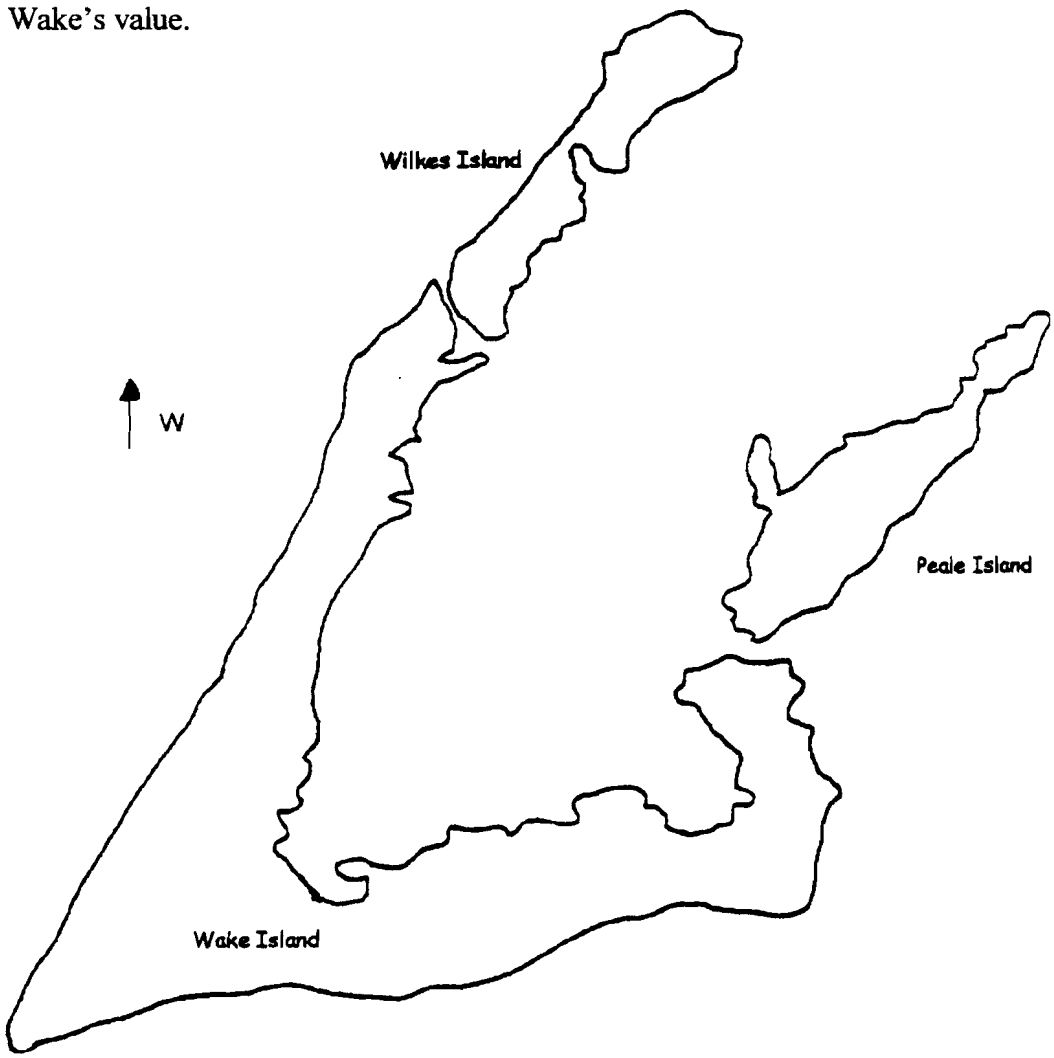
The first written account of Wake does not appear until 1586, when it was sighted by a Spanish explorer, Alvaro de Mendana. Short on food and water, Mendana closed in on Wake, hoping to replenish his supplies. His ship was dangerously close to the coral reef, so Mendana could only observe from a distance the limited hospitality Wake had to

offer. Sighting no signs of humanity but only sand, coral, and thick scrub, Mendana decided to depart. Even as he sailed away Mendana felt that Wake, or San Francisco as he called it, was so worthless that he did not bother to claim the island for Spain. It would be nearly 200 more years before Wake would receive its next recorded visitor.



In 1796, the British captain, Samuel Wake, plotted the position of the island and gave the largest of the three islands his name. Like Mendana, Captain Wake assessed Wake Island as being devoid of any meaningful vegetation and appeared to be lacking in fresh water. He likewise sailed away without claiming it for Britain. The first American visit to Wake Island occurred in 1840. Charles Wilkes, United States Navy, led an expedition to Wake to conduct a survey. Along with Wilkes was a naturalist, Titian Peale, who studied Wake Island's vegetation and animal life. In his journal Peale writes, "The

only remarkable part in the formation of this island is the enormous blocks of coral which have been thrown up by the violence of the sea. One or two that I visited were quite 20 feet in diameter."[2] Peale also included observations that many of the later construction workers confirm. "Rats were common. Fish abound in the lagoon and were of the most varied and beautiful colors. The sun powerfully hot, and the white coral sand very unpleasant."[3] In 1923, a scientific expedition from Yale University and the Bishop Museum of Honolulu conducted a series of surveys of Wake. In honor of the 1840 expeditions, they named one of the smaller islands after Wilkes and the other after Peale. The tiny atoll in the central Pacific was now officially identified. Though ships would occasional pass Wake in the late nineteenth century, it was not until 1898 that the United States realized Wake's value.



With the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States began looking for locations in the Pacific to serve as coaling stations for its planned operations against the Spanish in the Philippines. On July 4, 1898, a navy transport stopped at Wake and the atoll was officially claimed by the United States. The hostilities in the Philippines ended quickly and Wake played no role in the U.S. war effort. In 1899, the USS *Bennington* visited Wake to strengthen the previous U.S. claim to the atoll. When the *Bennington* departed, a brass plaque stating that Wake was a possession of the United States, along with a new flagpole and flag, were left behind.[4] In the early twentieth century, the United States made plans to establish a transpacific cable. Wake Island was considered as a possible relay station for this cable. Ultimately, Wake was not selected and it was virtually forgotten for the next thirty years.

In 1921, Wake surfaced in a naval study, *Sea Power in the Pacific.* The author, Hector Bywater, felt that Wake would be an ideal location for a well-defended fueling station.[5] He also thought that Wake could be an advance base from which the U.S. fleet could operate against any Far Eastern threat, including Japan. Though the Bywater study showed that Wake could have military value, Congress would not provide necessary funds for construction of a base. Furthermore, naval fortifications were restricted by the 1922 Washington Treaty, which "prohibited the United States from fortifying its possessions west of the 180th meridian (encompassing Guam and Wake.)"[6] Once again Wake enjoyed a brief moment of attention, only to return to obscurity.

Aeronautical developments in the 1930s, especially for long-range travel, altered Wake's history. In 1935, Pan American Airways was developing the use of its long-range, four-engine flying boat "Clippers" to provide passenger and mail service to the Orient. Once a week, the western leg was scheduled to leave from San Francisco, its destination Manila or Tokyo. The Eastern leg, leaving at roughly the same time from Manila or Tokyo, would eventually arrive in San Francisco. To cover the vast oceanic expanse, locations were needed for refueling, radio relay stations, protected lagoons for aircraft

landings and service facilities. The first stage was from San Francisco to Honolulu. After an overnight stay, the airplane left for Midway. From Midway a site was needed to serve as the third destination and a place where passengers could spend the night. Wake, with its horseshoe shape, offered the perfect location. Guam was the fourth stage, and after a brief rest, passengers on the Clippers were ready for the final stage. The eastern-bound Clippers were scheduled so that both planes would not overnight at the same location, since accommodations were limited.[7]

In the spring of 1935 the United States Navy, which had jurisdiction over Wake Island, gave its permission to Pan Am to construct facilities to support its mail and passenger service. By early May 1935, two ships had arrived with "construction materials, sectionalized prefabricated houses, all the appurtenances of a modern hotel, as well as construction equipment."[8] The crew was quick to learn that construction on Wake would be no easy task. The first problem to be solved was how to get supplies ashore. Since Wake is surrounded by a coral reef and the lagoon is too shallow for large ships, a freight dock had to be constructed. The most suitable site for the dock was off the ocean side of Wilkes Island. Unfortunately, the most suitable site for the air station was on the far side of the lagoon on Peale Island. The solution to the problem was to build a freight dock to unload supplies onto Wilkes. The construction crew then constructed a small narrow-gauge rail line that enabled the movement of supplies to Peale, which still had to be unloaded and reloaded a number of times in route.

Once the supplies were ashore, the construction crews faced a more serious problem. Wake has no potable water. The construction crews brought drilling machinery to drill for water, but these attempts proved fruitless. A system of collecting and storing rainwater was a temporary solution. Food was also a problem; the soil composition supported only scrub vegetation. Following the construction of the air station, a small amount of hydroponic farming was done by the Pan Am staff, but the majority of food had to be shipped in from Hawaii or the continental United States.

By October 1936, Pan Am began operation of its transpacific service. Wake Island not only had dock and repair facilities, but also had a first-class hotel, the Pan American Airways Inn; however, other than a place to rest, Wake Island offered little in the way of entertainment for passengers. Being an island with so little elevation, the hotel offered the best view of the islands, but this view offered little scenery. Pan Am did offer air rifles and ammunition to the passengers so that they could pass the time by shooting the numerous crabs, birds, and rats that inhabited the island. Wake Island was never intended as a South Pacific resort --- Pan Am had one specific purpose for the island, refueling, and it fulfilled that mission, despite its spartan existence.

Although it was being developed commercially, Wake also was beginning to draw attention from other groups. Ever since the opening of the Japanese mainland by Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853, Japan quickly realized it must modernize or face the same fate as China. Since Japan was ill equipped and unprepared to fight Western imperial powers, Japan sought to modernize and looked to the West for military training and technology. It is not surprising that Japan adopted Western military strategies to guarantee its security.

Japan is an island nation, relatively poor in natural resources. The Japanese realized that they must develop a consistent supply of raw materials to compete with the West. It was with this economic need in mind that Japan began to develop a strategy to ensure the supply of necessary raw materials. Japan saw the need for a navy capable of protecting the home islands and for merchant ships to transport materials the economy demanded. Japan liberally adopted a naval doctrine from Great Britain and the United States. Developing a navy was only part of Japan's military requirements to ensure its economic and political freedom. Japan also needed an army that was capable of securing bases and territories that could provide these vital resources. It was from such economic realities that Japan proposed the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere."

The territories Japan desired, French Indo-China, British Malaya, Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines, were colonies of the Western powers who would not willingly surrender them to Japan. Therefore, it was necessary to formulate plans to occupy those areas. Japanese planners realized the United States was a formidable foe with unlimited economic potential. Tokyo realistically produced a strategy that would allow Japan to strike quickly and cripple or destroy American naval might in the Pacific. Alfred Mahan initially proposed this strategy for the United States Navy in 1897. By destroying American battleships and surface forces, Japan could neutralize its principal offensive instrument of war. Since shipping is so critical in the Pacific, it would take considerable time for the United States to react in force.

In the meantime, Japan refined its doctrine and focused forces on overrunning the territories that contained the desired materials. By occupying Pacific islands Tokyo could establish a defense in depth. By fortifying and reinforcing those areas, it was believed that the United States would find it too costly and would abandon the conflict and negotiate a settlement, leaving Japan in possession of those regions. Finally, Japan could be free to develop the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

For Japan, Wake Island was an important part of their pre war military strategy. Wake was the closest American possession to the Japanese home islands. If the United States established an air base on Wake, Japan's most important outposts in the Marianas and Carolines would be within range of U.S. heavy bombers. To the Japanese, Wake was a dagger in the heart of their defenses. It was so potentially dangerous that Japanese planners felt that Wake had to be taken within the first few days of hostilities. For Tokyo planners, Wake was more than a spot on a map; it was a critical portion of their overall strategic plan.

Even though no action was taken by the United States following the 1921 naval study by Hector Bywater, the U.S. Navy never totally forgot Wake Island. Since the turn of the century, the United States developed plans to deal with potential adversaries.

Following World War I, America's only serious threat in the Pacific appeared to be Japan. A strategic plan, designated as Orange, was based on the Mahan philosophy that the United States Navy would seek out the enemy navy and fight a decisive battle. Although on paper this seems like a straightforward concept, actually locating and achieving this strategy is where the difficulty lies.

The 1930s proved to be a time of ever-increasing tension between the United States and Japan. As Japan pursued a more militaristic path, the United States began to review war plan Orange. In the review process, American strategists realized that Wake Island could and should be an essential element of American defense in the Pacific. In 1939, Washington adopted a new overall strategic plan, Rainbow Five. Part of this plan called for a screen of fortifications west of Pearl Harbor that would serve as a first line of defense. From Wake's ideal location, the navy could collect intelligence on the Japanese islands of the Carolines and Marshalls and monitor Japanese naval movements that could threaten the United States. In this plan, Wake would be used first as a base to conduct reconnaissance of enemy movements, then later as a staging area for offensive operations.

As early as 1938, Rear Admiral Hepburn, in a report to Congress, recommended that $7.5 million be allocated to develop Wake as an air base. Unfortunately, recommending is not the same as actually authorizing the funds. In light of its continuing recovery from the Great Depression, the appropriation was not seriously addressed by Congress. Congress was spurred to action only with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939. According to one historian, "Congress, which a few weeks before had been reluctant to approve a $2 billion appropriation for defense, now quickly voted appropriations totaling 10.5 billion."[9] In late May 1939, President Roosevelt signed a bill into law authorizing funds to fortify bases in the Pacific. However, Wake was left out of the bill.

Other islands such as Johnston and Midway were being upgraded too. The navy used the remainder of 1939 to formulate plans to upgrade Wake once funds were

appropriated in 1940. It became clear to navy planners, considering the difficulty Pan Am had in building its facilities on Wake, that whatever the navy planned for Wake would not be an easy task. Consequently, the navy felt they needed resourceful men and construction companies that would get the job done.

Even though they did not have funds for Wake, the navy contacted and screened companies so that when funds were available, construction could start immediately. By the time Congress allocated funds in June 1940 for construction on Wake, a consortium of companies, known as Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases (CPNAB), had been created. This consortium was composed of eight companies who contracted "with the U.S. Navy to build up the defenses . . . of Hawaii, the Philippines, Midway, Wake, Guam, Johnston, Samoa, and Palmyra."[10] Each company was placed in charge of construction on one of the islands. Of the eight companies making up CPNAB, five worked on Wake: Turner Construction of New York, Raymond Concrete Pile of New York, Hawaiian Dredging of Honolulu, J. H. Pomeroy of San Francisco, and Morrison-Knudson of Boise. Morrison-Knudson was the primary contractor for construction on Wake.

The original contract for Wake called for the construction of a naval air station and deepening the channel that separates Wilkes and Wake Island. Later Congress approved "money to build at Wake a pier, a channel, and a turning basin to accommodate a tender or tanker and complete facilities to house one patrol plane squadron."[11] Congress later released an additional $5 million for the construction of a naval station, fuel storage tanks, warehouses, and living quarters. All this work was to be completed by the spring of 1942. The work was contracted to civilians under the supervision of navy engineers. The first civilian work party reached Wake in January 1941, almost three years after the initial recommendation. In hindsight, the delay in providing the initial funds in 1939 later proved critical to military personnel and civilians who occupied Wake in December 1941.

On Thursday, December 26, 1940, the transport *William Ward Burrows* left Honolulu bound for Wake Island. Within its holds the ship carried enough construction

materials and supplies to outfit a small city. The *Burrows* also towed a "barge loaded with a northwest dragline, 2 D-8 cats, 2 Jaeger hoists, small buoys and paraphernalia to the tune of about 100 grand. Also towing the tugboat *Pioneer.*"[12] Also on board was a crew of eighty men known as the Pioneer Party, who were responsible for unloading the equipment and building facilities on the island for construction crews that were expected in the future. One member of the Pioneer Party was Frank "Curley" Mace. Trained as a carpenter by his father, Mace had worked on a previous Morrison-Knudson project, the Grand Coulee Dam. It was while working on this project that Mace first learned about possible future work in the Pacific. Harry Morrison, co-owner of the company, told Mace that he had bid on some jobs, and if he received the contracts, he would like Mace to go out and serve as his carpenter foreman.[13]

Also aboard the *Burrows* was Leal Russell. Russell had been hired by Morrison-Knudson to help supervise the construction on Wake Island. As Russell recounts in his diary, the passage from Honolulu to Wake was not without some moments of excitement. On Friday, December 27, the tugboat *Pioneer* was taking on water; apparently its pumps failed to operate. The tug had to be brought alongside the *Burrows* so a portable pump could be lowered to it. Once the pump was put into operation the trip to Wake continued. On a daily basis, if weather permitted, Russell or one of the other supervisors traveled out to visit the crew aboard the *Pioneer.* They would also check to make sure the equipment aboard the towed barge, *Wake #1,* was secure. When Russell noticed that some of the lumber in the storage hold of the *Burrows* had shifted, he organized a crew to straighten it out.[14] Otherwise the men relaxed in the sun, playing cards, reading, watching picture shows, or enjoying the good food served aboard the *Burrows.*

As the men ushered in the new year, life began to become more eventful. At noon on January 1, the barge broke loose from the *Burrows.* About a dozen men were offloaded to the *Pioneer,* which made its way to the barge. After five hours of work, the

chain between the *Burrows* and the barge was reattached.[15] Russell acknowledges that good work of the crew, but it proved to be another delay in reaching their destination.

When the *Burrows* crossed the international date line on January 2, it gained an entire day and the carefree nature of the journey became more serious. By listening to the ship's radio, the crew and workers became aware of increasing international tensions. This hit home when the captain of the *Burrows* ordered blackout restrictions because of "reports of German raiders in the [adjacent] water."[16] The next day the barge broke loose once again, and rough seas made it more difficult to reattach. For the next three days, January 6-8, the ship worked its way though rain and heavy seas toward Wake.

After two weeks at sea, the *William Burrows* arrived at Wake Island on January 9, 1941. Mace's first glimpse of Wake did not provide him with much of a reaction: "It was not very impressive. No palm trees; no tropical flowers, just a nearly flat terrain covered with thick brush."[17] These conditions would challenge the physical and mental toughness of the construction workers over the next year.

The first task for Mace, Russell, and fellow members of the advance crew was how to get equipment and supplies unloaded and placed safely ashore. Between Wake and Wilkes Islands was a channel by which boats drawing less than four feet could enter the lagoon.[18] This was the site that Pan Am was currently using to unload its supplies, but it proved to be too shallow to handle the volume of materials that the contractors needed to unload. The first task was to widen and deepen the existing channel. By loading jackhammers and compressors into two lighters that had been carried by the transport, the Pioneer Party began to attack the coral bottom, lowering it so that the barge, *Wake #1,* could be moved with ten feet of the shore.[19] The men were able to offload light machinery after a ramp was built to facilitate access to the shore. With bulldozers now at their disposal, the crew was able to build a more solid ramp from the shore to the barge. Once this was accomplished, the construction crew was able to offload and drive an eighty-ton crane, which was used to unload heavy equipment from the barge to Wake. Once the

barge was emptied, the lighters could go back to the *Burrows* for more equipment and then be towed to shore by cables attached to the heavy equipment already ashore.

During unloading, the construction crew relied on the *Burrows* for their basic survival. For the first couple of weeks breakfast and dinner were served aboard ship, but lunch was prepared ashore and consisted of barbecue or cold lunches. According to Frank Mace, a few tents were erected on Wake, but these mainly served as cook shacks. Most men would return to the ship at night, but some would stay on Wake and simply lay on the ground with a sheet.[20] Since Wake Island lacked a natural supply of fresh water, fifty-gallon drums filled with water were brought ashore from the *Burrows*. These would serve as the men's only supply of drinking water until a more permanent solution could be established. Even the most basic facilities, such as toilet, relied on the *Burrows*. Portable toilets were put ashore, but once full, they had to be taken back to the ship and emptied.

By Sunday, January 19, the unloading of the *William Burrows* was nearly 60 percent completed. Leal Russell, who was in charge of supervising the unloading, estimated that another five days would be needed to completely unload the *Burrows*. Russell further estimated that enough food, fuel, oil, and lumber had been unloaded to last the men six weeks.[21] Toward the end of the week heavy seas prevented the unloading of additional supplies. The swells became so rough that fill material used to bridge the distance from the barge to the shore had washed away into the lagoon. construction equipment was diverted to reestablish the unloading ramp. The men who had been unloading were sent to build the permanent camp, known as Camp One, until the ramp was completed.

One of the first items to be assembled and put to use was a desalination plant to turn ocean water into potable water. Once this process was completed, the water would be stored in an elevated storage tank. Simultaneously, work started on building permanent houses in the form of barracks, along with a kitchen and mess hall. Once these were finished, warehouses were built for construction equipment and supplies.

On January 28, nearly three weeks after making landfall, the *Burrows* was completely unloaded and pulled up anchor to return to Honolulu. It left behind a temporary tent camp and a group of workers going about their tasks of making Wake Island a permanent settlement. The day after the *Burrows* left was not a day off --- the men completed jobs in the temporary camp such as moving in the gear for the mess hall and kitchen. The remaining time was spent stowing away gear in their assigned six-person tents.

The first meals served in the new mess hall, a cold buffet, were a bit below the standards set by the *Burrows.* According to Leal Russell, when the quality of the meals had not improved, Dan Teters "blew up."[22] Teters was the superintendent of construction on Wake, a veteran of World War I who had earned an engineering degree in 1922. It was his responsibility to see that the work was completed on time and fulfilled the provisions of the contract between the government and Morrison-Knudson. Construction is physically demanding, and even more so on Wake, considering the conditions. The men needed, and Teters demanded, quality food so that they could maintain their strength. Therefore, Russell was given a crew to go into the mess hall and correct the situation. On top of these duties, Russell was assigned the task of reviewing letters from men seeking employment on Wake.

During the first week in February an additional forty men were sent to Wake. At this stage, work consisted of eight-hour days, six days a week. However, progress was slow because many of the men suffered from a stomach aliment that was affectionately called "the Wake Island runs."[23] The problem became such a concern that on February 10, 1941, when the Pan Am Clipper was making its run to the East, it brought from Guam a chief pharmacist mate. The stomach problems did subside and eventually the affected men recovered and returned to work. It appears likely that bacteria contaminated the food or water supply.. By mid-February, the camp had been enlarged to accommodate 120 men and the construction of a road was under way extending from one side of Wake to the

other. Simultaneously, work proceeded on the other permanent structures, such as providing plumbing to the laundry and placing poles to run electricity to the barracks and other buildings. Work was also being done on laying foundations for the boiler house, dispensary, and the cold storage building.

Life on Wake revolved around construction; however, the men did have some time to relax. Sundays were days off. Extra pay was available to men if they chose to work on Sunday. Others occupied themselves with fishing, swimming, collecting shells, or listening to the radio. The monotony was broken when the USS *Trenton* arrived on February 28, 1941, with mail and additional provisions. Although the ship did not stay long, it brought fresh vegetables, which lifted the men's spirits.[24]

To complete the contract, Morrison-Knudson needed hundreds of workers, but conditions on Wake were not conducive to supporting such a workforce, at least not in early March 1941. As conditions improved, more workers were brought ashore. The decisions concerning the workforce rested with the recommendations of the island's supervisors, such as Leal Russell and Dan Teters. Teter's job became more difficult when the original contract was expanded to include additional work for the United States Navy on Wake. "The contract was changed to include a submarine turning basin in the lagoon which meant deepening the channel much more and deepening the section of the lagoon which was quite shallow. Even later, digging an additional channel across the middle of Wilkes was ordered."[25]

By the middle of March a majority of the permanent camp was completed and the channel had been excavated so larger barges could be unloaded near the ramp. Once this had been finished, one dragline was used to improve the channel, while another worked on the turning basin. By the end of March the number of workers on the island exceeded 250.

The camp included a hospital, power plant, and refrigeration unit. By this time, construction had reached a feverish pace. Work days shifted to "ten hour days, seven days

a week. For part of that time, CPNAB crews worked two shifts per day."[26] The focus of all this effort was the construction of a larger camp, quarters for the superintendent, and guest houses for visiting civilian executives and naval inspectors. The site of the new camp was to be located opposite of Camp One on the far side of Wake. Camp Two was being constructed to house over 1,000 men and included such luxuries as a barber shop, ice-cream parlor, an outdoor movie theater, a tennis court, and an enclosed swimming area in the lagoon.

Creating plans for a project was easy; turning them into reality was a challenge. The Wake project proved to be a tough nut to crack. Progress on the road was hampered by having only two four-cubic-yard dump trucks available to transport surface materials. As the length of the road increased, actual progress diminished even more, owing to lack of adequate trucks. Likewise, the crushed coral that was being used for the surface of the road proved difficult to blade out.[27]

Equally frustrating was the work on the lagoon. One day digging would go without a hitch, the next day work would be plagued by what Russell called "hard spots." To eliminate such hard spots, dynamite was used to break apart the coral. On April 7, six cases of dynamite were used during one blast. The resulting blast, and the low elevation of the island, nearly caused a tidal wave to sweep over portions of Wake. Leal Russell recounts in his diary how a rowboat that was used in the lagoon, "came bouncing over the island on top a big wave."[28]

Weather changes on Wake offered the men both opportunity and misery. When a rain squall occurred, it was not uncommon to see men running outside during the downpour. Though these squalls were short-lived, they gave the men a chance to take a shower. Although the island's desalination plant was able to turn out fresh water, its use was limited to basic necessities; showers were not considered necessities. A shower was built, but it relied on salt water. This type of shower would clean a person, but it did not leave an individual feeling refreshed. The best storm was one that allowed a man time to

run and get his soap so he could really get clean. In between storms, "some of the fellows would sneak over to the distillation plant and swipe water to rinse off with."[29]

The island itself was desertlike. The white coral that composed the island reflected heat but did not retain it. Therefore, at night conditions became rather cool. The effects of these conditions were hard on the men. Sunglasses were certainly helpful during the day. Leal Russell had worked on his tan when he was aboard the *William Burrows.* However, nothing prepared him for the sunburn he received within days of his arrival on Wake.

Isolation was difficult for the men on Wake. The only contact the men on Wake had with the outside world was either by mail arriving on the Pan Am Clipper or listening to the radio. Women were not allowed on Wake Island so that the men could keep their minds on the task at hand. The only exception to this was a couple of women whose husbands were executives of the Pan Am Hotel and Mrs. Teters. Florence Teters was given special permission by company owner Harry Morrison to join her husband on Wake Island. The Teterses quarters were separated from the regular camp for privacy reasons. Mrs. Teters served as the morale officer, but it could be debated if she improved morale or impaired worker efficiency. "Whenever she went swimming in the lagoon in a loud Hawaiian bathing suit, lovelorn men in the vicinity would cease working."[30]

The island was also dry, dry in the sense that alcohol and gambling were prohibited. In an effort to help make sure that gambling did not occur, men only were allowed to receive up to a maximum of $25 a month from their paychecks while on Wake. The remainder of their checks was placed in an account of their choosing or sent home to their families. The money they received was script that could be used only on Wake. The script or coupons could be used at the contractors' canteen, which sold products such as "soft drinks, tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, clothing and many other articles that go to make up the convenience and comfort of living conditions."[31] J. O. Young, a carpenter, traded at the canteen, but warned that a person "had to be careful of the candy bars. Those with

nuts, in that climate, developed life in the form of worms. Milkyway were the most popular because of no wormy nuts in them."[32] The men's script could also be used at the camp post office to purchase stamps or to send packages home. Mail could be sent either by ship or the Pan Am Clipper. Typical rates were three cents per ounce by ship, or fifteen cents for each half ounce by air.[33] Some of the men arranged to have Pan Am bring products to them from some of its western stops, such as the Philippines. J. O. Young remembers "one fellow who bought a Rolex watch for $110. They at the time retailed in the states for about $400."[34] Other products included linen, silks, shell purses, and china. These items typically exceeded the men's $25 limit, but they could have the cost of these items deducted from their salary.

Since the Pan Am hotel was located on Peale Island and it had both female visitors and alcohol, it was strictly off limits to the construction workers. Men who worked on projects there had to have a special pass before they would be allowed on Peale Island. Restricting access to Peale was fairly easy because other than a small boat, there was no way of getting to Peale from Wake. Plans were under way to build a bridge to connect the two islands. Although access to Peale was restricted, the restriction did not include the superintendent and his supervisors. On several occasions Leal Russell would go over to the hotel and have a beer. The hotel administrator would occasionally invite Russell, Teters, and some of the other contractor managers for dinner. On one occasion Teters had dinner with Ernest Hemingway.

All of these opportunities did not mask the loneliness the men still felt. The toll the island took on a person can be detected in Pete Russell's diary. One day Russell writes, "I do wish that we weren't so far out of civilization as I have never seen a place more delightful to work in." A few days later, "this place is plain unadulterated hell. I'm afraid by the time I get out of here I will be a no.1 candidate for the booby hatch."[35] Wake's island environment could literally produce these mood swings. For some men the conditions became too unbearable. Any man was free to leave and return to the United

States anytime a ship arrived. The only condition was that the individual had to pay his own passage. One man, Thomas Howell, had had enough of Wake. He was diagnosed with a nervous breakdown and was sent back to the United States aboard the supply ship *Regulas*. However, on the trip back, he leaped overboard. Howell ignored the life preservers that were thrown to him and continued to swim away from the ship. All attempts to rescue failed and he eventually drowned.[36]

In light of such conditions Morrison-Knudson faced a difficult situation; how to attract and keep workers for Wake Island? One solution was to offer a quality salary. Each position on Wake, carpenter, plumber, and dredge operator, was paid a different salary, but one that was far above what they would have received in the States. "At a time when a Marine Corporal with five years of service was paid twenty-eight dollars a month," a common laborer on Wake Island signed up for $120 a month.[37]

In addition to their regular salary, men earned a bonus for each month spent on the island after the third month. At the conclusion of the fourth month, a worker earned an additional $30. Each month the bonus would increase, so by the end of eight months a man was earning an additional $90, the maximum amount.[38] Since food and housing were provided, a man could save a couple hundred dollars a month.

Before a prospective employee was hired, he received a three-page letter from Dan Teters describing the conditions on Wake Island in 1941. The letter also described what the projected conditions would be by the summer. Teters's letter explained that Camp One had hot and cold saltwater showers, modern toilet facilities, and three gallons of fresh water for shaving, rinsing and so forth available to each man per day. Besides the canteen, weekly laundry service was available for each man and a modern hospital along with a doctor and male nurse for any reasonable medical emergency. All facilities, with the exception of the canteen, were free of charge.

Teters dedicated nearly a page of his letter describing what the men could expect on Wake. He further explained activities and items that were prohibited on Wake.

Besides banning alcohol and firearms, cameras were not allowed. "Personal baggage is inspected on arrival and departure and all packages received from any source must be opened for inspection. Receiving radios are allowed on the Island but amateur sending sets, commonly known as 'ham' stations, are prohibited."[39] With the exception of alcohol, the other items were prohibited according to navy regulations. Even though the contractors were civilians, the island was a naval facility, and they were ultimately working for the navy. Not only did each prospective employee receive this letter, but he had to return it signed, to acknowledge his acceptance of all conditions and regulations. By offering a good salary and living conditions, Morrison-Knudson officials hoped to attract and keep employees on Wake.

Another problem that began to plague the men on Wake throughout the spring and early summer was an increasing shortage of construction supplies. Lumber became so low at one point that men searched the scrap piles for anything usable. Many of the carpenters were shifted from building to setting up cement forms for foundations. The guest houses were built, but lacked power because necessary supplies were not available. A temporary solution was provided by Pan Am, which offered to lend a generator to the contractors. The only problem was getting the generator from Peale Island to Wake Island, since the bridge connecting the islands was still not finished. Leal Russell found a solution when he realized that during low tide he could wade across the reef. At its deepest the water was only knee deep. In the late afternoon of April 22, Russell drove a bulldozer across the reef to Peale. On the return trip, under decreasing sunlight, the incoming tide caught Russell on the reef and he had to quickly retreat back to Peale before the dozer was swamped. Stranded on Peale, Russell was eventually picked up by a worker who rowed over in a small boat. The following day Russell timed the tide perfectly and drove the dozer back to Wake with the borrowed generator.

The next problem was with the desalination plant. The pipe that led from the plant to the lagoon was being affected by the dredging of the new channel. During low tide, the

water trapped in the lagoon had been at a sufficient level to keep the pipe submerged. As the channel became wider and deeper, the pipe lost contact with the water and the plant ran out of water. A crew had to be dispatched to extend the pipe farther into the lagoon to alleviate this problem.

Late spring and early summer proved to be chaotic on Wake. Supply shortages meant that men had to be reassigned to new projects before others were finished. Wake was dotted with half-completed structures awaiting more supplies. When supplies arrived they often contained items that were not needed or that were the wrong size. Leal Russell gives an example of this inefficiency in his diary when he writes about a case of vault doors that were received during this period even though the structures they were to be attached to only existed in the blueprints.[40] Work was getting done, but falling behind the projections.

If there was not enough to do, the men took it as a sign that they could slow down. Teters, Russell, and the other supervisors had no intention of allowing this to occur. At a late-night meeting, the management of the Wake Island project decided to "tighten up on the crews . . . all sick must report to the doctor and all who quit are to be marked not to be re-hired again."[41] Shortages or not, the men were paid to work, and work, whatever type it might be, was what they were going to do.

In the face of this adversity there was some discussion among the supervisors about closing Camp One. The feeling was that Camp Two was far enough along that it could house all the men, and consolidating into one camp would save electricity and water. Whether this closure would actually take place at this time depended on the view of the superintendent, Dan Teters. Since the move did not take place until a later date, it can be assumed that he did not approve.

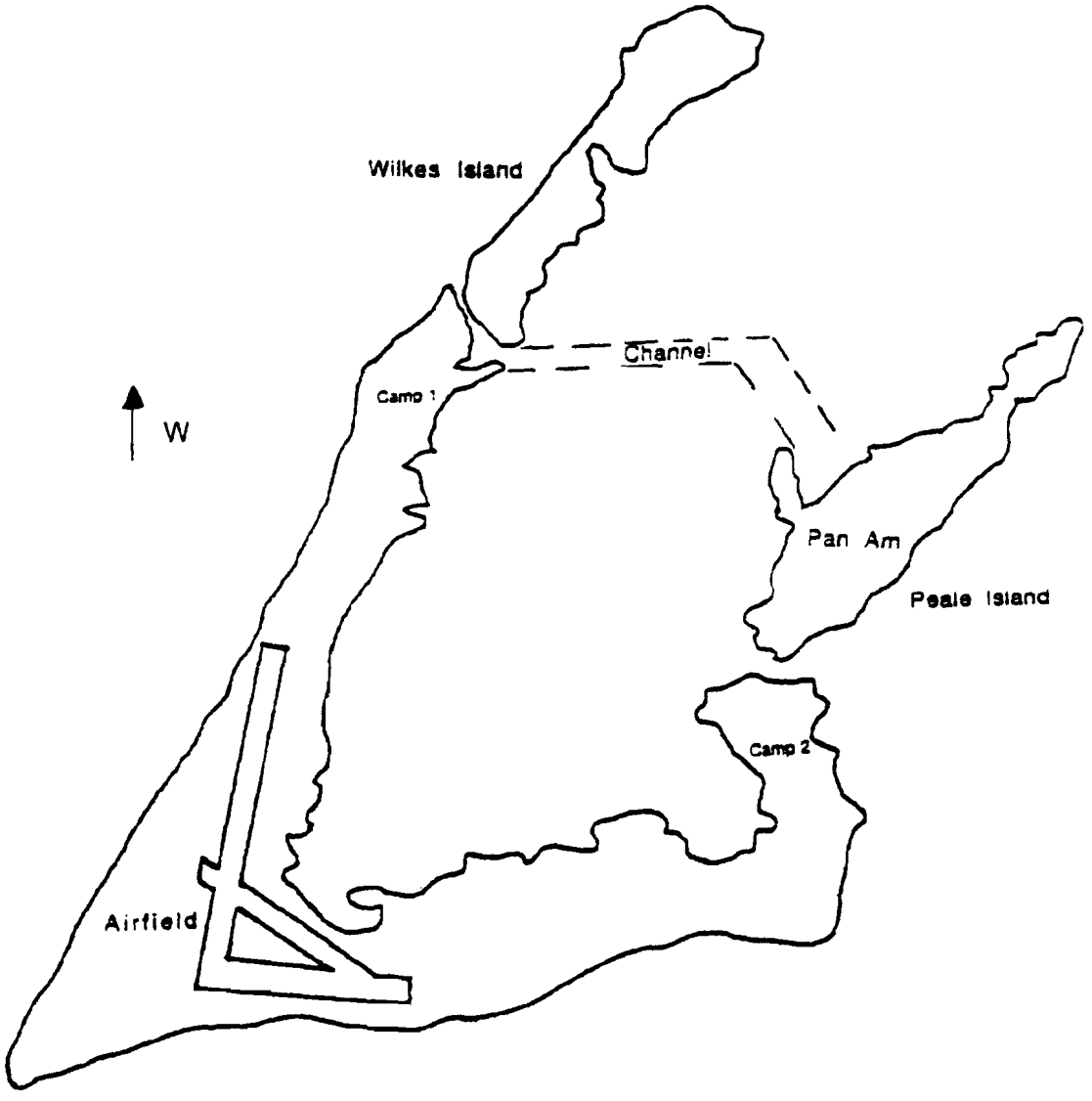
June 10 was a monumental day in the construction on Wake Island since it "marked the first actual construction of any building in the permanent navy setup."[42] An important event, it was not considered important enough to celebrate. Necessity dictated

starting this phase of work mainly because the materials needed to complete the permanent camp were not available.

Eventually the flow of supplies improved and the permanent camp was completed. On Sunday, July 6, 1941, Camp Two was occupied by all the contractors. The camp boasted recreation facilities such as a tennis court, a baseball diamond, and a recreation center. The camp also had electricity and modern indoor plumbing along with a sewer system that piped waste out beyond the reef. The camp contained a mess hall that could feed 1,000 men, an outdoor movie theater, an ice-cream parlor, and a modern hospital. The quarters were made as modern as possible, considering the location. Each barracks comprised "two wings with a center cross section all in the shape of a huge letter 'H.' The center or connecting section contain[ed] showers, washing facilities [and] lavatories. Each of the wings contain[ed] 40 beds, 20 on each side with a side aisle down the center. There was a partition extending about two thirds of the way up to the ceiling between each group of two beds --- making a sort of "stall" arrangement."[43] Additionally, each barracks was equipped with an individual steel locker for each man. In most cases the lockers proved to be inadequate to hold all of the men's personal possessions, so ingenuity took over. Makeshift shelves, dressers, and so forth were hammered together by most individuals, to store items within their stall.

The workers had their own newspaper, The Wake Wig-Wag. The paper informed the inhabitants of international news and events occurring on the island. Its main focus was to lessen the isolation of life on Wake.[44] The editor, Louis Cormier, created issue 53 not just for the island, but as a newsletter for the folks back home. The issue described current living conditions to relatives of the island's inhabitants and recounted funny stories that had taken place on the island. One story involved warehouse worker Herb Brown. "seems someone with a sense of humor sent bottles of rootbeer out from Honolulu in boxes marked 'Miller High Life Beer' and the rumor spread like wild fire that each of us would get two bottles of beer on [July] the 4th. Herb almost went nuts when the gang

swooped down on him and insisted on ransacking almost every case on the chance a stray bottle of honest to goodness beer had been put in by mistake."[45]



More workers were needed to work on military projects as work concluded on Camp Two. Many of the men currently on Wake Island had either previously worked for Morrison-Knudson or had been lured away from other projects. Walt Hokanson was one such man; he had been working on the Grand Coulee Dam until offered an assistant's job on Wake. A portion of the men came from areas near the headquarters of Morrison-Knudson in Boise, Idaho. A few others had sent letters to Wake Island seeking

employment. James Allen had been trying for two years to be hired as a carpenter by Morrison-Knudson, but they turned him down because of lack of experience. According to Allen, "they wanted carpenters with 10 years of experience and at [the age of] 23 [that was] hard to do."[46] However, by the summer of 1941, available construction workers were becoming a bit more scarce because of changing global conditions and increasing defense construction. Morrison-Knudson could no longer wait for men to come knocking --- the company now went looking for them.

Morrison-Knudson officials began to spread out across the United States, especially the western states, looking for potential workers. Sometimes workers were attracted by the recommendations of men already on the island. Nelson Johnson received a letter from a friend who was on Wake Island, and what he read was enough to encourage him to sign up. Other letters were a bit more personal. Norman Swanson's brother was on Wake and wrote back about the conditions he experienced there. These conditions were apparently favorable enough for Norman to volunteer too.

Another technique used to find workers was placing ads in newspapers. Many ads were placed in California, Oregon, and of course Idaho newspapers, but others stretched as far east as Nebraska. Ben Comstock had seen an ad for Wake in the Omaha newspaper. Both he and his father applied as carpenters and were hired by Morrison-Knudson. In some cases Wake Island officials actively recruited men for specific positions. Roy Stephens was working on a dredge in Los Angeles when he received a call: "they had bought a dredge from the city of Portland, Oregon, but they didn't have a dredge crew. They wanted to know if [he] was interested in going to Wake Island to run it."[47]

Sometimes Morrison-Knudson officials went to Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps seeking men. Glen Walden "was at a CCC camp in the Boise area that was closing. Morrison-Knudson officials came offering a job and I needed one."[48] D. C. "Doc" Miller recalls, a "Morrison-Knudson representative came to [his] CCC camp and

asked for 12 volunteers for Wake Island."[49] Miller volunteered and became one of the new men headed to Wake.

The reasons why men joined the company seldom varied; the main motivation was money. A prime example would be Lloyd Nelson. During the previous seven years he had a steady job working as a salesman and deliveryman for a dairy in Oregon, yet he signed on to work on Wake. With the way that the payroll was set up, a worker could count on having a tidy sum of money waiting for him once he completed his nine-month contract. Bill Charters signed up because he had "brought an apartment house for his dad and [he] wanted to get it paid before going into the service."[50] Joe Goicoechea, Charles Varney, Norman Swanson, and Myron Curtis all had one thing in common --- Wake offered a great way to save money. A few men went to the island not only to save money, but to kick a drinking habit. Since Wake was under an alcohol ban, they felt they were sure to come home cured.

For whatever reason a man was attracted to Wake, the hiring process was fairly similar for all. First a man was given a physical. If he passed, he was presented with a contract. The contract outlined his employment, work schedule, and payment.

Although a man was contracted for a specific job, the agreement stated that he could be used by the employer for all types of work as needed. Frequently, this option was exercised on Wake. Edwin Doyle went to Wake as a carpenter, but also poured concrete, drove a truck, and worked as a rigger. Lloyd Nelson had a comparable experience; he worked in the lumberyard, warehouse, machine ship, and finally as an oiler for the draglines.

The contract further stipulated rights that existed between the employer and the employee. A man who became incapacitated from illness or injury, while under contract, would continue to be compensated by the employer. However, a man whose work was "not satisfactory to the employer, or if he does not show himself qualified for the position

for which he is hired, or is negligent in his duties or displays bad temper . . . the employee may be discharged without any further obligations resting upon the employer."[51]

Once hired, a man was not officially on the payroll until he reached his point of departure on the West Coast, which was usually San Francisco, but the company would pay for the cost of transportation to the departure point. Once a new employee reported to the company officials on the West Coast, his pay started. While an employee was on the West Coast the company paid per diem allowances for housing and food until he shipped out to Honolulu.

When the men had been assembled in San Francisco, or whatever point of departure they were assigned, they received tickets on a passenger liner from the Matson line. According to Lloyd Nelson, while aboard the passenger ship *Lurline,* the men stayed in first-class accommodations and lived like kings.[52] Upon docking in Honolulu the men were told where to report and instructed that they would be met by a company representative who would help them claim their luggage. Besides bringing their own clothes, many men, such as carpenters, mechanics and plumbers, brought tools of their trade. When all the men and their possessions had been gathered, they boarded a bus and were taken to a hotel. The time spent in Honolulu varied from a few days to several weeks, depending on when the next ship bound for Wake was ready to depart.

The next stage of the journey to Wake was anything but luxurious. The ships used to transport the men were either U.S. Navy cargo ships or ships that had been leased to the government. In most cases the trip was slow and tedious. After at least two weeks at sea the men were nearly in sight of what they had signed up for. Nearing Wake the most common reaction was how small the island was. Ed Doyle was just glad to see land, but he did wonder how the island had escaped from being washed over. A similar view was held by Stanley Simmons, who wondered "how we could avoid being blown or washed away."[53] Prior to his departure from Honolulu, Melvin Danner had heard some negative rumors about Wake. When he arrived he was glad to see, contrary to the rumors, that the

island was not barren and had some brush.[54] When J. J. Coker got his first look at Wake his impression was that it "did not come up [to] the romantic idea of a South Pacific Island."[55]

After reaching Wake, the new men were usually restricted to life aboard ship. Early on when manpower was scarce, the standard rule was that cargo was unloaded first, then men. Regardless of a man's job classification, usually his first job was that of a cargo unloader. The general thought was that after two weeks at sea the men would be in a hurry to get off the ship and the unloading would occur quickly. Melvin Danner spent his first days on Wake in the hold of the *Burrows,* "stacking 100 pound bags of cement on pallets to be taken out of the hold by a crane."[56] After a few days Danner developed sores on his hands and arms from cement poisoning and had to be transferred off the ship. Once the men were removed from the ship they were taken to the camp office, where they were given a work button to wear. This assigned number identified each individual on the island and was also used for recording purposes.

As the number of men increased, the amount of work they accomplished grew proportionally. The workday was also changing. Already working six days a week, and at least eight-to-ten hour days, the increasing number of workers allowed shift work to begin. Depending on the type of job, three shifts of men were used. Once this phase of construction started, efforts, sometimes unusual ones, were made to keep it going. By the end of July, Walt Hokanson, who was in charge of unloading cargo, organized a crew that recovered some reinforcing steel and other cargo that had been lost overboard during a previous unloading, employing ingenuity to get the work accomplished. By August 1941, supplies needed on the island were finally increasing, but not without problems. On one occasion the island received 480 bundles of corrugated metal that was needed as roofing, but it did not come galvanized. Considering the salty nature of the air this made the metal virtually worthless. Leal Russell quickly organized a paint crew to coat the metal so that it could be made usable.

Errors were a nuisance, particularly with selection of materials, but that was the least of the problems facing the contractors. By monitoring their radios, along with mail from home, the men on Wake were aware of the growing tensions between the United States and Japan. The men realized that the tensions with "Japan [were] growing steadily worse."[57] Realizing they were closer to Japan then the United States, the men certainly felt exposed. Adding to this uncomfortable feeling was the fact that Wake was a potential thorn in the side of Japan. On August 10, 1941, a dispatch reached Wake that a company of marines would soon arrive and this gave the men some comfort.

In the late 1930s, when it was realized that islands such as Wake would be important to America's strategic defense, a new need was also created --- a way to protect these island bases. Since these islands were under naval control, the job of defending the bases was given to the marines. In 1939, the Marine Corps organized defense battalions to provide island security. The purpose of these battalions was to place a defensive ring of fire around an atoll such as Wake.[58] The typical battalion was to be made up of six five-inch coastal guns, twelve three-inch anti aircraft guns, .50-caliber machine guns to be used against aircraft, and .30-caliber machine guns for ground defense. Troop strength was set at 43 officers and 900 men.[59] This was the planned organization, but the fact is that in 1941 there were neither enough men nor equipment to go around. Efforts were being made to expand the battalions, but it took time to recruit and train new marines. One of the obvious problems facing the battalions was that they were understrength for ground defense. Each marine was to retain his own rifle and the battalion would have to serve as its own ground support if this became necessary.

On August 8, 1941, the USS *Regulas* set sail for Wake Island with a force of 6 officers and 173 enlisted men from the 1st Marine Defense Battalion. Another battalion would have been sent but because of chronic shortages of equipment the remainder of the unit was left at Pearl Harbor. On board the ship was the full contingent of five-inch and three-inch guns, but only some of the .50-caliber and .30-caliber machine guns. Once

word was received that the marines would be coming, work began immediately on building three temporary magazines. In fact, "this work took top priority over anything else."[60] After five days of hard work the temporary magazines for the expected marine ordinance was declared ready. However, other than the need for the magazines, the news of the marines' eventual arrival meant little change to life on the island. In fact, the main news event in early August was a heavy rainstorm that allowed 300,000 gallons of fresh water to be collected in storage tanks. On August 19, 1941, the *Burrows* and the marines arrived at Wake. What the marines found on Wake was a small antlike army swarming over the island. In a short time Wake had been transformed with coral roads connecting Wake to both Peale and Wilkes Islands. Work was under way to construct a crushed coral runway on Wake itself. A modern camp was completed, a deeper channel had been dredged between Wake and Wilkes, and a concrete ramp on Peale stood to handle sea planes. Yet there was still much work to do.

Although started, the airport still had a long way to go before being completed. The plans called for multiple runways, modern facilities to support aircraft, and protective revetments. Permanent concrete magazines were to be built, along with fixed concrete bases for coastal defense guns. In addition to these projects there was a list of buildings that needed to be built to support the marines' presence on Wake. As if there was not enough to do, the original contract for construction had been changed to add a turning basin within the lagoon. The navy called for a channel, large enough for a submarine to pass through, to be cut through the reef that separated Wilkes and Peale Islands. Dredging was attempted, but the reef proved to be too difficult for the workers. By mid-October, the contractors convinced the navy that it would be easier to dredge a channel across the middle of Wilkes Island.

The marines had their own daunting tasks ahead of them. After their arrival they spent the next three days working eighteen to twenty-two hours a day unloading the *Burrows* and the two barges it towed.[61] Once this task was completed the marines

occupied the contractors' former camp, Camp One, and started the task of placing their three-inch and five-inch guns. Although they lived on the same island, contact between the marines and contractors was fairly limited. When the marines initially landed, some of the construction workers went down to size up their new permanent "visitors." The marines had a limited number of vehicles, so Dan Teters sometimes loaned them a bulldozer or truck to help them move their heavy guns.

On occasion a little horse trading brought marines and civilians together. It took a while for the marines to establish a mess tent; in the meantime they survived on canned rations. Every construction worker interviewed mentioned how the civilian mess provided quality meals. Here was a natural trade in the making, but only if the marines had something to offer in return. The answer was beer. The marines had a beer ration and the workers had a thirst. On occasion a swap, secretly of course, was made.

The remainder of August found both the civilians and marines extremely busy on Wake Island. The civilians had barely finished one runway when notification was received that planes would be landing for refueling. The runway was long enough, 5,000 feet, for planes to land and take off, but it was only wide enough, 20 feet, for one airplane to operate safely at a time. The marines, who had plenty to do establishing their own camp and equipment, were responsible for the future refueling of military planes. On August 29, nine B-17 bombers landed at Wake on their way to the Philippines. Wake allowed the crews a chance to get out and rest while the marines began the task of refueling. The B-17s had a fuel capacity of 2,000 gallons, hence it required many 50-gallon drums. Unfortunately, the only items available to accomplish this transfer were hand-cranked pumps. This made the task a long, time-consuming process. Eventually Wake received a gasoline truck but it only had a 1,500-gallon capacity. Once emptied, it required two hours of hand-cranking to refill it. The problem of refueling was alleviated when in late October a flight of B-17s "generously left six portable gasoline-powered pumps at Wake to service future flights."[62]

Even Mother Nature paid a visit, or nearly so, to Wake Island during August. On August 29, the Pan Am station on Wake Island received a report of a typhoon 240 miles southwest of Wake and heading in its general direction.[63] Construction crews and marines were kept busy late lashing down equipment and storing items from the increasingly strong winds blowing across the islands. Fortunately, the typhoon missed Wake, but it would not be the island inhabitants' last brush with powerful storms.

The fall of 1941 found CINCPAC at Pearl Harbor looking for alternative ways to protect Wake. It was proposed that civilians might be used since there was a shortage of military personnel, and it would be some time before this situation would be improved. Rear Admiral Bloch wrote a confidential letter to the marine commander on Wake pointing out that "unquestionably a great many [civilians] had seen military service. If we should be so unfortunate as to become involved in hostilities and your island attacked, it will call for the combined efforts of everybody to beat off the attack."[64] Bloch proposed that the marines on Wake approach the civilians with the idea of volunteering for training with military equipment. It was felt by Admiral Kimmel that this request could yield 500 civilians who were up to the task. However, the military wanted this proposal to seem routine, not as an expression of the likelihood that war would occur. The military's greatest fear was that many civilians would decide to leave the island because of the possibility of war. If this happened, their departure would probably cause delay in construction, so with guarded optimism a notice appeared in Camp Two asking for volunteers. There were 150 to 165 civilians at the initial training meeting. These civilians were given instruction in the cleaning, assembly, and use of small arms and .30-caliber machine guns. Later training would be used to show how to load and fire some of the marines' heavier weapons.

The next couple of months, September and October, saw little change in the quality of life on Wake. "Whether you were a civilian or a marine you were on Wake to do a job and you did it."[65] Some projects were completed; others, such as torpedo and

bombsight buildings and cradles for buried gas storage tanks at the airport, were begun. The first of several permanent underground bunkers in which to store ammunition and bombs were completed. These bunkers featured "side walls [that] were made of concrete two feet thick. The roof was three foot thick, so they were bomb proof."[66] What the marines and the civilians did not know was how much their lives would change over the next two months, starting on October 12, 1941.

On this date, Major James Devereux arrived on Wake to assume command of the marines on the island. "Devereux was a tough, no nonsense commander who bore down on details."[67] Facing shortages in both manpower and equipment, Devereux made do with what he had. Working his marines twelve hours a day he slowly improved the defenses on Wake. These preparations were certainly necessary in light of the deteriorating international situation in the Pacific. On October 17, 1941, a message was sent to the Wake Island marine detachment, placing it on alert status. While the marines went on alert, the contractors continued their projects, but Devereux did have a meeting with Superintendent Teters. At this meeting Teters was informed of the alert and both men discussed what might, or should, happen if war did occur. Both men agreed that in the event of war, the civilians would take over all transportation needs and any other jobs that would free up marines for the island's defense. Yet even though Wake was under alert, the commanders at Pearl Harbor would not allow civilian workers and equipment to be transferred from their projects and to help build more fortifications. Devereux was told that the civilians should "fulfill their contractual obligations to erect only base facilities, not defenses."[68]

For the average civilian, Wake's alert status changed little in their daily life. Worked continued on the airfield, the submarine base, and the naval air station. However, the increasing number of military planes arriving for refueling and the arrival of more marines, 8 officers and 194 enlisted men on October 18, certainly had to capture the civilians' attention. Apparently Leal Russell had this feeling when on October 25, he

wrote in his diary, "seems like the U.S. might mean business in the Orient."[69] These feelings were reinforced when Russell was ordered to build two complete barracks and officers' quarters in anticipation of the arrival of more military personnel. Russell was given only five days to complete these buildings, but he was allowed to work the men in shifts night and day to get the buildings completed. A couple of days later the ocean seemed alive with ships. Several transports, and the barges they towed, were anchored offshore along with a navy cruiser and two submarines. Not only did the transports bring cargo, but also more marines and over 200,000 gallons of aviation gasoline. These types of situations, along with radio broadcasts from the United States and newspapers brought by the Pan Am Clippers, made the men aware that circumstances were critical between Tokyo and Washington.

Apparently tensions were becoming high enough that on October 31 the secretary of the navy ordered all dependents evacuated from outlying bases.[70] Mrs. Teters left on the eastbound Clipper on November 1 and Mrs. Cook, wife of one of the Pan Am executives, left a few days later. The news of these evacuations unnerved some of the workers on Wake and according to John Burton, "quite a few boys broke their contract and went home."[71] One of the plumbers who was going home offered to give Burton $100 to pay for his trip home. Burton was tempted, but he needed his paycheck, so he remained on Wake. With the departure of the few women who were on the island, Wake was now truly all male, but it would not be exclusively occupied by Americans.

On November 9, Japanese ambassador Kurusu arrived on Wake island aboard the eastbound Clipper. Kurusu had been dispatched by the Japanese government to assist Ambassador Namure in Washington. Kurusu's arrival was not unexpected and when the Clipper came to a stop, Major Devereux was there to meet him. Kurusu was escorted to the Pan Am hotel, where he and Devereux had drinks. Over the next hour and several drinks, Devereux and Kurusu, who spoke English very well, carried on a general conversation. Other than Kurusu stating, "I am going to Washington to see what I can

do. I hope I can straighten out affairs and avoid trouble," neither man talked about their nations' differences.[72] The following day Kurusu departed and life went back to normal, or as normal as possible under the existing international conditions.

Even during this tense situation, the construction workers continued their tasks. Nearly a dozen of the concrete magazines had been built and the concrete plant was putting out record amounts of material in an eight-hour shift. The plant was becoming so efficient that the steel needed for future magazines, buildings, and general reinforcement was running short. Likewise, the marines were busy strengthening and building gun emplacements. November 14 proved to be a day for the passing of the baton, for on this day many of the original civilian workers, the Pioneer Party, returned to the United States, leaving behind an example of what hard work and pride can accomplish.

The Pioneer Party would be missed, but more workers were sent so that construction could continue at an accelerated pace. Likewise, the end of November saw the arrival of more military personnel. Major Walter Bayler arrived aboard the seaplane tender *Curtis.* His job was to establish a radio station for air-to-ground communications on Wake. Also on board the *Curtis* were "twenty-six sailors, who were to handle flying boat operations at the atoll."[73] "By November the buildup [of Wake] had progressed to such a state that the complex was officially designated a naval air station and required a Navy officer as Commandant."[74] On November 29, Commander Winfield Scott Cunningham arrived to take command. Though officially in command of the island, Major Devereux was responsible for the islands' tactical defense.

With each nail that was driven in and with each sandbag filled, Wake's defenses grew stronger. Yet the naval command at Pearl Harbor knew how precarious the situation was. Wake needed more troops, but facilities still needed further improvements, especially fuel oil storage, food, and ammunition. The civilians were needed to make these improvements, but if the island was attacked, they would never be able to accomplish their work. The dilemma was obvious; there were just not enough supplies to

support the civilians and the military personnel. It was hoped that the civilians would stay and finish the projects before an attack occurred.

By December 1, 75 percent of the naval facilities on Peale Island were completed. Unfortunately, delays in completing the water and sewer systems, along with shortages in cement, meant modifications in construction until more supplies could arrive. Plenty of projects were under way and still more needing to be done would keep the men occupied. On the same date, radio transmissions were received from the United States that offered the men a little relaxation from the recent international tensions with Japan. As one worker recalled, "News men say Japan wants to take 2 weeks more."[75] This information was certainly good news for the men on Wake, but it certainly didn't ease their fears. They continued to practice blackout procedures.

On December 4, the construction workers had some new visitors. Twelve F4F-3 Grumman Wildcats of VMF-211 arrived at Wake Island, escorted by one of the twelve PBYs that had arrived at Wake on December 2. The Grumman Wildcats were piggy-backed aboard the *Enterprise* and provided Wake with its first offensive weapons. Even though the planes had no armor plating or self-sealing gasoline tanks, and the pilots had little experience in this type of aircraft, they gave Wake a fighting chance in case of war.

The arrival of the planes certainly captured the attention of the construction workers. The pilots and their commander, Captain Putnam, did not completely share their enthusiasm. Although the runway on Wake was adequate, it allowed only one plane to take off or land at a time. There was no protective revetments for the planes, refueling had to be done virtually by hand, and the maintenance crews had little experience with these types of planes. To make their jobs even more difficult, there were no instruction manuals available for maintaining the engines. For the most part, the squadron was operating on the barest of margins. If the construction workers had been aware of all this information, the arrival of the planes may not have been all that comforting.

One of the first tasks the military on Wake wanted to address was protecting the planes on the ground. The plan was to rotate four of the twelve planes on patrol during the day. This would, however, leave the other eight planes extremely vulnerable as they sat parked out in the open along the runway. On the same day the planes arrived, Commander Cunningham met with Dan Teters and "decided to employ the contractors [crew] to build the necessary revetments for the planes and [dugouts] for the men."[76] Understandably, Captain Putnam wanted the work done as quickly as possible and didn't care about frills and proportions. All he wanted was protection for his planes.

On Saturday, December 6, the military held a general quarters drill in which the marines manned their fighting positions. Things went so well it was decided that the marines would be given the next day off. As word spread across the island about the marines, Dan Teters ordered his men to turn off their equipment, put down their hammers and paint brushes, and take the day off as well. The men of VMF-211 weren't included. They planned to spend the next day transferring fuel into the newly completed 25,000-gallon fuel tank and dispersing other reserves around the island. What none of the men on Wake Island knew was that Sunday, December 7, 1941, was the last day they would have a chance to really rest for the next forty-five months.

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Chapter 2

War Comes to Wake Island

After enjoying a day of leisure activities such as fishing, swimming, playing tennis, letter writing, or just generally goofing off, the workers on Wake Island began to prepare for the dawn of a new day. However, the next day, Monday, December 8, 1941, would not prove to be an average day. As the construction workers dragged themselves out of bed and went to breakfast, the China Clipper, which had flown in the previous day, took off slightly before seven A.M. for its journey to Guam. A short time later, Commander Cunningham was given a message stating that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. Cunningham's first reaction was to get word to the Marine Defense Battalion so they could man their battle stations. Unknown to Cunningham, Major Devereux had received the same message at roughly the same time and had already put his men into action.

Cunningham's next order of business was to get word to the airfield. Because of the island's low relief and the fact that the island lacked radar, the planes of VMF-211 served as Wake's early warning system. Cunningham and Paul Puntam, commander of Wake's air squadron, agreed that four planes would be sent out to scan the horizon for enemy activity. Other than the planes, the only other advance warning for the island was to post a man on the fifty-foot high water tower located at Camp One. Since the airfield's protective hangars were not completed, the remaining eight planes were to be dispersed with as much room as possible between them. Complicating the dispersal was the fact that the area around the airport was made up of very rough coral. To move the planes very far

from the runway could cause damage to the aircraft. Therefore, the planes were parked along the runway with only about fifty yards separating them.

Realizing that the Pan Am Clipper could be flying into harm's way, Cunningham contacted the Pan Am office on Peale Island and informed them of the recent developments at Pearl Harbor. He suggested that the Clipper be recalled. This suggestion was accepted and the Clipper was radioed to return. As Cunningham dealt with these situations, word of the transmission from Pearl Harbor was beginning to spread to the contractors. Not long after, Superintendent Teters appeared in Cunningham's office offering his help. Teters, Cunningham, and the officer in charge of naval construction, Lieutenant Commander Greery, agreed that "the men who volunteered for military training would be rounded up as promptly as possible, told the news, and given the opportunity to leave their jobs and report to Devereux's office."[1] The remainder of the civilians were to continue with their usual construction work. Cunningham, Teters, and Greery felt that continuing the construction was the best course of action for a couple of reasons. One, when the men were at their construction jobs they were dispersed over the three islands. They were far safer than they would be if they were gathered in one single location. Second, the Pearl Harbor report had yet to be confirmed. Until the report could be verified, the civilians continued working, and the military stood on alert.

Perhaps the most serious problem facing Cunningham was the "ifs" and "whens." If they were actually at war, when would the enemy strike, if at all? Because of its location, the chances of Wake being a target for attack was good, so the main questions to address was when they would be attacked. At this point a suggestions was made to Commander Cunningham to use "the Clipper to make a long-range reconnaissance

flight."[2] Cunningham contacted Cooke, manager of the Pan Am facilities on Wake, who okayed the idea.

If word had not reached the civilians about the attack on Pearl Harbor, the return of the Clipper certainly made some of them wonder what was going on. At roughly 7:15 the Clipper came into view. James Allen, a carpenter working in the main camp, noted that, "the plane was dropping a white stream of gasoline north of Peale Island, preparing to land."[3] What Allen observed was the Clipper reducing the amount of fuel on board so it could make a safe landing. The return of the Clipper only added to the scuttlebutt beginning on Wake about Pearl Harbor. When Allen noticed the marines moving around the camp in their helmets, something out of the ordinary, he felt that the rumors might be true.

Samuel Silverman received word while he was working on an addition to the contractors' hospital. "A man came in and told me the Italians had attacked Guam. I told him to get sobered up."[4] Even though this information was wrong it was certainly entertaining. A short time later the civilian doctor, Lawton Shank, came forward and clarified the story for Silverman by telling him of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Once the Clipper docked and the passengers had disembarked, workers began unloading the cargo that was aboard the plane. By reducing the aircraft's weight, it increased the range the Clipper could cover. The pilot, who was a naval reserve officer, felt that the unloading and refueling would be completed in time for him to begin the reconnaissance slightly before noon. Besides using the Clipper, Cunningham had some other ideas to strengthen the island's defenses. One involved "mining the airstrip with some of the [civilian] dynamite supplies, to blast any attempted landing of enemy forces."

A second suggestion was "mooring a barge loaded with dynamite in Wilkes channel, to prevent small boats from landing."[5] Both steps seemed appropriate, but with all that was occurring at the time, Cunningham decided these measures would have to wait until later.

At 11:55 A.M. on December 8, 1941, Japan struck. Thirty-six twin-engine Japanese bombers dropped out of the overcast sky south of Wake Island. After unknowingly flying at a lower altitude than the Marine Wildcats who were on patrol, the Japanese approached Wake without detection. "To achieve maximum surprise, the Japanese cut their engines and glided silently toward the target."[6] This precaution by the Japanese was actually not needed; the pounding of the surf on Wake's reefs was so loud that planes could not be heard until they were right on top of the island.

John Burton was working on the southern side of Wake Island the morning of the attack. When tankers arrived, they would anchor offshore near a buoy that was connected to a pipeline that ran to some storage tanks for aviation fuel on Wake. It was discovered that the pipeline was leaking because of an error made by a welder. Burton and another worker, Joe Dollar, were given the task of fixing the problem and were sent out in a small boat to reweld the pipeline. At about noon Burton and Dollar had arrived back on shore and prepared to catch a ride for lunch. At this point, Burton witnessed planes suddenly drop out of the sky and head toward the airport.

Charles Varney had spent the morning working on Wilkes Island doing excavating work on the new channel being cut through the island. When Varney and the rest of his crew received word of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, they halted their work. The remainder of the morning was spent "burying the dynamite housed in a sheet metal shed [the powder magazine] on Wilkes into scattered shallow depressions so that a lucky bomb

hit on the magazine would not cause more damage."[7] When noon approached the workers knocked off early so they could go down to the channel between Wake and Wilkes to hopefully catch a boat, then a ride to Camp Two for lunch. Varney stayed a few extra minutes to do some quick maintenance on the dragline so it would be ready for work after lunch. Once he completed this maintenance he waited by himself on the Wilkes side of the channel for a boat to pick him up. While he was waiting, he noticed a flight of planes just south of Wake drop out of the clouds and head directly toward the airport. "I had a ringside seat for the attack of the three flights of Japanese bombers as they bombed the airport."[8]

The attack on the airport could not have occurred at a more inappropriate time for the Americans. Not only were the eight planes not on patrol, they were parked out in the open fully armed and fueled. A couple of the planes were undergoing maintenance as the Japanese bombers approached. If the raid had come a couple of hours later, some of the planes might have been under the protective cover of underground shelters that were being built. The planes were easy targets --- seven of the eight planes were destroyed. The squadron lost several pilots who tried to reach their planes, and over half of the maintenance and ground crews were killed. "Loss of life had been staggering. Of the fifty-five officers and men in the vicinity, twenty-three were either dead or dying, and eleven more were wounded."[9]

After striking the airport, the Japanese bombers split into two formations. One headed toward Camp Two and the other attacked the marine camp. Carpenter James Allen was with the marines working at the mess hall. He had just finished and was looking for a ride to the civilian mess when he felt the island shake. As he looked toward the

airfield he saw some planes coming directly toward him. He immediately began to run northwest from the camp when after about seventy-five feet he was thrown to the ground with shrapnel in his left leg. When he looked up and saw more planes coming toward him, he decided to continue northwest. "While running, I remembered a story told to me by a one arm man selling pencils. He told me he had been flying as a gunner with the Flying Tigers in China, and that was how he lost his left arm. He also told me it was a lot of sport to shoot Japanese officers on the ground. This was because they were running and you could see them." [10] Remembering this story, Allen hit the ground and stayed there until the danger passed.

After hitting Camp One, the bombers returned and proceeded toward Peale Island. N. L. Johnson was working on the dredge in the lagoon when bombers passed over him heading directly for the Pan Am facilities and the naval air station. He remembers bullets ricocheting off the steel sides of the dredge as the planes strafed his platform. Arnold Green and another worker were securing dredge lines by the sea plane ramp when the Japanese planes attacked. Green dove behind some pipes located nearby, but his coworker and friend jumped into the lagoon. "This was a no-no, we had been told to stay out of the lagoon in case of air raid." [11] After the planes passed, Green's friend, whose nerves were certainly on edge, climbed out of the water and repeatedly tried to light one of his wet cigarettes with his equally wet matches. Later, once things calmed down, both men shared a laugh about the matches and cigarette incident.

The Japanese strike on Peale left the Pan American hotel destroyed, along with several other Pan Am buildings. Fortunately, none of the guests were hurt, but several Pan Am employees, including ten native Chamorros from Guam, were killed.

Miraculously, the large Pan Am Clipper that was tied to the dock was still airworthy following the raid. A closer survey of the plane showed that the extent of the damage was a couple of bullet hits in nonvital wing areas. While this flight of Japanese bombers hit Peale Island, a second formation was striking Camp Two.

The Americans were caught with their pants down on December 8. In Edwin Doyle's case this was not just an expression. After working the night shift, Doyle was fast asleep in his bunk during the morning. He had no knowledge of what had occurred at Pearl Harbor until he was awakened by his brother. Doyle's brother had hardly begun to explain what had transpired earlier that day, when the Japanese began to strafe the barracks. Looking for better cover, Doyle headed out of the barracks naked. It would not be until later in the afternoon that Doyle had a chance to get back to his barracks to find some clothes and shoes.

Samuel Silverman heard some explosions south of his position in Camp Two when he noticed a group of planes. The Japanese planes were so low that Silverman "threw [his] duster at it and it blew away in the slip stream. I could have hit it with a heavier chunk of coral."[12] As the planes passed overhead Silverman noticed a steady stream of explosions coming his way. Discretion was the better part of valor and Silverman hit the ground.

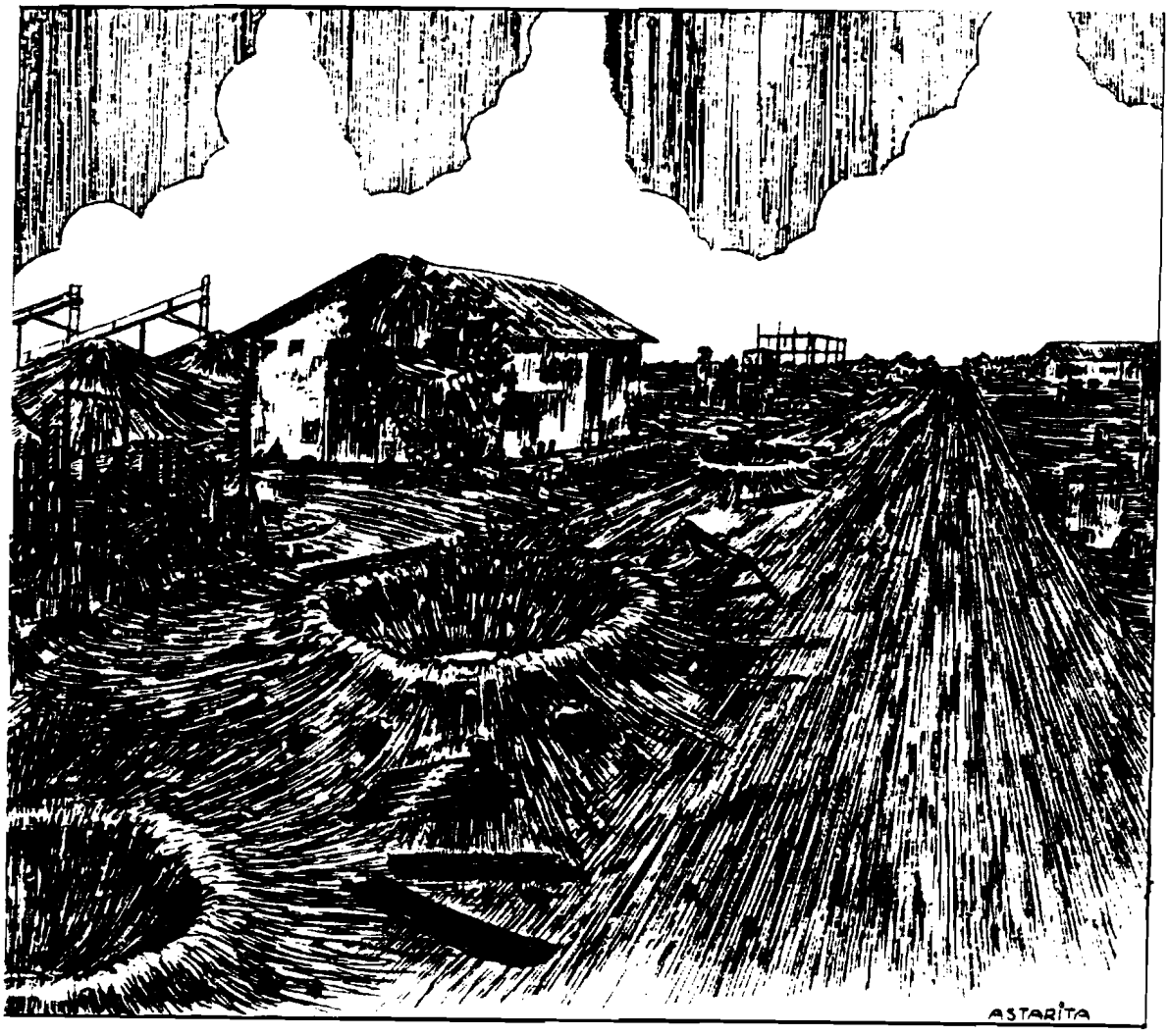
Like Silverman, Norman Daudlin was in his barracks washing up for lunch when he heard bombs dropping. As he made it outside, he saw a Japanese bomber coming right at him. Throwing himself on the ground, machine-gun bullets kicked up coral dust a foot on both sides of where he lay. "I looked up at the plane which was only 200 to 300 feet high and saw the tail gunner laughing at me."[13]

After striking the Pan Am facilities and Camp Two, both formations of Japanese bombers traveled north out over the ocean, circled, and came back toward Wake Island. Dropping bombs and strafing all targets of opportunity, the bombers traveled north to south. Unlike Charles Varney, who had a "ringside" view of the attack, John Burton's view was about to land him in the ring. With the planes continuing to travel south, Burton felt they were heading for the aviation storage tanks that were near. "I could imaging being burned alive in that flaming gasoline. I ran at a dead run out into the ocean and got behind a big jutting piece of coral." [14] Burton stayed behind that coral as the planes passed and continued south, until they were out of sight. The total attack on Wake Island lasted a maximum of ten minutes. However, in those ten minutes, the island's inhabitants got a rude awakening to World War II.

The survivors of the first attack had to deal with the shock, but they were also left with the feeling of the unknown. Questions nagged at the men: Was the attack over? Were more planes coming? What happened? Who was hurt? Who had died? These questions concerned the workers. Before some of these questions were answered, the wreckage had to be cleared and the wounded cared for.

Ben Comstock volunteered to search the island for casualties. Since so many men scattered when the initial attack occurred, volunteers such as Comstock walked the brush to locate casualties. Comstock noticed that "a great number of the casualties were fellows having their heels blown off [because] when they hit the dirt they did not turn their feet sideways." [15] Once a wounded man was found he was loaded aboard a truck and taken to the civilian hospital at Camp Two. There the civilian Dr. Shank, and the military doctor, Lieutenant Kahn, worked together to treat civilian and military personnel. Prior to

the raid, the civilian hospital was already nearly full from normal medical cases. With the injured arriving by foot, piggy-back, or by vehicle, the hospital quickly overflowed with patients. Shank ordered Theodore Abraham, a medical secretary, to take "the station wagon over to Peale Island, about two miles away, to pick up as many cots and mattresses as [he] could find."[16] The trip to Peale gave Abraham a chance to survey the damage firsthand. An interesting item noticed by Abraham was the birds who flew about in all directions. No doubt the birds were disoriented and scared form the bombing, just like the island's human inhabitants.



View of destruction caused at contractors camp. Above is the contractors warehouse. Behind and to the left can be seen the conveyor belts and gravel piles where many of the men were able to take shelter. (Astarita)

Abraham had made four trips to Peale before he was eventually stopped by a marine who inquired what he was doing. After explaining his task, Abraham learned from the marine that there was an unexploded bomb inside the building and the warehouse was off limits. Abraham happily got back into his vehicle and returned to the hospital, thankful that he was not a casualty too.

Like many of the civilians, Joe Astarita was on his way to the mess hall when the raid caught him out in the open. Once the raid ended, Astarita continued to head toward the mess hall, which unknown to him had been all but destroyed in the attack. Upon arrival, Astarita witnessed the carnage caused by the air raid. Astarita, an admitted lover of food, thought to himself, "there won't be many meals after this, I went ahead and had a good lunch."[17] Though his reaction might seem a bit callous considering what had just occurred, others would later wish they would have had a chance to enjoy that last good meal with Astarita.

As the island's inhabitants continued the process of surveying the damage and helping the injured, Pan Am officials decided the safest course of action was to get its passengers out as soon as possible. Since the hotel was destroyed and their safety was in jeopardy, the officials decided to remove all Pan Am personnel too. As the Clipper refueled and unloaded any unnecessary weight, attempts were made to locate all the passengers, who had scattered when the attack began. By midafternoon all the passengers had been rounded up with the exception of two. Unable to wait any longer, the Clipper was loaded with passengers and Pan Am officials. J. O. Young and some of his friends had gone to Peale Island a couple of hours after the attack to inspect the damage done by the Japanese. Young and his friends were at the Pan Am dock as the Clipper prepared to

depart. The pilot of the Clipper approached the group of civilians and stated, "There is room for a few more, do any of you want to come with us?"[18] Not one of the civilian workers accepted the offer. Young remembers the group expressed remarks that the United States would be coming for them in a few days, or they would take the next ship home. At roughly four P.M. the Clipper glided across the lagoon before becoming airborne. It was heading to Midway Island and home.

With the Clipper gone, the inhabitants were completely isolated and on their own until help arrived. The Clipper's departure also marked a sad incident in the eyes of Commander Cunningham. All of the Pan Am personnel were evacuated with the exception of the Guam employees. When two of these employees tried to stow away aboard the Clipper, they were "booted off shortly before the Clipper took off. It seemed an unfortunate time to draw the color line."[19] However, this selfish event would not become the norm on Wake Island, but the exception. As the shock of the original attack wore off, many of the civilians looked for ways to pitch in and help the marines.

Damage reports were bad, but not as bad as things could have been. The water storage tank, power plant, distillery, canteen, hospital, and a few of the civilian barracks had survived. The civilian mess was destroyed, but fortunately the kitchen facilities along with warehouses and refrigeration units had been spared. Several large storage tanks for aviation fuel had been destroyed, but there was still an adequate supply stored in fifty-gallon drums.

Civilian volunteers were requested to help disperse and camouflage the canned food, fuel, and water stored in empty fuel drums across the island in small caches. Not only would the dispersal help protect these vital items in any future raids but it would also

help in meeting the needs of the men who were going to have to disperse as well. With barracks being a likely target in the future, the civilians were encouraged to relocate to the brush and build whatever shelters they could. Volunteers were also needed to collect and identify the dead. In addition to the men lost at the Pan Am facilities and the airport, an estimated thirty to thirty-five workers had been killed at the mess hall or caught in the open. All the remains were placed inside a large freezer unit that had been emptied near the civilian mess for storage. The bodies were to be kept there until they could be returned to the United States for burial.

Roy Stephens met one of these civilian "graves and registration" volunteers the next day. The volunteer had used a station wagon with the seats removed to load and transport bodies. Stephens, unaware of the man's activity the previous day, caught a ride with the man to "take a run around the island and see what she looks like."[20] Covered with blood and bits of flesh, the station wagon had sat all night in the warm climate and developed a strong stench. Stephens rode with the man for about 300 yards when the odor finally overpowered him and he demanded that the man stop so he could get out. "I didn't like the odor and really wasn't wanting to see the island too damn bad anyway, so I said, . . . let me out."[21]

The impact of the dead also had a strong affect on Melvin Danner. Danner had been wounded in the arm during the bombing. Once it was safe to move, he headed toward the hospital to get it examined. After having his wound bandaged and receiving a tetanus shot, he left the hospital and quickly forgot his own problems. A truck had just pulled up in front of the hospital with people who had been injured at the Pan Am hotel. The bodies were stacked up in the back of the truck, and "it was necessary to sort body

parts out to see that the right parts went with the body . . . I forgot my own problems."[22] Danner was in shock until someone told him to either get to work or get out of the way and let someone else in who could help. Danner became one of several hundred civilians who were looking for ways to help.

Ike Wardle heard about a need for help on Peale Island so he decided to go there and see what he could do. Fires were still burning at what was left of the Pan Am hotel and it was feared that these fires might spread to nearby undamaged buildings. Wardle and a friend found a bulldozer, dozed down the remains, and pushed it into a pile to contain the fire.

During the raid the Japanese destroyed the planes on the ground at the airfield, but not one bomb hit the runway. It was believed that this was not by chance, but an entirely planned action by the Japanese. It seemed obvious that the Japanese had their own plans for the runway. Therefore, during the early evening hours, Wardle volunteered to help place dynamite charges along the entire runway on Wake. Once this was completed, heavy equipment was parked on the runway so if the Japanese tried to make a night landing, they would get a nasty surprise.

James Allen arrived at the civilian mess shortly after the raid and heard that all civilians who had trained with the marines were to report Camp One. When Allen arrived, he "was issued a 30-06 [Springfield Rifle] rifle, which was covered with cosmoline. The Marines had gasoline in buckets to remove the cosmoline, which was a difficult, time consuming job."[23] After getting his rifle clean, he was issued twenty rounds of ammunition. He and his friends then proceeded down the road toward the five-inch gun they had previously practiced with. On the way there they were stopped by some marines

from one of the three-inch antiaircraft emplacements who asked if the civilians would come and help them. The marines went on to explain that there were a total of eight of them to man three guns and they were in need of men to help pass the ammunition. Allen and his friends briefly discussed the situation and figured that helping was helping, no matter where they ended up, so they went with the marines. According to Allen, another reason for their decision might have been the fact that their legs were tired from all the walking and this would give them an opportunity to rest.

Over 180 workers appeared outside the tent of Major Bayler, who was a qualified recruiting officer, wishing to officially join the military. Upon considering the situation and not knowing if Japan would honor the Geneva Convention, it was felt best to not allow these men to join for fear they might be executed for being guerrillas. Bayler did accept eleven men who had been World War I veterans, and civilians like Charles Varney who had previously been in the marines. By having an established service record, it was felt that these men would be safer if captured. Civilian John Burroughs summed up the frustration of many civilians on Wake: "The contractors had agreed that no personal weapons would be brought to Wake. Now the civilians were faced with an armed enemy and with little means to protect themselves."[24] Major Bayler, recognizing the civilians frustrations, warned the marines to be careful where they placed their rifles and pistols because the civilians were stealing them for their own protection.

Contrary to what one would think, work did not stop on the projects. In fact, these projects were needed more now than ever. Civilians who had heavy equipment experience were requested to help dig underground shelters for the remaining planes. "Equipment dug deep channels on the flat island, which was covered with steel beams,

plywood, sheet iron and dirt, to guard the fighters."[25] The same technique was used to build an underground kitchen so that food could be prepared for the island's inhabitants. Superintendent Teters volunteered to feed the entire island's population at their assigned positions. Each day chuck wagons, "station wagons" or trucks, would traverse the islands bringing food to the marines and their civilian auxiliaries. Civilians living out in the brush relied on caches of food and water for survival.

Civilians provided critical support in the area of communication. The island was covered with telephone lines that connected gun emplacements to command posts. Unfortunately, most of these lines had been simply laid on the surface of the islands. Because of the number of things to do, there had not been enough time to bury these lines before the Japanese struck. Therefore, volunteers were needed to trace breaks in the lines and repair them. Arnold Green volunteered to help the radio operators, who were to man their position twenty-four hours a day. Since Green could use a telegraph, he would relieve some of the army radio operators so that they could get some sleep.

Civilians also provided vital help at the airfield. Since many members of the ground and maintenance crews were killed or wounded, civilians such as M. D. Johnson brought tools from the civilian shops and helped perform maintenance on the surviving fighters. Richard Williamson performed an equally important role at the airport. Not only did he help load 100-pound bombs from storage areas onto trucks for use by the planes, but he also walked the runway numerous times looking for shrapnel that might damage tires on takeoff or landing.

Commander Cunningham recognized another task, vital but often overlooked, that was needed to ensure the island's defense; sanitation. "Covered latrines were built all

over the atoll wherever groups of people were located. Dysentery could ravage our effective strength as thoroughly as a Japanese raid."[26]

The night of December 8 found hundreds of men lying in small depressions and holes across Wake Island. Few men wanted to spend the night in the barracks after witnessing the destruction that had occurred earlier that day. It was obvious that these structures were prime targets. The barracks that did survive often offered a glimpse of what could have been. When John Burton finally made it to his barracks he was happy to see that it was still standing. However, when he discovered machine-gun holes through his bed, he was more then ready to spend the night outside in something safer, like a hole. Many of the men spent a cool night in their slit trenches.

Although the military was doing all that they could, everyone knew that they were understrength. Even if the civilians were allowed to enlist, there were not enough small arms available to make a difference. Therefore, the men realized they were on their own until help arrived. For some men the shock of the attack caused them to go off into the brush and hide, not to been seen again until the whole situation played itself out. For others like Melvin Danner, it was a question of responsibility. "We felt that it was our duty as Americans to do whatever we could to help defend our country."[27]

On the morning of December 9, the sun rose brightly. Two planes headed off for patrol and an observer was placed atop the water tower to look for Japanese aircraft. The fact that the sky was clear was a positive sign for the Wake defenders. If the Japanese did return, hopefully the defenders would have adequate warning, something lacking during the previous overcast day. Another element working in the island's defense was that the previous attack was made of bombers. Because of the range, the bombers had to be

operating from a land base. This information, coupled with the knowledge that the bombers arrived and departed the previous day from the south led to the conclusion that they were probably based in the Marshall Islands. Therefore, "if the bombers took off at dawn, they could be expected sometime after 11:00 A.M."[28] Although that conclusion was based on speculation, it seemed logical and would give the defenders adequate warning

At 11:45, Cunningham was radioed from the water tower watch that objects were spotted east of Wake Island. Those who had radios heard the warning and began to alert others by firing small arms in a three-round burst. This system had been developed, since the surf masked the sound of approaching planes, as a signal to take cover.

The bombers first struck at the defense batteries on the eastern point of Wake Island, then moved on to the airport. Once again the runway was not hit and the only real casualties were a few gas drums. The real target this day seemed to be Camp Two. As Commander Cunningham watched through his binoculars, the bombers swarmed over the camp before heading over to Peale, dropping more bombs and then departing. The raid may have lasted only a few minutes, but it provided a number of lessons for the men on Wake.

This raid confirmed that Wake was an important target for the Japanese and the previous day's raid was not just a harassing attack. A second lesson was that Camp Two was certainly not safe and should be evacuated. To Cunningham's disgust, some of the civilians had not heeded the previous day's warning and had been caught as a group during the second raid. Third, the raid showed that attempting to work during the day was too dangerous and that most work would have to be conducted during hours of darkness.

A survey of the damage found that more barracks in Camp Two had been destroyed along with warehouses, administration buildings, and machine shops. On Peale, some large warehouses were hit, along with a communication building, storehouses, and a gasoline dump. Most important, and perhaps the greatest shock for the men on Wake, was the fact that the Japanese bombed the base hospital even though it had large red crosses painted on it. A mad scramble was made by the doctors, nurses, and men nearby to remove the patients before the burning building collapsed. This single event not only caused considerable anger for the workers but also showed them what type of enemy they were fighting.

With the hospital destroyed, it was now obvious that any aboveground structure was not safe. Orders were given to empty two of the reinforced concrete magazines near the airport so that they could be used as a hospital. Throughout the day volunteers helped transfer ammunition to other magazines and to guns across the island. Once this was accomplished, the patients and salvaged equipment from the hospital were transported to the new facilities. "Each of the little igloos had room for twenty-one beds. Gasoline-driven generators were set in pits dug alongside the structures to provide electricity for lights, refrigerators and other purposes. With their doors closed, the converted hospitals would show no light."[29] An unfortunate part of this new arrangement was that facilities were not available in the igloos to divide the operating "room" from that of the patient's room. Many procedures were performed in clear view of the patients, but no complaints were logged, for the alternative was returning aboveground and being placed in harm's way.

Following the raid word began to spread around the island that they had gotten their first "Japs." The combat air patrol had shot down one bomber and damaged several others. The antiaircraft guns, which the previous day had proven virtually useless because of the low altitude of the attackers, had also shot down a plane and left several others smoking. Flying at roughly 13,000 feet, the Japanese bombers were much better targets for the antiaircraft guns than they had been the previous day. However, not everyone was celebrating the victories. Roy Stephens had been working with some civilians sandbagging an antiaircraft position when the raid occurred. At first he stood and watched, thinking, that when they got close he would run out from under them. As the bombs got closer, Stephens took off running. He had traveled about twenty-five yards when he went to jump over two burlap bags that had been filled with coral by someone. As he leaped over the obstacle, he fell in a hole that someone had dug. The bags had obstructed his view of the hole and just as he hit the ground a bomb dropped nearby. In fact, the bomb landed so close, "it knocked the air out of me."[30] The impact forced Stephens deeper into the hole and caused him to black out for a short time. As Stephens recovered he heard someone say the planes were coming back. "I didn't even look up. I was making my hole a little bigger. That old coral is so hard; you can't dig in it with your hands."[31] When he felt it was finally safe to come out, Stephens discovered the burlap bags had received the brunt of the explosion and probably saved his life. When he returned to the spot where he had been working, he discovered the area had taken a direct hit and that several of the men he had just been working with had been killed. "I looked at some of those guys, two or three of them I couldn't even recognize. They were torn all to pieces. There was flesh and blood all over the ground."[32] Where there had been

sixteen to seventeen men before the raid, only four were left. Stephens was so disgusted by the sight that he did not stay to retrieve the dead, he simply walked off. As he wandered down the road he saw the station wagon that had helped him the previous day immobilized. The same man was at the wheel, but this time his face appeared chalk white. On closer inspection Stephens discovered that the man had been fatally wounded. Shooting down a couple of planes did not begin to make up for the lives lost during the raid. According to various accounts, nearly fifty civilians were killed and many more were wounded.

Medical secretary Theodore Abraham was given the task of helping to collect the dead following the day's attack. Finding a body is traumatic, but the first body Abraham found was shocking. Apparently when the raid occurred the victim had wrapped his arms and legs around a pipe, "the explosion . . . had stripped him of all his clothing except his shoes, and left his body unmarked, except for a rich tan."[33] Abraham and the men helping him stared in amazement. There were no visible wounds on the body, and it took five minutes to finally pry him away from the pipe.

It became obvious that better protection had to be provided for the personnel on the island. Raleigh Rucker and others "went out and buried several large galvanized pipes around the island so that if we got caught out in an air raid we would have somewhere to go."[34] Roy Stephens came across some workers who had made a makeshift air raid shelter, but weren't willing to share. Stephens noticed some forty-inch pipe nearby, found a bulldozer, and made his own shelter. After digging a trench, he rolled the pipe in and covered it so only the two ends were exposed. If a raid covered one end, Stephens had left himself an escape. When he wasn't helping at the antiaircraft guns, Stephens spent his

time in his shelter. These measures were taking place all over the island as necessity became the mother of invention. Whether it was pipe, timber, sheet metal, or some other material, the shelters were becoming more sophisticated. The net result would be fewer casualties in the coming days.

A review of the raid showed that the Japanese intended to target the island's civilians and its military posts. One marine noticed that one of the Japanese planes had broken off from the others during the raid and seemed to circle the island several times. He concluded that this plane was conducting reconnaissance and the information it gathered would help the Japanese pick targets for the next raid. If this observation was correct, and it seemed likely, the island had to prepare as best it could. The airfield was upgraded. The surviving planes were in protective revetments, and most of the flammable materials had also been dispersed. Nothing could protect the camp buildings, but a subterranean hospital had been established and civilians were already constructing individual shelters. The five-inch guns were stationary and were not effective against aircraft, but not much could be done to protect them except add more sandbags. However, the three-inch guns could be used in an antiaircraft role and during the recent raid the three-inch guns at Peacock Point were targeted for destruction. Fortunately, the guns received minor damage, but how long could the marine's fortune hold out?

It was proposed, and Commander Cunningham agreed, that the three-inch battery at Peacock Point be moved to a new location. This seemed sensible, but an incredible amount of effort would be needed to accomplish the move. Each gun, which weighed several tons, would have to be jacked up, mounted on trailers, then hauled to the new position. All told, the process required four moves to relocate the entire battery. Besides

moving the guns and the ammunition, each gun would have to be ringed with sandbags. To deceive the Japanese, dummy emplacements made of wood and four-inch pipe were left in the previous location. Although the idea was sound, the marines simply did not have the manpower to accomplish the task. Therefore, Superintendent Teters was called on for help. As night fell, Teters and about 100 civilians arrived at the gun position with some trucks and equipment, ready to lend a hand. Because of the threat of a possible night raid, the vehicles were made blackout-ready by covering the headlights with blue paint. The paint permitted enough light to drive, but not enough to illuminate the trucks to a plane flying overhead. Although it had taken most of the night, when the sun rose on December 10 the new position had been established and the old position had been made as convincing as possible. The only thing to do was return to places of safety, rest, have some breakfast, and wait and see what the new day might bring.

At 10:45 A.M. almost on schedule, observers spotted Japanese bombers off the eastern approach to Wake Island. In a matter of moments, the planes struck their targets and were gone. In what was becoming a routine, the men then came out of their shelters to check the damage and help the casualties. The decoy guns at Peacock Point were seriously damaged. The deception had worked to perfection and the herculean task of moving the battery had paid off.

The greatest damage to the island came when bombs ignited a dynamite bunker on Wilkes Island. The dynamite had been used to excavate the new channel across the island and for other projects. The resulting explosion leveled much of the vegetation on the island, damaged the three-inch guns on Wilkes, and ignited ammunition that was stored

nearby. Fortunately, casualties were light and the guns were still operable, though the range finders were damaged.

Following the raid, Cunningham noticed that morale among both Marines and workers had increased. "We had discovered that a man's chances of surviving an air raid were pretty good if he observed normal precautions. We were growing accustomed to our new way of life; we felt better than we had at any time since our Sunday holiday."[35] For the remainder of the daylight hours the "chow wagons" made the rounds trying to reach the island's population. A few men moved cautiously and continued to improve their shelters, helped to repair phone lines, or just tried to get some sleep. With sundown the real work began. The military sent word to Dan Teters on how many civilian volunteers were needed and where they should report. Sometimes Teters had more than enough workers, and at other times, he had to go out and round up the needed men. The key was having the right number of men for the required tasks. Too few meant the job might not be accomplished, and too many proved to be a danger to all involved. Because the most minimal amount of light was being used, it would be dangerous to have a swarm of men trying to move a gun that weighed tons. No one wanted to cause an accident in such an environment.

Working at night also played on the fear and anxiety the men were feeling at the time. Woodrow Whittenburg saw his fears magnified one night while he was walking in the brush near the lagoon. Thinking he had heard footsteps on the coral beach, Whittenburg dropped to his hands and knees, afraid that Japanese had landed on the island. "After a few minutes, I realized it was one of the big dry land crabs about the size of a cantaloupe, which would tumble over and make a crunching sound."[36] Whittenburg

was able to shrug off this experience, but it certainly exemplifies the stress that many on Wake experienced.

On the night of December 10, the marine commander decided that the three-inch guns needed to be moved again. This time it was not one battery that needed to move, but two, which meant more men, more sandbags, more equipment, and more dummy guns. In addition to this work, others had to dig foxholes and help set and build revetments for .30-caliber and .50-caliber machine-gun emplacements. Forrest Read volunteered to help move some of the three-inch guns. Since he was a heavy equipment operator, he was "ordered to move the 3 inch [gun] up to shore with a RD8 cat [caterpillar] at night . . . when I started the Cat, fire was belching out the exhaust, I was ordered to shut that damn thing off, or they'll see those flashes."[37] Fear of the enemy, night and day, was now a constant.

Once again the workers came through. The guns were moved and both the new and old emplacements were made ready. Likewise, new foxholes were dug and others were improved. On occasion, some men put additional effort into their foxholes. J. O. Young was on Wilkes Island helping the marines in whatever capacity was warranted. One day he noticed a gunnery sergeant had dug his foxhole so that he could jump in and stand up-right. He reasoning was that by doing this he could continue to watch the planes as they approached his fighting position. Young remembers how "one day the attack came at high tide and he [the sergeant] ran and jumped into it feet first and had a heck of a time because the hole was full of water."[38] With their work completed, the men returned to the safety of their shelters to try and get some rest before the sun came up and the next raid. What they did not know was getting to sleep that night would be especially difficult.

At roughly three A.M., Commander Cunningham was awakened to the news that a lookout had spotted what he thought were ships on the horizon. For the next two hours the objects were watched closely and word was spread among the workers to take cover and not to move. Observation proved that the objects were ships, but the question was, whose? It crossed Cunningham's mind that these might be navy ships coming to Wake's rescue. Once he analyzed the situation he quickly dismissed it. Even if the navy had sent help following Wake's first attack, it would take at least a week to ten days before they could reach the atoll. Since only three days had passed, the warships had to be Japanese.

Since the Japanese naval guns outranged Wake's coastal batteries, word was sent to the marines to hold their fire. For the next two and half agonizing hours the marines and their civilian volunteers watched and waited as the Japanese ships moved within range. At approximately 5:30 the Japanese opened fire. Cunningham remembers the tension as "a column of Japanese ships moved parallel to Wake's southern shore, advancing from Peacock Point toward Wilkes. Then it turned toward the atoll, moved in closer, turned again, and began steaming back toward Peacock."[39] At the same time this was occurring another small group of ships was approaching Wilkes Island. Both groups of ships increased their rate of fire. All this time the marines held their fire and waited for the Japanese to come within range. After successfully enticing the Japanese to close the range, orders were given at six A.M. to open fire. For the next forty-five minutes the marines, in many cases aided by civilians passing ammunition, pounded the Japanese with a lethal barrage of five-inch fire.

Leal Russell had been out traveling in a pickup truck when he saw a Japanese destroyer approach the island. Knowing that there was a marine five-inch gun nearby,

Russell stopped his truck and got out so he could watch the impending fight. As he sat on the running board of the truck Russell watched as the destroyer took repeated hits and sank right before his eyes. Later Russell learned that the gun firing on the destroyer lacked its fire direction control system and the crew was sighting down the barrel of the gun.

By seven A.M. all firing had stopped. One Japanese ship was known sunk and several others had been damaged and were smoking as they sailed away. Although the Japanese had limped out of range of the five-inch guns, they had yet to fully escape. Free to press their own attacks, three of the surviving Marine Wilcats dropped 100-pound bombs and strafed the fleeing ships, which resulted in yet another ship sinking. The best part was, even with all the shells the Japanese had fired; there were no Wake casualties. There were, however, some close calls. When word had been sent to take cover, Ben Comstock and his father climbed in their foxhole and threw a couple of mattresses over the top. "When the shelling was over and we came out in the open we discovered one mattress was just about cut in two pieces. One shell was closer that we thought."[40]

The Japanese naval bombardment boosted morale on Wake Island. As word spread across the island that the marines had beat back the Japanese, men crawled out of their shelters to celebrate victory. Commander Cunningham and Major Devereux took a short break to enjoy a beer together, even if it was warm, and recounted their success. What neither of them really realized was the impact the victory would have back in the United Sates. Every day Cunningham would send a report back to Pearl Harbor concerning Wake's status and that day's activities. His recent report told of the first

Japanese ships sunk and damaged during the war and was the first positive news the American public received since the war began.

The celebration ended when Japanese bombers made a return visit. Apparently, the Japanese realized that their intelligence was inaccurate concerning Wake's defenses. Unlike previous raids, on December 11 the bombers struck at 9:15 A.M. However, Wake was ready. This time the bombers inflicted no real damage and no causalities were incurred. To make matters even better, a couple of bombers had been shot down by the Marine Wildcats. In retrospect, throughout the whole siege of Wake, December 11 remained the best day in the island's defense.

The workers had little time for celebration when late in the afternoon the process of loading and moving the guns began yet again. Another more grim task demanded immediate attention: burial of the dead. Some of the men had been buried where they died, but others were stored in the refrigeration unit near the civilian mess. A dragline operator dug a trench into the hard coral and the dead, both civilian and military, were buried there. Since it was not safe meeting in large groups, only a small handful of men attended the short ceremony. Cunningham arrived at the conclusion of the burial and ordered that the dead should be buried where they fell. He truthfully hoped that there would not be a need for such gatherings in the future. The exact total of men killed in action remains difficult to estimate since some were buried in the brush. Cunningham estimated that approximately fifty-five to sixty men, mostly civilians, were killed during the early raids on Wake.

Repulsing the Japanese task force was a great accomplishment, but the fight for Wake Island was far from over. Though they did not know it at the time, the island's

defenders were about to begin a new monotonous phase of the island's defense. The bombers arrived each day, dropped their bombs, and departed. The men came out of their shelters, inspected and repaired the damage, moved the antiaircraft guns, and were happy that they had made it through another day. Complicating this routine was the fact that the Japanese varied their times and means of attack. Besides using conventional bombers, the Japanese also used large four-engine flying boats to gather intelligence at nighttime or to look for targets of opportunity they could attack.

The effect of the raids left the men on edge. On Saturday, December 14, no raids occurred. All day long the men checked the skies for approaching Japanese aircraft. No one wanted to experience another raid, but at least when a raid ended, so did the tension, and then the workers had some hours of peace. With mounting anticipation, the men were never at ease. The following day the Japanese broke their routine and raided Wake in the morning and in the afternoon. On December 15, the Japanese sent one flight of bombers to Wake. By varying their tactics, the Japanese were gradually wearing down the men and affecting their morale. The increasing tension had the effect of making the men become careless. "Nerves remained tense for so long that they grew listless and flabby; the time came when we had to remind ourselves that our lives were the stakes in the tiresome game we were playing [with the Japanese]."[41]

As if those problems were not enough, each raid usually caused additional damage that taxed the dwindling supplies that were needed to repair the damaged structures. Bomb-damaged sandbag revetments had to be replaced. When the supply of sandbags was exhausted, the workers and military resorted to using cement bags and ammunition boxes filled with coral sand to protect the guns. By using parts from the planes that had

been destroyed during the first raid, the men of VMF-211 were able to keep their four remaining planes in the air. However, the longer the raids continued the more stress was placed on both the pilots and aircraft. Soon the lack of spare parts became critical.

Likewise, the security of the water plant was paramount if resistance was to continue. Therefore, steps were taken to protect the large freshwater storage tanks. Ike Wardle and others used equipment to dig, haul, and position coral sand from the lagoon, as high as possible, around these tanks. Though they would not be fully safe from a direct hit, the sand would hopefully protect them from bomb damage and machine-gun fire. This work, so critical, had to be done during daylight hours at considerable risk to the workers. Lookouts were posted to check the horizon. If an attack occurred, alarms were sounded so workers could seek cover. Wardle also helped to protect the water supply by gathering, cleaning, filling, and then distributing water drums across the island.

One of Commander Cunningham's officers suggested that they should go out and round up workers in hiding so that they too could help in preparing the island's defenses. Cunningham understood their worries --- few of the civilians had ever experienced combat. Still, the work had to be done if Wake was to survive a Japanese landing. If common sense and national honor failed to bring the men in, the military might have to force them to work. Although such actions might not be popular in peacetime, the United States found itself at war and drastic means were needed. More to the point, Cunningham and Devereux lacked the manpower to force men in hiding to return to work.

Despite earlier attempts to provide adequate sanitation, dysentery set in. Men grew weaker and facilities were not available to treat all of the sick. The Japanese attacks also reduced the bird population and the increasing number of bird carcasses also resulted

in a threat to public health. The dead birds not only attracted flies, but also helped feed the rat population. It was not uncommon for rats to end up in the foxholes and bunkers the men occupied, resulting in some terrifying moments for the workers. Fear of rat bites increased the strain on the island.

Ever since the first attack on Wake Island, rumors spread that the workers were to be evacuated. Melvin Danner remembers the rumors as being a positive influence. "We were sure that our contract called for us to be evacuated and there was no doubt that this promise would be honored."[42] As each day came and went and no relief appeared, the rumors only seemed to lessen civilian morale and were met with suspicion. Early on December 20, Wake received a transmission from Midway Island to expect a visitor later that day. Unknown to the workers on Wake, a Catalina flying boat had departed from Pearl Harbor the previous day and landed at Midway, with its eventual destination Wake Island.

At roughly 3:30 P.M. on December 20, Wake received its first friendly visitor to the island since the war began. The navy PBY landed in the lagoon and tied up near the destroyed Pan Am facilities. Though the plane was not the cavalry, it brought good news. Receiving an official dispatch from the PBY crew, Commander Cunningham learned that a relief of Wake was being organized. This force would include another squadron of planes, spare parts, ammunition, more marines, and the evacuation of all but 250 of the island's civilian workforce. However, the dispatch did not say when the force would arrive. After informing the other officers of the news. Cunningham contacted Dan Teters and suggested that he begin to draw up a list of 250 civilian volunteers who would stay behind. Upon a recommendation from Pearl Harbor, the chosen civilians should be able to provide

critical services such as power and desalination plant operations, truck and tractor operators, transportation operators, and mechanics. In addition, a small crew of carpenters and electricians would be retained. Considering all that had happened, staying behind was a tough decision for any civilian. Leal Russell, assistant superintendent, was approached by Dan Teters with the proposition of remaining behind and serving as superintendent of the 250 civilians. His diary shows that his decision was not an easy one. Russell wrote, "I have not as yet accepted or declined, but in fairness to my wife and family I think I shall decline."[43]

The good news quickly spread and improved morale. The PBY crew also brought reports from the States. After questioning the crew, the men discovered the extent of the damage at Pearl Harbor and the public's anger. Each day, the American public was reminded of the heroic defense of Wake. Such slogans as "Wake Up" and "Remember Wake" were common places to invoke Americans to focus on the nation's war efforts. Nearly everyone on Wake was shocked when they learned from the PBY crew of a radio transmission that had originated from Wake, stating, "Send Us More Japs." The last thing the workers wanted were more "Japs." Upon investigation it was determined that the island did send the message, but not in the manner that it was reported. Standard military procedure dictated that all radio transmission be padded with extra words so that if the transmission was intercepted it would be more difficult to decode. One such transmission was started with, "Send Us" and ended with "More Japs." Someone's joke had created a propaganda bonanza in the United States, but the island's inhabitants were not amused.

Since the PBY had arrived late in the afternoon, arrangements were made for them to spend the night before departing the next morning. The layover allowed the crew an opportunity to survey Wake. Before the PBY departed the workers wrote letters home. Two men did not need to write letters because they were scheduled to leave the next morning on the PBY. One was Major Walter Bayler, a communications officer, who had orders to depart to Midway on the first available transport. The other man was a civilian who had missed the departure of the China Clipper on December 8.

Before dawn broke on December 21, the crew of the PBY prepared their plane for takeoff. Major Bayler arrived with a stack of letters that he had collected from men all across the island and said his good-byes. But by another cruel twist of fate, and naval regulations, the civilian who was to depart with Bayler, Mr. Hevenor was not allowed on board. Regulations stated that each person aboard a flight must have both a life vest and a parachute. Unfortunately, Hevenor had none and he was left behind once again. As the PBY departed and headed toward Midway, it gave Wake renewed hope.

This spirit was slightly tarnished a few hours later when the island received a heavy pounding from Japanese bombers and fighters. This was the first time Japanese fighters had appeared over Wake. When Cunningham saw the Zeros he was sure the Japanese had no such aircraft and perhaps these were planes they purchased from Germany. The appearance of fighters were serious since fighters did not have the range to operate from any of the Japanese-mandated islands and had to come from an aircraft carrier. The fighters signaled the preparation for a naval assault on the island by Japanese Imperial Marines. At noon, the island was hit again by Japanese bombers.

That evening the men once again moved guns, dispersed ammunition, improved defenses and if time permitted, had something to eat. However, something new was added to their routine, hope. While the men went about their jobs, an organized relief force was on its way to Wake. Its projected arrival date was December 24, but with the Japanese carriers in the area would this change American plans?

On December 22, Cunningham received a radio message from Pearl Harbor requesting information about the condition of Wake's runways. The message led Cunningham to believe that the relief force was close. This was encouraging news, but two Japanese raids that day, changed the situation. Both raids included more aircraft than Wake had experienced previously, and a wide assortment of carrier-based aircraft. The military command on Wake did not realize that they confronted not one, but two aircraft carriers. To support Japan's efforts to take Wake, the Imperial Japanese Navy sent carriers from the Pearl Harbor strike force.

Besides the destruction, the raid brought an end to Wake's airpower. Held together by any means possible, VMF-211 was down to two planes prior to the raid of December 22. Both planes charged after their attackers that day and both inflicted damage on the enemy. However, the raid terminated the marine air effort in defense of the island since one plane crashed on landing and the other one never returned. Unable to repair the crashed plane, Wake's only offensive weapon was no more. The surviving pilots and maintenance personnel collected small arms and reported to the infantry.

In the early hours of December 23, word spread across the island that lights had been seen north of Wake. It appeared that the Japanese were back, but this time they had learned from their mistakes. Rather than bombard the island prior to landing troops as

they did on December 11, the Japanese picked a moonless night to mask their movements and quietly reduced their range. Cunningham remembered the night as being intensely dark with visibility only being a few yards. During the hours of darkness, the Japanese assaulted the southern shores of Wake and Wilkes Islands. Major Devereux, who was in charge of the defense battalion, had anticipated those Japanese landings since "the coral reefs that surrounded Wake were closest to the beach on the lee side, giving the invaders the shortest stretch of water to get through."[44] Likewise, this was the area the Japanese had attacked on December 11. With this information, Devereux concentrated all his available forces along that approach.

Unable to see anything, Gunner McKinstry thought he heard motors off the shore from his position on Wilkes Island. Deciding to fire, the tracers from his .50-caliber machine gun lit up the night. At the same time a searchlight located on Wilkes was switched on. The marines realized that the Japanese were not landing on Wilkes, they had already landed. Civilian J. O. Young was one of six civilians who had volunteered to help man the three-inch antiaircraft guns on Wilkes. When the gun crew realized the Japanese had landed and were actually working their way toward their position, they leveled their weapons in direct fire and fired as fast as they could. However, "we were firing with a 9 second fuse which propelled the projectile out several hundred yards. I cut the fuse down to zero and Gunner Mac started yelling, we'll have a muzzle blast. It did not happen and I'm sure we did not hit anything."[45] When the Japanese started throwing grenades toward the marines, McKinstry ordered the civilians to take cover and he and his men formed a skirmish line.

Darkness masked the Japanese movements, making it as difficult for the Japanese as the U.S. Marines. Two Japanese destroyers served as troop transports and provided artillery support as well. Unable to navigate in the darkness, both vessels purposely beached themselves and began to unload troops. The noise and the flares revealed the stranded ships. Putting together an impromptu crew of civilians and marines, Lieutenant Hanna found an unmanned three-inch gun. Although the gun's range finder and sights had been destroyed during an earlier raid, Hanna fired point-blank on one of the destroyers. The resulting fires illuminated the night, making it easier to locate the Japanese who were struggling to reach the shore.

Melvin Danner was helping to move some of the three-inch guns when the lights were observed north of Wake. Comments were exchanged among the work crew that they hoped these were American ships. However, Danner, and probably the others too, knew that was not the case. When the guns had been moved, Danner had begun to make his way back to his dugout when he was surprised to find a marine in full battle gear. The marine told Danner that the island was swarming with Japs and that he should take cover immediately and stay there. Danner did as he was told, but he had an uneasy feeling and remembered, "I had the wits scared out of me."[46]

Once he realized the firing was the "Real McCoy." and a landing was taking place, Cunningham sent a radio message to Pearl Harbor requesting help. About a half-hour later a return message was received from Pearl Harbor informing Wake that there were no friendly vessels in the vicinity. At this point Cunningham realized Wake was on its own.

Despite the defenders' efforts, the Japanese established a foothold and were driving the marines and volunteers back. The fight for Wake had come down to hand-to-

hand combat --- rifles, bayonets, and grenades --- and the fact remained that Wake was outnumbered. As the Japanese moved inland they cut phone lines, ending communication between forward positions and command posts. Soon Devereux and Cunningham lost command and control over the battle. There was no longer organized resistance on Wake; now it became a fight between various pockets of men.

During the ensuing confusion the marines on Wilkes discovered a gap in the Japanese lines and counterattacked from the rear. Caught in crossfire, the Japanese on Wilkes were systematically cut down. Unfortunately, the news did not reach Devereux or Cunningham because of the communication failures. What news Devereux and Cunningham did receive was bad. The Japanese appeared to control the airfield and attempts to dislodge them had failed. The main command post had received no word from Wilkes and it was assumed it had failed to the Japanese. At five A.M. Cunningham sent another message to Pearl Harbor, "Enemy on Island. Issue in Doubt."

As dawn approached, the issue was not "in doubt." Japanese ships ringed the island and fighters and bombers were anticipated shortly. Japanese flags were seen flying on Wilkes and attempts to bring men from Peale Island to reinforce those on Wake had failed. Later in the morning, a four-man crew made up of survivors from the air squadron saw that the airfield was in enemy hands. Three men were protecting a generator that was wired to the dynamite that was planted under the airstrip. The only reason the airstrip had not been blown was the hope that it was needed by the relief force. As of December 23, it seemed unlikely that the relief would reach them, so they detonated the charges; however, that attempt also failed.

Throughout the battle Devereux and Cunningham were in regular contact. At 6:30, Devereux informed Cunningham of the status of the marines, based on current intelligence. Enemy pressure was mounting and he felt the defenders would not be able to hold out much longer. Since he was not the island's commander, it was up to Cunningham to decide what should be done, and he had much to consider. With a depleting and unorganized force, no relief in sight, and the responsibility for all the civilians, not to mention the wounded, "I knew the time had come to consider the question that only a few hours ago had been unthinkable."[47] As Cunningham pondered his choices resistance continued.

On Wilkes, not only had the island not surrendered, but it had repulsed the Japanese landing. When dawn approached, civilian J. O. Young, his uncle, and other civilians came out of hiding. They saw Wilkes covered with dead marines, both American and Japanese. "There were 16 American Marines on Wilkes, eight of them were killed. Seventy of the seventy-two Japanese marines that landed were killed."[48] Young and the civilians picked up rifles and ammunition from the dead American marines and started to head toward the channel between Wilkes and Wake. Fearing that the Japanese would not take prisoners, they were ready to make a last-ditch stand. Young and the others did not get very far when they were told to stop and put down their weapons --- the island had been surrendered.

Realizing the fight could continue, but the result would be the same, Cunningham contacted Major Devereux at 7:30 and authorized the surrender to the Japanese. The battle for Wake Island was over, but the battle for survival was about to begin.

Notes

1. Winfield Cunningham, Wake Island Command (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1961), 54.

2. Ibid., 57.

3. James Allen, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 25 March 1997.

4. Samuel Silverman, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 May 1997.

5. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 61.

6. Peter Andrews, "The Defense of Wake," American Heritage (July/August 1987): 68.

7. Charles Varney, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 11 July 1997.

8. Ibid.

9. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 61.

10. Allen.

11. Arnold Greene, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 4 March 1997.

12. Silverman.

13. Norman Daudlin, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 4 March 1997.

14. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails (New York: Vantage Press, 1992), 60.

15. Ben Comstock, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 30 September 1996.

16. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? (Manhattan, KS. Sunflower Press, 1992), 5.

17. Joe Astarita, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 March 1997.

18. J. O. Young, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 July 1997.

19. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 62.

20. Roy Stephens, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 May 1997, 3-5.

21. Ibid.

22. Melvin Danner, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 12 March 1997.

23. Allen.

24. John Burroughs, "An Eyewitness Account of the Siege of Wake Island," American Heritage (June 1959): 70.

25. Woodrow Whittenburg, Wake --- War & Hell (1992), 3.

26. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 66.

27. Danner.

28. Andrews, "The Defense of Wake," 69.

29. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 74.

30. Stephens, 3-6.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., 3-7.

33. Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 11.

34. Raleigh Rucker, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 June 1997, 17.

35. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 82.

36. Whittenburg, Wake --- War & Hell, 3.

37. Forrest Read, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 18 May 1998.

38. Young.

39. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 88.

40. Comstock, 3.

41. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 99.

42. Danner.

43. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 73.

44. Andrews, "The Defense of Wake," 75.

45. Young.

46. Danner.

47. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 135.

48. Young.

Chapter 3

Capture and the Unknown

Wake's surrender proved to be no easy task. Confusion and chaos reigned across the three islands. Since communications had been cut during the Japanese attack, getting word out was difficult. Equally complicated was locating and notifying everyone of the surrender. In the fog of battle, men and gun positions had moved continually. Their current locations were a mystery to the island's commander. A more daunting problem was trying to locate the civilians who had created their own shelters in the brush. Employing considerable ingenuity, some civilians had not only constructed bomb shelters, but had camouflaged them so they were indistinguishable from the rest of the terrain.

James Allen had been helping some marines at an antiaircraft gun when the position received a phone call. After answering the call, the battery commander informed the men that the island had surrendered and they were to destroy the antiaircraft gun, all their rifles, and side arms. Once this was done, the battery commander led the marines and civilians to the road to await captivity.

Allen's notification was simple, but unfortunately it was a rare occurrence. With so many phone lines cut, news was conveyed by runners. The most common technique was an American officer, along with a Japanese escort, going out to try and find the men. Charles Varney found out about the surrender when he heard a voice yelling, "The island has surrendered, lay down your weapons and come out with your arms up."[1] Looking in

the direction of the voice, Varney saw an American officer stripped to the waist at the head of a Japanese column. Seeing no other course of action, Varney came out and surrendered.

Even though the island had surrendered, tension between the marines and the Japanese was still high. Sporadic gunfire could be heard across the island and fighting continued between pockets of men who were unaware of the surrender. For Rodney Kephart, the surrender was a release from the suspense of his ordeal. After enduring days of periodic bombing and strafing, a feeling of relief overwhelmed him as it did for many others. The surrender signified the end of the ordeal.

While Kephart felt relieved, most others were wondering what would happen to them next. During the siege rumors abounded, but the most distressing was that the Japanese did not take prisoners. Now that they had surrendered, the main concern was what was their fate? Melvin Danner received word of the surrender and awaited the Japanese and contemplated destiny. Recalling those moments later, "I believed that America was a Christian nation and there was no way that God would let a heathen nation like Japan win. Although we were being captured I was sure that God would straighten things out."[2] Many men shared Danner's convictions, but they were anxious nonetheless.

The Americans were not alone during those anxious moments. Theodore Abraham had been serving as a helper at the hospital when word of the surrender reached him. As he and the others in the hospital prepared themselves for captivity, a group of Japanese soldiers, "rushed down the concrete ramp to the hospital entrance. The leader thrust his rifle inside and fired, killing one American instantly and wounding two

others."[3] Abraham was standing near the man who had been killed and he remembers staring into the bloodshot eyes of the Japanese NCO who had fired the shots. The NCO appeared, to Abraham, to be both very nervous and very tired.

Adding to the confusion was the language barrier. The problem of failing to communicate effectively caused some near-fatal results. Roy Stephens was sitting on his half-buried dredge pipe when he was approached by a Japanese marine. This soldier began shouting and waving at Stephens. Stephens thought the soldier wanted him to go for a swim so he got up and walked toward the lagoon. As he continued to walk, Stephens looked back to see the soldier looking at him through the sights of his rifle. Stephens promptly stopped as the soldier continued yelling what sounded to Stephens as "hoy, hoy, la, la."[4] After a few additional gestures, Stephens figured out the Japanese soldier wanted him to come to where he was, not go away. If a fellow was not careful, it could have fatal results.

As Rodney Kephart and many of his colleagues waited for their capture, they searched for food. The sudden movement must have caught the attention of a Japanese pilot because Kephart and his band were strafed by a Japanese fighter. Apparently news of the island's surrender had not reached the pilot and he was simply carrying out his mission. Fortunately, none of the men were seriously hurt. However, this incident demonstrated the danger that existed and how communication problems plagued both sides.

James Allen had a similar experience, but in his case, he was fired at by someone on the ground. Shortly after being captured, Allen saw "a Japanese dive bomber fly over our area. An American .50-caliber machine gun position had not apparently surrendered

yet. It opened fire on the bomber and drew smoke."[5] The Japanese plane proceeded out over the ocean and dropped his bombs. Allen recalled, "I and all the other prisoners were very concerned and scared. The Japanese had a machine gun set up at our backs, but why they did not execute the entire bunch of prisoners, I didn't know."[6]

Throughout December 23, American Marines and civilians laid down their weapons, came out of hiding, and surrendered to the Japanese. Regardless of their status, the treatment they received was virtually the same. Once captured, a prisoner was required to remove his clothes so the clothes could be searched for any hidden weapons. Some of the prisoners were required to strip all the way down, some down to their socks and boots, and others just down to their undershorts. While these clothes were searched, the men were required to usually sit or kneel before their captors. James Allen and other men were forced to sit naked on the hot coral. While kneeling, the Japanese took communication wire and tied the prisoners' hands behind their backs. The wire was tied also around their necks so if a prisoner tried to lower his hands and arms he would choke. Allen and his fellow prisoners were held in this position for several hours before they were untied and moved to another location.

The Japanese confiscated what they considered unneeded prisoner items, particularly personal items that were of value to the Japanese. After surrendering, the Japanese seized all their rings, watches, and any other jewelry, even taking coins the men had in their pockets. When the Japanese found paper money, however, it was discarded since it was deemed worthless.

As the fighting died down during the morning of December 23, more of the marines received word of the surrender. By midafternoon, the Japanese began to

concentrate the prisoners into larger groups, thus freeing more troops for security details. James Allen and the rest of the prisoners had their hands and necks untied and were led to one of the ammunition bunkers that had previously been used as a military hospital. Allen's group was ordered into the bunker and added to the growing numbers of POWs already there. Once inside, the metal doors to the bunker were shut and Japanese guards were stationed outside. The conditions in the bunkers were extremely difficult --- hot and humid. Soon the conditions became unbearable. When the metal doors opened a while later, a Japanese officer wanted a volunteer to go out and find two marines who had been spotted running in the brush. Allen, who was close to the doors, quickly volunteered and, accompanied by two Japanese guards, went looking for the marines. At one point Allen and his two guards came upon a wounded Japanese soldier. The soldier had been shot in the head but was still alive. To Allen, it appeared that the wounded Japanese soldier was trying to speak. Allen's guards motioned him forward and they passed the wounded man and continued to look for the marines. Eventually Allen reached the airstrip and he moved out across it yelling toward the brush on the other side for the marines, if they were there, to give up. Interestingly, Allen's guards did not venture onto the airstrip with him. They stood along the brushline monitoring Allen's movements. After he walked a short distance, the guards began yelling and waving at him. "I turned and looked and decided they wanted me to proceed, which I did, still yelling [for the marines]."[7] However, the Japanese continued yelling at Allen and he continued yelling for the marines. When the Japanese began firing their rifles into the air, Allen quickly returned to the two guards. Apparently the guards searched long enough and did not want to expose themselves further. As Allen marched back toward the hospital bunker, he passed

caches of canned food along the route. The guards indicated that Allen could have the food, but he declined. This was a decision he later regretted. When the guards stopped Allen a short time later, they pointed to a pair of pants that were laying on the ground. Allen gladly accepted them rather than being naked. When he returned to the bunker with his pair of pants, he was the envy of the other prisoners.

Theodore Abraham was captured at the civilian hospital and underwent the same treatment as many of the other prisoners. He was searched, items of value taken, stripped, and then tied up with communication wire. After kneeling outside the hospital bunker for nearly four hours, Abraham and the other prisoners were untied and marched back into the bunker. Here they were confronted with a large pile of their clothes and Japanese guards. These guards allowed the prisoners to put some clothing on, but not their own garments. The Japanese constantly yelled, "Speedo," and the men underwent what Abraham describes as a scavenger hunt. Men grabbed whatever they could and hoped it would fit. Abraham ended up with a pair of pants speckled with paint that barely came to his ankles, but it was better than nothing. After the men gathered what they could, they were lined up and marched off in the direction of the airfield.

J. O. Young was captured on Wilkes Island. As he and the other prisoners waited to be transported across the channel to Wake Island, he noticed that Gunnery Sergeant McKinstry was there minus his red mustache. The missing mustache struck Young as odd and he later found out the reason for its disappearance. During the night of the landing and the early morning hours, McKinstry went about Wilkes with his sidearm making sure that the Japanese soldiers who were supposed to be dead were actually dead. Any Japanese he found still alive he shot. After the surrender, McKinstry found out that

two of the Japanese soldiers had survived on Wilkes and, "told of the "mo okii" (Big Man) who was going around with his .45 shooting the downed [Japanese] marines, and that he had a big red mustache."[8] Once McKinstry heard who they were looking for, he used his pocketknife to cut off his mustache and avoid detection by the Japanese. His efforts were successful and the Japanese never found out that McKinstry was "mo okii." Once transported across the channel, Young and the others underwent what was becoming standard treatment. When this was completed they also were marched off toward the airfield.

Throughout the afternoon of December 23, small groups of Americans, workers and marines, were taken to the airfield and placed under guard. Many of the Americans, worn down from fighting or from the stress of the previous night, simply dropped from exhaustion. Staring at the machine guns and remembering it was reported that the Japanese did not take prisoners, J. O. Young expected the Japanese to start shooting at anytime. Young, and some of the men near him, discussed what they would do if the Japanese started firing. Young recalled that there was little fear expressed because they were totally defenseless and at the mercy of the Japanese.

Frank Mace and eight to ten men near him also saw the machine guns and the Japanese expressions. Figuring that their end was near, they vowed not to go down without a fight. In what seemed like a desperate situation, they devised a plan to resist. "We backed up to each other and untied the wire from around our wrists. At the first shot we would rush the machine guns from all directions. We figured they could not get all of us and then we would turn the guns on the Japanese."[9] Fortunately for Mace, Young, and the others, the Japanese did not commence firing, but "it was unsettling to see Japanese

officers marching about, swords drawn polishing their blades and staring menacingly at the prisoners."[10] J. O. Young later learned that the officers did not have their swords out solely to look menacing. The landing resulted in most of the Japanese equipment getting soaked. The officers Young saw had their swords out not so much to polish them, as to wipe them down and remove any salt water so the blades did not rust. What to one group looked menacing was actually standard military procedure.

Tired and weary, the prisoners were herded onto the airfield where they remained for two days under the watchful eyes of the Japanese. (Astarita)

As the prisoners sat near the runway wondering about their fates, nature began to take its toll. Few of the men were dressed and those who were might have only a shirt or a pair of pants. Sitting on the coral runway under the afternoon tropical sun, most of the men began to show signs of severe sunburn and dehydration. Attempts by the men to shield themselves from the sun resulted in sharp coral cuts and additional discomfort. Throughout the afternoon and into the early evening the prisoners quietly sat, contemplating what would happen. An unsubstantiated rumor circulated among the workers that one of the American officers had asked the Japanese commander why the Americans were being held in such a fashion. "He [Japanese commander] explained that their orders were clear and specific not to take prisoners. He [the American officer] asked them to wire Tokyo for permission to rescind this order. He [the Japanese commander] agreed to this request."[11] The rumor seemed credible. One, the Japanese had accepted the surrender of the Americans. Two, the efforts were being made to minimize casualties. Three, they were not executed. Although uncertainty mounted, there were certainly positive indicators that the prisoners would survive. However, the Japanese were by no means looking to make their prisoners comfortable. No medical attention was allowed for the injured, and no food or water was offered to the nearly 1,000 men held at the airfield.

As the sun began to set the men enjoyed a respite from the burning rays. As night fell on Wake, the temperatures dropped and the men huddled together to try and keep warm. Some men, like James Allen, tried to stack up coral so as to block the cool evening winds. Roy Stephens tried to dig into the coral and carve out a depression in

which he could sleep. Using only his hands, the most he could dig was inches into the hard coral.

At approximately eight o'clock that evening it began to rain. The Japanese roused the men and took them to a nearby underground hangar. "The hangar may have handled 500 men comfortably, but they crowded over 1,000 of us into it. We were bunched together so tight that it was almost impossible to sit or lay down."[12] Making the living accommodations even more difficult, the hangar still was partially filled with munitions. It made no difference to the Japanese that these items took up space, the Japanese continued to drive more men into the hangar. Men in the back of the hangar became nauseated from the lack of air and a few fainted. Rest was a luxury as men gasped for precious oxygen. The next morning, December 24, the stiff, sore, sunburned, and hungry men were marched out of the hangar and back to the airfield.

While the prisoners were being escorted back, the task of securing the island was still not complete. Although the firing had stopped and the vast majority of the Americans had been accounted for by the Japanese, there were undoubtedly some men who had not surrendered.

When fighting terminated on December 23, John Burton and seven other men had been hiding in a dugout near the main road. At one point Burton saw a truck pass that was loaded with Americans and Japanese. Burton and the others decided to stay in the dugout. That evening as darkness fell, Burton and the others left their dugout and crawled into the brush away from the main road. The men then separated into pairs and began to search for new places to hide. Using their hands, Burton and another man began to dig loose coral from under a tree, making a hole large enough for both of them to hide.

The remainder of the night the men wondered what to do next. The next morning, as the sun rose, the men cautiously crawled out of their holes and discussed what to do. They assumed that the men Burton had seen were probably executed, since the Japanese did not take prisoners. They also realized that their situation was precarious, since they had no weapons, food, or water. "The decision we had to make was a hard one, not knowing what the Japs would do if we surrendered."[13] The men finally agreed that the only course of action available was to surrender. No sooner had they reached that decision when Burton spotted a Japanese soldier coming up a trail directly toward them. Burton stepped out of the brush onto the trail. "I don't know which was more afraid, that Jap or me."[14] Following Burton's lead the other Americans stepped onto the trail and the Japanese soldier motioned them to take off their shirts and then marched them down the trail toward the beach. At the beach, the group of Americans were halted and Burton noticed a machine gun no more than sixty feet away covered with a tarp. Burton was sure the Japanese planned to machine-gun them. "I swore silently to myself that the first move that was made to uncover that machine gun, I would grab [a piece of] coral and throw it, then follow it to them."[15]

The machine gun was never uncovered and a short time later the Japanese allowed the Americans to put their shirts on. Noticing a jug of water nearby, Burton motioned toward the jug to a Japanese guard. The guard gave Burton a nod and he and the others got their first drink of water in nearly two days. After awhile, Burton and the other men were loaded onto a flatbed truck and take from Camp One toward the airfield. Along the way, Burton noticed that the route was scattered with clothes. Occasionally the truck would stop and Burton and the others would be taken out to gather the clothes

and throw them onto the truck. At one point, the truck stopped near Burton's original dugout. Burton motioned to the Japanese guards that he wanted to retrieve something. Under guard, Burton went to his dugout and took two suitcases of clothes he had hidden. When the truck finally reached the airfield Burton was greeted by an amazing sight. He was happy to see that the Japanese had not executed the prisoners, since he saw hundreds of Americans. However, he observed that most of the men were in terrible shape. Men who were not tanned had blisters, some the size of a fist, all over their backs, arms, and legs. When the truck stopped these exposed men began to surge toward it. The Japanese guards kept the prisoners at bay. Eventually, the guards got the Americans lined up and had them walk past the pile of clothes. As each man passed, a Japanese guard would pick up some article of clothing and throw it at him. No attempt was made to match men up to sizes, and most were happy to be covered at last.

Though still confined on the airfield, conditions did improve by the following day, December 24. The Japanese allowed a few mattresses to be laid out on the ground for the wounded to lie on. Ultimately, a few pieces of canvas were erected over the wounded to try and shade them from the sun. Some long trenches were dug nearby to serve as open latrines. However, the smell was terrible and it only served to attract flies. A small detail of marines was allowed to go out and collect the American dead and bury them. At the end of this burial an official accounting took place. A total of 124 Americans died on the island; 49 were marine and naval, the other 75 were civilians. It was later estimated that nearly 1,600 Americans and Guamians (Pan Am workers) were now prisoners of the Empire of Japan.

In the afternoon hours of December 24, the prisoners were called to order and addressed by an English-speaking Japanese officer. They were told the island and the men on it were the property of Japan. He went on to explain that though they were the enemy and would not be harmed, they should be obedient. If not, the guilty would be severely punished. At the end of his speech, the prisoners realized their situation was bad, but at least they were alive.

At dawn on December 25, the men received their first food and water. Ravenous with hunger and thirst, the men began pushing and shoving to get their share. Some of the men received a piece of bread, others a bit of cheese, and still others got nothing at all. The Japanese brought water to the prisoners in fifty-gallon drums. It appears that the Japanese simply filled empty aviation fuel drums for water consumption, since the water was tainted with gasoline. Men who received the water ration saw gas floating in their cups. Regardless, the men were so thirsty they drank the water, but in most cases, it made them seriously ill. After "breakfast," a detail of prisoners was taken to dig out the dynamite that had been placed about the runway. "When they had finished their task, they were made to swear at gunpoint that they were willing to die if any more mines were found."[16]

During the early evening of December 25, some Japanese officers arrived at the airfield and began shouting orders at their men. The appearance of the Japanese officers caught the attention of the prisoners, who were uncertain what was happening. Their fears were put to rest a short time later when they saw Japanese soldiers breaking down and removing their machine guns. The prisoners were then ordered to stand and they marched toward Camp Two. At the camp, the men noticed the Japanese had erected

barbed wire around the barracks that had not been destroyed in the Japanese air raids. The civilians were separated from the marines and groups of 150 were crammed into barracks that used to house 40 men. Once inside, the men looked for a place to sleep and any objects they could use. They were quickly disappointed with their new quarters. Lockers had been overturned, mattresses stripped from the beds, and personal objects taken. Other than a few scraps of clothing and blankets, little usable items remained. Apparently the Japanese had looted most items prior to the prisoners' arrival in their new makeshift prison. Forrest Read noticed that the Japanese were fascinated by photos --- they were the most common item looted from the barracks. Not one photo could be found in the barracks in which he was placed. Superintendent Dan Teters convinced the Japanese that the more self-sufficient the prisoners were, the easier it would be for the Japanese. The Japanese agreed to let the civilian cooks prepare two meals a day for the prisoners. After their initial arrival in the barracks the cooks were allowed to go and "cook [a] meal as long as it consisted of only one dish. They prepared a very thick, rich stew and brought it into the barracks."[17] In the mornings the cooks would prepare a hot cereal such as oatmeal. They tried to include as many calories as they could in the breakfast for instance, extra butter, sugar, raisins, and powdered milk would be added. The evening meal often consisted of creamed tuna or salmon. Though most of the men agreed the food tasted good, they also agreed it seemed there was never enough.

Lowering the American flag in particular brought the civilian workers to the sudden realization of their fate. Even though it has been nearly sixty years ago, this single event still rings sadly for the survivors. When talking about the lowering of the flag, some became choked with emotion and others were brought to tears. The

significance of lowering the flag became even worse when they noticed that the Japanese were using the American flag as a doorstop in the barracks that they had occupied. Besides having to deal with this emotional moment, the men were also informed they were now working for the Japanese.

Heavy equipment operators and other skilled workers were taken by the Japanese to repair damage from the attack and to start the task of building Japanese structures planned for the island. Other less skilled workers were taken out to clean up debris and help move Japanese supplies. J. O. Young was taken out of the barracks compound to unload rice from a barge. "Two Japanese would put a sack of rice on a person's shoulder and he would have to carry it over to where it was being stacked. They weighed over 100 pounds each."[18] Young, however, could not carry the sacks, they were just too heavy. The Japanese jeered and shouted at him but he was not punished, he was simply moved to another work detail. Roy Stephens and Theodore Abraham were made part of a crew that was taken out to dig post holes for a barbed wire barricade that was to extend along the beach across the entire island. Digging with shovels in the coral was extremely difficult and every time a prisoner stopped, the Japanese were quick to yell and scream at him. When a water break was given it was not much of a relief since it consisted of water from the gas-tainted fifty-gallon drums. Frank Mace was made part of a detail to go out and gather up Japanese soldiers who had been killed storming the island. The bodies had been decomposing for several days and Mace remembers the smell was nearly overwhelming. Once piled up, Mace and his crew were instructed to douse them in gasoline and then they were set aflame. Such action was often shocking to the

Americans. It seemed to them that the Japanese were barbaric. What they did not realize was the Japanese were Buddhist and cremation was the preferred form of burial.

Not all the men were taken out on work details. Those who were left behind were kept under guard but allowed to move about in their barracks compound. Within a short time these men had repaired damaged water lines, showers, and toilet facilities. Though they had no electricity, the desalination plant was still in operation and the men could now have clean drinking water and water to occasionally clean themselves with. Life was a bit easier for the workers during the waning days of 1941. On occasion the Japanese assembled the men on the "parade ground" out in front of the barracks. Here the prisoners would be addressed by the Japanese commander who, through an interpreter, would tell them that "they [the Japanese] expected to land in Washington, D.C. in six weeks and if we would obey, someday we would be allowed to return for a visit with out loved ones."[19] After this type of speech the work parties would be sent out to start another day.

At on point the prisoners were required to fill out forms for the Japanese. On the forms the prisoners were to list their name, age, home address, nearest kin, and occupation. This information was compiled and eventually turned over to the Red Cross, who passed it on to American authorities. Unfortunately, the accuracy of the list was flawed. Several men were left off the list; and other men were reported as killed who were very much alive.

Anytime a work detail went out, prisoners tried to return with something that could be useful. On one occasion, Rodney Kephart and each man in his work detail were allowed to bring back an innerspring mattress to sleep on. John Burton was sent out on a

detail to locate caches of canned food that had been buried during the siege. Once a cache was located the men would have to carry it back to camp. However, when they returned to camp, the guards searched the prisoners and took everything that interested them. When their rations were not increased, Burton decided to try and beat the system. When Burton returned from the can detail he had a friend inside the compound, Read Catmull, meet him. "I [Burton] would get in line going to the gate. Read would be waiting at the fence for me. When the guards weren't looking I would throw my contraband under the fence. Read would pick it up and take it into the barracks. As I went through the gate, the Japs would shake me down and [find] nothing."[20]

Not all such plans for Burton and Catmull worked so well. Catmull was without shoes so Burton asked him what size he needed. He said he would try and find them on one of his work details. Sure enough, Burton found a pair in Catmull's size and smuggled them back to the barracks. As before, he waited until the Japanese guards were not looking, and he threw them under the fence to Catmull. Sometimes the best-laid plans go awry. Burton was shocked to find out once he got into the barracks that the shoes were the right size --- but were for the same foot. They laughed about it later, but it was not funny at the time. The next day Burton found a shoe for the other foot.

Burton and Catmull were playing a potentially dangerous game. One day Burton was part of a detail that was taken to the civilian canteen to repair the damage. When one member of the detail was caught taking food from the canteen, the Japanese told him if they caught him again they would kill him. Sure enough, he was caught again. "We were all watching [as] they [Japanese] put a black rag around his eyes, and made him

bend over a hole in the ground they had dug. The Jap officer drew his sword, and cut [off] his head."[21]

Roy Stephens was not as worried about being executed for doing something wrong on his detail as he was worried about being killed on the way to work. His crew would be crammed, standing up, in a truck. The Japanese driver often increased the speed to forty to fifty miles per hour and then suddenly slammed on the brakes. "All those bodies would be thrown toward the front . . . The ones at back had to get up first and then all down the line in a domino effect. By the time they all got up, a bunch of those men had already conked out. By the third time . . . they were having to load men with bayonets. No one wanted to be first on the truck. I wasn't about to get up there, I'd have my argument long before I ever got close to the damn truck."[22]

Some of the men were given the task of improving or repairing military emplacements for the Japanese. Feeling that such work violated the Geneva Convention, the prisoners took the attitude that whenever possible they would try and disrupt these projects. It is no wonder that firing pins, discarded prior to surrender, were never found, since they were conveniently buried by work details. Samuel Silverman was part of a detail that was sandbagging a Japanese anti aircraft position. Working on this detail, Silverman noticed a maze of cables, part of a fire control system, that were connected to a twelve-volt auto battery. "The caps [to the battery] somehow unscrewed themselves from the battery, the battery tipped over, the acid spilled and was replaced with coral."[23] Getting the caps back on was a bit more difficult for Silverman, but while the Japanese were busy opening tins of American food they had found, they were not alert to Silverman's repair work.

Overall, whatever the prisoners could do to help themselves and at the same time disrupt the Japanese, the civilian workers attempted. However, just when the prisoners were starting to get a bit more comfortable with their situation and were beginning to regain some semblance of routine, they were gathered together on January 11, and informed they needed to prepare to leave by ship. The names of 350 men who would stay behind on the island were read off, but the rest received no word of their destination. Eventually the only information given was that their destination would be cold. Once again the civilians and Marines on Wake were about to venture into the unknown.

Notes

1. Charles Varney, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 11 July 1998.
2. Melvin Danner, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 12 March 1997.
3. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower Press, 1992), 18.
4. Roy Stephens, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 May 1997, 5-3.
5. James Allen, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 25 May 1997.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. J. O. Young, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 July 1997.
9. Frank Mace, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 9 May 1997.
10. Young.
11. Danner.
12. Young.
13. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails (New York: Vantage Press, 1992), 66.
14. Ibid., 67.
15. Ibid.
16. Rodney Kephart, Wake, War and Waiting (New York: Exposition Press, 1994), 24.
17. Danner.
18. Young.
19. Forrest Read, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 18 May 1998.
20. Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails, 69.
21. Raleigh Rucker, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 June 1997. 22.

22. Stephens, 5-5.

23. Samuel Silverman, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 May 1997.

Chapter 4

Journey into the Unknown

The announcement by the Japanese that a large contingent of prisoners would be leaving left many of the men in shock. While they remained on Wake, many of the civilians still held out hope that they might be rescued by an American relief force. Others had a glimmer of hope that the Japanese might exchange them for Japanese civilians held by the United States. However, the announced departure dashed these ideas. It seemed most likely they were going to be sent to Japan and their chances of rescue were highly unlikely.

Exactly how the Japanese determined who would stay and who would leave was never made clear. It seems probable that the Japanese used the information provided earlier by the prisoners' personnel forms in making their selections. Of the 350 men who were to remain, many were involved with heavy equipment such as the dredge, road graders, and bulldozers. Men who could operate the power and desalination plants were also left behind. It seems as if the Japanese were retaining men who could help them with their building projects and at the same time finish the original projects contracted by the Americans for the island. In addition, the wounded, many of whom were unable to travel, were left behind. Dr. Shank, the civilian doctor, volunteered to stay and provide medical assistance.

With so much work still to do, why did the Japanese remove many of the skilled workers from Wake? One possible answer is security. Even though the U.S. Navy had been crippled at Pearl Harbor, the Americans were far from defeated. Washington considered the occupation of Wake as a threat to Hawaii, Midway, and other American possessions in the Pacific. Therefore, it seemed likely that Wake would be an immediate American objective. Removal of most of the prisoners reduced any threat they might

pose if the United States attacked. Their removal also improved the Japanese logistical situation by reducing the necessity for additional food.

Regardless why the decision was made, some men left and some stayed. Although the Japanese had created their list, some of the prisoners planned to make their own additions and subtractions. When the list of men who were to remain was read, Ben Comstock was one of the 350 who heard his name. The problem for Comstock was his father's name, who was also on the island, was not read. Comstock was determined not to be separated from his father. He was able to find a man who was willing to trade identities with him so he and his father could stay together. Roy Stephens was faced with the same type of decision, but in his case he was to go, and the dredge crew skipper wanted him to switch identities so he could stay. Stephens had originally gone to the island as part of the dredge crew, but had transferred to construction. It was for this job that the Japanese had him listed; otherwise, he probably would have been selected to stay in the first place. The dredge skipper knew Stephens could operate the dredge and he had a man on the crew whose brother was going to be shipped out. "He wanted me to trade names with one of the brothers so they would both be together."[1] Stephens contemplated the skipper's request, but he also realized the island had not been a great place to be for the last five weeks. Ever since the Japanese had occupied Wake Island, Stephens had spent his time digging, or attempting to dig, post holes in the coral. An added factor was the realization that rations were reduced and Stephens was losing weight. After considering all his options, Stephens decided to leave and face the unknown.

As some men said their good-byes, others packed for the journey. The Japanese had instructed the departing men they would be allowed to take possessions as long as they could be carried in a small bundle. For most of the men this was not a problem, since they, had lost most of their possessions earlier. That evening many prisoners slept wondering what the next day would bring.

The next morning, January 12, 1942, the *Nitta Maru* anchored a short distance offshore. Previously it had been a luxury liner, but now it was used as a troop transport. After roll call, trucks began to transport groups of departing men to the waterfront. However, before boarding, the guards searched the prisoners, looking for anything of value that had not previously been confiscated. After being searched, the prisoners were notified of the regulations that they were to follow while they were aboard the ship. The warnings were ominous since, according to the Japanese, "prisoners disobeying the following orders will be punished with immediate death."[2] This was not going to be a pleasure trip. After listing all the do's and don'ts, the regulations ended with the statement that "The Navy of the Greater Japanese Empire will not try to punish you all with death."[3]

Since Wake contained no deep-water docking facilities, the men waited at the waterfront until passage was arranged. In groups of twenty, the men were transported out to the *Nitta Maru,* where a rope net hung over the side. With the boats bobbing up and down in the heavy waves, the men had to try and time their jumps from the boats onto the nets and then up the side of the ship. "When we hesitated at jumping into the ship, the excited Japanese screamed, speedo, speedo, their arms flying in every direction."[4] Raleigh Rucker remembers his leap and climb as "a scary climb and [I] was shaking with fear, because if we fell we would be immediate shark bait"[5]

Once a prisoner reached the rail of the ship he was greeted with two rows of Japanese sailors who could not speak English. The sailors, speaking Japanese, gave their orders, enforcing them by either a kick or a rap to the head. Using clubs and sticks, the sailors forced the prisoners down a gauntlet of vicious Japanese sailors toward the cargo hold. As the prisoners marched toward the hold, they passed a large room where they were instructed to toss their baggage. A Japanese officer told them that it would be returned when they reached their destination, but these items were never seen again.

Taken from Wake, the prisoners look upon the *Nitta Maru*, and they begin a new chapter in their lives. (Astarita)

After passing through the corridor of sailors, the men reached the cargo hold. The men were instructed, through pointing and clubbing, to go down the ladder into the cargo bay. Each prisoner was issued two blankets, and immediately afterward looked for a place to sit or lay down as the bulkhead door was sealed behind them. Ben Comstock was in

one of the lowest cargo holds in the ship, easily below the waterline. He was so low that he was located where the structural ribs of the ship came together toward the keel. In Comstock's opinion, there couldn't have been another human lower than he was.

When Roy Stephens came aboard the *Nitta Maru*, he was greeted by the same reception as the other prisoners. However, when Stephens saw the men in front of him assaulted by the Japanese, he backed up and created what distance he could between himself and the Japanese. Once the sailors finished thrashing the men in front of him, Stephens ran as fast as he could through the swinging sailors, so quickly that not a single sailor managed to hit him. Stephens went down four decks before reaching his final destination. At each deck, if a man was not moving fast enough or if the Japanese sailors just felt like it, they would step on a prisoners hands he passed down the ladder. The punishment was painful since the Japanese wore hobnailed shoes. The prisoners had to endure the pain, otherwise they would have fallen and risked serious injury.

Mathew Morris, like Roy Stephens, had avoided the beatings when he passed through the line of sailors. Unfortunately for him, his luck ran out. As Morris climbed down the ladder he muttered something, exactly what he does not remember, but he was quickly rapped on his head by the flat side of a bayonet. The Japanese wanted silence and failure to do so obviously resulted in severe punishments.

At one point, Theodore Abraham remembers that the door to his cargo hold was thrown open, "two Jap sailors entered the hold laden with three five-gallon cans with long ropes attached to each."[6] One of the sailors addressed the men as he flashed a light in their eyes. The men were told to place the buckets in the corner of the hold. The buckets were intended to serve as toilets, but before they could use them they must ask the Japanese for permission. In the process of requesting permission, the prisoners were required to say, "Benjo" the Japanese word for toilet. The men were further reminded that moving about in the hold or talking would result in their punishment.

After being in the hold for what most men estimated as a few hours, the prisoners could feel the ship get under way. Charles Varney recalls that even at this point there was a rumor within his hold that they were going to a neutral location for exchange. This rumor proved untrue. As Melvin Danner sat in the hold of the *Nitta Maru*, he was concerned about his impending journey, "knowing that the ship was unmarked and traveling through waters that we believed to have many American subs didn't do much to calm our nerves."[7]

As the ship departed Wake Island, the prisoners tried to get used to their new living quarters. The holds had little to no ventilation and became hot and humid. With the ship bobbing up and down as it cut through the open sea, many of the men became seasick. Only a single light providing illumination, the sick would stumble over their companions toward the five-gallon buckets. Quickly the smell of excrement filled the hold, causing other men to become nauseated. Once the buckets were filled, the guards, who came in every couple of hours, would pick a prisoner to carry the buckets to the center of the hold so that it could be hauled up and dumped.

Twice a day guards would arrive with food for the prisoners, with strict instructions on how the food was to be distributed. Guards selected men to serve the meal rations. Each prisoner was to remain in place and wait for his portion to reach him. No one was to eat until all the food was distributed. The men serving the rations made sure that each portion was as equal as possible. Once the meal ended all the plates were passed toward the servers, who collected the dishes and the buckets. Occasionally, a couple of prisoners left the hold to clean the eating utensils.

Meals were served twice a day and consisted of a thin soup or gruel made from barley and rice and served with warm water. Occasionally, a prisoner would find a small piece of fish or vegetable in his soup. The nutritional value was slight; consequently, the prisoners experienced the onset of malnutrition as the voyage continued. Body functions were now stressed, causing additional physical discomfort. Melvin Danner remembers

that when many of the men in his hold began to complain about constipation, a Japanese doctor was brought down to evaluate them. After his examination, the doctor decided, "they [prisoners] were not sick but just could not [relieve themselves] because there was nothing going into their bodies to create waste, he ordered the [guards] that came along with him to beat up those complaining for wasting his time. This ended the complaints."[8]

In the hold of the *Niita Maru*, the prisoners watch as one of their comrades is beaten by a Japanese sailor for some infraction. (Astarita)

Japanese regulations required that while in transit prisoners were to remain quiet unless given permission to speak. "When a person talked loud enough to be heard from

above, a Japanese sailor would come down the ladder with a club tied to his belt. We would all pretend we were asleep, and then the guard would make two or three stand up and would swing and hit them across the hips so hard they would yell with pain and fall on their face."[9] Roy Stephens remembers that threatening and even beating one particular man in his hold was not enough to keep him quiet. The prisoner, Ben Rose, had a reputation as a talker even before the war started. "On the boat he just wouldn't shut up. A Jap would come in there with a bat. He'd make Rose bend over and hold onto the ladder and then whip him. Rose would be quiet for maybe four hours."[10]

With no access to the outside world it became increasingly difficult for the prisoners to keep track of time. Most of the prisoners focused on their continued misery, but others found ways to relieve the boredom. By using common sense, Roy Stephens managed to track the days he spent in the hold and roughly the direction the ship was heading. Located in the forward portion of the ship, Stephens noticed that the steel plates near him warmed as the sun rose for the day. At the end of the day the plates on the side opposite him were still warm, whereas his side had cooled down. From these simple deductions he figured he was on the east side of the ship and the opposite side was the west. Therefore, he knew that the ship was traveling north and by using the sun he was able to keep track of the number of days the ship was at sea.

Two days out of Wake the *Nitta Maru* and its human cargo ran into a storm. As the ship was rocked by one swell and then began to recover, it was immediately hit by another swell. John Burton recalls that the impact of the ship rising and falling with the crashing of the waves left him and his friends wondering if it would break in two. With little to hang onto, the men in the cargo hold were thrown about. Likewise, the waste cans in the holds hit the steel bulkheads and spilled the contents on nearby prisoners.

Once the sea calmed down, the prisoners began to notice that the hold was not as hot and sticky as it had been previously. When Japanese guards came to inspect the prisoners or deliver food, cold air drifted into the hold. At first the influx of cold air

helped to lessen the odor, but after a while the temperature continued to drop and the men experienced yet another discomfort. Having nothing to wear other than the tropical clothes they had on when they left Wake, the hold quickly became full of shivering men. The men tried to stay warm by bundling in the few thin blankets the Japanese had distributed. "Some stood to wrap up in their blankets before lying down; others merely crawled under them so only their nose and mouth were exposed."[11] J. O. Young and three other men decided to bunch up together and use their collective body heat and blankets to keep warm. Other men in Young's hold decided to do the same thing. However, when the Japanese guards saw what was going on they put a stop to such efforts. Shivering, shaking, and huddling together was a sign of weakness and the Japanese had no tolerance for such behavior.

After enduring six days of being jostled about in the *Nitta Maru*, the prisoners noticed that the ship had come to a stop. Unsure of where they were and hoping to get out of the hold, the prisoners sat, stood, and lay about waiting to be released from their dungeon. The ship had docked at Yokohama. Here some prisoners were taken off the *Nitta Maru* and put to use by the Japanese. One group of military prisoners, mostly army personnel with communication experience, were taken away to be interrogated and later interned in a prisoner of war camp in Japan. Another small group, including Commander Cunningham, were exhibited to Japanese officials and the Japanese public. These men were allowed to make a statement that was transmitted to the United States. Although the Japanese intended to use Cunningham for propaganda purposes, he felt that he had to let the people back home know they were alive. Cunningham hoped that in giving the statement, it was a way to let the American public learn of their mistreatment, "without saying anything that would cause the Japs to throw the recording away. One of our civilians, Hudson Sutherland of Portland, Oregon, solved it by saying: So far we have been treated fine, I think."[12] After being paraded for the newsreels, and shown off, the men

were locked again aboard the *Nitta Maru.* After two days in port, the engines came to life and the prisoners' journey continued into the unknown.

For several more days the ship made its way through choppy seas until it anchored again. After enduring days of stifling heat, shivering cold, not seeing daylight, and poor rations, word was given to the prisoners to prepare for disembarkation. John Burton remembers the mood among the men: "We didn't know what lay in store for us. But we did know that anything would be an improvement over conditions aboard ship."[13] However, after laying and sitting about for so many days, the men began to realize how weak they had become. Struggling to make their stiff bodies work, the prisoners willed themselves up the long ladders that led out of the cargo holds. Once the men reached the main deck they were ordered to the gangplank, where they faced yet again the gauntlet of club-swinging Japanese sailors.

After running the gauntlet, the prisoners double-timed down the gangplank and were assembled on the dock. Standing about in nothing but the skimpy clothes on their backs, the men were greeted by a drizzling rain and cold evening temperatures. In addition, "there were about four inches of snow on the ground and a bitter cold wind blowing. To a well-fed, well-clothed man it would have been cold, but to us, still with our suntans, it was brutal."[14] As Forrest Read stood and waited, a civilian next to him, who had been with the merchant marine, exclaimed he knew where they were because he had been here before --- they were in Shanghai!

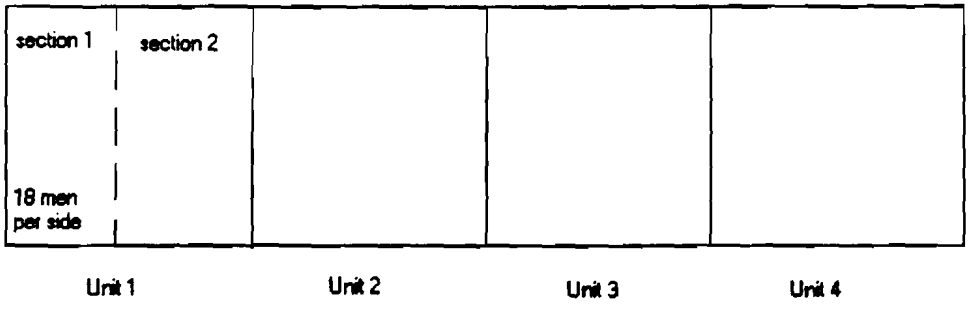
Waiting to move out, the prisoners were eventually addressed by an old, rather pale looking, army officer. While the officer gave his speech, a Japanese man dressed in civilian clothes served as an interpreter. The interpreter's translation into English was rather poor but the prisoners were able to discern that they were now prisoners of the Japanese Army and they were expected to obey all orders. Mathew Morris recalls the speech and especially the translation. The translator said "we had better behave and if we tried to escape we would immediately be 'shit.' Of course he meant 'shot.' In spite of our

predicament this gave us something to laugh about."[15] On completion of the speech the men were told that they were to be marched a short distance to a barracks.

In a drizzling rain, the prisoners, both civilian and military, lined up in a column four abreast and marched down a narrow muddy road to confinement. As the men marched along, the journey became a struggle for most of them because of their exhaustion and weakened condition. Soon they were strung out over two miles, which resulted in keeping the Japanese guards busy running up and down the column, prodding the men to quicken their pace. In addition, the guards also drove back Chinese civilians who occasionally lined the road to look at the American prisoners. Ben Comstock does not remember seeing any Chinese civilians; in fact, he remembers little of the trip from the ship. While Comstock walked down the road with his father, a man nearby produced a pack of cigarettes and lit one of the cigarettes. To Comstock it was amazing that after all the searches and shakedowns the man had managed to hide a pack of cigarettes. After Comstock's father borrowed the lit cigarette and took a drag, the man offered Comstock a smoke. "Dad tried to tell me not to inhale, but too late. I never had anything hit me so hard in my life. I floated the rest of the way to camp. Higher than a kite on one drag."[16]

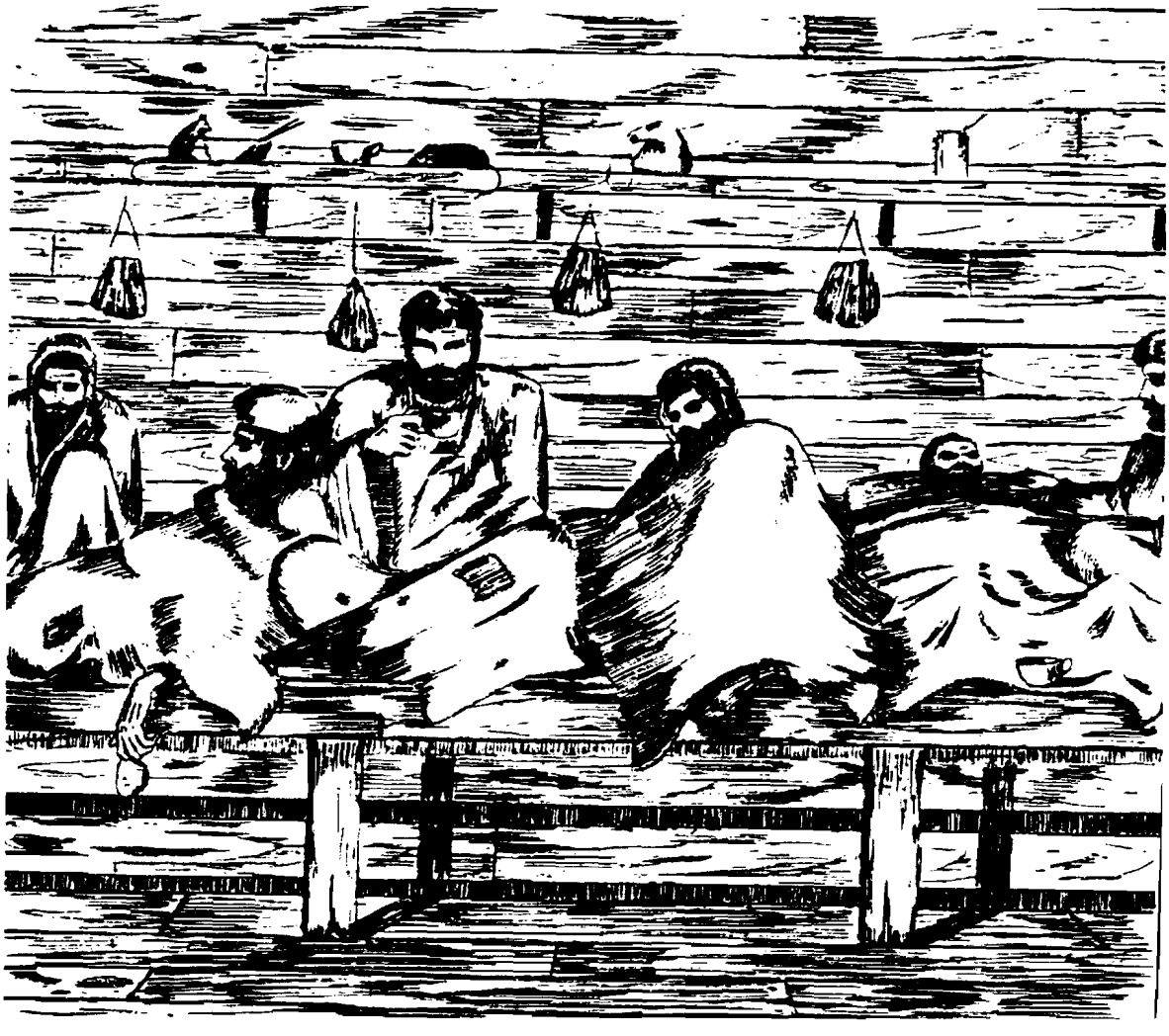
After a five-mile hike, the men arrived at an area known as Woosung. At Woosung, they were taken through a serious of barbed wire gates to a group of buildings that looked like barracks. The prisoners later learned that this camp was formerly a Chinese army camp until it was captured by the Japanese in the late 1930s. After another short speech by a Japanese officer the men were told they would be assigned to a barracks and that they would be fed. Military and civilian prisoners were separated and assigned to their own barracks. "Each barracks was divided into four units, each unit was occupied by two sections of 36 men, half of each section on each side of a corridor that ran the length of the building. [They] slept on raised platforms nine men on each of the four platforms that made up each section."[17]

Woosung Barracks



Once inside, the men were assigned to a particular section of the barracks and a platform that served as the prisoners' bunks. Though the platform was raised, it afforded little space to the nine men who were assigned to each of the four platforms that made up a section. J. O. Young remembers that he and the others had little more than eighteen inches of width and approximately six feet in length per man on the platform. Covering each platform were some very thin and hard mattresses made from straw. In addition to the mattresses, each man had a pillow filled with sawdust or sand.[18] On the back wall of each platform was a shelf where the prisoners could store what few personal items they might have been able to keep since leaving Wake. The only personal item Roy Stephens owned, other than his clothes, was a toothbrush that he had kept in his shirt pocket. Each man was issued a small cloth bag that contained "one deep bowl, one shallow bowl, one smaller bowl about the size of a mug, one tea cup, one pair of chopsticks."[19] All of these items were stored on the shelf behind the sleeping platforms. As the men moved about the barracks in the dim light that was provided by the single bulb that lit each unit, a detail of prisoners from each barracks went to a warehouse to secure blankets from the Japanese. The combination of being wet and cold temperatures left most of the men shivering as they waited in the barracks for the blankets. The wood siding on the barracks was cracking, and much of the glass was broken in the windows, adding to their misery. The

net result was a stiff breeze blowing into the barracks that continued to chill the prisoners. Eventually the blanket detail returned with bundles of blankets. Before the bundles were opened, the Japanese issued orders that each man was to receive two, and only two, blankets. As the blankets were being distributed it became obvious that they were very thin, dirty, tattered, wet, and moth-eaten. Thin or not, the blankets offered some type of cover, so the men either wrapped themselves in the blankets or huddled under them while laying on their platform.



After a long cold march to the Woosung prison camp, the worn out prisoners try and warm themsleves and get some rest. (Astarita)

At about 11:30 P.M. word spread throughout the barracks that chow had arrived. The late evening meal consisted of a small bowl of rice and a bowl of curry stew. The stew consisted of a few vegetables, and a small amount of meat, curry, and salt. To John Burton, "each mouthful was like fragments from heaven."[20] J. O. Young also fondly remembers the stew because it was the last time the prisoners were served stew.

After eating, the men tried to settle down and sleep but because the barracks were so cold, it was very difficult. In an effort to keep warm, some men walked the main hallway in the barracks trying to keep their circulation going. On his platform, Roy Stephens and men near him decided to pool their blankets and sleep together for warmth. "You'd be on the outside of this group and just about the time you'd think there was nothing to keep you from freezing, one of the men would have to go to the bathroom, and you'd get to move in."[21] The latrine was located at the end of the barracks and often there was a steady stream of men throughout the night walking to the facilities.

At roughly six A.M. a Japanese bugle blew, rousing the men from their slumber. Shortly after the bugle stopped Japanese guards entered the barracks shouting "tenko," notifying the prisoners of an inspection. After riding in the hold of the *Nitta Maru* for nearly two weeks, many of the men found it difficult to stand for inspection. Since all the men slept in their clothes, little time was needed for them to get ready. The men were instructed to fold their blankets and to leave them on the platforms. A prisoner in each section was appointed by the Japanese to be the section leader. When a Japanese officer arrived it was the duty of the section leader to call the men to "kiotski," the Japanese word for attention. The section leader was also responsible for reporting the number of men in his section. The men then had to count off, "bango" in Japanese so the numbers could be compared. Since the men didn't know Japanese, they received an abbreviated lesson during the first day at Woosung. If a prisoner failed to use the correct Japanese number, a prisoner received immediate punishment. As a result, some prisoners memorized their

number but never learned Japanese. This worked for a while, but it did not work if a prisoner was missing from his section.

When it was mealtime a detail of prisoners from each section of the barracks would go to the galley and collect a bucket containing that meals rice. At right is the tea house. The only safe way to drink water in China was to boil it first. (Astarita)

Once the inspection ended it was time for breakfast. Food was brought to each section, but distribution was a problem. "The men were all starving by then. The big stout ones would jump up and eat it just like hogs at a trough and the little ones were getting left out."[22] As a way to end the chaos each barracks selected a mess sergeant. When the food was brought to the barracks the mess sergeant divided it into eight

buckets, one for each section. Each section chose an individual to serve the food. If food was left in the bucket, seconds were given. In Roy Stephens's section, seconds were started with one man and additional food would be given until it ran out. If there was only enough extra food for five men then the next time there was extra food it would be distributed starting with the sixth, man and so on.

Once the food reached the barracks, one man was selected to equally divide up that days ration among the men. Any extra food was given out on a rotational basis. Not a single scrap of food was wasted, the pots were scrapped and any scrapings, burnt rice, were consumed. (Astarita)

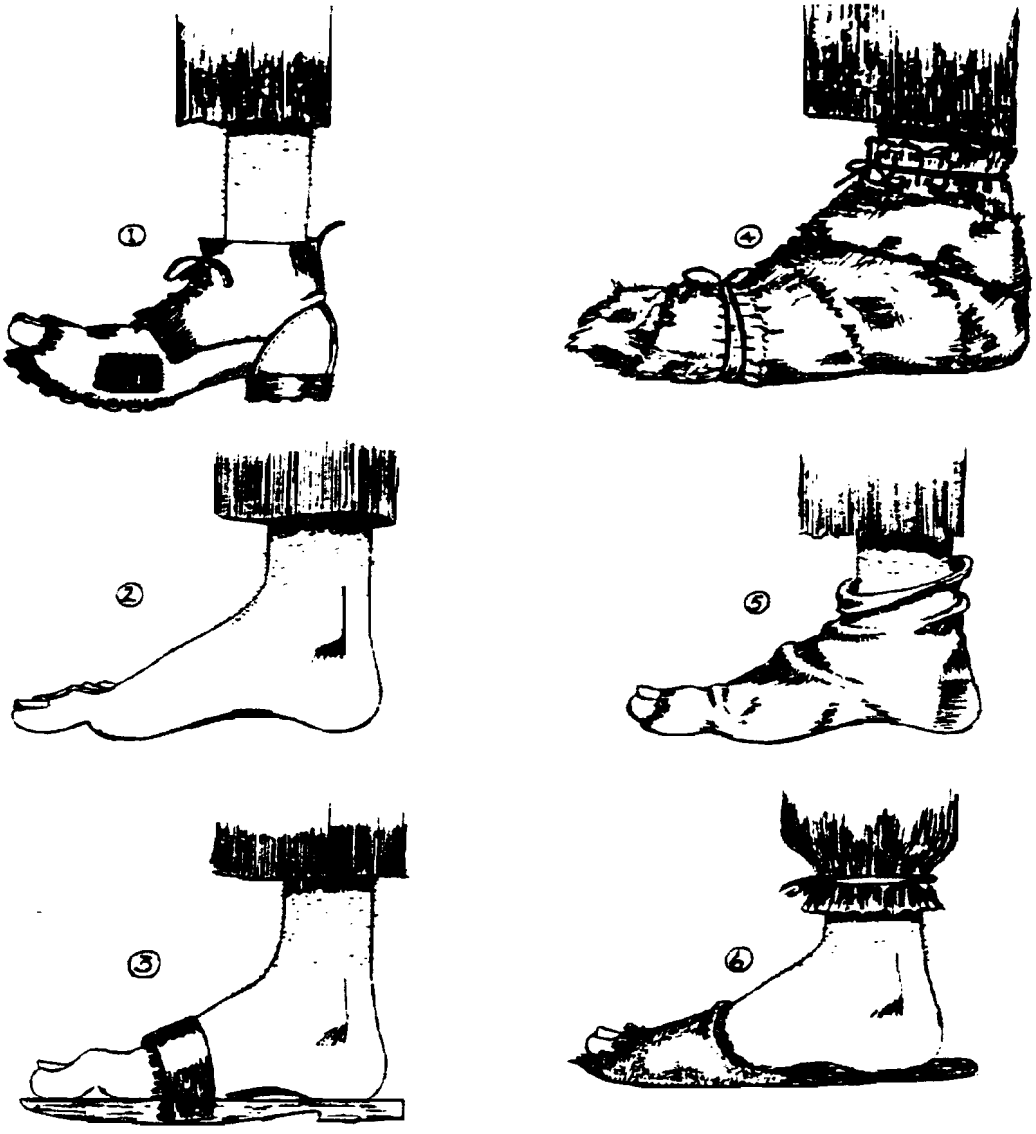
The first breakfast in Woosung consisted of a bowl of rice, soup, and a cup of tea. Typically Japanese tea was nothing more than warm water with a bit of flavor. Although

the tea was weak, the prisoners eagerly sought the beverage. The soup was also usually warm water with bits of vegetables added. With such little substance it was important that when the soup was divided that each man received a fair amount. In Melvin Danner's section, when it was mealtime each man sat at the foot of his platform waiting for his food. "We would all set and hold our bowls until the buckets were empty to make sure that everyone got the same amount of food. If they were short they would come back and take a bit from each one to make sure everyone had the same."[23]

Other than the barracks and the main gate, the men knew little about their new location. Following inspection and breakfast, the prisoners became familiar with their new surroundings. The camp consisted of two sets of barbed wire. One set surrounded the prisoners' compound and the other the entire camp. Attached to each barracks was a latrine, consisting of nothing more than a series of holes cut into the floorboards. Eventually, a little jingle was posted with a prophetic message, especially at night, "Step lightly when you enter, because the damn hole is in the center."[24] Below these holes were placed buckets, known as "honey buckets." Once a week, as the prisoners would learn, Chinese peasants collected the contents and transported it out of the camp. It was not until later that the prisoners found out the waste was not dumped someplace outside of the camp, but it was used by the peasants as fertilizer in their fields. As a result, the prisoners made sure that everything they drank or ate was boiled.

Other than the prisoners' barracks, all other structures were outside the compound. At each corner of the camp stood guard towers that were manned around the clock. A large cluster of buildings in the southwest corner of the camp was occupied by the Japanese. As the prisoners moved about in the compound they discovered they were the camp's new occupants. A few American and British personnel who had not fled China before the war were already in camp. Also there were some sailors from a British gunboat and American sailors from the gunboat *USS Wake*. The *Wake*, which had previously been stripped to its bare essentials, had been in Shanghai harbor prior to Pearl Harbor. On

December 7, the Japanese demanded the surrender of the *USS Wake*. With no chance of escape, the crew surrendered the ship to the Japanese and were taken to Woosung prison.[25] The *Wake* was the only American naval vessel captured by the Axis in World War II.



Prisoner footwear. 1. Japanese shoe with toe cut out so foot would fit. 2. Barefoot
3. Wooden clog. 4. Burlap bag. (most expensive since burlap was scarce)
5. Old sock. 6. Straw slipper. (Astarita)

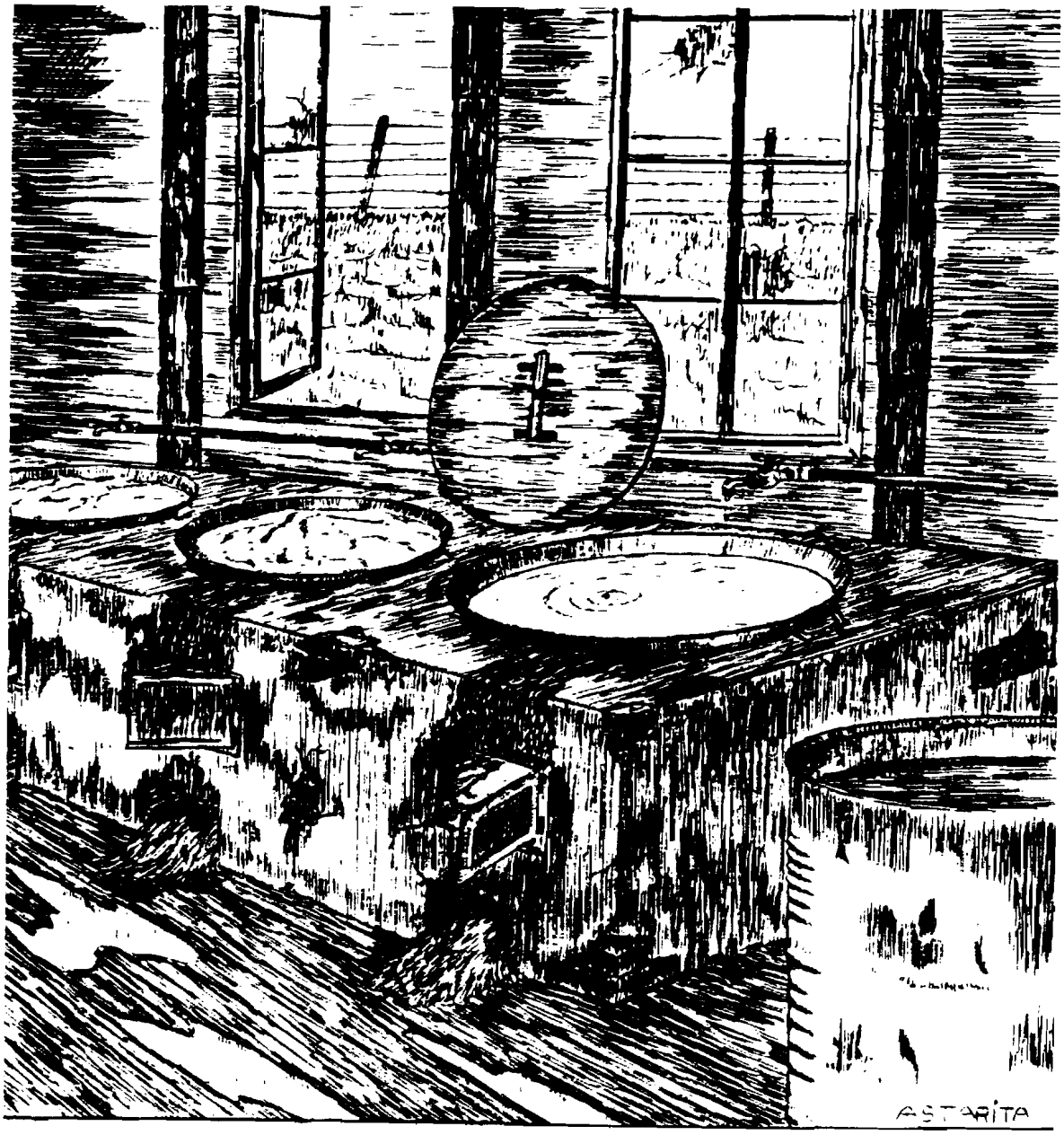
For the first couple of weeks, there was little for the prisoners to do but complain. The most common complaint was the lack of adequate clothing. One day the Japanese

took a detail of prisoners to a warehouse in camp and brought old Japanese uniforms, overcoats, and shoes for the prisoners. As usual, no effort was made by the Japanese to match men to the size of the garment. The differences in sizes between the Japanese and Americans meant that there was little chance to find a natural fit. Still the garments were better than what the prisoners wore when they had arrived. Some were lucky to get Japanese boots --- the first priority was to get two boots of the same size. Japanese boots were split toed a unique feature that took some getting used to. Those who were not lucky enough to get boots or boots that fit tried to keep their feet warm as best they could. Some wrapped their feet in cloth rags; others cut the toes out of the Japanese boots so their feet would somewhat fit.

Even though the prisoner detail claimed there were many more, only one overcoat was issued per section, according to Melvin Danner. "We did the democratic thing and voted to give the overcoat to an old man, probably forty-five at the time."[26] The recipient of the coat might have been the envy of some of the other prisoners, but he certainly wasn't later that evening. When the Japanese came for the evening inspection, the old man stood at attention in his overcoat. The Japanese interpreter noticed and he asked why he was wearing his overcoat. The man explained that he was cold. The interrupter said that it was winter and he was supposed to be cold. Suddenly the soldier took out his club and started beating the elderly worker, knocking him down on the platform.[27] There was nothing that Danner, or his fellow prisoners could do but watch and realize that these outbursts could occur from time to time.

J. O. Young discovered that a prisoner could never assume anything and that taking the initiative could lead to trouble. Young was outside the barracks one day when he noticed some prisoners taking their mattresses across the road that ran west of the compound to a warehouse. Young decided to do the same thing. Young did not know that a Japanese guard had marked the bunks with blue chalk for those that were to be

filled. "When I brought mine back and there was no blue 'X' . . . the [guard] stood me at attention and struck me on both sides of the head as hard as he could."[28]



The galley was a filthy, smoke-filled room. The food was cooked by the prisoners who tried their best to remove foreign material from the food. (Astarita)

One of the first jobs assigned to the prisoners was to cook. A group, many of whom had been cooks on Wake, were taken to a building west of the compound that was

to serve as the galley. Inside this structure the cooks found a long row of metal pots embedded in concrete with a firebox under each. There the cooks prepared the "soup" and boiled rice that made up the typical meal. The rice often contained dirt, feathers, and pebbles. The cooks did their best to remove the foreign matter, but they never seemed to get it all. A prudent prisoner ate carefully so as not to damage his teeth. Later, a barracks room was established as a dentist office, complete with a chair and some basic tools to handle dental problems often associated with their daily meals.

There was little change in diet throughout the winter of 1942, but on one occasion cracked wheat was served instead of rice during the morning meal. J. O. Young remembers the cracked wheat well because it was full of weevils. "We did not bother to pick them out. [We] just figured they furnished a little protein."[29] This slight variation in diet did not change the nutritional intake of the prisoners. Even if more food was included in the diet, it would not have mattered for one prisoner. On Wake Island J. O. Young ate at the same table as a prisoner named Murdock, and recalls that Murdock's eating habits were different from the other men. Prior to the war most of the civilians filled up on meat and potatoes, but Murdock preferred sweets and fruit. "When he left the table he would pick up apples, oranges, or whatever fruit might be on the table and eat [it] as he drove his truck."[30] When he was in Japanese custody, Murdock refused to eat rice. Over the next several weeks he grew weaker and eventually became the first Wake Island prisoner to die at Woosung. The Japanese allowed a couple of carpenters access to some wood so they could fashion a basic coffin. Once Murdock's body was placed in the coffin, it was taken out of camp and disposed of by the Japanese.

Not long after arriving at Woosung, the Japanese "supplied the prisoners with some English language bulletins, newspapers, and magazines printed by the Japanese [government] about the war's progress."[31] In addition to the newspapers, each barracks was given a small radio from which the prisoners could pick up Japanese news stations and learn about the course of world events according to Tokyo. All of these media

sources had a common theme: continuous Japanese victories and the inevitability of Japan winning the war. However, the propaganda did not bother the prisoners, who were happy to hear anything about the outside world. As time went by the Japanese restricted access to these media sources. The radios were the first items to be removed by the Japanese. Eventually, prisoners were denied all newspapers and it became a punishable offense to be caught with one. The prisoners saw this as a sign. When the prisoners were earlier given access to the media they proclaimed Japanese victories. Now it was a question of reversal of fortunes.

With nothing to do but try and stay warm, an increasing number of complaints occurred among the prisoners. What few duties were assigned the prisoners were made as hard as possible. Stephens resigned as section leader because he got tired of being victimized by the Japanese guards for mistakes made by men in his section. He became the wood cutter, supplying wood to the kitchen. Each morning Stephens rose at four A.M. to start the fires in the galley and cut wood for the evening meal. The Japanese provided Stephens with a double-headed ax, but no instruments to sharpen his ax. He used the ax until it was so dull that chopping wood became nearly impossible. At this point the Japanese often took the ax away and brought him another.

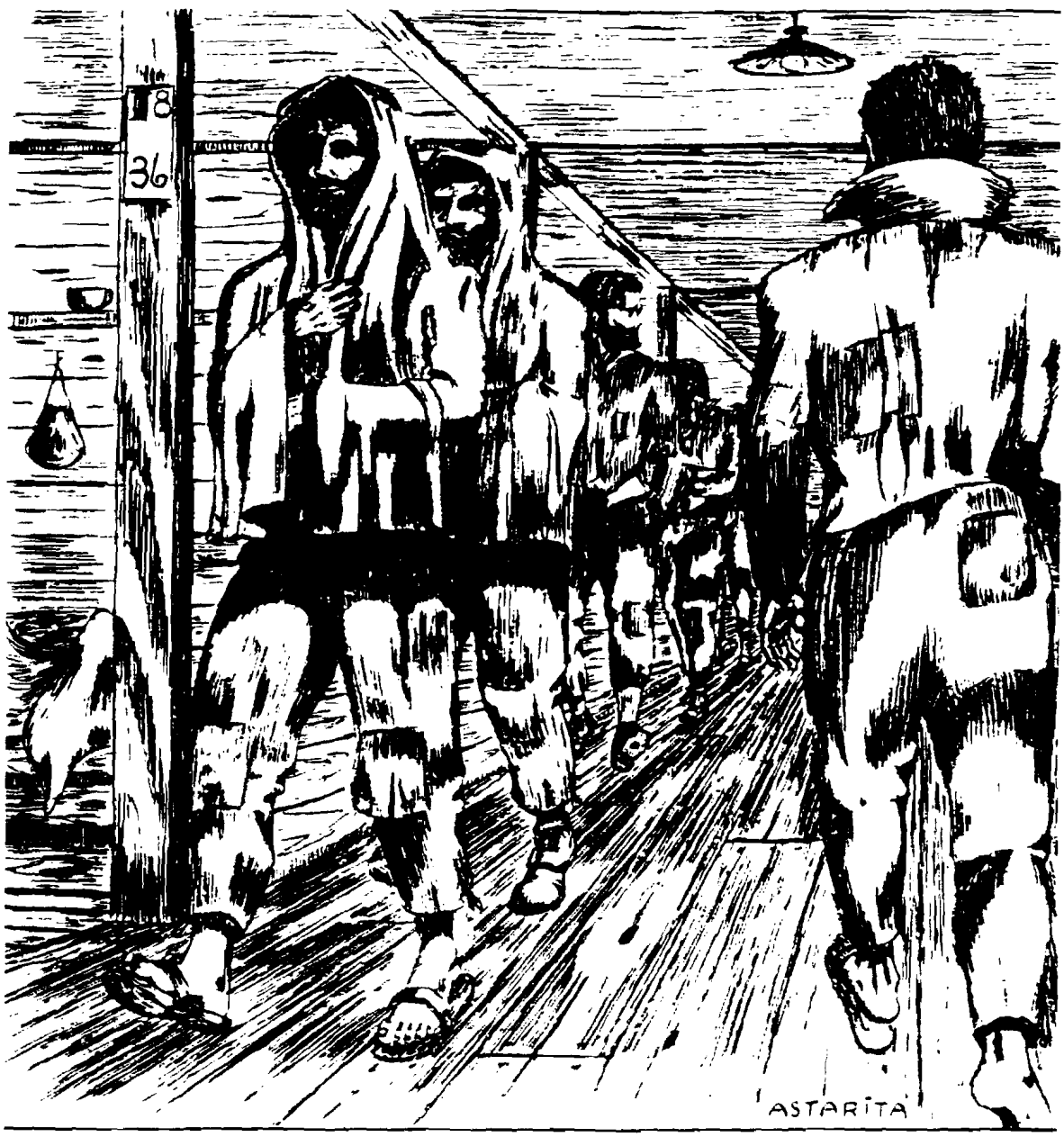
Prisoners were required to salute all Japanese soldiers. Failure to salute meant instaneous disciplinary action in the form of a beating. One of the most brutal offenders was the Japanese interpreter, Ishahara. The prisoners learned that there was little they could do to avoid sudden and violent outbursts, including those by Ishahara. Sometimes the beatings served no purpose, and other times a prisoner brought the blows upon himself. One evening Ishahara came into a barracks that housed Melvin Danner for an inspection. When Ishahara discovered that all the barracks items were not stored properly, he became angry with the section leader, calling him a SOB. The section leader, not accustomed to such profane language, "immediately hit him [Ishahara] with his fist knocking him to the floor."[32] The section leader was immediately jumped on by a group

of Japanese soldiers who kicked the man until those watching thought he was dead. A couple of lessons were learned from this brutal experience. First, there is little or nothing that can be done when a prisoner is being attacked. Trying to intervene would only result in additional beatings. Second, the prisoners had to outwit the Japanese and not give them an excuse to be victimized. Instead, prisoners had to pick and choose when to take a stand. A more prudent course of action was to ignore such statements. Some men quickly learned these lessons, others did not.

Not long after the arrival of the Wake Island prisoners, the camp received additional American POWs. Shortly after December 7, 1941, about 100 United States Marines, who had been serving as embassy guards at Peking and Tientsin, had been seized by the Japanese. Unlike men on Wake Island, the North China Marines had been treated much more humanely. Not only had these marines been transported by train under better conditions to Woosung, but they had been allowed to keep not only their winter clothing but also personal possessions such as razors, soap, tooth brushes, and supplies of canned food. These amenities made the Northern Marines the envy of the Woosung prisoners and led to feelings of resentment among the camp's inhabitants. John Burton referred to the China Marines as "Ten-cent" Marines. This name was derived from the area that some of these marines had served, Tientsin, China, but its meaning was more than simply name-calling; since most of the China Marines did not share their items, they were viewed as lesser than a fighting Wake Marine. Melvin Danner recalls that they were greedy and "smart enough not to be sharing their riches with the rest of us for they knew it was going to be a long haul."[33] Though it is true the China Marines had more material items than the others in the camp, these advantages were short-lived. Eventually their food supplies ran out and they were down to eating the same rations as everyone else.

The Japanese claimed that an electrified fence surrounded the perimeter of the camp. Considering the dilapidated conditions of the camp, many prisoners wondered if the fence was actually electrified. Once when a group of prisoners were outside

undergoing an inspection they saw a dog running along the perimeter of the camp. At one point the dog got too close to the fence and its tail came into contact with it. The dog was immediately electrocuted. The question whether the fence was charged was now settled. Word of the dog's death spread throughout the camp.



With little or no heat in the barracks and with only a few thin blankets to try and keep warm, prisoners would often march up and down the barracks to work up a bit of heat. (Astarita)

During the early phase of their captivity the Japanese assigned prisoners to work on camp projects. The prisoners soon learned that working for the Japanese was comedic but could be nearly fatal at times. On one occasion some of the prisoners were summoned by Ishahara to work on filling holes that had accumulated water throughout the camp. A small detail was led by Japanese guards to a shed to collect shovels for the job. As the men waited, they openly questioned how they could complete the task --- filling the holes required dirt, something the Japanese did not provide. The situation was ridiculous, but the prisoners were not willing to question Ishahara. When the shovel detail returned, the prisoners thought they had found a solution to the problem; they decided to level the areas that required little or no fill. Because of the cold damp weather, the prisoners worked as quickly as possible to complete the assignment.

Once work stopped, each prisoner was instructed to place his shovel in a pile in front of the Japanese guards. Thinking they were done and could return to the barracks, the prisoners discovered they were short one shovel. Ishahara immediately accused the prisoners of stealing and demanded the shovel's return. The men denied knowledge of the shovel, but Ishahara refused to release the prisoners until the shovel was returned. The men looked for the shovel, hoping to find it so they could get out of the cold. After searching an hour, Ishahara informed the men they would stay outside all night until the shovel was located. Following this announcement, the barracks leader questioned the men who checked out the shovels on how many were taken. Part of the problem was that no one knew how many shovels were assigned to the detail. Likewise, the Japanese guards counted in Japanese and the detail didn't know what the guards were saying. Suddenly one of the men remembered that one of the shovels had a broken handle and was returned to the shed. This was probably the shovel in question. Now the problem was to convince Ishahara without risking his wrath. The barracks commander approached Ishahara, who demanded to know if the shovel was found. Once Ishahara was informed of this new development, he questioned the guards. After the guards confirmed their story, Ishahara

addressed the prisoners and told them it was their responsibility to take care of Japanese property! The incident taught the prisoners several lessons about the Japanese. One, the Japanese did not care about worker efficiency, two, they were always wrong, and three, Ishahara hated Americans. The imprisoned Americans never gauged his hatred and how far he would go to punish the prisoners until later.

The first couple of months were the most difficult for many prisoners. Not only were the Americans trying to adjust to their new surroundings, but they were also constantly hungry. The rations never satisfied the prisoners' nutritional needs. The work details amplified the hunger since it caused the prisoners to expend more energy than their rations could produce. Under trying conditions the prisoners had dropped anywhere between forty to fifty pounds per man.

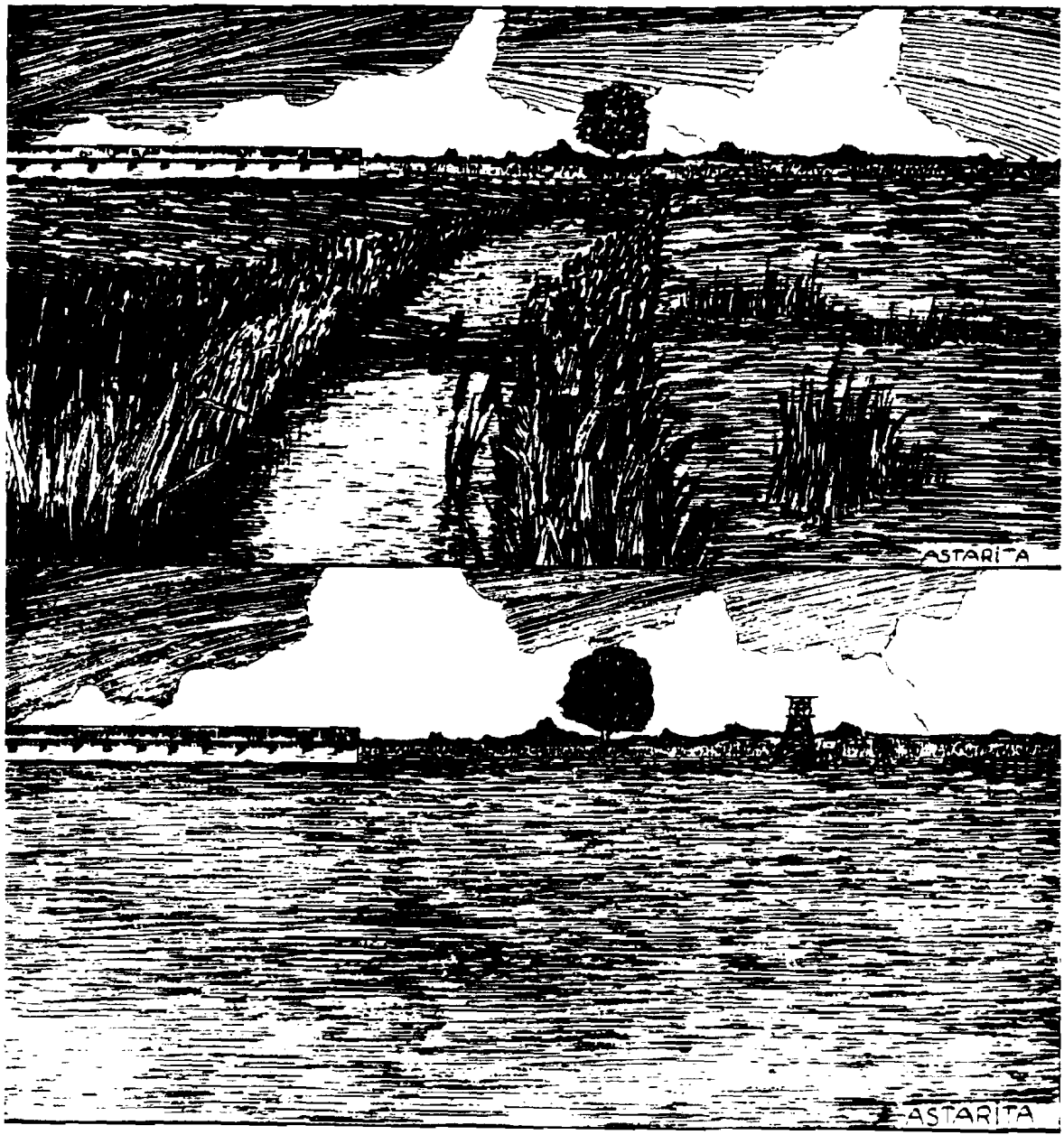
As spring approached, the number of work details increased. Forrest Read spent time policing the compound, cutting weeds, and improving walkways that had fallen into disrepair. For a while J. O. Young worked as a carpenter, repairing barracks and other jobs the Japanese deemed necessary. Theodore Abraham was part of a fifty-man detail that was marched to the Woosung train station where they boarded a freight car for a half-hour ride. After the short ride, Abraham and the others were led to a ditch where they were given shovels and ordered to dig out the ditch, which was filled with silt. After working all morning, the men were stopped for a noon meal. Receiving less than they did in camp, a bowl of rice and some bread, the Japanese allowed them a short break before returning to work. Abraham remembers the day as pretty uneventful, at least until they were returning to camp: After disembarking the train and marching back to camp, the prisoners witnessed Japanese cruelty. Abraham and the others passed a group of Japanese soldiers who "were torturing a [Chinese national]. They had removed all his clothing and had tied him to a post with his feet stuck in a bucket and a broken bottle hung around his neck to prevent him from dropping his head. The Japs threw buckets of water at him. This brought bursts of laughter from the Japanese soldiers as they gathered around an

open fire."[34] The Americans were not shocked, since they had experienced Japanese cruelty too. Still, the incident was a defining moment.

Frank Mace was part of a detail that worked outside the camp leveling terrain. Mace estimates that his detail leveled about ten acres of land that was covered with mounds. The Japanese instructed the prisoners that they could use the land for raising their own garden. As Mace and the others went about their jobs, they discovered that these were not just contours in the terrain, but were Chinese graves. "They [Chinese] put the coffin[s] on the ground and covered [them] with dirt. When someone else died they just put it on top of the mound and covered that one up."[35] The work was labor intensive and went on for several months. As the prisoners leveled the graves they occasionally found jade jewelry. These objects were picked up by those on the detail and used to trade for additional food. When the work was finished, the Japanese provided seed for the garden. Mace recalls that "there were small canals where we could get water for the garden. We installed some treadmills to bring water out of the ditch up to the garden."[36] Not surprisingly, when the garden started to produce, the Japanese took what they wanted and the prisoners received the rest. On one occasion the Japanese provided whale meat to be put into the prisoners' soup. However, this meat was so rancid that many men had a hard time eating it, but after some time they managed.

Not every detail worked smoothly. Dan Teters, the project manager on Wake, convinced the Japanese that by digging a drainage ditch under the electric fence, he could drain the water accumulated in the camp when it rained. The Japanese agreed and workers started digging the canal through the fence to drain the water. A few nights later, Teters, Cunningham, a Chinese prisoner serving as a translator, and two others crawled through this ditch and under the fence. As the men stumbled through the night, and hopefully into freedom, they eventually came upon a Chinese farmer who agreed to hide them. When the Japanese called for an inspection, and it was discovered that the men were missing, all prisoners were confined to their barracks. As word spread among the

prisoners about the escape, the prisoners hoped they succeeded to reach freedom. Unfortunately, their hopes were dashed when the escapees were captured the following day. The Chinese farmer, instead of hiding them, turned them over to the Japanese.



One of the first projects as Woosung was filling in a ditch that ran through the camp. Above is a view of the ditch before work began, below is the completed project. It was through this ditch that Dan Teters and Commander Cunningham escaped through only to be later recaptured. (Astarita)

The prisoners learned of Cunningham and Teters's fate when the entire camp was told to assemble near the barracks. Suddenly Teters, Cunningham, and the others were paraded before the assembled POWs, demonstrating that escape was impossible. The Japanese believed in collective guilt and therefore, in retaliation for the attempted escape, the entire camp was denied several meals. For their attempt, the military prisoners were tried in a Japanese military court and sentenced to ten years in a Shanghai prison, and the civilians were given two years for their attempt.

As spring approached, one prisoner suggested to the Japanese that they be allowed to play baseball and construct a playing field. The only hitch was that the Japanese did not have the necessary sports equipment. Apparently, the Japanese must have inquired about equipment in the International community in Shanghai. The foreigners who lived in the International Settlement "donated" equipment including bats, bases ,and balls, along with a football. "Occasionally on Sunday afternoon some played or enjoyed watching a ball game."[37] Occasionally the ball games resulted in injury and death. Forrest Read watched a baseball game one Sunday when the batter hit a deep ball toward the fence. The ball hit the ground and rolled under the fence. The outfielder, apparently caught up in the excitement of the game, reached too far under the fence to retrieve the ball and was electrocuted. Read and several others grabbed some buckets of water to revive him. J. O. Young remembered a prisoner, Tommy Essaff, who actually touched the wire and survived. "From that point on he was known as short circuit Essaff."[38]

Many prisoners organized football teams and they played other teams on Sunday afternoons. Roy Stephens joined a team because he liked football and prisoners were occasionally let off work early to practice. Practices paid off when his team reached the camp finals against a team of the North China Marines. During the final game, Stephens challenged a hard tackle by a marine on his running back. A play or two later, Stephens threw a block on the marine that broke the marine's collar bone. After the game Stephens

felt remorse, yet the marine held no grudge. In fact, "he thought that was the best thing that ever happened to him because he . . . was able to lay around the barracks all day."[39]

When a prisoner became ill or injured he was taken to the camp hospital, hopefully to receive treatment. Between the medical corpsmen and the naval doctor, Dr. Conn, the prisoners received the best care that could be provided under the circumstances. The camp hospital did have some primitive equipment that had been taken from Western doctors who had lived in Shanghai.

Most prisoners viewed the Japanese with a mixture of hatred and contempt. The only exception was a Japanese physician, Dr. Shindo. Even the most ardent haters of the Japanese remembered Dr. Shindo as a pleasant man who "did everything he could for the sick of the camp."[40] At one point Frank Mace got stomach cramps so bad that he was unable to walk, but still had to report to work. He eventually went to see Dr. Shindo, who gave him three different doses of medicine. Mace was unsure what type of medication he received, but the result saw Mace "throwing up a tapeworm."[41] Raleigh Rucker also had the fortune of meeting Dr. Shindo. Shindo determined that Rucker had acute appendicitis. Unfortunately, Shindo had no anesthetic for the operation. Rucker was held down as Dr. Shindo and a corpsman performed the operation with nothing more than a sharp knife and black thread to sew up the incision. Rucker survived the operation and fully recovered.

J. O. Young had the misfortune to require medical attention while in camp. Young broke out in hives and he went to the hospital, but by the time he got there the hives had mysteriously disappeared. The corpsman on duty gave him a shot and sent him on his way. A couple of hours later the hives returned, so Young returned to the hospital. He was given another shot and told that it was the last one he could have. Sure enough, later the same night the hives were back again. Knowing that the hospital would not provide more medication, Young went to a nearby barracks where he knew a corpsman. Young explained his problem to the corpsman, who told him he shouldn't worry and retrieved his

medical bag. The corpsman gave him some pills, two white and one blue. "As he put the bag back he [told Young] to take the blue pill and if that doesn't do it take the white ones."[42] The only problem was that Young in his haste had already taken both types. Young remembers returning to his barracks and then waking up the next morning. Whatever the medication the corpsman provided, the hives were gone. On another occasion, Young had his appendix removed. Unlike Rucker, he was given a shot, a local, to deaden the lower abdominal area.

In the spring of 1942, the Japanese decided to vaccinate the prisoners for cholera. The entire camp lined up and at the head of each line was a corpsmen who filled a large syringe. Melvin Danner stood in line, watched the proceedings, and noticed that "the same needle was used over and over until the syringe was emptied, it held about twenty shots."[43] The needle was then changed, but not before it was dull.

The Japanese embarked on a campaign of personal hygiene to reduce the number of illnesses in camp. The bathing facility was an old wooden building that contained a large vat that was filled with water and heated with wood. The prisoners were taken to the bath building where they disrobed and were provided with a small wooden bucket to wet their bodies and to rinse. If additional water was needed, they climbed into the vat. Theodore Abraham recalls the bath. By the time his section arrived the water was cold. The Japanese were not willing to provide additional firewood to heat the vat. The Japanese dispensed soap, but a prisoner was lucky to ever acquire a piece. The Japanese placed a time line on bathing too. With nearly 1,800 men in camp, the Japanese intended to get them bathed in one day. Therefore, groups were run in and out as quickly as possible. Although the vat was far from hygienic, it did remove some of the dirt and grime and left the prisoners feeling somewhat refreshed.

During the first few months, it appeared that the Japanese were unsure what use to make of the prisoners. A few details were organized, but nothing was consistent. The result was that the prisoners had too much idle time on their hands. One way to fill their

spare time was playing cards. The cards were made from cigarette packages and contributed to the rise in gambling. To gamble, a person had to have a stake, and since most of the men did not have money, they risked what was deemed valuable, such as food. Joe Goicoechea looks back on his gambling for food as stupid. "Being alive the next day might be a gamble, so why not try to improve our lot by having two rations instead of one?"[44] Goicoechea, however, ended up being on the losing end and lost his noon ration for a month. The loss of food meant that a man had to survive on two meals a day, which would be possible under normal conditions, but in Woosung life was not normal.

In 1942, the International Red Cross pressed the Japanese concerning the nutritional level of their prisoners. The Japanese estimated that they provided one and three-quarter pounds of food daily to their POWs, about three pounds less than Americans fed their prisoners. In actuality, it was far less.[45] Losing a third of your meager rations, as happened to Goicoechea, could cause fatal results. Goicoechea might have died, had it not been for Roy Stephens. At the time Stephens was the section leader of Goicoechea's barracks and Stephens also served the food during mealtimes. Stephens made sure that Goicoechea not only paid his debt, but provided Goicoechea with some food each noon. Goicoechea realized later, "Roy stuck his neck out and saved my life. Roy got me through that and never scolded me. He never said, you fool"[46] Not all the men were so lucky to have a friend like Stephens. Some men who became ill or lost the desire to survive missed their rations and they were gone in no time at all.

Besides food, cigarettes were another valuable item to trade or wager. At first, the only cigarettes the prisoners had were ones that they hid from the Japanese. Needless to say, there were not many available and the ones that survived the trip were used quickly. Many of the men who were regular smokers went through nicotine withdrawal during the first weeks in China. It was not uncommon to see prisoners scramble to retrieve discarded butts of cigarettes that the guards had smoked. After collecting enough butts, the men attempted to roll the remnants into a smokeable cigarette. Like cigarettes, cigarette paper

was scarce and substitutes, such as toilet and writing paper, were used if available. Eventually the Japanese began to supply a small amount of Japanese cigarettes, ten per month, which some men compared to the Japanese, small and stubby. "When a man lit up he was in danger of scorching the end of his nose."[47] One of the brands given to the prisoners was Kyoa, which was a shortened version of the Japanese words for Co-Prosperity Sphere. Those who smoked Kyoas found that the contents were not much more than the stems of tobacco leaves rolled together. Still, they offered relief to those who needed nicotine. For the men who did not smoke, their cigarette ration was used for gambling or trading for other scarce items such as soap and toothpaste. Unfortunately, some men became so desperate for cigarettes that they traded their food rations for them. Such situations created a moral dilemma for some men. A man who traded his cigarettes for food had the advantage of extra calories, which was vital for survival, and at the same time the other fellow denied himself the necessary food to make it through the war.

At first it seemed that the Japanese were unsure of what to do with their new prison laborers, but that was soon to change. Initially the prisoners had simply been used to repair structures and fill depressions in the camp, along with leveling land outside the camp for a garden. Suddenly the Japanese decided to have the prisoners clean and polish expended artillery shell casings, to make more productive use of prison labor. The polishing was required before the shells could be reloaded and reused. When the Americans were informed of the Japanese plans, the prisoners protested, claiming that work that directly aided the Japanese war effort was a violation of the Geneva Convention. The Japanese noted that they had never signed the convention, hence they were not obligated to adhere to the protocols. Therefore, if the prisoners were told to polish shells, they had to obey. With no option available, the prisoners reluctantly went about their tasks. However, many of the prisoners did shoddy work and dented and damaged the shells, so they could not be reused. Being caught "sabotaging" the Japanese

war effort would have resulted in severe punishment, but it was a risk many man took as part of an effort to defeat Japan.

Being a prisoner is never an easy transition for a free man to make. It was particularly difficult for a prisoner of war. A prisoner of war, especially a civilian detainee, is a victim of circumstance and has no idea how long he will be held. Because of the uncertainty, POWs never feel comfortable in their surroundings. Just when the Wake prisoners felt like they might have a handle on their situation, the Japanese would stir things up.

In mid-spring, the Japanese made an announcement that the prisoners were to gather their possessions and prepare to move to a new camp. Many POWs wondered why they had to move. The Japanese tried to reassure them that they were moving to a new camp that provided better conditions. Once their belongings were packed, the entire camp marched seven miles to Kiangwan, the site of the new prison camp. Kiangwan was located near the Yangtze River, about four miles from Shanghai. The layout of Kiangwan was similar to Woosung and the conditions were certainly not much better, so the prisoners wondered why they were moved in the first place, but it did not take long to answer that question.

The next morning the prisoners were ordered to work on a project to honor the Japanese presence in China. Once all the announcements and inspections were completed the men prepared to leave camp for their new assignment. Because of the limited width of the road, the men stood four across as they proceeded out of camp to an unknown destination. The guards attempted to keep the column moving at an orderly pace, but the column was extended for over a mile. After marching through a small Chinese village, the prisoners noticed a structure in the distance as they continued their march. The structure actually was a mess hall with benches, tables, and large iron cooking pots. It became obvious to the prisoners that they had reached their destination. After all the prisoners were assembled and counted, they were brought to attention so Ishahara, the

camp interpreter, could address them. He first criticized the prisoners for walking too slowly, "You took one hour and fifteen minutes to get here. That is too much time. In the future you should not take more than fifty minutes."[48] He further went on to explain that stakes had been set out to mark the boundaries of the large hill they were to construct. The hill was to be roughly 600 feet long, 200 feet wide, and 45 feet high. The dirt needed to build this large man-made hill, which the prisoners would eventually refer to as Mt. Fuji, was to be acquired across the road.

A large contingent of prisoners proceeded across the road and began digging and hauling dirt to the building site armed only with shovels, two-man yo-yo poles (a bamboo pole with a basket hung from the center) and rice mat bags. Another group of men assembled a narrow-gauge railway to the building site. Gathering iron rails that had been deposited at the site by the Japanese, the prisoners manually carried them on their shoulders and sat them in place. Other men struggled to push some small rail cars toward the newly laid track so they could be used to haul additional dirt to the site. "There were four or five sets of these tracks parallel to one another about fifty feet apart."[49] After working all day the men were assembled, counted, and marched back to camp. Theodore Abraham recalls that the men, weary from work, marched back to camp with little conversation, their main concern to eat and sleep.

The next morning, the men were assembled and marched back to "Mt. Fuji." Ishahara waited for them and after a short speech sent them to work. Ishahara served not only as camp interpreter, but also set the quota on how many loads of dirt had to be filled and deposited each day. At first the work was not too taxing, but as the height of the hill grew, pushing the heavy carts up the slope became increasingly difficult. Like most prisoners, whenever possible, the men would try and cut corners to ease their workload. Carts were not filled to capacity, or when possible, unofficial rest breaks were taken. Forrest Read recalls that some men tried to hitch rides in the carts as they rolled down the hill. "We were threatened not to, but we sneaked some when we thought they wouldn't

see us."[50] As fatigued as the men were over time, hitching a ride served a small risk many were willing to take for rest.

Used as manual laborers, the prisoners were pushed to their limits by the Japanese (Astarita)

It did not take long for the marines to realize that what they were being ordered to build was not a monument, but a rifle range. Once again the prisoners protested and once again the Japanese ignored their complaints.

The summer of 1942 brought mixed conditions for the prison workforce. Hordes of mosquitoes multiplied during the warm weather, requiring mosquito netting to be made available, since the prisoners were plagued with outbreaks of malaria. Living conditions deteriorated during the summer when the tin roofs of the barracks turned them into ovens. Combined with the heat, overcrowding, and the odor of human waste, conditions were perfect for the spread of diseases such as dysentery. The only positive for the prisoners was the warmth, but sometimes it was too warm. As Theodore Abraham recalls, the prisoners could cool down, but in the winter "we didn't have enough clothing and fuel to ever get warm!"[51] Although hunger was still a constant problem, appetites diminished in summer. Malnutrition stalked the prisoners and they barely consumed enough calories to cover their walk to and from the work site. Food rations never covered the hard labor of the prisoners. Japanese policy was simple: If a prisoner could stand, he could work. If a prisoner could not work, his food ration would be cut. The result was that Japanese systematically starved their prisoners of war. Some signs of malnutrition were obvious such as reduced weight, but other indicators were observed. Tasks that had been easy on Wake became difficult as the men lost strength. Many walked on wobbly legs, trying to avoid collapsing. Hair fell out, sexual drive diminished, and levels of irritability increased, all the results of inadequate food.

At this point during their internment many of the prisoners faced impending death. In late summer, a miracle occurred. Each man received a cardboard box from the International Red Cross, and even though the Japanese had removed some items, Mathew Morris believed they still contained five to six pounds of critically needed food. The men found cheese, dried milk, coffee, prunes, chocolate bars, and a new product, Spam.[52] Also stuffed inside were American cigarettes!

The Red Cross boxes were a great surprise, much like an early Christmas present. Some men sat down and ate everything, to the point of becoming ill. Others nibbled their windfall, trying to make every bite last. Still others used their gifts to gamble for more

food or cigarettes. The Red Cross boxes created the feeling among the prisoners that they were not forgotten and help was on the horizon.

The boxes were not the only time the prisoners received food from the Red Cross in 1942. On another occasion the Red Cross arranged for a truckload of vegetables to be delivered to the camp. Another time the Red Cross supplied bags of wheat that had been sent initially to China in the late 1920s for famine relief. When the prisoners opened the sacks, which had been in storage for years, they found not only wheat, but also weevils. Regardless, the prisoners cooked and ate the wheat despite the insects. But when the prisoners received extra rations from the Red Cross the Japanese cut their own rations until the Red Cross supplies were depleted.

In the summer of 1942, the prisoners were allowed for the first time to write a letter home. Previously a few officers were permitted to make a radio broadcast for American listeners in January 1942 when the *Nitta Maru* docked in Yokohama. However, most of the men had had no opportunity to notify their family of their capture.

The first message home was a postcard. On these small three-by-five cards the prisoners were allowed to tell their family of the "good" treatment they received. Eventually the prisoners wrote a postcard home every month and each quarter they were authorized to write a full-page letter. Writing letters was one thing, sending them was another matter. "Outgoing messages from the Asian camps might eventually turn up on the other side of the world [United States], via proper channels. Or they might not. Or whole batches of cards might never leave the camp."[53] Perhaps one of the most surprised persons to receive a letter from a Wake prisoner in China was Kansas senator Arthur Capper. Daniel Hall, a constituent of Capper's, and as he pointed out, someone who voted for him, sent Capper a typed letter about life as a prisoner of the Japanese in China. Not only does it describe his daily routine, but it helped establish the number of civilian workers held and the fate of the marines. Being typed and on official Japanese letterhead, it certainly raised the question of whether or not this was done purely for propaganda

purposes. It was only after the war that it could be verified that Hall's account was accurate. Hall raised an important concern for most civilian prisoners, repatriation. Hall's letter was dated July 28, 1942, but it did not reach Capper until July 1, 1943. The delay can probably be attributed to the fact that even though the prisoners were allowed to write letters in the summer of 1942, their letters were not forwarded on a timely basis.

Not only did the prisoners want to notify family of their whereabouts, they also sought news from the States. Letters from the United States were sent to Teheran, and from there the letters went to Moscow. The letters were dispatched from Moscow via the Trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok, then on to Tokyo. From Tokyo the letters were sent to China. Many prisoners discovered after the war that their families had written numerous letters that the prisoners never received. Receiving mail was left to the discretion of the Japanese. If mail from the States reached a prisoner it was a joyous event. Letters were read and reread and often memorized.

The Japanese would restrict or censor prisoner mail if the Japanese believed that the Americans were passing sensitive information to the United States. Once, when the prisoners were assembled to work on the Mt. Fuji project, Ishahara mentioned that "I have read several of your letters and they all complain of the monotonous life here."[54] This statement indicated that the Japanese censored the mail and letters that criticized the Japanese were discarded. Because of the critical comments, Ishahara added five additional carts of soil to the prisoners' workload and restricted the number of breaks prisoners could take that day.

Ishahara was known among the prisoners as the "Screaming Skull." Taller than his average countryman, "Ishahara was further distinguished by a protruding jaw and sunken eyes."[55] Although he was a civilian, Ishahara believed that his intelligence exceeded not only that of the prisoners, but also the average Japanese soldier. Eventually, the prisoners believed that when Ishahara became the interpreter he was given officer status, but when he got to China this status was never officially sanctioned. "When an ordinary Japanese

soldier didn't recognize him, it infuriated him."[56] Though he was a civilian, Ishahara wore a sidearm and sword like an officer. When a prisoner challenged his authority or when a prisoner displeased him, Ishahara used his sword as a club to beat the defenseless individual. The beatings were so bad that the camp officials took away his sword. In its place Ishahara used a leather riding crop to inflict punishment on the prisoners. Sometimes he lost all sense of perspective when dealing with prisoner offenses. After one especially brutal beating, the senior ranking prisoner protested Ishahara's actions to the camp authorities. "Their only comment was that they were sorry it had happened . . . [often] camp officials looked the other way."[57] To the prisoners he was the "Screaming Skull" or "The Beast of the East"; anytime a prisoner saw Ishahara coming his way he feared for his personal safety.

The main job for the prisoners was the Mt. Fuji rifle range, but it was not the only task assigned the prisoners. When needed, the prisoners were diverted to other Japanese projects. A detail dug a canal for the Japanese to offload supplies from cargo ships. Using picks and shovels, the men worked during low tide for nearly a year to complete the work.

As the height of Mt. Fuji grew, water erosion became a problem, often washing away the prisoners' labors. The prisoners thought using sod would correct the problem. The sod was acquired from the Chinese, and the Americans placed the grass along the completed portion of the hill to lessen the effects of erosion. Other men drained a small pond near the Mt. Fuji project. Using a treadmill as a pump, men took turns operating a wheel to remove the water.

One of the most interesting details involved about fifty men who were sent to a Shanghai race track. Once they arrived, they were issued shovels and told to bury fifty-gallon drums of gasoline. However, the prisoners discovered that not all of the drums contained gasoline; a few actually contained some alcohol. When the guards were otherwise occupied, some men started to consume the precious liquid, many becoming

intoxicated. The next day the detail returned to the race track, but this time they brought back some of the alcohol to give to friends. The detail was sent twice more before the Japanese realized what was happening and jailed some men for theft of Japanese property. The Japanese effectively cut the prisoners' supply of alcohol and made the camp dry again.

But the prisoners were ingenious when it came to intoxication spirits. Working in the kitchen, Roy Stephens and another man managed to secure molasses and yeast. With those basic ingredients they made beer. Although the beer was primitive by modern standards, they consumed it with a rare gusto. Fearful of the Japanese, Stephens proceeded to dispose of the contents after sampling his handiwork.

Rumors were one constant of prison life. There were rumors that the war would end shortly and rumors that the war would continue indefinitely. One persistent rumor involved possible repatriation. In the fall of 1942, rumor of a repatriation agreement spread throughout the camp. It seemed plausible when the Japanese had the men fill out personal information forms, including occupation. Many of the men believed that the Japanese wanted an accurate list of the prisoners so a prisoner exchange could be organized. Although intriguing, the rumor was dashed when the Japanese announced that a group of prisoners were being transferred to a new camp. Once again rumors surfaced concerning who was leaving and who was staying behind. Many prisoners realized that the men of Wake Island were going to be separated yet again. As they began to prepare for yet another move, little did they know that across the Pacific some of their Wake comrades were also about to embark on a journey of their own.

Notes

1. Roy Stephens, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 May 1997, 5-7.

2. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? (Manhattan: KS. Sunflower Press, 1992), 21.

3. Ibid., 22.

4. Ibid., 23.

5. Raleigh Rucker, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 June 1997, 22.

6. Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 24.

7. Melvin Danner, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 12 March 1997.

8. Ibid.

9. Woodrow Whittenburg, Wake--War & Hell, (1992), 8.

10. Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 27.

11. Stephens, 6-4.

12. Winfield Cunningham, Wake Island Command (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1961), 154.

13. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails (New York: Vantage Press,1992), 72.

14. Forrest Read, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 18 May 1998.

15. Mathew Morris, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 23 June 1997.

16. Ben Comstock, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 30 September 1996.

17. Samuel Silverman, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 May 1997.

18. J. O. Young, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 July 1997.

19. Silverman.

20. Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails, 74.

21. Stephens, 6-6.

22. Ibid., 6-7.

23. Danner.

24. Earl Christensen, Interview with Charles Appelhanz, 28 September 1997.

25. Cunningham, Wake Island Command, 165.

26. Danner.

27. Ibid.

28. Young.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Charles Varney, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 11 July 1997.

32. Danner.

33. Ibid.

34. Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 52.

35. Frank Mace, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 14 May 1997, 45.

36. Ibid., 46.

37. Read.

38. Young.

39. Stephens, 7-3.

40. Mace, 46.

41. Ibid.

42. Young.

43. Danner.

44. Stephens, 6-9.

45. Gavan Dawes, Prisoners of the Japanese (New York: Bonanza Books, 1984) p. 111

46. Stephens, 6-10.

47. Dawes, Prisoners of the Japanese, 115.

48. Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 67.

49. Read, 12.

50. Ibid.

51. Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 77.

52. Morris.

53. Dawes, Prisoners of the Japanese, 128.

54. Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 75.

55. Reba Wilkerson, "Wake's Forgotten Survivors," American History Illustrated 22, no. 8 December 1987: 45.

56. Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 70.

57. Ibid.

Chapter 5

Wake Island, 1942

After saying good-byes and watching the *Nitta Maru* depart, the remaining merican prisoners on Wake were returned to their camp. On their arrival the Japanese formed them that they were to move into the marine barracks. As before, a scramble ook place as men moved quickly to claim beds, blankets, mattresses, and any other items the barracks. Claiming beds and lockers was not a problem, since everyone needed a lace to sleep and hang clothes. The real dilemma for some was claiming the small items. aying about were pictures, letters, Bibles, and other personal objects left by the departing en. Seeing these objects reminded many of broken friendships and the uncertainty of eir fate.

Once the men were settled, the Japanese ordered a crew to go to the former vilian barracks to clean them so the Japanese could occupy the facilities. While they ere cleaning up, the detail tried to salvage what they could to deny the items to the panese.

For the next couple of weeks the prisoners' main activity was the construction of addition to their barracks and a new barracks for the Japanese. The prisoners had their ldition done in no time, but construction on the Japanese barracks, even though it had a rger crew of workers, crept along. There was an obvious discrepancy between what the vilians wanted to do and Japanese demands.

Although the Japanese were in command, when it came to construction they relied American know-how and Leal Russell, who was the assistant superintendent of nstruction prior to the outbreak of the war. After the departure of Dan Teters and the her civilians on the *Nitta Maru,* Russell was made superintendent under the Japanese.

ong with this title went a blue armband that allowed him free movement around the ands to inspect work that was under way.

Each morning the Japanese conducted a barracks count before the prisoners went the mess hall for breakfast. After breakfast the men were assigned to work details. ne of the projects that Russell oversaw was the remodeling of offices to fit the desires d whims of the Japanese. Rodney Kephart was part of the carpenter crew who worked the remodeling project. Kephart and the others went about their task with regret and sdain. "This remodeling got us down, to tear out the good work we had spent our time d energy on and rebuild it to suit the fancy of some slant-eyed Japs."[1]

Across Wake, construction and reconstruction took place. Gangs of laborers were sy building entanglements and fencing in compounds. Stevedores worked unloading pplies and others dug gun emplacements and underground shelters. After lobbying the panese for their own shelter, the prisoners were allowed to build a large dugout next to eir barracks. However, work on this dugout was not a priority for the Japanese and uld only be worked on when extra time was available. Likewise, the Japanese refused release building materials for the prisoner dugout. What materials were provided didn't the requirements for the job. "They want us to use 6 x 6 as timbers but they are very ht."[2] When such occasions occurred, Russell and the others would stall construction, ping that the Japanese would change their minds about the materials and release propriate items. Obviously the Japanese were not worried about the prisoners' safety, t after nearly two weeks of questioning, the Japanese supplied the timbers and Leal ssell got the okay to use twelve-by-twelve timbers rather than the inadequate -by-sixes.

On January 20, the Japanese received a shock. A work detail and Japanese guards, rching the brush for hidden caches of food, stumbled on Lloyd McKeehan. McKeehan d been hiding for nearly a month since the surrender. Fearful of the Japanese, cKeehan had lived on a large supply of canned goods that he hid next to his self-made

dugout. Convinced to surrender by a Japanese interpreter and other prisoners, McKeehan ended his isolation and joined the other Americans.

As the days dragged on the food rations gradually were reduced. Eventually prisoners received the minimum food requirements to support the work they were doing. The result was weight loss and reduced productivity. Therefore, the nearly two truckloads of food found with McKeehan was welcomed by the prisoners.

In early February 1942, a Japanese freighter not only brought food, building materials, and military equipment, but also several hundred Japanese workers, coolies, who were brought to the island to assist in construction work. The coolies were brought on deck and a large cargo net, a prisoner recalled, was "spread on the deck and the coolies were run on the nets like cattle, and the net hoisted, swung over the side and lowered onto the barge."[3] It was obvious to the Americans that by the way these men were unloaded the Japanese military had no more regard for them than their American prisoners.

Once the tension associated with the Japanese invasion and the subsequent occupation of the island eased, the Americans and the Japanese began to look at each other a bit differently. It would be an overstatement to infer that both sides ever trusted each other, but they did see some positive characteristics on both sides. On one occasion a Japanese soldier who Leal Russell worked with on planning construction projects showed some compassion to the prisoners. The soldier, Katsumi, let Russell know that a surprise inspection was coming and that Russell and the others should hide any food and excess cigarettes beforehand. some guards even proposed trading addresses with the prisoners so they could keep in contact when the war was over. It's probably easier to propose such ideas when you are the captor rather than the captive, but it does indicate that at least some Japanese saw the prisoners as men and not slaves. Such gestures were sure to gain a small measure of American respect.

Although some Japanese showed compassion, it should not be implied that they were trying to be buddy-buddy. In early February the Japanese demonstrated their control

vhen they required that all prisoners should not be out of their compound after 6:30 P.M. The change in policies raised eyebrows, but no formal explanations were given. Over the ext several days the prisoners noticed increased activity among their Japanese captors. oldiers moved about the island in full combat gear and a renewed emphasis was placed n digging gun emplacements and connecting trenches. Piecing together these clues, the risoners surmised that the Japanese were expecting an attack. On one hand, the risoners welcomed an invasion because it would mean freedom, but the thought of being ombarded and the ensuing confusion of combat did not thrill most of the men. Some of ne prisoners, caught up in the invasion hysteria, began planning their return home, the eople they would see when they got there and the food they would eat. As day after day assed with no invasion, the Japanese seemed to relax a bit, and Americans who were lanning their homecoming became depressed.

As so often happens, as soon as the prisoners let their guards down they were ictimized. On February 24, just after morning inspection and as the prisoners sat down or breakfast, the island erupted in bomb blasts and machine-gun fire. For the next hour ne prisoners could hear the sounds of war as they huddled in their underground dugout vishing they could see the Stars and Stripes again. Once the raid was over, a few men vere taken to fill shell holes. Others were allowed out of the dugout, but were not llowed out of the compound. Most of the men returned to the mess hall to finish their reakfast, but they were again interrupted when the air raid siren sounded. Back in the ugout the men waited for the sounds of war, but it was not forthcoming. Several more lse alarms occurred during the remainder of the day as the Japanese nervously waited for possible American landing. If an American landing was planned, the night of February 4 might have been a perfect time because the island was lit up like a Christmas tree. trangely, on this night, searchlights were lit and large bonfires raged across the island. ater that night the reason for the Japanese madness was evident: Over the sound of the aves, a drone of engines could be heard as eleven Japanese planes descended, one at a

time onto the airport runway. If the Americans came back tomorrow they would get a warm welcome.

As dawn broke over Wake the next day both the Japanese and their American prisoners waited in anticipation of another attack. The Americans hoped that a renewed raid might be the one to secure their freedom. The Japanese hoped to make a better showing and to thwart a landing. Both sides waited in earnest for the attack that never came. As morning turned into afternoon, it seemed likely no attack was coming and the prisoners were sent to work. Other than a couple of damaged barracks and buildings, little harm was caused in the February 24 raid.

On February 26, word spread among the prisoners that two American fliers had been picked up on Wilkes Island. Unlike previous rumors, this scuttlebutt was true and was confirmed by the two new faces seen locked up in the building used by the Japanese as a jail. The following day a prisoner was allowed to take some food to the fliers and obtained their story. As part of the February 24 raid, the pilot's plane had gone down with a fuel line problem. After ditching, the two crewmen climbed aboard their rubber raft and observed the searchlights and fires used by the Japanese to guide their planes to the runway on February 24. Using the lights as beacons, the two men paddled their way to Wilkes undetected. Searching for food the next day, the men were captured by the Japanese. Over the next several days the air crew was beaten and tortured to provide information, and on March 3, they were taken off the island and placed aboard a ship to an unknown destination. Unfortunately, the civilian prisoners were unable to get a second chance to talk to the fliers before their departure. There was so much they wanted to know about home and the war, but apparently these questions were left unanswered.

Though starving for information the prisoners were not entirely without any news. Oscar Peterson and other members of the asphalt crew had managed to hide a radio. "Prior to the war, a barge loaded with among other things, Christmas items, arrived at the island. It contained . . . short wave radios. One of these was set up under the floor of the

asphalt pump house and was used most days after our capture."[4] Being caught with a radio would have resulted in severe punishment, so the radio's existence was a well-guarded secret among the asphalt crew. During the day a member of the crew slipped into the pump house to try and catch a bit of news to share among the crew. As carefully as possible the crew provided information to the other prisoners, but since they could not explain how they obtained the information it was usually treated as just more scuttlebutt.

On March 10, 1942, two ghosts appeared in the prisoners' compound in the form of Fred Stevens and Logan Kay. Though their bodies had not been found after the chaotic fight on December 22-23, both men were listed as dead. As if miraculously resurrected, the two stood in the compound surrounded by Japanese guards. Located not far from the prisoners' compound the two men had kept themselves hidden in heavy brush since December 23. Initially the two had their own food supply, but when a bulldozer began clearing the brush for a new building their food supply was covered up. With the loss of their food, the two relied upon some ingenuity to survive. "They concocted a gun from a piece of two-by-six flooring, a rubber band, and a plunger which they worked in the groove in the flooring. Spikes were used for ammunition."[5] At night the two would slip out of their hiding place and using the moonlight they would go hunting. Once a bird was spotted the rubber-band gun was fired and hopefully the spike would find its mark. For drinking water, a tarp was spread out to catch rainwater. Even as successful as Stevens and Kay had been keeping themselves alive, by the time of their capture they were mere shadow of their former selves.

The Americans and Japanese were certainly surprised to see the two men. The Japanese did not believe that the two had been hiding undetected for nearly two and a half months. Stevens and Kay were locked up and put on a diet of crackers and water. While they were confined, the Japanese continually questioned the men about their true activities on Wake. Perhaps as a way to save face and not to admit they had not completely secured

e island, the Japanese accused the men of being pilots who had been shot down. nother accusation was that they were spies who had landed on the island to collect telligence for an American landing. The Japanese believed those fantasies, but the mericans knew the truth about Stevens and Kay. Both were civilians, not pilots, and had en on the island prior to the outbreak of the war. Eventually, the Japanese realized that tevens and Kay were simply two civilians who were probably scared and were just hiding the brush. After a week of questioning and confinement, Stevens and Kay were brought the prisoners' compound and released into the general prisoner population.

It did not take too long before life on Wake became monotonous. Even before the ar Wake wasn't a mecca of entertainment, but under the Japanese, a prisoner could look rward to little other than work. When the prisoners had free time, usually on Sundays, e prisoners had to look for some type of diversion. The prewar activity of making welry and other trinkets continued, along with wood carving. Other men turned to old liable games, checkers and cards, to pass the time. Since Leal Russell was the perintendent and had a bit more leeway than other prisoners, he was able to go fishing. ain showers were another opportunity for the men to grab their soap and rush outside to y and scrub down before the rain stopped.

One of the constant struggles for the Americans was the language barrier that parated them from the Japanese. At times the language differences could be extremely ustrating or funny. It took Leal Russell a great deal of gesturing and explaining to nvince a Japanese guard that he needed a truck to haul aggregate to a job site. Russell cided to try and learn Japanese, since he had to interact with the Japanese on a daily sis about work projects. He certainly didn't become fluent, but he did learn enough to t by. Sometimes the language confusion had the opposite effect. Working on a project, group of Americans were approached by a Japanese coolie asking for "benjo." One of e Americans knew enough Japanese to know that this meant bathroom, so he pointed in e direction of the bathhouse. A short time later the American also needed to go to the

athroom, so he walked to the bathhouse only to find the coolie "face to the wall with his eet on the seat of the stool, squatting and holding on to the vertical pipe from the flush ank."[6] It gave the Americans something to laugh about.

Despite the fact that there was a clear sky and not a plane in sight, the air raid siren ounded on March 24. After running for cover and then waiting for an attack that never aterialized, the men returned to work. Eventually, word spread across the island that the eason for the alarm was that the Japanese had found a torpedo on Wilkes Island. Fearful f an attack, the Japanese went on full alert. However, upon inspection the torpedo was usty and covered with slime and must have been left from the December attacks. The mericans got a good laugh because of the concern it caused the Japanese.

Even before the war Leal Russell had kept a diary while on Wake. After his apture he continued the diary and began keeping a record of the number and type of apanese planes that were on the island. The number of aircraft was never constant and eemed to change daily. The most common were four-engine patrol planes, but twin ngine bombers were also frequently sighted. Apparently the Japanese were using the land for the same purpose as the Americans had intended, aerial observation. On March 0, 1942, Russell learned from the waterfront crew that they had unloaded six crated anes from a ship that had come in. Why were these crated when the others had flown ? After observing the uncrating it became obvious that they were smaller and were ghters.

Over the next month little changed on the island. The prisoners worked, planes me and went, and an occasional ship showed up bringing food, equipment, and ditional Japanese personnel. Life became so monotonous that Russell became nvinced that "U.S. forces will not come in here unless they need the island and from all ppearances, they do not."[7] Even for the Japanese things on Wake Island must have emed to be pretty secure because by mid-April they began disassembling and crating up e fighter planes. However, on April 19, the crating stopped, and an additional nineteen

planes arrived. Obviously, something had changed and Wake was to be part of whatever the Japanese were planning. A rumor spread among the prisoners that Japan had been bombed and apparently the Japanese intended to use Wake as a base to send out planes to find the American ships involved in the attack. Over the next few days more planes came to the island, raising the total to thirty-one. Apparently one plane developed engine trouble shortly after takeoff and jettisoned its bombs. However, because of the engine trouble the plane had not gained sufficient altitude when the bombs were released and it crashed, killing six of the crew.[8] It was not long after this incident that the Japanese began pulling out planes and crews; soon the only planes on the island were patrol aircraft. Apparently, Russell was correct that Wake was no longer important to either side in future Pacific operations.

Following roll call one morning the Japanese claimed that two men were missing. The remaining prisoners in camp were questioned extensively about the missing men before they were released to go about their work. Most of the men wondered who was missing and where they could be since Wake was an island and there weren't too many places to hide. A few days after questioning, a prisoner learned from a Japanese guard that a boat was missing and it was believed that it was stolen by the two men. About a week later at morning roll call, the Japanese claimed to have caught the two and executed them. They also "stated that more rigid rules would be enacted and cooperation by U.S. [prisoners] was expected."[9] It was never confirmed whether the prisoners escaped, were captured, or executed, but it was apparent that the Japanese were tightening the rules. This change soon had fatal results for the confined men.

In early May, not long after the new regulations were issued, prisoner Julius "Babe" Hoffmeister had been questioned and thrown in jail by the Japanese. Hoffmeister had originally came to the island because he was an alcoholic and since the island was alcohol free he hoped to end his addiction. "When the war began Hoffmeister went to the bombed-out hospital and took alcohol and stashed it around the island. After his capture,

ıe would occasionally sneak out of the compound to dig up alcohol and he would get lrunk."[10] Eventually Hoffmeister ran out of his supply, so he broke into the Japanese anteen, stole alcohol, and go drunk. The Japanese put him on trial, convicted him of heft, and sentenced him to death. Rodney Kephart remembers Hoffmeister as a man who lacked both character and principle, but he was still one of us."[11] On Sunday, May 10, Mother's Day, the foremen and superintendent were called out to witness Hoffmeister's xecution. Marched out to the edge of the lagoon, Hoffmeister knelt before an open rench with his hands tied behind his back, wearing a blindfold. After a short reading by a apanese officer, another officer, who stood by Hoffmeister, took out his sword and with a ingle swing severed his head from his body. Both head and body were kicked into the rench and covered up. This incident sobered the prisoners to the realization that they vere in a serious situation, a situation that could prove fatal, if they were not careful.

Anytime a ship arrived at the island, it was greeted with enthusiasm by both the apanese and the American prisoners. For the Japanese it meant a possible rotation home r at least a letter. The Americans were always hopeful that this was a ship that would ake them home too. Both groups typically benefited from the supplies that were often elivered. Before one particular ship arrived on May 11, the island population was down o eating reduced military rations. After the ship unloaded its cargo, Leal Russell was able o feast on "roast duck, dressing, gravy, and turnips creamed." The following day he had baked ham, fruit sauce and spinach."[12] The ships did not always bring happiness. On ne occasion all the remaining American military personnel on the island who had been oo sick or wounded to leave with the first group were taken off the island. Another time, ine men and their equipment of steam rollers, caterpillars, and draglines were loaded and aken to an unknown destination.

The end of May saw some strange occurrences take place. The Japanese began ulling in a few prisoners for questioning. The remaining prisoners wondered what the thers had done, but the fact remained that they had done nothing. So why were these

risoners being questioned? The only possible explanation was that they all worked on the aving crew, but that did not seem sinister. Only after their release did everyone figure ut what was going on. The men in question had arrived on Wake Island in November 941. Prior to their arrival they had worked on Midway Island paving the runway there. he men told the others that the Japanese had asked them a lot of questions about Iidway. It was apparent to the prisoners that something was happening and Midway was nvolved.

Over the next few days Leal Russell tracked the increasing number of Japanese lanes coming to the island until they peaked at forty-seven. On June 6, 1942, the apanese revealed that they were attacking Midway Island, but made no mention of xactly what was taking place. As time passed, no further news came from the Japanese bout Midway and eventually the forty-seven planes at the airfield were reduced to four. he Japanese might not have been forthcoming with information about the battle of Iidway, but the hidden radio of the asphalt crew was. Listening to the radio one day, scar Peterson learned that a battle was taking place at Midway and it was an American ictory.

The news of the victory helped boost prisoner morale and created the recurring uttlebutt that they were going to be freed sometime in the future. As the weeks ticked y and the men were no closer to being freed then before, spirits began to drop. Just hen they began to feel abandoned, the prisoners were awakened on the night of June 27 y fiery explosions across the islands. Over the next couple of hours, while the prisoners ere hunkered down in their bunkers, bombs continued to drop and tracers lit up the ight. Once again the damage was not great, but it sent a message to both prisoners and ie Japanese. The prisoners were not alone and the Japanese had to be on guard.

Perhaps because of the U.S. raids on Wake, the Battle of Midway, or the need for esources elsewhere, the island received fewer visits from Japanese ships. The effect of iese infrequent visits was the inevitable reduction in rations and materials to continue

ertain construction projects. The island's lumber yard was nearly exhausted and fresh upplies were not forthcoming. To keep construction going the prisoners had to dismantle uildings to use the lumber to continue building to Japanese specifications.

These conditions continued for the remainder of the summer. An occasional raid ccurred, the men would work, and life generally got a bit tougher each day. The tuation came to a head in September when the Japanese sent word that a contingent of risoners were going to be shipped out.

On the morning of September 30, all the men were assembled with their ossessions for roll call. As the men stood about looking at each other, wondering who ould stay and who would go, the Japanese began reading the names of those who were eparting. When they were done, 265 men would be leaving while 98 others were led ack to the barracks to remain behind. After an inspection of their bags, the prisoners sat ound the compound waiting for orders to depart. Hour after hour ticked by, still with o orders to move. Using the excuse of having to use the bathroom, many of the eparting prisoners returned to the barracks to say their good-byes to the others. Little d either group know, but it would be the last time they would ever see each other.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the men were picked up by trucks and taken to e waterfront where they were loaded aboard a barge and taken to an oil tanker, the *achibana Maru*. As Walter Hokanson waited his turn to go to the tanker he remembers Japanese officer telling the men not to worry, "they would be going to Japan and after eing held there for a short time they were going to be exchanged for Japanese ivilians."[13] This announcement was certainly the news the prisoners had all hoped for, if ly it was true. Once aboard the tanker the prisoners were crowded into one of the holds the ship. After an issuance of orders about following all orders or face punishment, the ip got under way. With so many men crowded in the hold, the heat was almost bearable. On the fifth day of the journey fourteen men passed out from exposure. What tle water was issued, about a quart per man per day, was hardly enough to sustain the

prisoners. Walter Hokanson noticed some pipes running through the hold and finding one hat felt cool he decided to see what was inside it. The mechanics who were taken off the sland were allowed to take their toolboxes with them on the ship, so Hokanson borrowed a wrench and began loosening a half-inch plug that he found in the pipe. Once the plug was removed he found the contents to be fresh water, so he used his construction helmet as a way to hold the water and passed it around the hold. Fortunately for Hokanson, the Japanese never learned of his actions or he would have faced severe punishment. Other men, like Rodney Kephart, hung up blankets that had been issued to them. "We pulled them from side to side with strings as we lay nude on the deck below trying to keep cool."[14] On three occasions the Japanese allowed groups of prisoners up on the deck for fresh air.

After sailing for nine days the ship dropped anchor. The prisoners were hustled out of the hold and brought on deck. After enduring the conditions in the hold. Rodney Kephart looked out over the deck and noticed "how green and inviting the hills of the andscape looked, even if it was Japan."[15] While the *Tachibana Maru* was anchored in the harbor, Walter Hokanson noticed several ships that were already docked. One of the hips had a large red cross painted on its side. It looked like the Japanese were telling the ruth --- they were going to be exchanged. A tugboat came out to the tanker and the men were sent down the gangway to the tug. Once on the docks the men were lined up four cross and marched off past the Red Cross ship to a train station, where they were rammed aboard rail cars. The cars were little more than a box with some planks for eats. With the blinds on the windows pulled, the train headed south for the next day and half.

When the train finally stopped the men were transferred from the train to a coastal ransport that took them to the island of Kyushu. Here they were again loaded aboard a rain and transported to the city of Sesabo, which was to become their new home until late n the war.

Notes

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Chapter 6

China and Japan

John Burton wondered what the future held as he said good-bye to his best friend and joined the other seventy men who were gathered to leave the Kiangwan camp. As these seventy men, most of whom were plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and mechanics, milled about they often asked the inevitable question of where they were going. An English-speaking guard overheard the men and informed them they were being sent to Japan. For Burton, the idea of leaving the others behind was difficult, but his "spirit of adventure into the unknown came alive."[1] Lined up at the gate the men were marched to the same docks they had seen when they arrived in January. After boarding, the men were put below deck, the foghorn sounded, and they were on their way out of China.

Unlike their trip to China, the prisoners were allowed limited freedom of the ship. They were permitted on deck during the day and were given nearly all they wanted to eat. Burton was amazed that the sea really was yellow as the ship left the Yangtze River and entered the Yellow Sea. The enormous amount of sediments from the Yangtze provided the yellow tint for the Yellow Sea. The yellow patina continued for some time until it merged with the dark blue ocean. "The difference was amazing. Sailing through that beautiful, blue water made us fell clean again."[2]

The ship was not particularly large. Burton and the others, locked up below deck, kicked around the idea one night of trying to take over the ship. Being completely free tempted the men, but soon reality set in. The ship was pretty well guarded, the prisoners had no weapons, and even if they did take over the ship where would they go? Being in enemy waters, thousands of miles from friendly territory, the ship would surely be caught by the Japanese. After careful reflection, the idea of seizing the ship was dropped. However, years later, the men agreed that had they known what was in store for them they would have been better off trying to seize the ship, regardless of the consequences.

After three days at sea the ship sailed into Moji Bay. Once it docked, the men were marched from the ship to the Japanese town of Kokura. As the men made their way through town Japanese citizens lined the streets, taunting, throwing sticks and rocks, and spitting at the prisoners. These actions certainly did not endear the Japanese civilians to the prisoners, but they did feel some satisfaction when the Japanese guards beat civilians who got too close to them. Once the prisoners had passed through Kokura, they entered the steel mill city of Yawata. There they were marched up a steep hill to a white concrete building that the prisoners named the Castle.

The Castle was three stories high with barred windows. The prisoners were housed on the ground floor. Each room contained two wooden platforms that ran perpendicular to the outer wall of the castle. The platforms served as bedding for the fourteen men assigned to each room. Steam coils ran from room to room, making the prisoners' life a little bit more comfortable during the winter. On the west side of the Castle the Japanese had built a kitchen where prisoner meals were prepared. The prisoners later learned that the Castle had a large room that contained a vat for bathing and lines for hanging out clothes and blankets.

It was not long before the men discovered why they were brought to the Castle in the first place. After a few men were selected as cooks the remainder were taken to Yawata to work on details, "unloading coal from ships, hauling coke, unloading scrap iron and pig iron on cars, and others work[ed] on the docks and in the steel mills.[3] The work was hard and extremely labor intensive. What made the work even tougher was the limited rations, and with winter closing in, the lack of adequate clothing. If a man was not freezing, he was starving, or both. The men had to struggle up the hill and back to the Castle from a grueling day of work. Already tired, the men were exhausted and content to eat their meal and sleep. All in all, life was rougher than at Kiangwan.

It was not long after their arrival that the Wake prisoners began to receive new prisoners to share the accommodations of the Castle. A small group of American seamen were brought in after their ship had been sunk by the Germans and they had been turned over to the Japanese. In addition, a mixed group of about thirty-five American submariners, whose subs had been damaged and forced to surrender, were added to the prison population. Whenever new men came into camp they provided fresh news for a while, then life settled back to the same routine.

Just when John Burton thought things could not get worse, it did. Burton developed terrible gastrointestinal pains. After struggling with this condition for several weeks, the prison doctor, an American who had been captured on Guam, convinced the Japanese to put Burton on the kitchen detail. Burton was kept out of the elements and managed to regain his strength. He was also able to improve his diet, which helped ease his stomach pains.

Working in the kitchen, Burton was under the command of a large Japanese guard the prisoners nicknamed the Bull. Unlike the other Japanese guards, Burton never saw the Bull abuse anyone unless he was provoked. Likewise, he treated the soldiers under him in the same manner. The prisoners respected the Bull. If nothing else, the Bull was fair. Burton learned that the Bull may have had a measure of respect for the prisoners too. After suffering another bout of stomach pains, Burton was confined to bed. To his amazement, the Bull came to see Burton and brought him some rice cooked into a thick soup. "That was the first time anyone ever saw the Bull show a streak of softness."[4]

Burton and a friend received permission to take their blankets up to the roof one day so that they could air them out on the clothesline. Burton and his friend did not know that a couple of their comrades had broken into a storage room and taken food from Red Cross packages that the Japanese had not released. The men hid the food items on the roof. Sure enough, a Japanese guard came up to the roof, found the items, and found Burton and his friend up there. Burton and his friend were prime suspects and the

interrogation began immediately. After repeatedly denying their guilt, additional Japanese guards arrived and began to beat the men. Occasionally the beatings stopped and the interrogation began anew. The two men could admit stealing food and hope for the best, but there were no guarantees following that course. The alternative was not to admit their guilt but to pray the beating would end. Regardless, the choices were not easy and either meant more pain. Burton could not admit to something he had not done, so the Japanese continued to beat him. At one point during the interrogation he caught a reflection of himself in a window. He could hardly believe the punishment he withstood in so short of time. "My eyes were nearly swollen shut. The back of my head and the sides of my face were a beaten, swollen mass, and the Japs weren't through yet."[5] Burton was strapped to a stretcher and water was poured on his face. As he attempted to breathe he would inevitably inhale water, slowly drowning. Occasionally the water stopped and questions started again, but all Burton could do was cough and sputter.

As violently as it started, the beating suddenly stopped. Burton was taken to a cell, unstrapped from the stretcher, and dumped on the floor. A short time later the cell door was opened and the Japanese informed him that the true thieves had been caught and he could go back to his room. Burton dragged himself along to his room. Burton couldn't decide who he hated more, the Japanese who had inflicted so much pain, or his countrymen who allowed them to take the blame. What made this injustice intolerable was when Burton discovered that the real culprits had only been slapped a bit and then released. It took several years before the effects of the beating wore off. Enduring the trauma for years, Burton's only crime was simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

When prisoners became sick or injured, they were typically taken to a couple of rooms that were isolated from the rest of the prisoners. To be placed in one of the rooms required one to be extremely ill; otherwise, they were sent back to work. In essence, the sickrooms were not places to recover, but places for men to die. With little medication,

the men slowly withered away and died. Perhaps one of the worst cases was a man who had developed leukemia. Over several months the lymph nodes in his groin, under his arms, and in his neck were swollen. To make matters worse, some Japanese guards went to the sickrooms to poke and prod the prisoners, often telling them they would die.

When a prisoner died, his body was placed in a pine box that was often stood on end at the entrance of the building. Each day the survivors passed and saw their dead comrades until they were buried. It seemed to the prisoners that the Japanese would stop at nothing to break the prisoners' morale, but morale was much stronger than the Japanese realized. The Americans adjusted to their new surroundings and held their own. It might have consoled the men to know that they were not alone in adjusting to life in Japan.

The 265 civilians who had been shipped from Wake in the fall of 1942 were also trying to get acclimated to their new surroundings. At about midnight the men arrived by train at the town of Sesabo. Disembarking, the men marched through the town, guarded by Japanese troops and local police. To their shock and amazement the city streets were lined with Japanese citizens who were waiting to see the prisoners. The prisoners would later learn that the Japanese military had advertised the fact that they were bringing in British prisoners from Malaya and the people turned out to see the defeated men. Walter Hokanson, who was in this group of prisoners, felt the Japanese civilians surely had to be disappointed with what they saw. Expecting to see British soldiers, they witnessed a bunch of older, ill clad, scraggly civilians. It gave Hokanson satisfaction to think the Japanese civilians were disappointed. Once they had marched through town, the prisoners were loaded aboard trucks and buses that took them to a camp in the mountains, known as Camp #18, above Sesabo.

The camp was less a traditional camp as it was a construction compound. The entire compound was encircled by a bamboo fence and inside were several sheds used for storing cement. One of these sheds was empty and was to be used as the prisoners' barracks. Once inside, the prisoners were organized into squads of roughly twenty-one to

twenty-two men and each was assigned a specific place to sleep. The barracks contained no beds, but had some straw mats on a bare floor. "We slept seven in a row side by side from the center of the room to the wall, and heads to heads and feet to feet the length of the shed."[6] The barracks, or storage shed, contained no heat, the siding was of thin boards, many of the knots in the wood siding had fallen out leaving holes, and the roof leaked. All in all, it was a miserable place to sleep. To complicate matters, the prisoners had spent at least a year in the tropics and within a matter of days were thrown into the wintry mountain conditions around Sesabo. If they had adequate clothing and food to counter the cold, their situation might not have been so bad. The Japanese issued each man four Japanese blankets, but they were thin, old, not particularly warm, and were infested with fleas or bedbugs. Attempts to wash the cotton blankets resulted in shrinkage. Optimistically, most men hoped they wouldn't be at this camp long and their next conditions would be better. How wrong they were.

The next morning the prisoners got their first breakfast in Japan. They received about half a cereal bowl of rice and about a quarter bowl of soup, consisting of a few vegetables, some unpeeled potatoes, and the bones left over from fish that had been filleted for the Japanese. After breakfast the men were marched to their first day of work, building a dam in the mountains. The average workday was twelve hours, seven days a week. The second and fourth Sundays of each month were free days, but even then the prisoners had to do some form of work. The exact jobs varied from day to day.

On the first day of work Rodney Kephart and his squad were assigned to carry bags of cement to the dam site. Each bag weighed 112 pounds and the prisoners carried each bag roughly one mile. Some men worked removing material from the dam site and carrying it to a location above the main dam. On other occasions, men unloaded a shipment of cement that had arrived and carried it to a warehouse. Each squad was given a quota to unload. "The quota might be a hundred sacks per man in a thirty-man crew. With six or eight men from the crew loading and unloading, that made ten or a dozen

extras for every packer."[7] Once the unloading was finished, it was still not the last time the prisoners saw the sacks. Eventually they loaded the bags aboard a train tram that ran to the camp and unloaded them into storage sheds in the camp. From there the prisoners moved the bags to the mixing plant before taking the liquid concrete to the dam site. All in all it was a terrible waste of manpower and as Walter Hokanson remembers, the worst part about it was, "you were a complete slave to a bunch of idiots."[8] Here was a group of 260 veteran construction workers, many of whom, like Hokanson, had worked on the Grand Coulee Dam, and they were now going to build a dam with picks, shovels, and their bare hands. It was at this point many of the prisoners were positive there was no way the United States could lose the war to the Japanese. The Japanese were simply going to be outmatched by U.S. technology, output, and will.

With winter approaching and little provided to help keep them warm, the prisoners turned to their own resourcefulness. The cement bags were made out of paper, and paper was a good source of insulation. For the prisoners it became a "hot" commodity. Technically it was illegal for the prisoners to take the empty cement bags, but if they were not caught, it was a way to warm up. Once back in the barracks, some prisoners used the bags as leggings inside their pants, others as socks. Still others layered the bags in between their blankets to provide additional warmth while they slept. Prisoners also tried to use heated rocks as bed warmers until one prisoner accidentally set his platform on fire from an overheated rock. The Japanese took the offender, along with others they discovered who were using heated rocks, and forced them to stand at attention, with rocks overhead, for nearly an hour. If a man's arms dipped, he was clubbed by the guards. After the hour each man was individually beaten for possessing rocks. As a result of this incident, prisoners created a password to warn their comrades of approaching Japanese so they could hide their illegal items.

Periodically the prisoners were given a day off. However, prisoners were expected to clean the barracks. During cleaning days a detail was taken from the compound to cut

and gather wood for the bath. Another group was responsible for cleaning the latrine, which was not much more than a shack, with a few boards missing in the floor that served as openings to the concrete storage tanks below. "There were doors on the outside of the shack where the refuse could be dipped out and carried to the gardens, or stored in cisterns at the corner of the fields."[9]

When the work was completed the prisoners were allowed to bathe. Much like facilities in China, the bathhouse consisted of two wooden tubs that were about four feet long by five feet wide and about three feet deep. The water was heated by a furnace located outside the bathhouse. Once heated, the water had to serve 250 men, which taxed the facilities to the breaking point.

The meals the Japanese provided for the prisoners consisted of barley, rice, or maize. On some occasions a soybean-based soup was added to the menu. Other times the Japanese served a soup consisting of nothing more than warm water with an occasional vegetable added. On one occasion Walter Hokanson recalls that the Japanese informed them the next day they would be having tomato soup. Tomato soup was one of Hokanson's favorites so he was looking forward to the next meal. However, when he received his soup he was surprised to see that it was not red like traditional tomato soup. Upon further inspection he found that it was tomato soup, but it was made from tomato vines, not the tomatoes. He and the other prisoners thought the meal was terrible. Never during his captivity did Hokanson receive milk, eggs, cheese, or butter. Rarely did he and his fellow prisoners receive fish, but only because it was tainted and not fit for the Japanese. The prisoners could not afford to be choosy, so they ate the fish, and rarely missed a meal.

Prisoners looked for extra food at every opportunity. It was not uncommon to see a prisoner working on the dam project pick up a small clam, crab, or any other food item to supplement his diet. Walking across the compound one day, a prisoner stopped and picked up an orange peel that a guard had dropped. The prisoner was caught and placed

in what the prisoners called the dog box. The dog box was not much bigger than a large doghouse. With six inches of snow on the ground, the man was given one blanket to keep warm. For ten days he was kept in the box with only a small bowl of rice for food, simply for picking up an orange peel!

One day Hokanson was sure he was about to get a taste of heaven. A truck pulled into camp loaded with watermelons. A large table was brought out, the watermelons were displayed, and the prisoners were assembled. With considerable anticipation the men stood staring at the melons. The Japanese then brought out a camera and took pictures of the prisoners with the melons. When this was done the men were ordered to put the melons back on the truck, whereupon the Japanese drove the truck away. Even though the melons were within their grasp, the prisoners did not receive one bite or drop of juice from the delicious looking fruit.

Like most other POWs, the men constantly talked about food. Though this did not relieve the hunger, it was a daily topic. Many prisoners made up recipes for different foods. Some went to the extent of writing them down on the cement sacks so they could take them home. Though most never carried out their intentions, it did help them pass the time. Unfortunately, the combination of hard labor and limited rations led to a slow death by starvation. If a man became sick and missed a meal or two, his chances of survival were greatly reduced. This was how critical food was to a prisoner.

The Wake prisoners transferred to Japan were trying to adjust to life at Sesabo, but Leal Russell and four others never made the journey. After arriving at Yokohama, Russell and some of the other construction chiefs who had been on the island were put on a separate train and taken to the Ofuna camp. Not far from Tokyo, Ofuna was more of a prison. Unlike the other camps that held Wake prisoners, this was not a work camp; instead, it was a traditional lockup.

Ofuna was run with military precision, a clear difference compared to what Russell and the others had experienced on Wake Island. At 5:30 A.M. the prisoners were

awakened. Half the prison population washed up and the other half cleaned their cells. The total prison population numbered about thirty. All were Allied military, except the five civilians from Wake Island. After these tasks had been completed the men were brought out to a compound and lined up. They faced Tokyo and bowed to the emperor, and by then it was time for breakfast. After breakfast there was additional time to police the prison before exercise began. At no time was talking allowed for prisoners, except in the prison-sponsored games such as volleyball and races and while they were in their cells. The prisoners ate three times daily, were given two cigarettes a day, one in the morning, one in the evening, and locked up at 7:30 P.M. for the night. There was no heat in the cells and the prisoners were only given a few thin blankets. On a specific day each month a barber gave the prisoners a shave and a haircut. A haircut to the Japanese meant not a trim, but the removal of all of their hair. Another day was dedicated to removing the bedding, airing it out, and scrubbing the cells with water. Like clockwork, the Japanese followed this schedule day in and day out.

A week or two after Russell's arrival, the population of Ofuna began to grow. First, five additional Wake prisoners who had been hospitalized when they arrived in Japan were brought to the prison. The next small group included six British prisoners whose ship had been captured by the Japanese in the Indian Ocean. Russell was glad to meet the latest arrivals because they brought a large supply of tobacco. The tobacco was seized by the Japanese at Ofuna and distributed daily among the other prisoners. Since Russell was a smoker, his ration of two cigarettes doubled.

The prisoners who were confined at Ofuna were there for a reason. Japanese officials regularly came to interrogate prisoners. The questioning went on for hours and then abruptly stopped. Russell did not know what they wanted to learn from him. He answered the questions but wondered what a civilian who had been a captive for ten months knew that would assist the Japanese war effort. He and the other Wake prisoners

openly expressed hope about being reunited with their comrades who had been sent to Japan.

The interrogators were influential and powerful men. After one bout with the interrogators, the prisoners were called to attention and informed that they had not been polite enough during the questioning. According to one guard, the prisoners "could expect no favors until we learned how to act and until our attitude was different."[10] It is not known when the Japanese discovered that the prisoners had no information of value but in early December 1942 most of the men in Ofuna were informed they were being sent to Yokohama. For Russell, the news was cause to celebrate. He thought any place had to be better than Ofuna.

On December 5, 1942, Russell and the other prisoners arrived at the Yokohama prison camp. Here they were issued new uniforms, which for the most part were put on over their existing clothes, assigned to a barracks, and told they would work in the shipyards starting the next day. As the new men tried to get settled, they learned the camp was already home to 600 men, half of whom were sick. Perhaps this was not better than Ofuna. Assigned to work gangs in the Mitsubishi shipyards, the Wake prisoners helped pound, shape, and place steel plates for new Japanese warships. The work was hard and potentially dangerous. Besides the prison labor in the shipyards, Russell noticed a large number of Japanese women and boys working too. Apparently, the Japanese war effort was putting a strain on Japanese manpower.

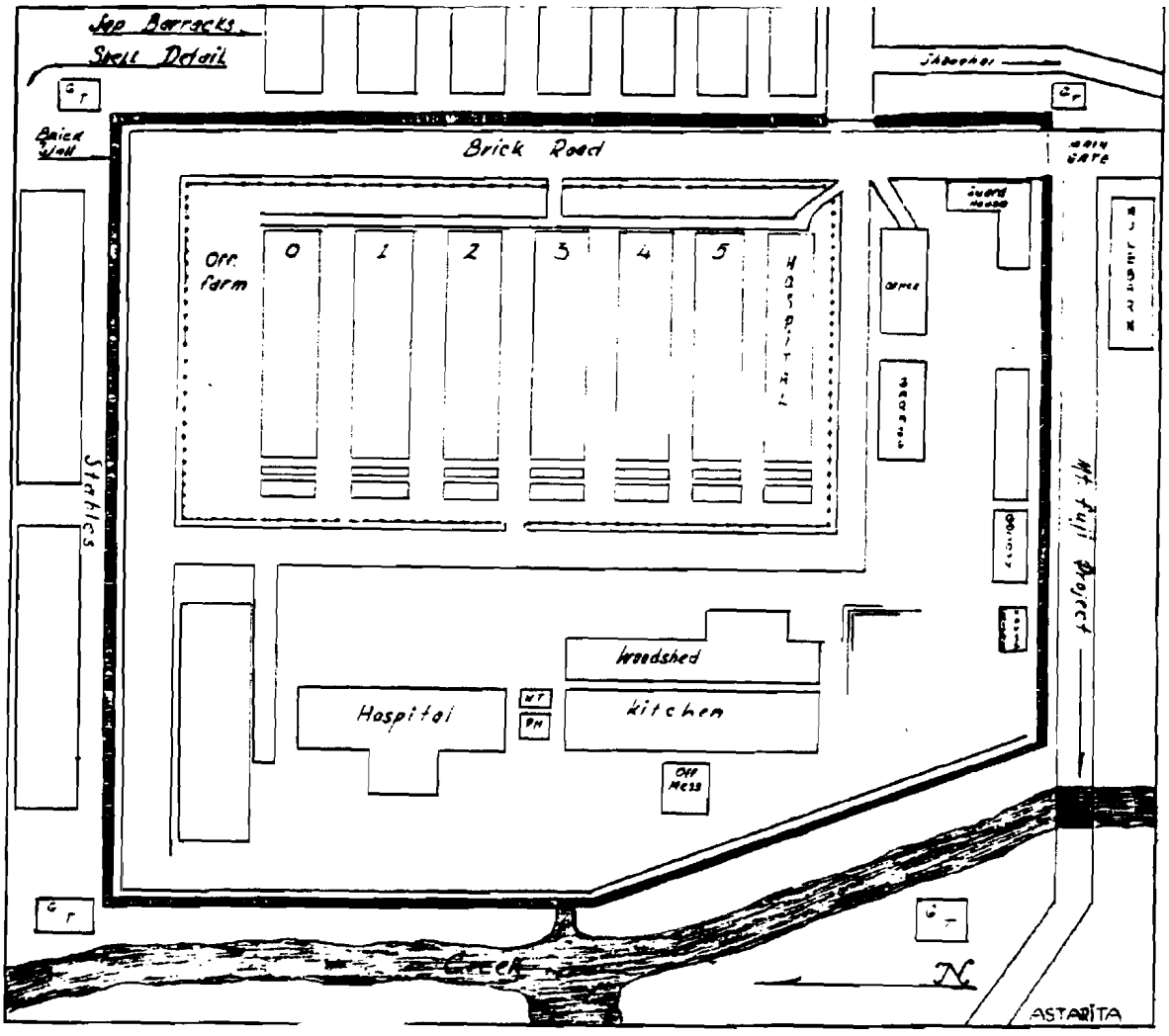
On December 15, the prisoners in Yokohama received an early Christmas present. The Red Cross had came to visit the prisoners. Not only did the Red Cross bring cards, so the prisoners could write home, but they also informed the men that all their names had been collected and would be sent on to Washington. For Russell, and certainly the others, "that is the best news I have had since I have been a prisoner. I am so thankful that my loved ones will receive word that I am ok."[11]

The highlight of the Red Cross visit of December 15 came on Christmas Day 1942, when the prisoners were issued British Red Cross packages. Inside the packages were "1 can apple pudding, 1 can bacon, 1 can nestles milk, 1 can creamed rice, 1 can beef and vegetables, 1 can service biscuit, 1 can margarine, 1 can cheese, 2 cans sugar, 1 can syrup, 1 can tomatoes."[12] Like children, the men opened their boxes with gusto, inspecting and reinspecting their contents. The prisoners were also allowed to sing Christmas carols, hymns, and take baths. By far this was a much better Christmas than they had experienced the previous year on Wake. To make matters even better the prisoners were told there would be a three-day Japanese holiday coming and they would not be required to work. What an exciting ending to what had been less than a fortunate year.

The other men who had been taken from Wake also celebrated Christmas, but in an entirely different way than those at Yokohama. The men at Sesabo did not get a Red Cross visit, no letters, and no special food, but they did get the day off. This day was not exactly given by the Japanese, it was earned. Rather than get a day off in the middle of the month, the prisoners worked that day so they could have Christmas free from labor. The Japanese did allow them to have a tree, sing a few carols, and have a short church service. The real present to the prisoners was when the Japanese took off for their three-day holiday. The men not only didn't have to work, but the Japanese were so busy drinking and eating that they did not bother the prisoners. Like the men at Yokohama, the three days of peace was far better than what they had experienced the previous year.

Following the departure of the seventy men in August 1942, life at the Kiangwan prison camp in China proceeded much as it had previously: work, work, and more work. Whenever possible, the prisoners tried to amuse themselves at the expense of the Japanese. Ed Koski and his friends nicknamed one of the guards "Dip Shit." After being called this several days the guard inquired whether this was good or bad. Of course Koski and the others assured him it was good. One day Koski and the others learned that the same guard's wife was going to have a child. The prisoners suggested that the guard name

the baby Roosevelt. The guard went through the roof with anger and they were lucky they were not severely beaten. For the next two months they asked how Roosevelt was doing just to see him get angry.[13] Surprisingly, the guard began to respond by telling them that Roosevelt was doing fine!



Layout of the Kiangwan Prison camp. The camp was so close to Shanghai that the prisoners could see the cities skyline as they marched out of the gate to work. (Astarita)

The prisoners almost always gave the guards nicknames. These names were usually based on the guard's physical appearance and were racially motivated. One was called "Handlebars," another "Horseface," and another "Ape." One guard named

Morisako, was given an unflattering name, but it was funny for the prisoners. Exactly who gave Morisako the nickname remains in doubt, but he was called Mortimer Snerd. Based on Edgar Bergen's puppet, Morisako was the spitting image of the homely Snerd. Morisako wanted to know why they all called him Snerd and the prisoners assured him that it was the name of a famous American movie star. In a sense they had not lied; Mortimer Snerd was a famous star, he was just famous because of his homeliness. "Using this name really puffed Morisako up, and he thought he was hot stuff. This went on for several months until one night Morisako went to a movie in Shanghai. It was an Edgar Bergen movie with Mortimer Snerd in it."[14] When Morisako returned he was angry. Fearing punishment, no one risked calling him Mortimer Snerd again. Although they were captives, the Wake men still had their sense of humor and the jokes played on the Japanese were a diversion from daily prison life.

The best Christmas for the prisoners in China came in 1942. On Christmas morning a truck came into camp and began unloading their Christmas dinner. "There was turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, bread, coffee."[15] For dessert there was candy, pies, and cigarettes. There were enough turkeys available that one bird was assigned to every five men. It was truly a feast. It was only later that the men learned that their benefactor was not the Japanese, but the American businessman, Jimmy James.

James had served in the U.S. Army during World War I and eventually ended his career in Tientsin, China. After his discharge he stayed in China and opened his own business, including two Shanghai restaurants. When the Japanese seized Shanghai they allowed James to keep his restaurants. The International Red Cross had a headquarters in Shanghai and James approached them with the idea of sending out a Thanksgiving dinner for the prisoners at Kiangwan. "They recommended waiting for Christmas since Thanksgiving is strictly an American holiday. Some Japanese were Christians and Christmas was more of a universal holiday."[16] After living in Asia for some time, James knew enough about Asians not to be too pushy. First, he asked Japanese officials if he

could send in an item. Once he got approval, he asked for something else. The list of requests kept growing. Eventually, the officials said he could provide the prisoners whatever he wished. In this way James prepared his Christmas dinner for his fellow countrymen.

Importing 350 turkeys from Indo-china, James put his restaurants and cooks to work preparing the meal. Working around the clock for a week, the feast was ready on Christmas Day, 1942. Every prisoner who had been in Kiangwan prison fondly remembers the Christmas feast and Jimmy James. A few months later, the Japanese seized the property of all foreign nationals in Shanghai, including the restaurants of Jimmy James. He and the others were interned for the duration of the war. After his release in 1945, James stayed in China restarting his businesses until the Communists seized power in 1949. Returning to the United States penniless, James still had the memories of bringing Christmas cheer to 1,500 American prisoners in 1942. Likewise, many prisoners never forgot what James had done for them. (After returning from the war and hearing of Jimmy James's misfortune, the prisoners took up a collection and sent it to James as a thank-you for his personal sacrifice.)

Following their Christmas dinner, the prisoners in Kiangwan received a Red Cross parcel at the start of the new year. Inside the boxes the men received food: corned beef, margarine, prunes, hardtack, cheese, and cigarettes. The Red Cross also provided "a kit made up of razor blades, toothpaste, brush, comb, needle and thread, soap in a nice container, shave brush and cream."[17] At least 1942 ended on a positive note, but what would 1943 bring?

It was not long before the food parcels ran out and the turkey dinner was a thing of the past. Once again the Kiangwan prisoners were back to reduced rations and food was a mere dream. At one point the Red Cross provided the camp with a young sow. One pig was not enough to feed the camp, so the prisoners requested permission to build a pen, raise the pig, and eventually breed it so they could produce more hogs. The Japanese

gave their consent and the prisoners provided the feed, grass, and whatever they could find for their pig to eat. Eventually, the pig was bred and became pregnant. This part of the plan worked well; it was the rest of the plan that collapsed. While the men were working on various projects the sow gave birth. A Chinese cook who was a prisoner killed the piglets after their birth and began boiling them up for stew. However, there was hardly enough meat to adequately feed the prisoners. With this, the great pig raising came to an end.

Like all Japanese POW camps, food distribution was well below American standards. The Japanese often supplied spoiled foods, such as fish, to the prison population. On one occasion a cooler in Shanghai broke down that contained a supply of fish. By the time the Kiangwan cooks received the fish, the cargo was so spoiled that it could not be cleaned. The cooks simply "would throw them in the pot and boiled them to kill the bacteria."[18] When it came time to serve the meal, the fish still smelled and made it difficult to eat. Some men found a way to devour the food. Others just found it too distasteful. "That was one time when the bucket went back to the kitchen half full. No one wanted firsts, let alone seconds."[19]

Even when a prisoner received his rations, there was hardly enough to sustain him as he labored in the harsh conditions of camp life. Many of the Masons in Kiangwan continued to practice the Masonic tradition of looking after each other. If a Mason became ill the others contributed food for their sick comrade. Although it was a noble act, it did nothing for those who were contributing the food. Roy Stephens had his own troubles --- he had acquired intestinal worms. Stephens knew he had to do something since he was growing increasingly weak over time. He decided to visit a navy corpsman before it was too late. The corpsman worked for the camp dentist and told Stephens that he could help, but it would cost him. Knowing that Stephens cut wood for the camp kitchens, they mutually agreed on a price. Two bags of wood chips for the dentist's stove eventually rid him of the worms.

The number two camp interpreter was named Morasako. The prisoners nicknamed him Mortimer Snerd. (Astarita)

The prisoners noticed a flurry of activity in the Japanese offices in early August 1943. A prisoner working in the office discovered that over 500 prisoners were being transferred to Japan. According to the prisoner, the Japanese were drawing a list of names based on prisoner skills and Japanese needs. Shortly thereafter, prisoners were required to

fill out forms listing their occupations. One prisoner, Axel Johnson, wrote down sheepherder. Another wrote down bartender. Both men were actually iron workers. Earl Christensen was advised by an Englishman to falsify his job because life in Japan was surely worse. On Sunday, August 20, 1943, prisoners whose names were listed were ordered to report to a field near their barracks. After having their personal items searched, the camp commander addressed the prisoners. Through an interpreter, the commander reminded the prisoners to obey Japanese rules and feel fortunate to be going to Japan. Divided into two groups, the men were loaded onto trucks and driven away, as the remaining prisoners were allowed to wave their good-byes. As the last truck pulled away, "those remaining behind expressed a sigh of relief knowing they were not going to Japan. Most felt [their] chances of surviving were better the farther they remained from [Japan]."[20]

The convoy of prisoners went through Shanghai before arriving at the docks. Loaded aboard a Japanese coastal steamer, the men set off for Japan. Unlike their trip to China, the prisoners were allowed a bit more freedom and were allowed on deck. Here they could breathe fresh air and enjoy the deep blue ocean. Still, the men were under constant watch by Japanese guards armed with machine guns. On August 24, 1943, after four days at sea, the ship steamed into Osaka. Disembarking in Osaka, the prisoners were taken to the industrial section of the city to a camp constructed for their arrival. "The barracks were over 100 feet long and 20 feet wide with six-foot platforms on each side for us to sleep on."[21] The camp was cleaner then Kiangwan, but medical treatment was almost non-existent. The men were issued boots, bowl, spoon, two blankets, and new uniforms, at least new to them.

Osaka was home to a large shipbuilding facility and it was here the prisoners were going to be put to work. Over the next year and a half, the men worked at a variety of jobs in Osaka. Mathew Morris was put on a crew working at the dry docks. Once in dry dock, a ship was braced with wooden poles, "from the side of the ship to the side of the

dry dock to keep it from falling on its side when water was pumped out."[22] After this was completed, the hull was scraped of barnacles.

Charles Varney worked a variety of jobs, from laborer to blacksmith and finally as part "of a bolting crew putting individual steel plates on the side of the ribbed skeleton of the ship."[23] Working at this job, Varney suffered hearing damage from the rivet hammers.

Frank Mace worked in the shipyards hauling steel plates to where the ships were being refitted. "There were six men to a plate, the men in the middle always had more weight to carry, so we traded off."[24] When the steel plates reached the ship they were placed on a coke furnace that had been dug in the ground. Once the steel sheets were heated to the proper temperature, the men had to create the proper bend or shape based on the template they were given.

Though the prisoners were forced to work for the Japanese, sometimes the quality of that work amazed observers. J. O. Young noted that one man worked extremely hard at his job. When Young asked the man why, "his response was, I'm killing Japs! I get these parts done as fast as I can, so they can build ships and put more Japanese on them, so our Navy can sink the ships. I'm killing Japs!"[25] A similar view was held by Hank Knowles. He felt that by working in the shipyards he was freeing Japanese men for military service so they could get killed. Therefore, in his opinion, he was aiding the American war effort. Frank Mace saw one man purposely sabotaging rivets by overheating them. Once the rivets had cooled and were painted, "they looked good but we knew they would not hold for long."[26] This was done to outside plates and inside watertight compartments. If the Japanese knew about those actions, they would probably classify them as sabotage. On the other hand, the prisoners saw their actions as patriotic and helping the American war effort.

When a prisoner did not perform up to Japanese standards he could expect to be punished. The problem for a prisoner was discerning the expectations, which typically changed day to day. The Japanese administered a unique form of punishment at Osaka.

One prisoner, Frank Mace, experienced the changing expectations of the Japanese and was the victim of a marginal infraction. As a consequence he was struck several times on the back by a piece of bamboo that had holes drilled in it. At times, prisoners fantasized of punishing the Japanese for their cruelty. Melvin Danner traded three cigarettes for a rice ball at lunch. Danner took the rice ball, put it in his pocket, and headed toward the latrine so he could enjoy his treat. Although trading was a practice that went on in all the camps, Danner had made a deal with a prisoner who already was being punished and was not allowed cigarettes. Sure enough, Danner was stopped and searched by a guard, who found the rice ball. "He took it away from me and made me stand at attention while he got a rope and tied knots in the end. Then he stood back and struck me repeatedly so the rope would wrap around my head and snap in my face and he would then give it a jerk."[27]

The Japanese often administered collective punishments, so if one prisoner was punished other prisoners were too. On one occasion in the winter of 1943 the Japanese punished the entire barracks when they discovered a minor infraction of the rules. All the prisoners were taken outside and each man was issued a bucket full of water to hold over his head. If a prisoner spilled the water he was beat across the back with the infamous bamboo stick. As the strain of holding the bucket increased, prisoners inevitably spilled the contents, resulting in additional beatings. Once the Japanese decided the men had had enough, they were led to work.

If a prisoner was caught doing shoddy work, he could expect swift retaliation. If Ben Comstock had been caught listening to Allied broadcasts he could have expected far worse. Comstock and several other men had collected enough bits and pieces to make a radio. At night the prisoners tried to listen to the latest war updates. At one point, Japanese inspections became so intense that the radio was buried for safekeeping. Comstock was the camp carpenter, and he had access to parts of the camp while work parties were in Osaka. Once the inspections ended, it was decided by the other conspirators that it was safe for Comstock to dig up the radio. He had just completed the

job when the Japanese started another shakedown of the entire camp while the prisoners were away. Comstock suspected that someone in the camp was an informer and told the Japanese about the radio. Comstock was in the carpenter shop when the Japanese guards entered. They went through everything in the shop before moving on. The only thing they did not check was a recently packed bag of wood shavings, where Comstock had concealed the radio. Though the Japanese searched the camp, they never found the radio. The experience was too close for comfort and Comstock decided to pass the radio to other prisoners who were apprehended with the radio in their possession.

Sometimes the prisoners pushed the envelope to see how far they could go before the Japanese would act. It was illegal for a prisoner to smoke at night. J. O. Young remembers one summer in Osaka when there were thousands of fireflies. Some of the prisoners would catch the fireflies and hold them near their mouths. To the Japanese guards who patrolled the camp at night it looked as though the prisoners were smoking, and apprehended the violators; however, when they reached the suspects they could not find any cigarettes and left, perplexed. Of course the prisoners got a good laugh out of it and it took the Japanese quite a while to finally catch on.

Most prisoners fought a daily battle with hunger. Many prisoners lost a third of their prewar weight while they were in Japanese custody. Mathew Morris went from a lean 160 pounds to 110 pounds. "My hip bones stuck out so much that I believe you could hang a hat or coat on them."[28] When food was served, no matter what it was, the prisoners ate it. One day several large containers of fish heads were brought into the camp. There were enough heads that each prisoner received three or four. Though they smelled horrible the men devoured them. Everything that could be picked off was. Flesh, eyes, and even the bones were chewed on. An hour or two following the meal, Forrest Read remembers his fellow prisoners becoming seriously ill from the fish --- apparently, many became ill from food poisoning. Fortunately, no one died from the tainted fish.

Mel Davidson was working in the shipyards one day when he noticed a sack of what appeared to be grain against a wall. Taking a whole sack of anything was a serious risk for a prisoner. So when Davidson passed by he grabbed a handful of the contents and threw it in his pocket. After making several passes, and getting what he could, Davidson found a safe place to eat his bounty. Davidson began chewing the coarse crunchy grain; however, he noticed that the grain had an unusual texture and taste. On further inspection he realized the contents of his pocket was not grain, but toasted grasshoppers!

At other times the Japanese helped the prisoners with extra food. Forrest Read was part of a detail taken by a Japanese "Honcho" [boss] to bail out some barges that had sunk long ago in Osaka harbor. After several hours of bailing, the barges began to rise out of the water. In the bottom of the barges, Read and the others found, "small sardine size fish and 8 to 10 inch eels. Our honcho let us build a fire and we, along with him, would thread them on a wire or a willow and when they were black enough, we would gobble them."[29] Ironically, while the prisoners and their guard sat down and ate together, the prisoners helped keep watch, so they collectively would not get caught.

J. O. Young also had a situation where a Japanese honcho was not so much a boss as a friend. Young had made it from Wake to China and to Osaka still in possession of a navy pea coat. The coat was very warm and the envy of others. At one point Young was assigned an inside job at the shipyards and didn't really need the jacket. Therefore, he worked out a deal with his honcho, Onwane San [San is a title like sir]. Young loaned the jacket to Onwane so he could wear it when he had to go outside and check the rest of the crew. At lunchtime Onwane San wore the coat and slipped some rice or whatever he could find into a pocket Young had sewn on the inside of the coat. When he got his coat back, Young might receive an extra bite or two of food. Had he really wanted to, Onwane San could have taken the jacket or at least provided no food in return. However,

the arrangement between prisoner and guard demonstrated the humanity and compassion that still existed on an individual level.

At times food was so enticing that the men ate it without thinking. Shortly after arriving at Osaka the Japanese gave each prisoner half a pear. Fresh fruit was a rarity, so the prisoners quickly ate their portion. In their haste, the prisoners did not wash the fruit and most of them contracted dysentery at a time when medical treatment was almost nonexistent. The camp contained a hospital, but like all Japanese POW camps it was nothing more than a barracks that held some wooden platforms for the sick to rest on. Likewise, bandages and medicines were almost nonexistent for most prisoners. For a while the only doctors were two Dutch physicians who were captured in the Dutch East Indies.

A pair of pliers had a wide variety of medical uses by the doctors at Osaka. When Melvin Danner developed a toothache, the Japanese took him to the dentist. Danner was sat down in a chair, and "the doctor took a pair of pliers, took hold of my tooth, twisted a couple of times, and then gave a big yank."[30] As soon as the tooth was out the Japanese led him back to his work detail. On another occasion, Danner was hit in the hand with a piece of hot metal. The doctors took the same, or so it seemed, pliers and dug out the metal. After applying a bandage, Danner was again sent back to work. Unless a prisoner had a temperature of at least 104 degrees or was seriously injured, he was expected to work.

Some men injured themselves on the job so they could be sent to the hospital and avoid work. Self-inflicted injuries were not only serious, but desperate. At one point J. O. Young had reached this point and decided to break his own leg. "I was working on a 250 lb. casting one afternoon and finally decided to do it. I got a hose behind me so that it looked like I pulled it over as I stepped back, tripping over the hose."[31] Putting his plan into action, Young pulled the casting over onto his leg, but his leg did not break; instead it was skinned. Young continued on the job with a painful leg injury and a limp. A few days

later Young developed diarrhea, resulting in his hospitalization for nearly a week, giving him a needed break.

The only exception to the temperature rule was serious illness. Mathew Morris was too weak one morning to get up after suffering a combination of dysentery, beriberi, and malaria. When the Japanese guard came in and saw Morris still in bed, he began to strike him. Morris was so weak he couldn't even put his hand up to defend himself. In the process of the beating, Morris suffered long-term vision loss. Eventually, the guard realized Morris was not malingering and stopped the assault. Morris was taken to the hospital and his personal struggle to live began. With his face swollen from the beating, Morris laid in bed, unable to move. The doctors prescribed a gruel made from rice for Morris, but even this was a struggle to eat. As Morris recalls, "I knew I had to eat it or I would die, so with much effort I forced it down."[32] Morris struggled on as other patients in the hospital died. If his illness was not enough, his eye became infected and became worse. The arrival of a new doctor saved his eye and his life. A young American doctor captured in the Philippines replaced the two Dutch physicians. The new doctor immediately gave Morris a bag of blood plasma that he had found in the hospital and some sulfa tablets he had brought with him. What the Dutch doctors were saving the plasma for remains a mystery. Morris was also put on a diet of regular food. Within about a week Morris began to feel better and his eye began to heal. Over several weeks Morris began to regain his strength and eventually returned to work, something that did not seem possible a month before.

Fred "Fritz" Schaffer was taken to the hospital with a bad case of diarrhea and beriberi. It was so bad that he was not expected to make it through the night. In fact, the doctor had filled out his death certificate. However, this was not the first time Schaffer was thought to have one foot in the grave. During the siege of Wake, Schaffer's name was on the list of men that had been killed. This list had gone out via the PBY crew that arrived on December 20, 1941. Eventually, the news of his death reached his parents who

held a funeral service for him. Much to their surprise, they would eventually learn that he had not died at all. He survived Osaka to go home and show his parents his miraculous resurrection.

Not all the men who went to the hospital were so lucky. When a man died at Osaka his body was taken outside of camp to be cremated. Frank Mace was part of a crew that built the crematorium. Mace and the others discovered that the fire in the crematorium failed to incinerate the larger bones. They "rigged up some gears with a handle and one man would push in the bones into the center of the gears and by cranking the handle the bones would chip and make small pieces."[33] Once this was done the bone fragments could be put back into the crematorium for further burning. Once the cremation was completed, Mace gathered the ashes and placed them in an eight-inch-square box provided by the Japanese and recorded the man's name, and if military, his rank and serial number on the lid. Once this was done, any personal items went inside the box, it was sealed, and put into a warehouse to be kept until the war ended. As the prisoners at Osaka struggled to survive from day to day, their remaining friends on Wake experienced a cruel fate that became one of the unknown crimes of World War II.

Notes

1. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails (New York: Vantage Press, 1992), 82.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 84.
4. Ibid., 87.
5. Ibid., 88.
6. Rodney Kephart, Wake. War and Waiting (New York: Exposition Press, 1994), 38.
7. Ibid., 40.
8. Walter Hokanson, Audiotape to Charles Appelhanz, 14 July 1997.
9. Rodney Kephart, Wake. War and Waiting (New York: Exposition Press, 1994), 41.
10. Pete Russell, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 January 1998, 113.
11. Ibid., 115.
12. Ibid., 117.
13. Ed Koski, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 28 September 1997.
14. J. O. Young, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 29 May 1997.
15. Roy Stephens, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 May 1997, 8-4.
16. Ibid., 8-5.
17. J. O. Young, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 24 June 1997.
18. Stephens, 10-1.
19. Ibid., 10-2.
20. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower Press, 1992), 85.
21. Melvin Danner, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 12 March 1997.

22. Mathew Morris, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 23 June 1997.
23. Charles Varney, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 11, July 1997.
24. Frank Mace, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 9 May 1997.
25. Young.
26. Mace.
27. Danner.
28. Morris.
29. Forrest Read, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 18 May 1998.
30. Danner.
31. Young.
32. Morris.
33. Mace.

Chapter 7

The Fate of Wake and the Ninety-Eight

In the original Japanese plans, Wake Island, or Otori Shima (Bird Island) as the apanese renamed it, was to be used as a base for aerial reconnaissance along with serving s a staging area for further eastward conquests. Following the Japanese defeat at Midway and the focus of the war shifting to the South Pacific, the new mission for the garrison on Wake was to prepare the island to serve as part of the empire's outer defense ing.

After the departure of the two large civilian contingents in January and September 942, only ninety-eight Americans remained on the island along with a mixture of several housand Japanese military personnel. Using the Americans to run the heavy construction quipment, the Japanese went about the task of improving the existing American defenses nd preparing new ones of their own. Traditional defenses like tank traps, trenches, and un positions were improved. Likewise, living quarters, fuel, supply depots, and ommand centers were dug in or buried. The Japanese prepared for the invasion they ealized would come.

Although the U.S. focus was elsewhere, the Americans did not completely ignore Vake Island. In 1942 the U.S. Navy conducted raids on Wake. At first, the attacks were sed as a way to confuse and divert Japanese attention from the next American landings. As time passed, American raids on the island were used as live fire training for carrier task orces before they got into "serious" action in the Pacific. It was not only the U.S. Navy hat attacked Wake Island. Using Midway and bases on Kwajalein and Eniwetok, army ircraft also struck Wake. All available targets were hit repeatedly. It was becoming xtremely difficult to move about the island during the day, let alone get any work done ecause of the frequent attacks. In addition to aerial and surface attacks, U.S. submarines

lurked around Wake Island. Since it was impossible to produce edible food on Wake, all food had to be brought in by ship. In the summer of 1943, the *Suva Maru,* a merchant vessel, was bringing food and building supplies to Wake. As it approached the island, it was struck by two torpedoes fired from a U.S. submarine. With the ship taking on water, the captain of the *Suva Maru* maneuvered his ship onto Wake's coral reef to avoid the ship's loss.

The aerial and surface attacks were frustrating for Shigematsu Sakaibara, the Japanese commander, who had few options to counter the attacks. With anti aircraft guns and coastal batteries, the island's defenders had a chance to down attacking planes, but the Japanese had no opportunity to counter the presence of American submarines. Deeming it too dangerous to send additional merchant ships but not important enough to send warships to lift the submarine blockade, the Japanese military command decided to leave Wake to its fate.

Angry with the American tactic of launching hit-and-run raids, Sakaibara wished for an American landing so he could inflict a crushing defeat on the Americans. After an especially hard pounding on October 6 and 7, 1943, Sakaibara's frustrations came to a head. As his command was slowly being reduced by American raids, the prisoners safely hid, smiled with approval, then ate food that could not be replenished as a result of such raids. Sakaibara therefore devised a plan to obtain his revenge on America and solve his prisoner problem as well.

After already having one of the prisoners beheaded in July 1943 for stealing food from a warehouse, Sakaibara planned to execute the remaining ninety-seven men. Sakaibara justified his actions since he feared an invasion following the October 6-7 raid, and that "one or more prisoners would escape and communicate intelligence to the task force as to the disposition and weakness of his command."[1] Sakaibara believed it was therefore a matter of "military necessity to rid himself of the troublesome prisoners."[2] Giving his second in command an oral order, Sakaibara informed him that the ninety-seven

men were to be executed. As he stood on his command post, Sakaibara watched the prisoners being marched to the shore of Wake near the bridge that separates Wake and Peale. From about 200 yards, Sakaibara witnessed the men have their hands and legs tied and then forced to kneel while blindfolds were put on. After the prisoners had been made ready, the Japanese guards moved back about seventy-five feet and manned their machine guns. Once the weapons were ready, the second in command gave the okay to fire. Using machine guns and rifles the Japanese guards shot the prisoners in the back. After a minute or two the firing stopped and the Japanese guards dragged the dead civilians to a nearby tank trap where they were buried in a mass grave. Sakaibara was satisfied. To justify his action, he radioed his commander and told him that the prisoners became "riotous" and they had to execute them. After all, who knew the truth?

Even in death the executed Americans could not rest in peace. When the Japanese suspected that one of the prisoners had escaped, the bodies were disinterred for a body count. Following the count it was discovered that only ninety-six men were executed and indeed one man was unaccounted for. On October 15, the man was captured while searching for food. Since the prisoner was the sole witness of what happened on October 7, Sakaibara knew the man had to be silenced. Sakaibara took the man to a secluded beach and beheaded him with his own sword.

The execution of the prisoners might have ended one of Sakaibara's concerns, but it did not erase the fact that his command was slowly withering away, like a fruit on the vine. The last supply ship to reach Wake Island arrived in early January 1944. After this time an occasional submarine, a total of five over the next eighteen months, arrived crammed with ammunition, parts, and other supplies, along with having rice-filled rubber bags lashed to the decks. These visits were welcomed, but did not alter the situation that the garrison was consuming more than they were receiving. Rationing of food and water was strictly enforced and violators were punished. Whenever possible a Japanese soldier looked for additional ways to supplement his ration. Using human waste as fertilizer, the

oldiers attempted to plant vegetables on Wake. Others attempted to fish in the lagoon or ollect leaves from plants and trees to eat. Yet others collected eggs from the nests of the irds who inhabited the island. Some even hunted and ate the island's plentiful supply of ats. All these efforts could not hide the fact that the island's population was slowly tarving. "Near the end of the war, daily rations were cut to thirty-seven grams of rice, nd the men who stayed alive could summon only enough energy to work one hour a ay."[3]

By June 1945, even Sakaibara admitted that if the Americans invaded Wake, his en could do little to resist them. This was clear to the Americans when the following onth an American destroyer stopped a Japanese hospital ship headed to Wake Island. he ship, *Takasago Maru,* was allowed to proceed to pick up its cargo of sick and ounded. The ship was stopped again after it left Wake and the destroyer reported that it ontained roughly 970 sick and emaciated Japanese soldiers. It was obvious that the years f raiding had taken its toll on the island's garrison.

By the end of the war the Japanese garrison of 4,100 men had suffered somewhere etween 725 and 750 killed in raids and an additional 1,300-1,500 deaths owing to arvation. Adding in the number of men evacuated in July, the island's population at the me of surrender was about 1,200 men.

When news of Japan's surrender reached Sakaibara, he called together all the fficers and informed them of the news. He likewise informed them that he had heard om radio reports that the Allies intended to punish all war criminals. Fearful of this ction, Sakaibara reminded his officers of the story that they had (fabricated) to explain e deaths of the ninety-eight American civilians.

On September 4, 1945, the island was formally surrendered by Sakaibara in a gning ceremony held aboard a U.S. destroyer. In attendance at the signing was Colonel Valter Bayler, the last American man to leave Wake before the surrender to the Japanese n December 23, 1941. The terms of the surrender required that the Japanese turn in all

eapons, disarm and remove all mines or any other explosive devices. These orders were rried out with speed and without complaint. However, when it came time to answer uestions about the ninety-eight Americans who were known to have been held on the land, Sakaibara's explanation seemed strange. Upon further questioning of the other apanese soldiers, who supposedly put down the riot, it became clear that Sakaibara was ot completely forthright. In November 1945, Wake's Japanese population of nearly 200 men were taken off the island and returned to Japan. However, Sakaibara and fteen of his officers and men were removed on November 5, and sent to the island of wajalein to face trial.

Prior to their departure to Kwajalein, two of the accused verbally admitted what ad taken place. Unfortunately, on the trip to Kwajalein they committed suicide rather an having to testify. Once on Kwajalein one of the Japanese officers also committed icide, but before his death he left behind a signed statement implicating Sakaibara and e others. Faced with such evidence, Sakaibara admitted his deeds but tried to explain hy he had taken such a course of action. Rejecting his claim that he acted out of military cessity, the court found Sakaibara guilty and sentenced him to death. The others also dmitted their actions and received various punishments. On June 18, 1947, Sakaibara as led to the scaffold and hanged, thus extracting revenge for those who had been so ajustly murdered four years earlier. Perhaps the justice imposed helped the souls of those murdered in 1943 rest easy. However, in 1943 the war was still going on and their omrades in Japan and China were struggling not to join them in death.

Notes

1. Captain Earl Junghans, "Wake's POW's," Proceedings February 1983: 49.

2. Ibid.

3. Peter Andrews, "The Defense of Wake," American Heritage July/August 1987: 80.

Chapter 8

How Much Longer?

After enduring a year and a half of captivity, two items dominated the minds of the Wake prisoners: How much longer would the war last? Would they survive? Facing unending work day after day, the prisoners sought ways to escape the monotony of imprisonment. Sometimes the Japanese provided relief and at other times it came from their fellow inmates.

In the fall of 1943, the Japanese transferred John Burton and the other Americans to a new camp near Moji Bay on the northern tip of the island of Kyushu. Although living conditions in this camp were not much different from other camps, the men were assigned new jobs. Each morning the prisoners marched half a mile to a train station, where they boarded coal cars bound for the Yawata steel mill. Previously, the prisoners did hard labor at the mill such as carrying bags of coal, or transporting loads of iron ore. At the Yawata steel mill they were assigned to the pipe shop. Their job included cutting specific lengths of pipe or welding them together if necessary. John Burton's task was to bend pipes to a specific radius. Before the job could be completed the pipe was taken to an elevated platform. There, the "men on the platform filled the pipe with sand, then hammered the pipe to settle the sand."[1] The pipe was then sent to a large furnace and properly heated so the pipe could be bent to the proper shape. Although the work was hard and dangerous, it required more skill than the prisoners' previous assignments.

Burton and several other men purposely sabotaged their consignment of pipe. For example, the Japanese had built a bomb shelter near the pipe shop. During the construction, the prisoners used pipe to tamp down the cement used for the floor. However, once they were finished, the prisoners did not clean out the cement. Following a few rain showers the shelter filled with water. One of the Japanese foremen selected several prisoners, including Burton, to run a line of pipe from the shelter to a pump

located near the pipe shop. The men purposely used pipe that was filled with concrete inside. After spending two weeks bending and connecting the pipes to the shelter, the time had come to fire up the pump. As the prisoners watched, the Japanese foreman started the pump, but the water was not drained from the shelter. After banging on the pipe and taking the pump apart, the foreman could not ascertain the source of the problem. When asked, Burton and the others claimed ignorance but they "were so tickled" at what we accomplished "we could hardly hold it."[2] In frustration, the foreman ordered the men to take the pipe apart. When the foreman ascertained the source of the difficulty, his anger exploded and he threatened to shoot the men for their stupidity. After he regained his composure, the foreman selected pipe and told the prisoners to redo the line. In two weeks the line was finally installed. Burton recalled, "this time it worked, cuss the luck."[3] If nothing else the Americans had wasted time and had won a temporary moral victory.

Whenever possible the American prisoners would look for ways to slow down Japanese production, no matter what was being produced. It was not uncommon for machines to break down, especially when the Americans were assisting in the breakdown. On one occasion Marvin Fisher took some metal shavings from a bench grinder and put them in the oil system of a pipe machine. Over the next month the machine made more and more noise until it finally stopped working. Soon the Americans discovered that spare parts were very difficult to get to repair Japanese equipment. Therefore, when a machine broke down it was out of production for a considerable time. Even if parts were available, sometimes trying to fix a machine only made matters worse. On numerous occasions the Japanese used prisoners to repair disabled equipment. Although the prisoners solved the problem, other parts "disappeared," making the machine useless. Such methods were risky but the prisoners felt they were doing their part to defeat Japan.

Years of captivity were taking their toll on the prisoners working at the Yawata steel mill in the winter of 1943. A combination of factors, including starvation, poor

medical care, and substandard living conditions caused the general decline of the prison population. John Burton, for instance, decided to seek medical help after developing several boils on his arm. Unable to treat Burton, the American doctor sent Burton to the Japanese hospital. After examining the sores, the Japanese doctor made a small incision slightly above his wrist. Burton remembered that the wound drained for a long time. The Japanese physician even gave him a shot for the infection. Still, it took several more days for his arm to finish draining. Burton was lucky, not because he received medical treatment, but because he survived. Many were not so fortunate. Kenneth Davis, who had tuberculosis, slowly withered away as his friends watched, unable to do anything to help him.

Many of the deaths at the Yawata camp could have been avoided had the Japanese showed any interest in their prisoners. An increase in rations could have certainly saved lives, and this was proved in early 1944 when the camps gave out Red Cross parcels. Although only a half a pound was issued to each man, the deaths by starvation that the camps had been experiencing dropped to almost none. When the prisoner packages were exhausted, the cycle of starvation started again. By now the prisoners were so thin that ribs were exposed, showing prolonged signs of malnutrition.

In addition to more rations, bathing could have made a difference. The opportunity to take a bath was very infrequent and when the opportunity arrived soap was not accessible. Consequently the men were plagued with lice and lice carried various infectious diseases. Even though the men boiled their undergarments to kill the lice, it did not kill the eggs still in the garments, so within a few days the vermin were back again. Often lice are attracted to warm areas of the human body, such as under the arms and inside the thighs. Being parasitic, the lice bite their human hosts and extract small amounts of blood. The amount of blood extracted by the lice seemed insignificant, but added to other conditions it made the struggle for life even more difficult. The prisoners also experienced circulatory problems; particularly sitting often resulted in numbness in the

feet and legs. When a man tried to stand he staggered about clumsily until his body could adjust.

Despite the hardships during the winter of 1943-1944, the prisoners kept their sense of humor. Joking about their girlish figures or how if they rounded up all the lice they would have enough meat to last the duration of the war, the prisoners at Fukuoka struggled on.

The prisoners held at Sesabo prison camp in 1943 maintained the same regime as the previous year. The only modification was the conditions under which they worked. As they continued their labors on the dam near Sesabo, a new foreman and commandant appeared. Previously, the Japanese navy ran the camp and the project, but in 1943, the army took charge. As the naval guards departed the entire camp came to attention, but by then the navy authorities had already provided detailed information on the prisoners. It was not long before the American prisoners challenged their new masters. During this changing of the guards, the prisoners discovered that the Japanese army authorities had notified the U.S. government, via the Red Cross, of the names of prisoners held in Japan. For the families back home it was the first news since December 1941.

The Japanese army provided the prisoners with promises of improved treatment but little in the way of tangible results. On one occasion, the army issued clothing that only could be used when the men were in camp. Since the navy ran the construction project, it was the army's contention that the navy should supply work clothing for the prisoners. Of course the navy didn't agree and the prisoners were caught in the middle of a tug-of-war between the army and navy.

The army maintained an ordinary camp routine. Once the prisoners readjusted, the situation improved. The Japanese also rotated the guards every thirty days, giving the prisoners a sense of time, as well as removing the most vicious guards and hopefully replacing them with more humane ones.

Working on the dam project, the prisoners found themselves guarded by sailors yet under civilian control. The civilians were no better than the military and abused the prisoners just to receive rewards and recognition from the military. Rodney Kephart felt that "the army was better than the navy on the whole --- [however] that is if there is any choice between bad eggs."[4]

Japan might be located in the Pacific, but it is not a tropical paradise and has a continental climate associated with hot summers and cold winters. The winter of 1943 was especially cold. After working all day at the dam, the prisoners returned to their barracks, which had no heat. When it rained the situation was further complicated because the prisoners returned with wet clothes and little or no way to keep warm. In the barracks the prisoners wrapped themselves in their thin blankets after taking off their clothes and hanging them to dry. At first the Japanese were indifferent to men who became sick and eventually died; however, as the fatalities increased the Japanese allowed the prisoners to place oil-drum stoves in their barracks. The stoves solved many of the prisoners' problems, but as usual other issues complicated the relationship between the Japanese and their American prisoners. The first problem was the absence of chimney pipes --- smoke filled the barracks. One prisoner recalled, "the smoke got within three feet of the floor at times, but there was heat."[5] The most serious issue was when the guards permitted the stoves to be used only a few hours each day. Still, the heat was welcomed. The second obstacle was fuel for the stoves. The army controlled the camp, but did not provide fuel. The navy controlled the project and would not allow the prisoners to take wood from the dam to use in the camp. It was again a classic catch-22 with the prisoners caught in the middle. A solution was reached by Japanese army guards, who woke the prisoners in the early hours of the morning and allowed them to steal wood from the navy. The guards didn't mind if the wood came from the navy, as long as they could confiscate some of the wood for their own use. According to prisoners' recollections, no one was caught. If someone was stopped the guards claimed ignorance.

It was by this subterfuge the wood was acquired. Last, there was the cold. Some men refused to bathe and clean their clothes because they wanted to stay warm. That decision affected everyone and exposed all the prisoners to serious illness. By not following proper hygienic techniques, many were exposed to lice and other vermin. Rodney Kephart remembers one prisoner forcing another to bathe. As the prisoner disrobed the individual, they discovered he was well covered with lice. After bathing him and washing his clothes to remove the lice, he was taken to the hospital. Unfortunately, his condition was so poor that he later died, possibly from typhus. For all the others it was a painful lesson on the importance of camp hygiene.

The start of January not only ushered in a new year, 1944, but it brought four new men to the Sesabo camp. The men were the first Westerners the Wake prisoners had seen since December 1941. The four, two English, one American submariner, and one New Zealander, brought with them stories and experiences that lifted camp morale, if only for a brief time.

When spring 1944 arrived the men happily greeted the warmth and the news that the dam was finished. Where once a stream ran through a canyon there now stood a large concrete dam built virtually by hand with prison labor. Now the prisoners had to clean up the camp and dam and prepare the sites for an upcoming inspection and dedication by Japanese officials. Following the inspection the prisoners packed the equipment and then loaded this material aboard a train. The prisoners gathered their few possessions for another redeployment to a new camp, the first in eighteen months, one they hoped would be better than Sesabo.

Late one morning after breakfast the prisoners were marched to the nearby train station. Once on board, the shades were pulled down and for the next eight hours the men endured crowded conditions and experienced the fear of the unknown. By late afternoon the train came to a stop and the men were instructed to disembark and line up on the platform. The men discovered that their destination was the city of Fukuoka. After the

men assembled and the guards counted and verified their rosters, they were marched north about five miles until they arrived at a partially completed camp. With darkness approaching, the men were once again counted and hustled off to what the Japanese called a barracks; the prisoners considered them huts. Rectangular shaped, the wood-frame barracks used tar paper and grass for roofing and were primitive by U.S. standards. For example, the floor was nothing more than the dirt and sand and the prisoners' bunks were elevated about three feet off the ground. Each barracks had a central aisle dividing it into two sections. In this central aisle prisoners found permanent tables and benches for the prisoners to gather and eat. Each barracks held approximately forty-eight men and the occupants of a barracks were grouped according to nationality and their civilian or military status. Besides the Wake prisoners, English and Dutch civilians were held in the camp. At first it was a pleasure for the men from Wake to talk with these other groups, but later the Americans did not want anything to do with them. The prisoners had a saying about the other foreign prisoners: "The English and the Dutch, they don't amount to much."[6]

Since the camp was not fully completed, the prisoners were kept at the camp for the next week helping with the finishing touches. Prisoner details were organized to load slag from a nearby mine into wagons, pulled by horses, then dump the contents in camp to serve as walkways between the camp's buildings. Other prisoners erected offices, latrines, and washrooms.

The prisoners were not sent to Fukuoka to complete a new POW camp. It was not long, however, before the Wake prisoners discovered the reason why the Japanese brought them there. Using small carts, the prisoners filled them with dirt and rocks from a nearby coal mine and hauled the contents to the site of a new airfield. The camp commander had one objective and that was to complete the airfield ahead of schedule. Each man was given a quota and could not return to camp until the total quota was completed. Regardless of the situation, the men worked to fill the quotas set by the Japanese. At one point, faced with a shortage of shovels, only seven for every fifty men,

the camp commander's solution to accomplish the task was that the rest of the prisoners should use their bare hands to finish the job.

August 20,1944, was an especially memorable day for the prisoners at Fukuoka. First, the prisoners were given the day off. On this particular day the prisoners were expected to clean their barracks and wash their clothes, as well as do whatever the Japanese desired. As the prisoners were enjoying their rest, an air raid siren sounded throughout the countryside. Previous sirens signaled a drill, but not this time. The prisoners could make out at a distance the roaring of aircraft engines and explosions. Scanning the sky, the prisoners could see the planes were American. Not surprisingly, the prisoners were elated, since "it was the first real evidence that Uncle [Sam] was bringing the war home to Japan."[7]

For the most part, American prisoners in Japan received little war news. What they did learn often had to be gauged from the actions and reactions of the Japanese. The prisoners did realize that as the years passed their day became longer and the work more difficult. Several shifts of prison labor were used at the steel mills near Osaka. The increased output led many prisoners to conclude that Japan was losing the war. Forrest Read was part of an eighty-man bull gang. The term "bull gang" originated from the work that was previously done by animals, but since there were not enough animals, prisoners were substituted. Read and the others pulled two wheel carts around the steel mill removing ashes and other debris from the furnaces. They also gathered all the metal shavings from the lathes and hauled them away to be remelted into usable steel. Frank Mace assisted in making iron ingots that were rolled and shaped into steel plates. A bull gang dumped a load of iron ore on an elevated platform directly above the large furnaces. Mace was part of a crew that shoveled the ore into the furnaces. Working above the heat of the furnaces, Mace estimated it took eighteen tons of raw material to fill each furnace. Once the material was heated properly, Mace and the others formed molds in the wet sand

to shape the molten iron. Once the iron cooled, it was loaded by the prisoners aboard flat carts and taken outside and stacked up.

Besides the increased labor, most prisoners concluded the war was going poorly for Japan because the food supply decreased, not only for the prisoners but also for the Japanese. Could the American bombing campaign account for the collapse of Japan's distribution system? To most prisoners the Japanese guards became more moody, even barbaric as the fortunes of war changed. The prisoners linked those observations with possible Japanese defeats.

Ben Comstock worked as a carpenter at the Osaka prison camp. Comstock recalls that one day he was asked by a Japanese officer to construct a box. Comstock attempted to explain to the officer that he did not have the material needed to complete the task. According to Comstock, the officer became so angry that "he hit me over the head with a sword scabbard."[8] On another day, a Japanese guard found fault with Comstock and began kicking him. Comstock could not recall what infraction caused this beating, other than being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Today, former guards would deny excessive brutality, but the record shows the Japanese guards went out of their way to punish the prisoners. Often at night the guards roused prisoners for bed check. The men were expected to run outside and line up as quickly as possible. As the men exited the barracks, a guard stood on either side of the doorway and all prisoners were expected to salute every Japanese guard, regardless of rank. Hurrying to line up, the prisoners still had to give a proper salute. Melvin Danner recalls that if prisoners failed to salute, "they were subject to the punishment of being clubbed by the one that felt he was not being recognized properly."[9] The only chance a prisoner had was to run the gauntlet fast enough to avoid the Japanese clubs.

Sometimes American prisoners witnessed additional Japanese criminality. Frank Mace heard planes overhead while working one day at the steel mills. Looking up, he saw an American plane being pursued by two Japanese fighters. In the end the American plane

was shot down and its pilot ejected. As the pilot dangled from his parachute, the pursuing Japanese planes returned and shot the helpless pilot. The lifeless body landed in a lagoon about 300 yards from where Mace worked. He asked the guards if he and some of his fellow prisoners could recover the body. After bringing the body back, the Japanese stripped it of the pilot's watch, ring, dog tags, and anything else of value. The inhumanity of the Japanese to the living and the dead sickened Mace.

Although the Japanese controlled the prisoners' daily activities, they could not control nature. Osaka often experienced earthquakes. At first the prisoners were startled, but eventually they rushed outside to watch the smokestacks sway. One day in late 1944, the prisoners felt the ground shake, but when they went outside they discovered that the tremors were the result of American bombers making a bombing run. They could feel the explosions and see the bombers but they were unharmed by the air raid. Like the prisoners at Fukuoka, the air raid assured them that Japan was experiencing punishment.

For the Wake prisoners still in the Shanghai area, work on the Mount Fuji project continued. After the departure of some of the Wake prisoners in the fall of 1943, the remainder of the prisoners, nearly 1,000 men, continued their labor on constructing the Japanese rifle range named Fuji. Day after day the prisoners struggled to load carts of dirt under the watchful eye of the sadistic Japanese interpreter, Ishahara. Regardless of the weather, the work schedule never changed.

According to the Geneva Convention, prisoners were to be paid for labor. Hypothetically payments were made, but where could the prisoners spend the money at the Kiangwan camp? Some men had hidden away money when they left Wake and brought small sums with them when they went on work details. Away from the guards, they would try to buy food from the local Chinese. The Japanese forbid such commerce between the American and Chinese. Soon a Chinese worker was caught in possession of American money. Under intense pressure the man revealed how he had obtained the cash and the names of those involved in its illicit trading. Ishahara called in each man

individually and questioned him about the illegal purchases. Each prisoner proclaimed his innocence, which did not satisfy Ishahara, so he had each man strapped to a ladder and tortured. After having water poured down his throat and struggling for breath, the questions started again. If a prisoner confessed he was usually given ten days in solitary. If he did not confess, he typically received twenty days. Despite the humiliation all the prisoners survived. The Chinese national was not so lucky --- the Japanese had him shot. Most prisoners believed taking these risks was necessary to survive; however, sometimes they worked and other times they failed.

A few prisoners remained in camp because of their health and did not go to Mount Fuji. Feeling safe because Ishahara was absent and Dr. Shindo, a humanitarian, was temporarily in charge, the prisoners decided to build a fire in the barracks stove. Unexpectedly, Ishahara returned to the camp earlier than anticipated. Spotting the smoke, Ishahara, visibly angry, entered the barracks with two guards. Ishahara demanded to know where the men got the firewood. All the prisoners vacillated and relied on the standard "I don't know." Ishahara accused them of lying and demanded a truthful answer. One prisoner told him that they were collecting wood from the work site. Ishahara quickly cut the man off, stating that the men were searched regularly and that no Chinese national would trade wood when it was already scarce. Ishahara's solution was, "prisoners must be destroying Japanese property."[10] According to Ishahara not only did the prisoners commit a serious offense, but all the men broke a camp rule that prohibited fires before five o'clock. As punishment, all three stoves were to be removed. That evening, after the other men had returned from Mount Fuji, the three offenders removed the stoves and carried them about the camp while others followed with signs that proclaimed their crime.

Fire was a constant fear for the Japanese guards at Kiangwan, which originated from the fact that many buildings in Japan were made of wood. Most of the buildings in Kiangwan were made of wood, and thus highly flammable. Theodore Abraham recalls,

"the Japanese made each barracks have a night watch in case of fire, even though their own guards passed through them hourly."[11] Even though fire watches were established, Ishahara still conducted random fire drills at night. To many prisoners it always seemed that Ishahara purposely picked the most inopportune times for a fire drill, such as during rainstorms. Ishahara always reminded the prisoners how fortunate they were to have practice fire drills while they stood in the rain and mud. To the prisoners' way of thinking, such drills were only part of the misfortune of life at Kiangwan.

It was a small measure of satisfaction for the Wake prisoners that it was not only the Americans who were abused by the Japanese. The Japanese even victimized their allies. Like the prisoners in Japan, Sunday was a day for the men at Kiangwan to clean up the camp, wash, and do other incidentals. On a particular Sunday the prisoners were shocked to see a small column of men, escorted by Japanese guards, enter the camp. Brought before the camp commander, these men were given the typical speech about following orders and then sent to a barracks. Of course the Americans wondered who the newcomers were, but they were not allowed access to the new men for several days. Eventually, word got out that the newcomers were from Italy, a former Japanese ally. Most Americans wondered why the Japanese were interning Italians, but the Japanese constantly forced the Americans to question the Japanese motives. Over time, the Americans ran into the Italians and were able to discern what happened. The Italians were sailors from an Italian passenger liner docked in Shanghai when the Italian government capitulated. Now seen as enemies rather than allies of Japan, the Japanese quickly captured the Italian ship and arrested its crew. However, before the Japanese could seize the ship, the crew scuttled her and abandoned ship to be interned by the Japanese. After being rounded up, the Japanese marched the Italians to Kiangwan to wait their fate. Over the next two months the Italians received the same treatment as the Americans and were sent to work on Mount Fuji. Without warning, the Italians were gathered, marched out of camp toward Shanghai and never seen again. However, before their departure a couple of

American prisoners were used to calculate compensation for the Italians. Using a base pay per day formula established by the Japanese, the two men figured how much pay each Italian should receive as compensation. The total came to about "forty- to forty-five dollars per month,"[12] so after being in camp for two months each Italian received nearly $90. The release of the Italians led the Americans to believe that the status of Italy had changed once again.

The camp barber shop. Just a small room that would ordinarily hold a few men at a time. It had to accommodate 1,700 men. The elder prisoners doing the barbering did a fine job considering the equipment they had. They used old razors that had to be sharpened on a brick. (Astarita)

The camp did have a canteen that was open once a month, but prices were very high. Roy Stephens recalled that "a pound of butter cost $500, ten Chinese cigarettes cost $35, and a one-pound box of salt cost $144."[13] When the Americans quizzed one of the Japanese officers about these prices he replied that the prices were set by the Japanese command and not him. To many prisoners, this was another example of Japanese extortion and a brazen way for Japan to claim they were following the Geneva Convention.

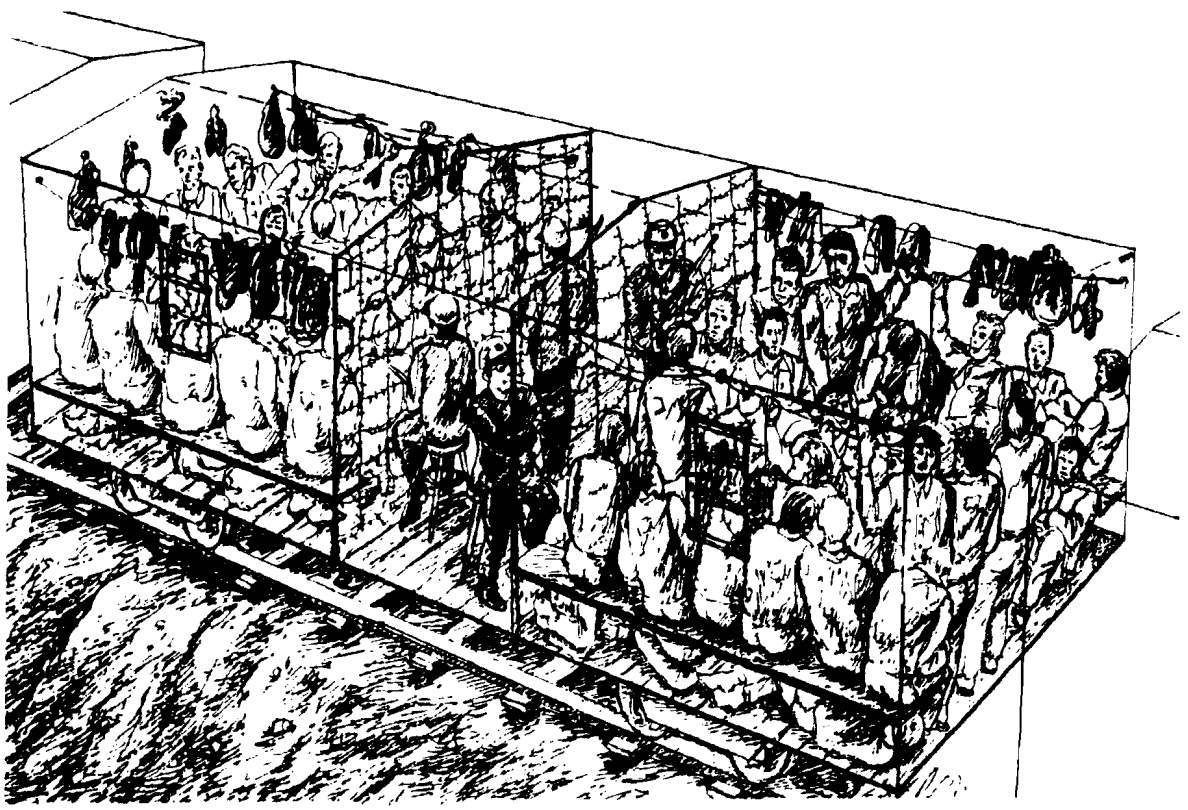
In late 1944, after two and a half years of punishment and hard labor, the unthinkable finally happened. It was announced that the Mount Fuji project was done. As the men returned from their last day on the project, most wondered what the Japanese had in store for them next. Over the next several weeks various details were sent to work on small projects, but nothing that even came close to the scale and magnitude of Mount Fuji. To the American prisoners it almost seemed as if the Japanese were unsure of what to do next.

In early 1945, the Americans received a sign they had desperately waited to see. The prisoners saw high-flying planes bomb targets near Shanghai. As excitement mounted, the prisoners watched the Japanese appear confused and dazed, raising prisoner morale. The air raids in Shanghai was a clear sign that the end of the war was near and liberation was at hand. On one occasion P-51 Mustangs flew low over the camp, showing the distinctive American insignia as they headed toward the Japanese airfield near Shanghai. As the planes passed over, Theodore Abraham remembered that "the Japanese sentries would drop to one knee and fire their rifles at them. For the first time the enemy showed signs of fear."[14] Unfortunately for the prisoners, the fear shown by the Japanese guards manifested itself into brutality once the raid was over. Since they couldn't reach the planes, several guards beat prisoners after raids just to get a measure of revenge. At one point Japanese reprisals accounted for three Americans being bayoneted. Although American air raids raised prisoner morale, they also made camp life even more dangerous.

The air raids increased throughout the spring of 1945. In early May 1945, word reached the prisoners to be prepared to move out. Some men figured that the war was getting too close to Shanghai and that the Japanese were going to evacuate the camp. If that was true, they wondered why the Japanese just didn't leave them behind and abandon the camp. Other disagreed and stressed that Japan still had use for the prisoners and that they were going to be sent to Japan instead. In the early morning of May 9, 1945, the prisoners were ordered to assemble in the parade ground with their possessions. Standing at attention, with boxes containing their possessions at their feet, the prisoners waited as the guards counted and recounted the nearly 1,000 men. Perhaps as a final act of revenge, or to show their total control over the prisoners, the guards dumped the prisoners' meager possessions on the ground. As a guard approached Theodore Abraham's box he watched nervously as the guard picked up the box and shook it hard. Inside the box Abraham had created a false bottom that hid three diaries containing the history of his internment for the last three years. After concealing them for so long, Abraham thought that now they would be confiscated. The thought made Abraham sweat. Abraham remembered that the Japanese were "satisfied that there wasn't anything inside, the sentry threw the cardboard box down with much force."[15] As the guard moved on to the next prisoner and Abraham went to retrieve the box and his items, he noticed that one of the diaries had fallen out. Fortunately, he was able to scoop it up and place it and his other items in the box before anyone noticed. With the inspections completed, the prisoners were marched out of the Kiangwan for the last time to a railway station.

At the station the prisoners were divided into groups of fifty with each group assigned to a waiting boxcar. After three of the cars were filled with personal gear and other supplies, the Japanese ordered the prisoners aboard the remaining twenty cars. Japanese officials divided the cars into thirds, and according to Roy Stephens, "it was fixed for twenty-five men in one end, twenty-five in the other end, and about one-third of the car, the middle, was fenced off for Jap guards and their bunks."[16] Each boxcar

contained "some rice-straw mattresses on the floor, a fifty-gallon drum of drinking water, 3 five-gallon cans [for human waste], 2 teapots, 186 loaves of bread and 2 chow buckets"[17] for the prisoners. The cars were extremely crowded, and it did not take long before the air became stuffy, almost suffocating. The train headed north and within a few hours it reached the city of Nanking. There the prisoners disembarked while the train was ferried across the Yangtze. Once the train was ready, the Japanese ferried the prisoners across the river and they reboarded the boxcars. Hour after hour the train headed north with its human cargo fighting for fresh air. As daylight gave way to darkness the prisoners tried to sleep, but the accommodations made sleep nearly impossible. In Theodore Abraham's car an arrangement was made among his fellow prisoners in order to lie down: "It was necessary for at least eight fellows to be standing all the time. This was accomplished by each prisoner standing three hours and sleeping six."[18]



Fifty men were crammed into each boxcar, twenty-five on each end. Barbed wire was not only placed over the windows but also used to separate the prisoners from the guards. (Taylor)

Sometime in the early morning a couple of the American POWs escaped by loosening one of the bars on the window and jumping out of the moving train. When their absence was reported, the train came to a halt and Japanese guards searched for them. Eventually, the train started again. The prisoners wanted to know what had happened and were told by the Japanese that "two men escaped, and they had killed them both."[19] On the following day, two more prisoners escaped, Bill Taylor and Jack Hernandez. According to Taylor, one prisoner served as a lookout while the two men slipped a window bar loose and exited out the train window at abut 1 A.M.

While the guards slept, William Taylor and Jack Hernandez slip out the window of their boxcar. (Taylor)

Jumping from a moving train is dangerous, but doing it at night complicates matters. Since the prisoners did not know where they were, Taylor and Hernandez leaped

and just prayed. Both hit the ground hard but Hernandez broke his leg and was unable to move. As the train sped by, Taylor began making his way through the darkness and hopefully toward freedom. The next morning when the Japanese realized that two Wake prisoners were missing, the train was stopped and the Japanese searched for the escapees. In the ensuing search Hernandez was discovered and recaptured, but Taylor moved as far as possible from the train. As dawn broke, Taylor was shocked to see that he was near a large encampment of Japanese troops. Taylor moved away from the camp without detection, but two days later while resting, he was surprised by a couple of Chinese soldiers loyal to the Japanese. After a brief struggle, Taylor overpowered his captors. It was not long after this that Taylor was captured, but this time by Chinese Communists. Offered food and protection, Taylor lived with the Chinese Communists until an arrangement was reached for his release to the Allies.

The Japanese nailed boards over the windows, sealing them off to ensure that no further escapes occurred. With the windows sealed, conditions went from bad to worse. No fresh air, stifling heat, and the odor of the waste buckets made the journey nearly impossible. In the boxcar where Roy Stephens was confined, the Japanese guards opened up the boxcar door about twelve inches to allow in some air. At one stop, the guards allowed a few men at a time out of the barbed wire entanglement to urinate out of the slightly opened door. After five days the train stopped near Peking and the men were marched off to a camp known as Fengtai. Calling Fengtai a camp was generous reality --- it was nothing but a large warehouse. Passing through the metal double doors the men found the interior run-down, dirty, and lacking any floor covering. Divided into five groups, each was assigned to one of the warehouse's five sections. Once in their assigned spot, the men began to further inspect their new accommodations. A small detail of men was taken back to the station to gather rice mats and other supplies. Another detail was taken outside the "barracks" to dig a slit trench as a latrine. Over the next several weeks the prisoners were used for various projects. These projects included everything from

chopping and removing weeds from around the warehouse, improving living facilities, and building a galley to constructing a more permanent latrine. As in Shanghai, the work was overseen by Ishahara, but he did so with less hostility as the war neared its end. A prisoner on a work detail found a natural artesian well bubbling above the ground. Ishahara allowed the prisoners, in shifts, to bathe in the water. Besides cleaning themselves, the prisoners enjoyed the refreshing taste of the water. According to Abraham, "it was the first water we had that didn't have to be treated before drinking."[20] The water was better, but the food was worse than at Kiangwan. A cup of noodles and a cup of watery greens served as the diet for breakfast and dinner. Over the years the prisoners adapted to less food, but now the situation had reached a critical stage.

After a month at Fengtai, the camp bakers received flour and were instructed to make hardtack. Consisting of nothing more than flour and water, the cooks struggled to mix, and then flatten, the mixture on pans before placing them in the ovens. For two days the bakers made hardtack, but none of it was distributed to the prisoners. Rumors spread among the inmates that the hardtack meant they would be leaving again. On the morning of June 9, 1945, the prisoners were told to gather their belongings and prepare to leave. The prisoners marched to the train station and boarded a train, traveling north and stopping only for food, which was much better than most of their meals in Japan.

Soon the prisoners noticed that they were traveling south. After several days of traveling the train pulled off to a rail siding and the prisoners were ordered out. Once assembled, the men were marched approximately two miles to Pusan, Korea, to a military barracks. With broken windows and a roof made up of pieces of sheet metal, the entire group of prisoners, nearly 1,000 men, were crowded into the barracks. The barracks had a wooden floor, but not nearly enough space for everyone to rest comfortably. After a couple of nights trying to jockey for space, a few men improvised and made a makeshift bed. The ceiling of the barracks was not covered, so some men crawled up in the rafters and as Stephens recalls, would "take their belts and strap themselves to a 2 x 4 and spend

the night up there."[21] Roy Stephens found a plank outside, and taking the board into the barracks, he rustled up some nails and went about nailing the board perpendicular to the wall. Stephens kept looking and soon found some wire that he nailed to the outer edge of the board and to the wall, making a shelf bed. Though it was not particularly comfortable, Stephens did manage to get some sleep.[22]

One day the Japanese marched the entire camp to a Japanese medical facility near the coast. After disrobing, the prisoners' clothes were taken, washed, and disinfected. While this process was going on the men were examined by Japanese doctors. The entire day was spent standing about waiting their turn to be checked over or for the return of their clothes. The most common rumor among the prisoners was that this was an indication that they were going to Japan. The next day the prisoners were marched to the docks. It seemed to everyone that the rumor was true. However, rather than boarding a ship for Japan, the men were put to work loading salt aboard the waiting ships. Some of the prisoners loaded baskets of yo-yo poles and others balanced the poles on their backs and then walked up a gangplank. The task was not complete until the ship's hold was filled. On June 28, 1945, the men returned to the docks, were fed some rice, given a farewell speech, and then loaded onto a ship to Japan. For Raleigh Rucker the trip to Japan was frightening. The vessel was so loaded down that it seemed to Rucker as if the ship was barely above the waterline. During the entire journey to Japan, Rucker feared the ship would sink at any moment.

Once the ship anchored the men were ferried by barge to shore. Unlike China, the air smelled fresh and the prisoners could see mountains covered with lush green vegetation. Once the entire contingent was ashore, the men were marched under guard to a train station. After several hours a train arrived and the prisoners were loaded aboard. Unlike their previous train transports, the ride was "The Ritz." The windows were blacked out, the seats were cushioned, and there was adequate space for each prisoner. Those conditions did not last for long. After a few hours the train stopped and the men

were transferred to another train. Disembarking, the prisoners saw a large crowd of Japanese civilians moving in their direction. Quickly the prisoners ran a hundred yards to the next train. The prisoners narrowly avoided the anger of an unruly mob who screamed and banged their hands and fists on the sides of the rail cars. This was the first time the prisoners welcomed their Japanese guards.

The train made several stops and at one point the prisoners were separated into smaller groups. Groups of prisoners were then ordered to board separate trains to different camps throughout Japan. The division of the Wake prisoners from China was not unusual even in 1945. The general trend by 1945 was the relocation of the prisoners to new camps. Sometimes the Japanese decision to move the prisoners was voluntary, but most times it was not.

Throughout the spring of 1945, American planes became a common sight in the skies over Japan. Occasionally, prisoners working Osaka at the steel mills could hear the sounds of war, but no direct evidence of bombings. In early May 1945, the war came dangerously close for Wake survivors at Osaka. When they were in their barracks, the sirens sounded. Taking cover under their wooden platforms they slept on, while bombs dropped all around the prison camp. Besides using conventional explosives, the Americans also used incendiary bombs on Osaka. After about an hour of intermittent bombing, the guards took the prisoners out of the barracks to help put out fires in camp. One of the buildings on fire was the grain storage shed. Running to the shed, J. O. Young and others carried out the grain while additional men extinguished the flames. The camp also was saved by the foxholes the Japanese had the prisoners dig near their barracks. The foxholes had filled with rainwater and offered the prisoners a close supply of water to extinguish the fires. When it was all over the prison camp had been spared and only sustained minor damage to the roofs of the barracks. Ironically, the fire station was burned to the ground during the raid.

The next morning the Japanese assessed the damage. One barracks was damaged and two prisoners were killed and several wounded. The prisoners saw a landscape destroyed by fire. Japanese homes and other buildings were vulnerable to fire since they were largely made of paper and wood. Along the road near the camp, the prisoners saw Japanese civilians with two-wheeled carts loaded with their belongings, moving from Osaka. They also spotted a horse that had been killed in the raid. As a reward for containing the fires, the camp commander allowed the prisoners to drag the horse into camp so they could use it for food.

On May 15, 1945, the prisoners left Osaka by train. The windows blacked-out, the train headed north for an unknown destination. Although it violated the rules, Mathew Morris moved the window cover so he could peek outside. What he saw shocked him. With this brief glimpse, Morris saw leveled buildings and burned-out areas. Basically what he saw was complete devastation.

After traveling most of the day, the train finally came to a stop at a site known as Naoetsu. Located on the northwest of Honshu, Naoetsu, was a rather small camp and contained only one barracks. As the Wake prisoners entered their new quarters, they found that it was already occupied by Australians. Talking with the Aussies, the Wake prisoners discovered what they were up against. The Australians explained that there were 200 men in their group when they arrived, but the winter of 1944 had reduced their ranks by half. When asked why so many died, the Australians described how the temperature often dropped below zero and the snow accumulated to fourteen feet. With this information, many Americans, including Forrest Read, began to think, "in our weakened conditions, we probably would not survive a winter in this camp."[23]

A combination of factors at Naoetsu made it the worse camp the men had experienced. With the end of the war in sight the supply and the quality of food only declined. For breakfast prisoners received a cup of boiled barley or seaweed and a cup of rice. For lunch or dinner their diet did not vary. Occasionally the guards allowed the men

to collect weeds near the barracks so it could be added to their meals. Such a diet was hardly enough to keep the prisoners alive and do hard labor for the Japanese.

During their imprisonment the Americans had experienced some vicious guards, but at Naoetsu many took additional pleasure in demonstrating their authority. Melvin Danner recalls, "The guards in this camp were a larger strain of Japanese. Most being over six foot tall and weighing over 200 pounds."[24] With most of the prisoners hovering around 100 to 125 pounds, one strike from these guards could easily knock a prisoner down. If the combination of rough guards and poor food was not enough, the work performed by the prisoners taxed the limits of their physical and metal strength. Like at Osaka, the Japanese sent the prisoners to a steel mill. The work was extremely hard labor and dangerous. The heat from the furnaces was so intense that the Japanese furnished wet towels to the prisoners to help protect them from the heat. J. O. Young arranged bricks for the metal to be cast. The temperature was so hot that Young and the others in his crew only wore a Japanese G-string and some homemade wooden shoes to protect the soles of their feet.

Forrest Read was part of an eighty-man crew that marched two miles to unload ships at a local harbor. Arriving at the docks early in the morning, the prisoners boarded freighters and proceeded down four decks into the cargo holds. Armed with shovels, the men would scoop the bulk cargo, usually coal or salt, into a large container that was raised by cranes to be loaded on a waiting barge. Amazingly, by the end of the day, the eighty-man crew had emptied all four cargo holds of the ship. The next day the crew met the barges that they had loaded the previous day and unloaded them. Using baskets strapped to their backs, the men hauled the loads up and down a gangplank.

The work was physically taxing, whether in the steel mills or at the docks. Had the prisoners been able to rest and were fed properly, they might have been more productive. Each night they fought a new war against fleas, lice, and bedbugs. The resistance was futile. There were just too many of the enemy. As John Burton recalls, "we could see

bedbugs by the hundreds crawling up and down the posts, from the bottom bunks to the top."[25] The men fought a valiant rear-guard action, but eventually succumbed to exhaustion and fell asleep. Some of the men who worked in the steel mill were allowed to occasionally strip and boil their clothes.

While the men at Naoetsu were trying to adjust to their sleeping arrangements, the Wake civilians who had been brought from China were trying to adjust to life in Japan. After arriving in Japan, the Wake prisoners from China were sent to various camps. One contingent was taken to Niigata, which is located on Honshu. Like Naoetsu, conditions at Niigata were difficult. In 1942, the camp housed 650 French Canadians who had been taken prisoner in Hong Kong. By the time the Wake prisoners arrived, only 2 of the French Canadians remained alive. The men at Niigata were used for a variety of labor projects from cutting down trees to working on the docks. One day, unloading soybeans, Roy Stephens witnessed a Japanese cargo vessel blow up and sink as it came into port. Apparently, the U.S. Navy had dropped mines into the harbor unknown to the Japanese. From that day forward the Japanese used mine sweepers to clear the harbor and channel of mines. Those countermeasures were not always successful and other ships fell victim to mines. Like Naoetsu living conditions at Niigata were spartan. The main dietary supplement for the prisoners was a soybean mash, the residue of soybeans that had already been pressed to remove their oil.

Also like Naoetsu, the barracks at Niigata were infected with lice and bedbugs. J. J. Coker remembers trying to sleep but was unable to because of constant irritation. Coker simply would "get up and go outside to try to shake the fleas out of the blankets. This would help for awhile, but soon [he] was outside shaking [his] blanket again."[26] Soon, many Wake prisoners wondered if they might suffer the same fate as the French Canadians.

Working at the docks one day, a group of men were unloading barrels of liquid. Breaking into one of the barrels, they tested the contents, which had a sweet taste. When

the guards were not looking they shared drinks of the unknown liquid. The prisoners did not know that they were drinking aircraft engine coolant. All men who drank the coolant were either blind within a few days or died. Roy Stephens had stolen salt from the docks one day and buried it near his barracks for safekeeping. Salt was extremely valuable and occasionally Stephens went out and removed some salt to trade or to consume. One day checking his salt cache, Stephens was spotted by a Japanese guard, who quickly discovered Stephens's salt supply. The guard promptly beat Stephens for his infraction of camp rules. Though bruised and battered, the risk of stealing the salt had been worth it. The little extras that the salt could provide often meant the difference between life and death.

The majority of Wake prisoners from China were taken to northern Honshu to a series of camps near Sendai. Located in the mountains, the Sendai POW camps offered a spectacular view, but were cold because of the elevation. Access to the camps was difficult because of the limited road network through the mountains. A narrow-gauge rail served as the main transportation link to the camps. Marched to the rail line, the men were packed, fifteen men per car, for the trip up the mountain. Working its way up the slopes, the train took nearly an hour to reach the camp. For Theodore Abraham the trip "represented everything that war didn't. It was peaceful, beautiful, and prolific."[27] At the end of the journey the train arrived at a valley where a village was visible along with a camp surrounded by a high wooden fence. Once they reached the camp the men were taken to a two-story barracks. The prisoners were assigned the second floor, which had three-tier bunks. The guards informed the prisoners that the barracks belonged to a mining company and their general welfare depended on how well they worked in the mines. After a meager dinner the men tried to adjust to both the camp and the climate. If they were still in China they would had experienced the sweltering heat of summer, but instead they faced the cool climate of northern Honshu. The next morning after roll call and breakfast, the men were marched to their first day of work. After a two-hour march

in the mountains, the men were exhausted when they reached the iron mine. Given a fifteen-minute break to rest and catch their breath, the prisoners were then put to work extracting iron ore. The men loaded the ore into cable cars that ran from the mine to the valley below. Once the ore reached the valley it was taken to a smelter. Day after day the prisoners became weaker and prayed for the war to end.

At this point the Wake prisoners---whether located in Sendai, Niigata, Naoetsu, Omori, Yokohama, or any of the other camps in Japan---were reaching the breaking point. From all indications Japan was on the verge of defeat. However, Japanese authorities pushed the prisoners to do more work on less food. Weakened as they were, the men could only work for short periods of time before needing rest. However, the Japanese would not tolerate prisoners failing to reach their quotas. Failure to reach assigned amounts resulted in beatings. With winter approaching, most of the prisoners wondered if they would survive to see another spring, let alone see the war finally end. If the winter didn't get them, according to rumors substantiated by Japanese guards after the war, they would be killed if the Americans attempted an invasion. The only question that remained was whether the prisoners would survive to the end of the war.

One of the largest projects done by the prisoners they called Mount Fuji. Overseeing the project was the camp interpreter (above) Ishihara known by the prisoners as the screaming skull. Ishihara went out of his way to punish prisoners for the slightest infraction of rules.

Notes

1. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails (New York: Vantage Press, 1992), 93.
2. Ibid., 94.
3. Ibid., 95.
4. Rodney Kephart, Wake, War and Waiting (New York: Exposition Press, 1994), 48.
5. Ibid., 52.
6. Ibid., 58.
7. Ibid., 61.
8. Ben Comstock, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 30 September1996.
9. Melvin Danner, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 12 March 1997.
10. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? (Manhattan, Kan: Sunflower Press, 1992), 131.
11. Ibid., 112.
12. Ibid., 104.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., 155.
15. Ibid., 161.
16. Roy Stephens, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 May 1997. 11-5.
17. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 162.
18. Ibid., 163.
19. Roy Stephens, 11-6.
20. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 166.
21. Roy Stephens, 12-2.
22. Ibid.
23. Forrest Read, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 18 May 1997.

24. Melvin Danner.

25. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails, 106.

26. J. J. Coker, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 March 1997.

27. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 196.

Chapter 9

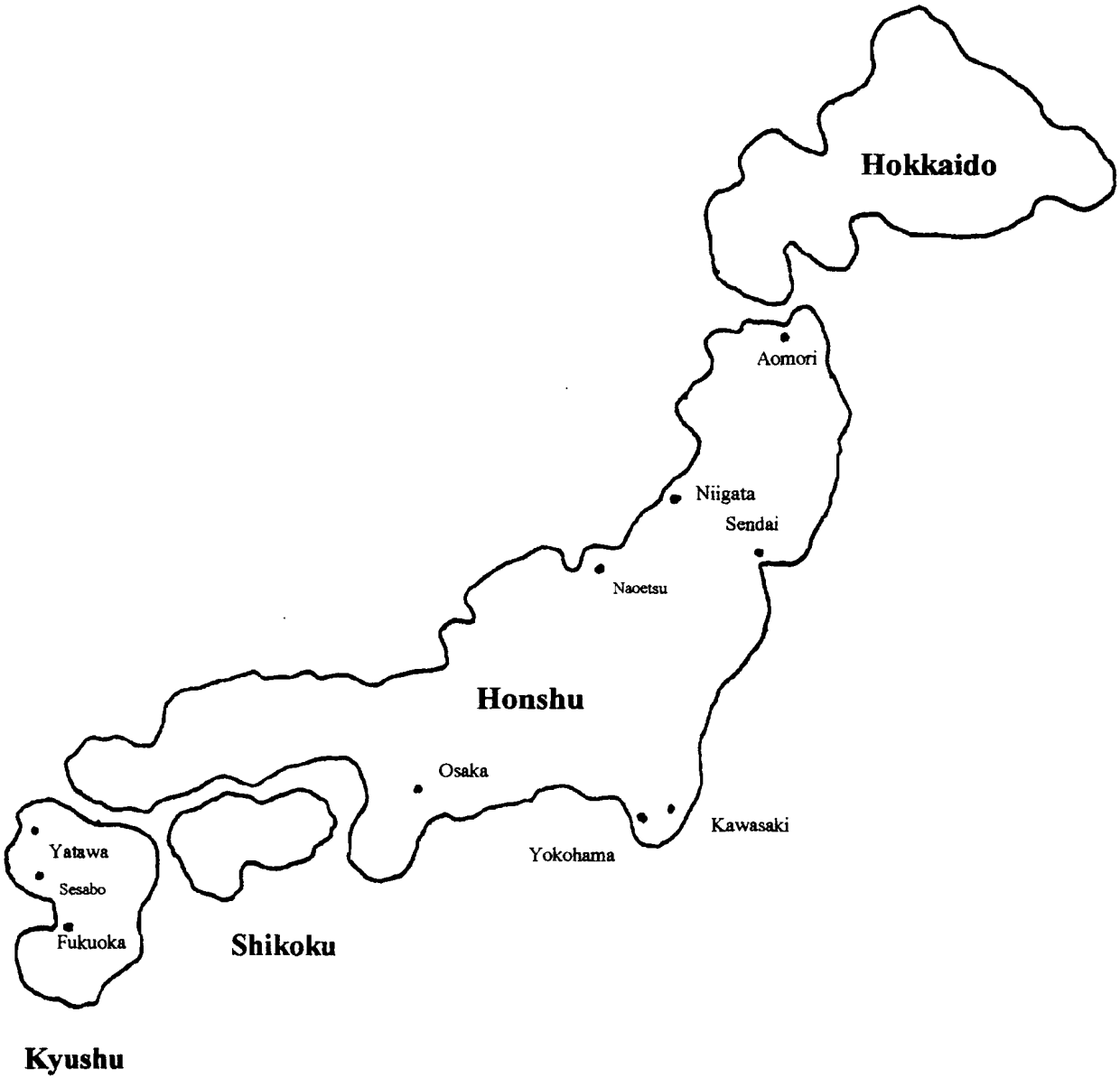
The End and Returning Home

Throughout 1944 and 1945, the Japanese began a policy of prisoner relocation from major industrial areas to more isolated regions in Japan. One reason for this shift in policy was increased American bombings and the destruction of urban industries. The other factor was to move the prisoners to more secure areas where the prisoners could still be productive, yet far away from potential invasion and battle areas that would not threaten the Japanese. The movement to more rural areas left the men with little news on how the war was progressing. Occasionally, they saw American airplanes flying high overhead, but little else. What information they did receive involved rumors and were not completely accurate. One rumor commonly held by most American prisoners was that the Japanese guards were not to allow their prisoners to fall into Allied hands. With all the prisoner transfers, this rumor seemed to be true. Another persistent rumor was if the Americans landed in Japan, "the prisoners were all going to be killed."[1] If disease, starvation, or overwork did not kill them, it seemed clear the Japanese surely would finish the job. To most prisoners the future looked bleak.

Unlike most prisoners, John Burton had a clear picture of how the war was going since he was held as a prisoner on the northwest tip of Kyushu. Working in the steel mills at Yawata, Burton had witnessed the intensifying American air raids. Every time planes appeared overhead, air raid sirens would sound with both Japanese and Americans rushing to the nearest shelter. By the summer of 1945, it appeared to Burton that he spent as much time in shelters as he did working. The ferocity of the raids reached a peak on August 8, when Yawata was hit with firebombs. The raid destroyed much of Yatawa and Burton and the other prisoners were returned to their prison camp, which was completely undamaged. The following day a small contingent of prisoners were sent to Yatawa to

clear the debris, but the mills had been destroyed by bombing. In camp on August 9, Burton heard the Japanese interpreter tell some prisoners that he thought the war would be over soon since the Americans "had dropped two deadly new bombs," one on Hiroshima and the other on Nagasaki, "reducing most of those two cities to ashes."[2] The interpreter's information spread quickly through the camp; however, after waiting so long, the prisoners tried to keep their emotions in check.

Japanese Prison Camps that held Wake Island Prisoners



Roy Stephens did not see much evidence of the war since his transfer to Niigata. When he was working at the docks. A guard told him that a bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and that it killed "everything." When Stephens inquired about it, the guard did not know what was dropped, but he told Stephens that the weapon literally killed everything, humans, animals, and plants. The next day, a bomber flew over Niigata dropping leaflets. Reading one of the leaflets, the prisoners discovered that the Americans warned the civilians of Niigata to evacuate their city or face the same fate as Hiroshima. The rest of the day the prisoners watched as a steady stream of Japanese civilians, loaded with what they could carry or push in carts, left Niigata. Over the next several days the prisoners continued to work in Niigata, either at the docks or the mills, but they realized that the war was almost over.

On August 15, J. O. Young, part of the night shift at the Naoetsu steel mill, lined up outside the barracks to be counted before being marched off to work. On this night, though, the men were told to go back to the barracks because the power was off at the mill. Although the men were happy to have the time off, they were struck by the fact that the Japanese had never given them such freedom before. It seemed even more odd when they went up to the second story of their barracks and they could see the lights at the mill shining as bright as usual. Throughout the night the men restlessly tried to sleep, wondering what was happening. The next morning the prisoners awoke only to discover that most of their camp guards had deserted. The Japanese camp commander proceeded to inform the Americans that Japan had surrendered and the war was over. Charles Varney noticed a dramatic change in attitude among the Japanese guards: "They [guards] went from being the Emperor's loyal legions to being General MacArthur's special police with orders to take good care of the POWs."[3]

The prisoners at Naoetsu discovered that the war was over, but Melvin Danner continued his usual routine. Following breakfast on August 15, Danner and other prisoners left the camp for work. To everyone's surprise the men were ordered back to

camp at noon. During the route back to the compound, Danner asked the interpreter, "Why we did not work? The interpreter replied that Honolulu had surrendered and they were celebrating."[4] Granted, Danner and most prisoners did not have newspapers, but this explanation appeared contrary to everything the prisoners visualized during the year. The next day Danner was unsure of what to expect and was even more confused when he noticed the guards at the camp were changed. The situation was clarified when an American fighter flew over and dropped a wrench with a note attached. To the prisoners, who had waited so long, the wrench and note were like a gift from heaven because it revealed that the war was over.

Across Japan the word spread among Allied prisoners of the Japanese capitulation. After years of starvation and beatings the prisoners finally were free. No longer did they have to live in fear, but as the realization of freedom set in interesting developments occurred. Many prisoners sought retribution against guards whom the prisoners deemed excessively cruel. The retribution took the form of ordering guards to work, but unlike their experiences severe consequences did not occur. Prisoners who dreamed to get a crack at one or more of the guards did virtually nothing. Perhaps more serious incidents were avoided because many guards had fled and the prisoners now had more important concerns such as returning home.

Although the war was over, Allied troops had yet to arrive and occupy Japan. Consequently, the prisoners were advised to stay in camp and wait until arrangements could be made for them to return home. As the prisoners waited they began to receive airdrops from American aircraft. Frank Mace first learned the war was over on August 18, when an American fighter flew over his barracks waving his wings. Standing outside watching, Mace observed the plane return and drop an object from the plane. Locating the site of the drop, the prisoners found a military duffel bag filled with "cigarettes, candy and news that the war was over."[5] The prisoners were thankful, but more thankful that their nation had not forgotten them.

Soon more organized drops occurred. The United States Army Air Force (USAAF) began to locate POW camps and bring relief to the prisoners. Fifty-gallon drums dropped from the planes brought manna from heaven to the prisoners who had been suffering from severe malnutrition. In the drums the men found boots, clothes, cigarettes, gum and, most importantly, food. Joe Astarita vividly remembered the first food he received from a B-29 drop. It was a can of sliced peaches and a can of evaporated milk. After going without for so long, Melvin Danner compared eating to hogs visiting a trough. "Just about everyone ate all he could get his hands on."[5] One item dropped to Danner and the others were cans of split pea soup. According to the directions, the soup was to be diluted and heated. Before either of these could be done they had to be opened. Most of the prisoners lacked the means, but Danner figured out a way to open the cans. Being hungry, however, he ignored the instructions to heat and dilute. Eating the soup straight from the can, Danner ate one can, then another. Although the soup tasted great, he soon became ill. Danner recalled, "for the next 3 hours I spent in the lavatory going freely."[7] To this day, Danner has been repulsed by split pea soup.

The airdrops brought needed food, but they also brought unneeded danger. Through no fault of their own, the air crews had problems dropping the goods. Trained to drop bombs, not supplies, the crews went about the food drops as though they were making a bomb run. Bombardiers often used their bomb sights to line up a camp, then release their load. The supplies, which were attached to parachutes, drifted with the winds and rarely landed at their intended target. In an effort to counter this problem, bombers began to fly lower to reduce the drift. The only problem with this technique was that parachutes failed to deploy because the containers traveled so fast that the supplies crashed to the ground. Eventually, through trial and error, the crews reduced their speed, lowered their altitude, and supplies reached their intended targets. Using conventional parachutes rather than the larger cargo chutes, which were not always available, a lot of free-falling supplies continued to appear until American troops arrived to aid the prisoners.

Previously, when the prisoners heard planes approaching the camp, they ran outside to wave and await the supplies. With the problems associated with the airdrops, the prisoners soon learned it was best to run and take cover when planes approached. Unfortunately, the lesson of taking cover was learned the hard way.

At Sendai, the camp where Theodore Abraham was located, a relief plane dropped supplies right on target; the only problem was, the target was the camp. Abraham remembers, "Supplies came crashing down all over, through the kitchen, barracks, and one went through the bathhouse striking a prisoner and killing him."[8] The death seemed a terrible twist of irony. For years the victim had survived starvation by the Japanese, only to be killed by an American airdrop. Such tragedy was not confined to the POWs. Japanese civilians going about their daily business were also subject to such unlikely incidents. One prisoner saw a cow's carcass that had been out in a field after it was hit by a fifty-gallon drum. When supplies landed outside the camp they were often looted by Japanese civilians by the time the prisoners got to the drop site. Almost as hungry as the prisoners, the Japanese raced the prisoners to the food. Forrest Read did not have to worry about racing for food because his racing days were over for a while. Sitting on the wooden fence that surrounded the Naoetsu camp, an airdrop arrived. Scrambling for cover, Read jumped off the fence, about twelve feet, onto a concrete slab, breaking a bone in his foot. After years of abuse by the Japanese without a major injury, Read seriously injured himself jumping off a fence!

Besides the food drops, planes began dropping leaflets warning the prisoners not to overeat. The sudden appearance of food to individuals who had been on reduced rations could cause acute sickness. Although it was easy to warn hungry men, it was hard to stop them feasting on their new bounty. Many of the men became physically ill; some developed dysentery. Over the next several days the men started to regain their weight. It was not a healthy weight; instead, the men were now bloated. The prisoners consumed

food at such a rate that the air drops could not always keep up with them. On occasions when the prisoners ran out of food containers, prisoners left their camps looking for food.

The general rule for the former prisoners was to remain in camp. What few guards remained on duty were left in the camps to make sure disgruntled Japanese civilians did not harm the prisoners. The prisoners believed that the Japanese guards' real mission was to keep an eye on them. Rule or not, some men ventured beyond the gates exploring and searching for food in the Japanese countryside.

One day Roy Stephens and some friends took some parachutes and sought to trade the parachutes for eggs. Every village had already been visited by a prisoner who traded for eggs or chickens. Eventually Stephens and the others succeeded in obtaining eggs. One night Stephens and two others left camp and walked to Niigata searching for food. The city had been evacuated and seemed to be a ghost town when the prisoners arrived. As they moved from one empty store to another the three men stumbled into a large group of Japanese sailors. The sailors did not harm the three, but instead took them to a brothel. After some watermelon and a bottle of sake, the three started back to the camp. Unsure of where they were they stumbled about until they came to a Japanese checkpoint. Here they were told how to reach their camp and told to stay there so they would not be harmed by revengeful Japanese.

Restless, Alanzo Goulding and his buddies decided to do some exploring. After commandeering a vehicle the men drove to the nearest town. There they found an abandoned hotel that had been used by Westerners before the war. Going to the kitchen they found only four fish in the freezer. Taking matters into their own hands, they visited a Japanese military supply depot they had seen earlier on their way to town. Walking past the Japanese guards, who never attempted to stop them, the prisoners helped themselves to blankets. Scouring the neighboring countryside, the men traded the blankets for food, which they took back to the hotel. Soon the men turned the hotel into a resort for several days.

Although he was now free, Theodore Abraham grew restless and wanted to venture beyond the confines of the prison camp. The senior American officer at the Sendai camp gave Abraham and three others permission to leave camp, on the condition that they take a Japanese guide with them. Walking down the mountain the group took in the scenic vistas as they headed in no particular direction. Occasionally, meeting random Japanese civilians, the prisoners were intrigued by the civility and politeness the Japanese showed the Americans. The civilians stepped off the road to let the former prisoners pass. After walking for several hours it began to rain and the Japanese guide hustled the four men to a small hut where an elderly man shared his tea with his five visitors. After the break the men ventured into the rain and the guide took them to a train station, where he helped them board a train and waved good-bye as they returned to their camp. Unsure of what was going on, the prisoners entered a rail car and looked for a place to sit. They soon discovered that the entire car was filled with Japanese officers. Feeling like "Daniel in the Lion's Den" the men took the first available seats. The Americans sat in complete silence and tried not to look or stare at the Japanese officers. The train stopped several times during the trip, so enough of the Japanese officers departed that the four men were able to sit together, which reduced their anxiety. After an hour and a half, the train stopped once again and its conductor waved to the prisoners to get off. Surprised, the men discovered that they were at the same train station where they arrived earlier at Sendai. After taking the narrow-gauge train up the mountain to Sendai the four men were happy to return to camp and were in no hurry to go sightseeing again.

After feasting on supplies from the airdrops, J. O. Young, Jim Sewesberg, and Norman Swanson decided to leave the Naoetsu camp. The men took some of the airdropped supplies --- cigarettes, gum, shoes, and clothes --- with them in search of eggs. After five miles of walking there was not an egg to be found. Not completely deterred, the men decided if they could not have an egg then they would settle for a chicken. Wanting two, the men finally traded for one chicken and some potatoes. When they

returned to camp they had also traded for some bread and sake. Now, after a brief rest, they were ready to have their feast. Slicing the potatoes to make french fries, the men went about preparing the chicken. Cooking the chicken was a task --- it was an old laying hen and had become tough. After overcooking the chicken, the three men were able to tenderize it enough to eat it along with their bread and potatoes.

Besides food, clothing, and living conditions, the former prisoners wanted to know when they were to return home. Tired of waiting, Frank Mace and a few others went to the nearest train station and waited for a train to Yokohama. Once the men found a train they boarded even though they did not have a ticket and no one asked for one. Thus began their three-day journey to Yokohama and a trip home. When they arrived at Yokohama the prisoners were confronted by a female Red Cross worker handing out candy and cigarettes. Mace stopped and just stared at the Red Cross volunteer. "She asked what I was staring at, and I told her she was beautiful and the first American woman that most of us had seen in over 5 years."[9] Eventually, when the men regained their composure, they were directed to a compound for other liberated prisoners.

Omori was one of the first camps officially liberated by the Allies in Japan. Omori was located on a small island in Tokyo Bay. Lloyd Nelson was among Omori's inmates and was removed from the island on August 28. Placed aboard a hospital ship anchored in Tokyo Bay, Nelson and his fellow prisoners received a physical by doctors who evaluated their level of sickness. Men who were seriously ill or injured were assigned beds, and men who were well enough were taken to the ship's galley to enjoy their first American meal. Nelson enjoyed ham and eggs along with vanilla ice cream. Following the meal, those that could be moved were assigned to an auxiliary ship so the seriously ill could be treated on the hospital ship. Nelson stayed aboard one of the auxiliary ships for several days. In fact, he was in Tokyo Bay when the Japanese signed the terms of surrender on September 2. Most prisoners were removed following September 2. As the prisoners left their camps to

go to their debarkation points, they had the chance to see the destruction that had been inflicted on Japan by American bombers.

From his camp near Kokura, John Burton boarded a train to Kanoya. His trip to Kanoya was delayed because of the number of destroyed bridges forced the train to ferry the passengers across. Burton described what he saw: "Every time we came to one [bridge], we would cross the river on the debris, and catch a train waiting on the other side."[10]

Rodney Kephart was aboard a train that was, as he remembers, traveling through some of the most beautiful countryside he had ever seen in Japan. He saw fruit orchards, terrace hills, and gardens. The train traveled through this picturesque scene and then entered a valley where "the hills' vegetation was brown from the heat. All things were gone. Where dwellings, orchards, and gardens had been there were but bare terraces scorched [by a] terrific heat. Where there had been factories there was but twisted steel."[11] What Kephart saw was the remains of Nagasaki. Many prisoners wondered how the Japanese survived such devastation.

As the prisoners waited for news that it was time to leave, many thoughts were running through their minds. What would home be like? What changes had occurred? From the few letters that reached them, some prisoners realized what awaited them. In captivity, some men had discovered that their wives had deserted them, or others were informed that family members had died. All realized that they had to make considerable adjustments once they returned to the United States. The prisoners needed no time to get used to freedom. On September 9, the prisoners at the Sendai camp held an official flag-raising ceremony. As the makeshift flag was raised, Theodore Abraham experienced a flood of memories, particularly the surrender of Wake and his subsequent imprisonment by the Japanese. As the flag rose it became more than a piece of dyed cloth, it "represented freedom, security, and a way of life found nowhere else in the world."[12]

When word finally arrived that it was time to depart, the prisoners wondered what the future would hold in store for them.

On September 5 and 6, the Allies evacuated the prisoners from Naoetsu by train to Tokyo. The state of a prisoner's health determined when a man could leave Japan. Forrest Read, with his broken foot, left on September 5. Excited to be going home, Read felt some apprehension since his nephew, J. O. Young, remained behind. Arriving in Tokyo, Read was placed aboard the hospital ship *Marigold,* where orderlies X-rayed his foot and set it in a new cast. After years of imprisonment Read was amazed at the cleanliness of the *Marigold.* "After living amid [filth], rats and lice . . . the inside of that [hospital] ship looked like heaven."[13] Not only was the ship clean, but the men were assigned beds with clean sheets. Even more special were the nurses who some men referred to as angels in uniform.

All throughout September 1945, prisoners were moved from their camps to evaluation centers. The largest center, where most of the former prisoners were ultimately sent, was Yokohama. On their way to Yokohama, Mathew Morris and many of his fellow prisoners passed through Tokyo, where they saw their first American troops. With echoing cheers, the prisoners voiced their excitement at seeing their first concrete example of America.

After reaching Yokohama and receiving the friendly greetings of the Red Cross, the prisoners removed their dirty, lice-infected clothes, which were collected and burned. The men were given soap and taken to hot showers where they bathed. After their showers they were doused with DDT and given new clothes. Besides new undergarments the men received new military uniforms along with new shoes. Although Yokohama offered additional benefits and comforts, it was not home. The first leg of their journey home took the former prisoners to either Okinawa or Guam. The most seriously ill were flown from Tokyo to either location. The remainder of the POWs were sent by troop transports to the same locations.

As troop transport aircraft ferried the 11th Airborne Division for occupation duty in Japan, the sick and injured were loaded aboard for the return flight to Okinawa. As John Burton boarded a plane he became "deathly afraid that something would happen and we wouldn't get to leave after all."[14] Roy Stephens also got a flight to Okinawa, but unlike Burton, he was not worried about taking off, he was worried about landing. The plane departed for Okinawa at night. When they were airborne, the pilot, a Texan, asked the POWs over the intercom if anyone else was from Texas. Hailing from the Lone Star State himself, Stephens was allowed into the cockpit. As the flight continued the pilot, copilot, and navigator began to discuss their present location. Scanning the ocean below, the four men, including Stephens, began looking for Okinawa. To make the situation more tense, the plane was running low on fuel. Stephens thought to himself, "Good God almighty, after I survived [the camps] for nearly four years, someone is going to fly me in the water!"[15] Finally the pilot spotted a searchlight and made an approach to the airfield. Stephens was never so happy to be on the ground.

During John Burton's flight to Okinawa a couple of items caught his eye as the plane circled the island. He was struck by the number of ships at anchor and the number of planes that dotted the landscape. Burton wondered how Japan was able to survive as long as it did with such massive American firepower. Once the plane landed Burton received a second shock. Red Cross girls handed out coffee and doughnuts to the men. It had been nearly five years since Burton had seen females and he could hardly talk when they approached him. Burton recalled this single event because "of the pleasant welcome they extended us, on behalf of our country."[16]

Rodney Kephart reached Okinawa by ship. Aboard the USS *Haven,* Kephart was invited to the engine room, where the crew wished to hear about his experience as a POW. While there, Kephart saw his first movie in four years. During the film he was amazed by "the new music, dress, all the war talk" that dominated America.[17] That evening Kephart struggled with his emotions as he left Japan, especially after all that he had experienced

during the past four years. Now he was returning to freedom, but his world had changed since he left before the war. In a way, he was returning to a society that had changed vastly. On Okinawa, Kephart decided to explore the island. He was struck by how much devastation had occurred. Everywhere he went he saw the ruins of cities and the new construction under way to restore Okinawa.

Because of his injuries, Forrest Read was loaded aboard a plane with other litter patients and flown to Guam. After landing, the patients were told that Guam was only an overnight stop before they continued the flight to the United States. Like the other prisoners, the Red Cross informed the men that they could wire home to their families. At a loss as what to tell his family, Read's message was simple, "flying home well and happy!"[18] After arriving at Guam and all that it had to offer --- clean sheets, clothes, food --- one of the prisoners summed up their situation: "we must be in heaven, 'cause we just left hell behind us."[19]

J. O. Young, Melvin Danner, and many others began their trip home from Japan on the USS *Ozark*. The first port of call for the *Ozark* was Guam. Like the other former prisoners the men were given a thorough medical examination. After the physical the men were sent to the galley where they had an all-American meal. J. O. Young remembered the feast consisted of chicken a la king, a half loaf of bread, sugar, and canned milk. He not only consumed everything, but he ate the same amount later at supper. The result of overindulging was that Young was "sicker than I had been, even while a POW."[20] For the next several days, despite being sick, Young and most of the others put on weight and began to regain their strength.

The former POWs who were sent to Okinawa were airlifted to the Philippines. Once again Stephens boarded a plane that developed a problem. Losing oil pressure, the pilot put the plane down at an auxiliary airfield in northern Luzon rather than risk a crash-landing. Eventually, Stephens caught another plane to Manila, but he was determined to avoid flying as much as possible. Once the men reached Manila and were

checked in, they waited for word for the next leg home. John Burton went to the airfield one day where there were a few small planes that would take the prisoners up for an aerial tour of the island. At the airfield, Burton made friends with a sergeant who was in charge of a detail of Japanese prisoners. Discovering that Burton had been a prisoner in Japan, the sergeant asked if he could speak Japanese. Explaining that he knew a few phrases, the sergeant asked if he could get them to work. Burton walked over and shouted attention in Japanese and "they came to their feet and snapped to attention."[21] Burton went on to explain to them that he had been a prisoner in Japan and they had better get to work or he would use some of the tricks he had learned as a captive. The sergeant had no problem with the Japanese prisoners while Burton was in Manila.

In Manila Rodney Kephart made friends with a soldier from Kephart's hometown of Boise, Idaho. Kephart revealed that he had been captured on Wake Island and was a prisoner during the way. The soldier told Kephart that he too knew about Wake because he had thought about going there to work in 1941. By a twist of fate two men stood together: one went to Wake and became a prisoner, the other fought to make the world free and indirectly saved the first.

The meeting between Kephart and the soldier was not the only unique reunion that occurred. Perhaps the most unlikely reunion was between Pete and Leal Russell. Pete Russell was thirteen years old when his father left in 1940 for Wake Island. Following the American entry into the war and the subsequent capture of Wake, Pete was determined to free his father. By 1945 Pete had turned eighteen and dropped out of high school to join the service. Unsure of exactly how he was going to gain his father's release, Pete wanted to join the navy because he knew it was heavily involved in the war with Japan. Once in the navy he waited to be assigned to a ship for service in the Pacific. After completing signalman school at Pearl Harbor, Pete Russell was assigned to the battleship USS *Pennsylvania.* In late July 1945, the *Pennsylvania,* a light carrier, and a few escort ships left Hawaii for sea trials and live firing exercises. In preparation for future action against

the Japanese, the navy sent the task force to raid, of all places, Wake Island. As Pete Russell recalled, "it was an unusual feeling to see my first action against the enemy at the island where [my] Dad had been captured."[22] On August 1, 1945, the carrier planes attacked Wake, followed by the *Pennsylvania* and cruisers. Drawing in close to use its five-inch guns, the *Pennsylvania* returned fire from Japanese shore batteries. One shell hit the *Pennsylvania,* landing in the fire control center near where Russell was stationed. By a stroke of luck the shell did not explode, but the ship was ordered to Saipan for resupply and repairs.

After a short layover in Saipan, the *Pennsylvania* was ordered to Okinawa to become the flagship of the Seventh Fleet. At Okinawa, plans were being made for Downfall, the invasion of Japan, which included the Seventh Fleet. During the journey to Okinawa Pete Russell told some of his buddies of his plan to liberate his father. During the evening of August 12, a single Japanese torpedo plane launched a torpedo that struck the *Pennsylvania.* After the situation had been stabilized the *Pennsylvania* was ordered to Guam for repairs. Seeing his plan collapse, Russell requested a transfer to another battleship, but it was denied. Despondent that his ship was departing Japanese waters, Russell wondered why fate worked against him. As the *Pennsylvania* steamed toward Guam, the crew learned that the war was over and Russell began anew to devise a plan to locate his father. Docking Guam on September 6, 1945, Russell used his radio skills to find his father. "I began asking ships if they had been to Japan. If the answer was yes, I asked if they had any POWs aboard. If the answer was negative, I thanked them and terminated the conversation."[23]

On September 23, the *Rescue,* a hospital ship, arrived at Guam. Sending his typical message, Russell found that *Rescue* had POWs on board. Giving the radioman of the *Rescue* his father's name, he waited for a reply. Checking the ship's records, *Rescue*'s radioman replied that they did have a Leal Russell on the manifest. After waiting so long, Pete was stunned at his luck in finding his father. Some of the other crew members on the

Pennsylvania, aware of Russell's plans, took him to the commanding officer and requested that Russell be sent to the *Rescue*. The request was granted and Pete Russell was off to see his father. After reaching the *Rescue,* Russell was given permission to board --- waiting at the top of the ladder was his father. Shocked to see each other, father and son fell into each other's arms. Enjoying dinner together, the two Russells exchanged information about their experiences. After unsuccessfully trying to be transferred to the *Rescue,* Pete Russell left his father the next morning, knowing that his father was well and they would be reunited soon.

On September 12, 1945, Forrest Read was lucky to be loaded aboard a plane flying to the United States. After stopping at Kwajalean, Johnson Island, and Honolulu, the plane landed at the Mare Island Naval Air Station near San Francisco. At the Mare Island hospital, Read had his leg recast so that he could get around on crutches. He was also able to make a call home to tell his parents and wife that he was in San Francisco. Driving all night, Read's wife, mother, sister, and brother-in-law arrived at the hospital the next afternoon. After four and a half years, Read and his family were finally together. Read remembered, "I wasn't going to cry and my folks had said no tears, but you know what, we couldn't hold them back. It was the most wonderful day of my life to be back in their arms and knowing I would soon be going back with them to good old Idaho."[24] The next day Read was discharged from the hospital. On the trip back to Idaho, Read learned that many items were rationed in the United States. Mentioning that he wanted a milk shake and a hamburger, the family promptly stopped at the first roadhouse. When Read finally arrived in Boise, he found that someone had taken his picture when he was in the hospital and had given it to the local newspaper. Seeing the photograph of the emaciated former prisoner, a number of people stopped by the Read house to wish their best and drop off popular food dishes. All of the attention had the desired effect and within a matter of months Read's weight went from 128 pounds to a hefty 198 pounds.

For many prisoners on Guam the joyous reunion that Read experienced would have to wait. Unlike Read, they did not get a plane ride back to the States. Instead, they returned by sea transport. On September 27, former prisoners boarded the USS *Ozark*. For Theodore Abraham the trip was miserable. Not only was he seasick, but he was also homesick. On October 5, the *Ozark* sailed into Honolulu to resupply, but those onboard were not allowed off the ship. They were, however, given a chance to send a telegram via the Red Cross to their loved ones, telling them of their return. The next morning the *Ozark* departed Honolulu for San Francisco. On October 11, most of the men did not want to miss the moment as the *Ozark* sailed beneath the Golden Gate. Melvin Danner believed "that was one of the happiest moments of my life for when the bridge came into view it just seemed to say it is over, and you are free."[25] As the ship approached the San Francisco docks its array of colors, cars, and signs stood out in stark contrast to what they had experienced in China and Japan. When the ship finally docked it was greeted by a band and a large boisterous crowd. The former prisoners scanned the crowd for people they knew. Disembarking as quickly as possible, J. O. Young spotted his girlfriend, Pearl, who had waited for him to return. All around the dock similar reunions occurred. In the excitement, Theodore Abraham nearly missed his reunion. Walking past a sailor, the man reached out and grabbed Abraham by the arm. Staring at the sailor, who asked if he recognized him, Abraham realized it was his own brother. The last time Abraham had seen his brother he was thirteen! Walking together from the dock the two caught up on the news of their family.

For the men in Manila their homecoming was still in the future. After two close calls flying from Japan, Roy Stephens received orders to sail from Manila. In Stephen's opinion, "it was the slowest boat that ever went to sea."[26] After nineteen days the ship finally approached San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge. Seeing the Golden Gate was an emotional moment. Like all arriving prisoners, the dock was crowded with people

meeting their loved ones. After forty-four months of captivity, the Wake Island civilian workers were finally home!

Nearly 1,600 American military and civilians were captured on Wake Island in December 1941. Of that number, 231 died in captivity or approximately 14.5 percent in comparison with 38 percent of other Americans captured by the Japanese. Several items accounted for this disparity in fatalities. First, the conditions in the camps in China were bad but the camps elsewhere in Asia and the Pacific were worse. Second, located near Shanghai, the Wake Islanders received food from the international community. Shanghai was a Red Cross center, so the prisoners received more Red Cross parcels than other prisoners. Third, growing up during the depression and having to make do with less, the men found it easier than others to adapt to the scarcity of items when they were Japanese captives. After years of hard labor the men entered captivity with strong bodies and were more adaptable to the work the Japanese put before them. Fourth, up until their capture the men were still eating fairly well in comparison with others captured early in the war. Fifth, contained to the island after their capture, the men had time to adapt to captivity before being shipped to permanent camps elsewhere. Sixth, the trip by ship to China or Japan was difficult, but they were fortunate in avoiding situations like the Death March of Bataan or the death ships from the Philippines. Seventh, and perhaps most important, the men were kept together. Prisoner depression was fatal; by being together with friends, in some cases family members, prisoners helped each other during difficult and trying times. The average American prisoner in the Pacific did not have the same types of support systems as the Wake prisoners and they consequently suffered high death rates.

Still, not everyone had a joyous reunion in San Francisco like Forrest Read, Theodore Abraham, and J. O. Young. Many families were unable to make the journey to San Francisco. Lloyd Williams's family had moved and he did not know where they were. Prior to disembarking the men were assigned to a hotel. In addition, they were given a location to receive their back pay.

Roy Stephens soon discovered that the Red Cross had rented several hotels for the returning prisoners. After a while, Stephens ascertained that some former prisoners had not left the hotel in two weeks. Many were too frightened to leave so they sat in their rooms drinking and drowning their sorrows in alcohol. Determined not to let the same thing happen to him, Stephens explored San Francisco. Although San Francisco had much to offer, returning home was more important to Stephens. The only problem was getting a ticket, since so many GIs wanted to go home. For several days Stephens tried to get a train ticket home and failed. Finally, throwing up his hands in despair, he told the ticket clerk that he had been a POW for four years and he just was trying to get home. The clerk had him on a train for Texas in thirty minutes.

John Burton arrived at his room, but even though it was nice, he could not sleep. Collecting his pillow and blanket, Burton laid on the floor and fell asleep in no time. After years of less than ideal sleeping conditions, it took Burton quite a while to get used to a regular bed. Burton's difficulties were common to many returning prisoners.

After reaching San Francisco, James Allen took his 1940 Ford out of storage from where he left it before he went to Wake Island in 1941. Driving to Oakland, California, and the office of Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases (CPNAB), Allen was able to collect slightly over a thousand dollars in back pay. After getting his money he drove around a bit more, then went to the Department of Motor Vehicles to get himself a new driver's license. Passing his test, Allen took his new license, car, and with money in his pocket set out for a trip across the United States to visit his relatives.

One Wake Island returnee was not as fortunate as Allen. After claiming his money, he went out and bought himself a car. Stopping by one of the hotels, he announced he was going to Washington, D.C., and anyone who wanted a ride could go with him. Three men volunteered to accompany him. Whether it was inexperience after years of captivity or excessive speed, the man drove the car off a cliff, killing all four men.[27]

Collecting his back pay, Richard Williamson took a train to his home in Michigan. Shortly after arriving home he was admitted to the hospital with a liver problem. For the remainder of 1945 and early 1946, Williamson was treated for his liver ailment. On his release he received a letter from the draft board, inducting him into the army! Upset by the notice, Williamson decided to at least choose his own branch of the service and he went ahead and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. This turn of events was not all bad, though; the military became his career until his retirement.

Arthur Menezes looked back at his prisoner experience as a total waste of time. Once he got home all he wanted to do was get on with life. This positive outlook was not always easy for others to adopt.

Shortly after Lloyd Nelson's return, a nearby siren blew when he was eating in a restaurant. Relying on the instincts he developed during the war, Nelson jumped up and asked the waitress if that was the air raid siren. The woman explained that it was just the five o'clock whistle, whereupon Nelson tried to settle down and eat his meal. Nelson's experience was shared by a number of former prisoners. After years of captivity it was hard to come home and resume their lives. As a Wake buddy explained to J. J. Coker, "the Japanese have taken care of us for four years --- told us when to get up, when to go to bed, when and what to eat, what to do every day. Now we've been dumped in a cold, cruel world and told to take care of ourselves, and we don't know how."[28]

Men like Lloyd Williams and Walter Hokanson tried to assimilate themselves back into society. Getting a job working at a Frigidare factory, Williams found the work too much like working for the Japanese and finally quit. Eventually, after earning his degree in accounting, Williams worked for the B & O railroad. Hokanson tried to return to construction work, but being told what to do reminded him too much of life under the Japanese. Eventually, he opened his own business selling construction materials to builders.

Other men displayed behavior after their return that some people described as unusual or just plain odd. Returnees were known to hoard food or become agitated when their children would not clean their plates at mealtime. Buffet lines were favorite targets for returnees, so they could fill their plates with food. Some former prisoners started the day with a shower and got dressed, only to undress and take another shower. Nonreturnees were amazed by their behavior. Besides trying to regain their physical health the Wake civilians had to deal with the emotional trauma of their experience. Unlike the returning military POWs, who qualified for veteran services, the civilians received no help from the U.S. government.

In addition to nightmares, other events revived memories of camp life for Wake survivors. Nearly fifty years after his release from captivity, Lloyd Williams was on vacation when a busload of tourists pulled up next to him. Stepping off the bus was a group of Japanese, speaking Japanese. The incident reminded Williams of his days as a prisoner. Seeing the people and hearing their language so upset Williams that he immediately left the area. Upon his return, John Burton discovered that his wife had divorced him while he was a prisoner. Grappling with his loss, Burton turned to smoking and drinking. It was not until 1947 that Burton met a woman who helped him bring meaning to his life and allowed him to move forward. The experience of captivity continued to plague Lloyd Nelson until he was hospitalized twice in 1950 for stress-induced stomach disorders. Recovered from the ailment, he continued to suffer the effects of life under the Japanese.

For Theodore Abraham, the two to three years after his return from captivity were filled with nightmares. Dreaming he was still a prisoner, Abraham would wake up in a cold sweat or sometimes screaming. Abraham recalled years later, "Only the passing of time diminished the intensity of the nighmares."[29]

Notes

1. Gavan Dawes, Prisoners of the Japanese (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1994), 324.
2. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails (New York: Vantage Press, 1992), 116.
3. Charles Varney, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 11 July 1997.
4. Melvin Danner, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 12 March 1997.
5. Frank Mace, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 14 May 1997, 58.
6. Melvin Danner.
7. Ibid.
8. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower Press, 1992), 210.
9. Frank Mace, 59.
10. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails, 122.
11. Rodney Kephart, Wake, War and Waiting (New York: Exposition Press, 1994), 81.
12. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 220.
13. Forrest Read, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 18 May 1997.
14. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails, 123.
15. Roy Stephens, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 May 1997. 13-1.
16. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails, 124.
17. Rodney Kephart, Wake, War and Waiting, 82.
18. Forrest Read.
19. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 225.
20. J. O. Young, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 July 1997.
21. John Burton, Traveling Life's Twisting Trails, 126.
22. Pete Russell, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 22 January 1998.
23. Ibid.

24. Forrest Read.

25. Melvin Danner.

26. Roy Stephens, 13-2.

27. Ibid.

28. J. J. Coker, Letter to Charles Appelhanz, 10 March 1997.

29. Theodore Abraham, Do You Understand, Huh? 278.

Chapter 10

Wake and Its Civilians Today

On September 4, 1945, the Unites States officially reclaimed possession of Wake Island. As it had before the war, the island played a prominent role in American military planning. Not only would Wake serve as a stop for Transpacific military flights, but it also served as a navigational and weather station. From late 1945 to mid-1946, a group of Navy Seabees improved and expanded the runway, along with building basic structures for military personnel. In 1947, the navy turned over the daily running of the island to the Federal Aviation Administration.

During the early 1950s Wake was again an important military outpost. During the Korean War Wake was used as a refueling stop for planes going to Korea. In 1962, Pan Am returned to the island and operated flights out of Wake for their Transpacific flights. Time had finally caught up with the island by 1971. Operating new long-range jet aircraft, Pan Am suspended its use of Wake Island. Also in 1971, the daily operation of the island was turned over to the United States Air Force.

At one time the island's population exceeded 2,000 military personnel and their dependents. Today the island population is approximately 200. Though mainly inactive, Wake still operates a weather station and its long runway, built over the original that was constructed in 1941, serves as an emergency landing field. Even as recently as 1991, Wake Island served as a refueling point during the Persian Gulf War.

Though it could still be used by the military today, Wake's real significance goes back to the conflicts in World War II. In 1965, the Pentagon constructed a monument to the defenders of Wake Island. Two years later a Japanese committee requested and received permission to construct a Shinto shrine for the Japanese soldiers that died on Wake.

Little remains of the epic battle that was fought in December 1941. By 1963, a Japanese salvage team contracted with the United States to come to the island to haul off remnants of war items such as tanks, guns, and landing craft for scrap. A few concrete foundations can still be seen from the Naval Air Station on Peale, but between construction by the Japanese during the war, the U.S. bombing of the island, and two typhoons that had hit the island, little is left from the days of Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases.

In 1985, the National Park Service officially designated Wake Island as a national historic landmark. Also in 1985, a group of civilians and military personnel came back to Wake as guests of the air force. Walking the beaches and through long-overgrown areas, the men relived their memories of Wake Island from the 1940s. With memorials on the island dedicated to the Japanese and American military dead, the civilians constructed a temporary monument to their own dead. In 1987, a permanent memorial was dedicated to the civilians who died and were executed on Wake.

Wake may again play a prominent role in American history. As of 1997, talks were under way to possibly use Wake Island as a site for the storage of nuclear waste materials. Nuclear tests conducted in the 1950s at Bikini required the displacement of the Bikinians. Today, controversy surrounds the safety of the Bikinians' return to their native island. Unlike Bikini, Wake Island had no native population, so no one would have to be displaced. Being several hundred miles from the next closest land area, Wake would be safe if a nuclear accident did occur. Likewise, Wake is so isolated it would be easy to detect any ship or plane approaching the island. Hence, it would be easy to protect Wake from any terrorist group who might try and steal nuclear materials for their own purposes. Furthermore, the waste would be put in huge heavy storage containers that would be safe from the furry of the annual typhoons. As of May 2000 no decision had been made regarding this proposal.

A sad part of the history of Wake is that the island received more attention following the war than the civilian workers who lost part of their adulthood there. After their return to the United States the civilians received approximately $1,000 from Morrison-Knudson. This figure was derived from what a man's monthly salary was at the time of his capture. Eventually this pay was stopped when the U.S. government broke the contract it had with the company. Claiming work on Wake was not getting done as prescribed in the contract, the U.S. government terminated the contract with Morrison-Knudson in 1942.

Although the money was helpful, it was a mere fraction of what the military prisoners received. On their return they received retroactive pay for the entire time they were held as prisoners of Japan. Trying to right this wrong, some of the Wake civilians and family members of men who did not survive captivity organized a committee and hired a lobbyist to petition Congress. These efforts paid off when Congress passed legislation in the late 1940s and early 1950s to compensate the civilian workers for the time they spent in captivity. The compensation, though not huge, was important in helping the Wake civilians start new lives. Since Charles Varney was not considered a veteran, he did not qualify for the GI Bill. Therefore, he used his back pay to go to college. Others used their money to start their own business, buy a house, or support a family.

The Wake Island civilians also formed their own support group. As early as December 1945, the former civilian construction workers on Wake began gathering to talk and share their experiences. After their return, friends and family members of the civilian workers wanted to know what had happened to them when they were held captive. Many of the men found it hard to describe what really occurred to people who had never experienced captivity. At their December gatherings, the men could at least be with comrades who had experienced imprisonment. In a sense, the meetings served as a symbol that the men were not alone. In the mid-1950s the group adopted the official title, Survivors of Wake, Guam and Cavite, and they met annually to reminisce and work for

legislation to recognize their role in the war. As the men became older it became more difficult to travel in the winter months so the annual reunion has since been held in September.

Over time many of the men have struggled with health problems. Even when it seemed their immediate health problems were resolved, they were never really cured. One historian noted, "Moving out of their late twenties into their thirties their death rate was higher by far than that of civilians of their age. By age forty, proportionally far more of them were dead."[1] By the time they reached middle age the years of captivity were catching up to the Wake survivors. Eventually, clinical studies demonstrated that for every year a man spent as a prisoner of the Japanese, his body ages an additional three to four years. For the Wake Prisoners this meant an additional ten to fifteen years. For years the men battled hearing loss, brittle bones, and the occasional return of tropical diseases. Finally, after years of work, Congress enacted a bill in 1981 that was signed by President Reagan recognizing the civilians as war veterans. Besides this recognition, each civilian was provided with an honorable discharge from the navy along with all the benefits available to any World War II veteran. In addition to these certificates, the men were also given the same medals that were given to veterans of the Pacific Theater such as the World War II Victory Medal, Asiatic Campaign Medal, and the American Campaign Medal.

Although it would seem that this would be a logical place for the civilians to end their fight for recognition and compensation, it has not. As the men sadly learned, being eligible for veterans' benefits and receiving those benefits were not quite the same. The most serious problem for the former Wake prisoners was being able to prove that the ailments they experienced in the 1980s and 1990s were related to their internment. In 1981, Joe Astarita was awarded a ten percent disability from the military for the health problems he experienced. Over the next fifteen years the percentage of disability slowly grew until it reached one hundred percent by 1996. Although Astarita has no complaints

about the care he has received, he does find fault with how long it took for the U.S. government to respond to his health problems. Astarita's example is applicable to other civilian workers and their struggle to receive disability pay.

Recently, class-action litigation has been filed against the Japanese government and some Japanese businesses by men who were prisoners of the Japanese. Their claim is that they were being used as slave labor and were not compensated for the work. Therefore, they are asking for a payment of $20,000 each. For the Wake Island men this would mean only $5,000 for each year they were held. If this amount was further divided by the number of days held in captivity, it would amount to nothing more than a few dollars per day. For the prisoners it is not the money that is at issue; they want the Japanese government to acknowledge the wrongs the Japanese committed during the war. So far, the Japanese government has rejected any statements of wrongdoing and rejected claims for compensation. Many of the civilians feel that the Japanese government is simply stalling, figuring that within a few more years the problem will disappear with the men's deaths.

Regardless of what happens in the legal arena and the development of Wake as a waste disposal site, Wake will always remain an important symbol of American fortitude and spirit. It was the commitment of the U.S. Marines, the U.S. Navy, and the average American civilian workers that made a tiny four-square-mile atoll a site that should never be forgotten as long as men remember heroism and valor.

Notes

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APPENDIX

NAME	HOMETOWN	PLACE OR DATE OF DEATH
Aaron, Barney	Boise, ID	
Abbott, Cyrus	Oakland,CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Abraham, Theodore	Riverside, CA	
Ackland, Maurice	Waco, TX	
Acorda, George	Boise, ID	
Acosta, Eleazor	Sacramento, CA	
Adams, Andrew	Morrill, NE	
Adams, Henry	Honolulu, HI	
Adams, James	Oakland, CA	
Adamson, Joseph	Oakland, CA	
Adamson, Louis		Wake Dec. 1941
Ahlirch, Wayne	Los Angeles, CA	
Aikman, John	San Francisco, CA	
Aki, Patrick	Honolulu, HI	
Akin, Shirley	Texas	
Albertoni, Philip	Oakland, CA	
Alcorn, Richard	Berkeley, CA	
Aldoius, Herbert		
Allen, Horace	Sacramento, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Allen, James	Madison, MO	
Allender, Harold		
Anderson, Clyde		
Anderson, Eric	Oakland, CA	Fukuoka #3
Anderson, Joseph		
Anderson, Joseph	Iowa	
Anderson, Norman	Portland, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Anderson, Roy	Agnew, CA	
Anderson, Warren	Martinsville, IN	
Andre, Roland	Pendleton, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Andrus, Verdan	El Cajon, CA	
Anhalt, Laurence	Dunnellon, FL	
Anvick, Allen	Klamath Falls, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Arambarri, Frank		
Archer, Ernest	California	
Armitage, Thomas	Nampa, ID	
Arterburn, Joseph	Boise, ID	
Astad, Arne	Oakland, CA	
Astarita, Joseph	Brooklyn, NY	
Atkins, Charles	Oakland, CA	
Ausland, William	Long Beach, CA	
Austin, Melvin	Portland, OR	
Baasch, Carl	Oakland, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Bailey, George	Los Angeles, CA	Fukuoka #3 Feb. 2, 1943

Bainter, Pete	Van Nuys, CA	
Bainter, Raymond	Cheyenne, Wy	
Baird, K.C.	Halfway, OR	
Banks, Richard	California	
Barbour, Thomas	Portland, OR	
Bard, Melvin	San Francisco, CA	
Barden, Jay	Fairfield, IA	
Barger, Herbert	San Francisco, CA	
Barnett, Ryland	Boise, ID	
Barney, John		
Barr, Frank	Oregon	
Barr, William	Melba, ID	Fukuoka #18
Bartlett, Harry	Los Angeles, CA	
Batscha, Alexander	Cincinnati, OH	
Bauman, Arthur	Pocatello, ID	
Bayok, Jospeh	Boise, ID	
Bechtold, John	San Francisco, CA	
Becker, Quentinn		
Becker, Zane	Riddle, OR	
Beebe, LeRoy		
Beeman, Clarence	Portland, OR	
Belknap, Ray	Mica, WA	
Bellanger, George	San Francisco, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Belle, Eugene	Brady, TX	
Bengston, Roy		
Bentel, Guy	Pocatello, ID	
Bergman, Benjamin	Los Angeles, CA	
Berry, Orvel	Boise, ID	
Bethel, Jonathon	Sausalito, CA	
Betts, Jacob	Meridian, ID	
Betts, Parlan	Kennewick, WA	
Bigler, Harold	Payette, ID	
Binge, Glen	Galesburg, IL	
Blake, Rayford	Sheridan, AR	
Bledsoe, Hollis		
Blessing, Frank	Sioux City, IW	
Blessinger, Douglas	Sequim, WA	
Boesiger, Max		
Bolgiano, Fate	Rogue River, OR	
Bonat, George	Portland, OR	
Bond, Gordon		Wake Dec. 1941
Bone, Richard		
Booth, Gerald		
Boutell, Albert	Los Angeles, CA	
Bowcutt, Don	Oakland, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Bowen, Ray	Berkely, CA	
Bower, Jess	Oakland, CA	
Bowers, Frank	Weiser, ID	Osaka
Bowyer, Cecil		

Boyce, Dave	Hastings, NE	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Boyles, Joseph	Little Rock, AK	
Brandenburg, Loren	Boise, ID	
Brauer, Douglas		
Brauer, Leslie		
Bray, Cleveland		
Brewer, Henry	Omaha, NE	
Brewster, Paul	Laurens, IA	
Bridges, Albert	Braxton, MA	
Bridgman, Harold	Witten, SD	
Briney, William	Concord, CA	
Brooks, Calvin	Yuba City, CA	
Brooks, Grover	Alameda, CA	
Brown, Brad	Los Angeles, CA	
Brown, Del		
Brown, Edward	San Pedro, CA	Fukuoka #18 May 6, 1943
Brown, Herbert		
Brown, John	California	
Brown, Robert		
Brown, Victor	Duvall, WA	
Brownlee, James	San Pedro, CA	
Bruecek, Albert	Boise, ID	
Bryan, Robert		Wake Dec. 1941
Budden, Clarence	Sioux City, IA	
Bukacek, Nad	Schuyler, NE	
Burge, Earl	Nampa, ID	
Burke, Thomas	Nampa, ID	Fukuoka #18
Burns, Edgar		
Burns, Frank		
Burns, William		
Burren, William	Los Angeles, CA	
Burroughs, John	Los Angeles, CA	
Burton, John		
Busy, Eddie		Wake Dec. 1941
Butler, Don		
Butler, George	Grants Pass, OR	
Calkins, Clarence		Wake Dec. 1941
Campbell, Claude	Caldwell, ID	Fukuoka #3
Campbell, Francis	Rogue River, OR	
Cantry, Charles	Las Vegas, NV	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Capps, Arthur	Wellington, TX	
Carden, Ivan		
Carlen, Del	Spokane, WA	
Carlsen, Carl	Pocatello, ID	
Carlson, Stanley	Portland, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Carney, Frank		Wake Dec. 1941
Carney, Leslie	Palmdale, CA	
Carr, Louis	Boise, ID	Woosung Oct. 31, 1942
Carr, Raynold	Boise, ID	

Carter, Wesley	Bonanza, OR	
Cash, William	Nampa, ID	
Castiglione,Carl	Bell, CA	
Catmull, Reed	Rupert, ID	
Cavanagh, Allen	San Francisco, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Cerney, Harry	Boise, ID	
Chambers, David	Grants Pass, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Chambers, Edwin	York, NE	
Chambers, Percival	California	
Chankg, Nan Sung	Honolulu, HI	
Chanot, Harry	Hobart, OK	
Chard, Donley	Pomeroy, WA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Charters, William	Boise, ID	
Chartier, Sidney	Boise, ID	
Chisham, Ray	Boise, ID	
Choi, Alfred	Pearl City, HI	
Chow, Walter	Honolulu, HI	
Choy, Robert	Honolulu, HI	
Christensen, Earl		
Christler, Elmer	Cody, WY	
Christy, Arthur	Boise, ID	Osaka
Church, Carleton	Robes Del Rio, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Clayville, Lawrence	Weiser, ID	
Clayville, Lawrence		
Clelan, John	Meridian, ID	
Cleveland, Bruce	Boise, ID	
Clift, Harold	Asotin, WA	
Clubb, William	Frederickstown, MO	
Cochran, Tommy	Wyoming	
Coker, J.J.	Texas	
Collier, Robert		
Collier, Rulen		
Collins, Chas	San Francisco, CA	
Collyer, Robert	Boise, ID	
Compton, Claire	Los Angeles, CA	
Comstock Jr., Benjamin	Nebraska	
Comstock Sr., Benjamin	Logan, IA	
Condit, Gomer	Boise, ID	
Congrove, Kenneth		
Connor, James	Los Angeles, CA	
Connors, Edward	Butte, MT	
Contes, George	Los Angeles, CA	
Cook, Edward	Alameda, CA	
Cook, Howard	Florida	
Cooper, Robert	Cody, WY	Osawa, 1944
Cope, H.T.	Salt Lake City, UT	
Cope, Ray	Homer, ID	
Corak, John	Boise, ID	Osaka
Corbin, Sewell	Los Angeles, CA	

Cormier, Louis	Washington, D.C.	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Corn, Jess	Boise, ID	
Cornish, Frank	Boise, ID	
Corton, Paul		Wake Dec. 1941
Couture, Carl	Temple City, CA	
Covaleak, John	San Mateo, CA	
Cox, Karl	Asotin, WA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Craver, Leroy	Boise, ID	
Crawford, Elmer		
Crenshaw, Richard	Alaska	
Crom, John	Strange, NE	
Crosby, Loyal	Wendell, ID	
Crow, Eldon	Kirby, OR	
Crowe, Frank	Boise, ID	
Cummings, David	Santa Cruz, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Cunha, James	San Francisco, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Curphey, Hugh		
Curphey, Robert		
Curtis, Myron	Pocatello, ID	
Daly, Ned	San Gabriel, CA	
Danner, Melvin	Paris, IL	
Daudlin, Norman	Oakland, CA	
Davidson, Bob		
Davidson, Melvin		
Davis, Charles	Boise, ID	
Davis, Joseph	Spokane, WA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Davis, Kenneth	Oakland, CA	Fukuoka #3
Davis, Lee	Boise, ID	Fukuoka #18 April 21, 1943
Dean, George	Payette, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Dean, Glen		
Deimler, Ward	Rogue River, OR	
Delacrus, Jack	Honolulu, HI	
Delap, Wesley	Rhinelander, WI	
Delay, Glenn		
Delmore, Roy	Alameda, CA	
Dennis, William		
Denten, Deorge	Boise, ID	
Derbeck, Ray	New Jersey	
Dettra, Paul	Los Angeles, CA	
Dickey, Lee	Helena, MT	
Dillon, George	Metaline Falls, WA	Fukuoka # 18 Feb 23, 1945
Dixon, Theron	Portland, OR	Fukuoka #18 March 8,1943
Dobyns, Harold	Weaverville, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Dodds, Darwin		
Dogger, Martin	San Francisco, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Dolan, James		
Dolezal, John	Wahoo, NE	
Dominy, James		
Donoho, Marshall	Boise, ID	

Donovan, Harry	Oakland, CA	
Donovan, Joseph	Portland, OR	
Dougal, Eugene	Boise, ID	
Dowling, George	Portland, OR	
Doyle, Edwin	Boise, ID	
Doyle, Robert		
Drake, Frank	Kimberly, ID	
Dressler, Leo	Crescent City, CA	
Dreyer, Henry	Aplington, IA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Driscoll, Leo	Los Angeles, CA	Kiangwan Oct. 2, 1943
Dugas, Bert	San Francisco, CA	
Dunn, Edward	Gladwin, MI	
Dunn, Joseph	Boise, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Dustman, John	Lewiston, ID	
Dyer, Frederick	San Francisco, CA	
Dyer, William	Cloverdale, CA	Fukuoka #18 Oct. 1, 1943
Easter, George	Portland, OR	Sesabo
Edwards, Clifton	Payette, ID	
Eiselstein, John	Berekley, CA	
Eliassen, John	Seattle, WA	Dec. 16, 1944
Elliot, Richard	Upland, CA	
Elliott, Elmer	Illinois	
Elliott, Thomas	New York	
Enright, Merle	Kettle Falls, WA	
Esmay, Wayne	Converse, WY	Fukuoka #18 Feb. 19, 1943
Essaff, Thomas		
Evans, Clifford	Boise, ID	
Evans, David	Inglewood, CA	
Ewing, James	Oakland, CA	
Fagerstrom, William	Oakland, CA	
Fairey, William	San Francisco, CA	
Farmer, Louis	Boise, ID	
Farran, Louis	Los Angeles, CA	
Farstvedt, Knut	Clackamas, OR	Fukuoka #18 March 27, 1943
Faubion, Donald	Boise, ID	
Fay, Laurence	San Francisco, CA	
Fenex, Jack	Cody, WY	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Fenwick, Thomas	Pocatello, ID	
Ferstermacher, H.M.	Honolulu, HI	
Field, Harold	Coleto, CA	
Fink, Philo	Ft. Richmond, CA	
Fisher, George	Chadron, NE	
Fisher, Marvin	Venice, CA	
Fisher, Ray	San Francisco, CA	
Fisher, Robert	Superior, NE	
Flagg, Walter	El Cerrito, CA	
Flannery, Frank	Boise, ID	
Fleming, Wallace	Burns Lake, British Columbia	
Flint, Howard		

Flores, Rudy	Los Angeles, CA	
Follet, Frank	Cloverdale, OR	Fukuoka #18 March 23, 1943
Fong, Ginn	San Francisco, CA	
Fong, Yee	San Francisco, CA	
Fontes, Glen	Boise, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Forberger, Laurence	Alton, IL	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Ford, Jack	Santa Cruz, CA	
Forsberg, Floyd	Van Nuys, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Forsberg, Harry		
Forsberg, Roy		
Forster, William	Los Angeles, CA	
Forsythe, Raymond	Boise, ID	
Fortune, Robert	Post, TX	
Foss, Drew		
Fraley, Leo	Wahoo, NE	
Francis, Dale	Costa Mesa, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Franklin, Mark	Honolulu, HI	Fukuoka #18 Jan. 12, 1943
Frederickson, Melvin	Oakland, CA	
Freestone, William	Cody, WY	
French, Albert	San Francisco, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Friberg, Carl	Bishop, CA	
Fuller, Charles	Berkeley, CA	
Fuller, Richard	Minnesota	
Fullmer, Emmett	Alameda, CA	
Funk, Arthur	Richardson, ND	
Gabbie, Jack	Los Angeles, CA	
Gabel, Walter	Boise, ID	
Galloway, Joseph	Twin Springs, ID	
Gammans, John	Concord, CA	Osaka 1944
Gans, George	Clarkston, WA	
Gans, Otto	Uniontown, WA	
Garrison, John	Enfield, IL	Kiangwan Jan. 2, 1943
Gates, Don	Alaska	
Gates, George	Butte, MT	
Gates, William	Boise, ID	
Gay, Charles	Oakland, CA	
Gay, Paul		Wake Dec. 1941
Gearhart, Walter	Oroville, CA	
Gehman, Ralph	Boise, ID	Fukuoka #18 Feb. 8, 1944
Gehman, Ralph		
Gell, Walter	Wadena, IA	
Gentile, Walter	Hollywood,CA	
Geoghegan, Edward	Oakland, CA	
Gerard, Morris	Shoshone, ID	
Gerdin, William	Little Falls, NY	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Gibbons, Fred	Redding, CA	
Gibbons, George		Wake Dec. 1941
Gibbs, Charles	Los Angeles, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Gibson, George	Los Angeles, CA	

Gilberston, Hurbert	Moscow, ID	
Gillen, Thomas	Portland, OR	
Gillespie, Robert		
Gillis, Lawrence		
Gilmore, Leo	Seattle, WA	
Girgal, Charles	Honolulu, HI	
Glaze, Miles	Los Angeles, CA	
Glazier, Milton	Laclede, ID	
Glenamen, Francis		
Glenning, John	Los Angeles, CA	
Go, Sing Wah	Honolulu, HI	
Goehnour, Harold	Nampa, ID	
Goemel, Clarence	Los Angeles, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Goicoechea, Joe	Boise, ID	
Gomes, Fred	Springfield, IL	
Gooding, William		
Goodpasture, Dexter	Burbank,CA	
Goodpasture, John	Daly city, CA	
Goodwin, Ralph	Phoenix, AZ	Fukuoka #18 Dec. 26, 1944
Gordon, Ellis	Belto, MD	
Gordon, Lloyd	Jefferson City, MO	
Gorman, James	Pontiac, MI	
Gossman, Paul		Wake Dec. 1941
Gottlieb, Henry	Venice, CA	Fukuoka #18 Jan. 13, 1945
Goudling, Alonzo		
Gough, Barnard	Boise, ID	
Gough, William	Gooding, ID	
Graham, Ellsworth		
Graham, Lyle	Sundance, WY	
Graham, Milo		Wake Dec. 1941
Grandy, George	Chatsworth, CA	
Granstedt, Theodore	Honolulu, HI	
Grant, Laurence	Boise, ID	
Graves, Winfield	Fairfield, MT	
Green, Arnold	Cincinnati, OH	
Green, Claude		
Gregory, Jess	Boise, ID	
Gress, Howard	Grimes, OR	
Greve, Louis	Flagstaff, AZ	Fukuoka #18 March 15, 1943
Griffith, Arthur	Boise, ID	
Grim, William	Portsmouth, NH	Fukuoka #18 March 10, 1943
Groshart, Jay	Worland, WY	
Gross, Marvin	Boise, ID	
Groth, Ernest	Worthington, MN	
Gushwa, Frank	Firth, ID	
Gustafson, Naad	San Francisco, CA	
Haakonstad, Clint	Boise, ID	
Hadley, Thomas		
Hadsel, Floyd	Hayward, CA	

Hahn, Chuck		
Hahne, Henry		
Haight, Ralph	Winfield, IA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Haines, William	Boise, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Hall, Daniel	Boise, ID	
Hall, Fred	Grants Pass, OR	
Hall, John		Wake Dec. 8, 1941
Hall, Kenneth	Reno, NV	
Hall, Lester	San Francisco, CA	
Haloway, Roger	Churden, IA	
Hamilton, John	Grants Pass, OR	
Hammond, Willard	Calistoga, CA	
Hance, Loren	Boise, ID	Fukuoka #18 April 25, 1943
Hancock, Jack	Gold Hill, OR	Fukuoka #18 March 16, 1945
Hansen, John	Wahoo, NE	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Hansen, Peter	Inglewood, CA	
Hansen, Villy	Oakland, CA	
Hanson, Ernest	Overon, ND	
Hanson, Fred	Oakland, CA	
Hanson, Ray	Oakland, CA	
Hanson, William	Craig, AK	
Harbeck, Lester	Grants Pass, OR	
Hardisty, Herbert	Canyon City, OR	Fukuoka #18 July 4, 1943
Hardt, Henry		
Hardy, Robert	Rio Oso, CA	
Hargis, Eldon	Oregon	
Hargis, Eugene		
Harper, William		
Harrel, Henry	Hilton, GA	
Harris, George	Redwood City, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Harris, Oliver	Detriot, MI	
Harris, Theron	Roseberg, OR	
Harrison, Robert	Wheatland, CA	
Hart, Irving	Boise, ID	Fukuoka #18 March 19, 1943
Harvey, Burdette	Oakland, CA	
Harvey, Wilbur	Portland, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Haskins, Chester		Wake Dec. 1941
Hastie, Frank	Charleston, WV	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Hastriter, John	Nampa, ID	
Hauner, Fred	Santa Barbara, CA	
Hayes, Ortis	McCall, ID	
Head, Robert	Tygh Valley, OR	
Heidle, Ralph	Neveda City, CA	
Heigeno, George	Los Angeles, CA	
Helendar, Charles	Lake Forest, IL	Woosung Nov. 13, 1942
Hellyer, James		
Henderson, Gene		
Henderson, Wilson		
Hendricks, John	Texas	

Henriksen, Cerall		
Henriksen, Gerald		
Hensel, James	Burbank, WA	
Hensel, Theodore	Burbank, WA	Fukuoka #18 May 1, 1943
Hepa, Abraham	Hawaii	
Hernandez, William		
Herndon, Pat	Fox Park, WY	
Hesseltine, Claude	Knoxville, IA	
Hession, Francis	Lone Pine, CA	Sesabo
Hettick, Howard	San Franscisco, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Hewitt, Spencer	San Diego, CA	
Hewson, Albert	Rome, NY	Fukuoka #18 Jan. 11, 1943
Hickenbottom, John	Portland, OR	
Higdon, Ralph		Wake Dec. 1941
Higgins, Lorne		
High, Lonnie	Los Angeles, CA	
Hill, Norman	Clarkston, WA	Fukuoka #18 June 4, 1943
Hizer, Joseph	Los Angeles, CA	
Ho, Moon	Honolulu, HI	
Hockstein, Ernest	Newburg, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Hodgson, Harry	Scottsbluff, NE	
Hoffman, Kenneth	Maywood, CA	
Hoffmeister, Julius	San Francisco, CA	Executed May 10, 1943
Hofschultz, Peter	Ft. Collins, CO	
Hogan, William	Portland, OR	
Hokanson, Walter		
Hong, Bing Tong	San Francisco, CA	
Hopkins, Kenneth	Canyonville, OR	
Hornyak, John	Portland, OR	Fukuoka #3
Hoskins, Jack	Okanogan, WA	
Howard, Donald	Honolulu, HI	
Howard, Ray	Rosemead, CA	Fukuoka #18
Howes, Claude	Portland, OR	
Hubbard, Carl	Emmett, ID	
Huber, Charles	Boonesville, MO	
Huddleston, Walter		
Hudson, Glen	Lubbock, TX	
Huntley, John	Boise, ID	Fukuoka #18 March 1, 1943
Hurst, Curtis	Beaumont, TX	
Huskison, Tom	Owensboro, KY	
Ingham, Ralph		
Irons, Edwin	Boise, ID	
Jackson, Melvin	Los Angeles, CA	
Jaffe, Herbert	San Francisco, CA	
Jakobsen, Oscar	Pasadena, CA	
Jee, Nee	San Francisco, CA	
Jensen, George	San Bernardino, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Jernberg, Andrew	Cody, WY	
Jew, Song Hay	San Francisco, CA	

Jiminson, Harold	La Jolla, CA	Fukuoka #18 Dec. 9, 1942
Johnson, Arthur	Spokane, WA	Fukuoka #18 March 26, 1943
Johnson, Axel	Basin, WY	
Johnson, Conrad	Grants Pass, OR	
Johnson, Edwin	Monterey, CA	Mar. 30, 1943
Johnson, Harold	Boise, ID	
Johnson, Lee	Jackson, WY	
Johnson, M.D.	Colville, WA	
Johnson, Nelson	Indiana	
Johnson, Oreal	Boise, ID	
Johnston, Leon	Atlantic, IA	
Jones, Alfred	San Bernardino, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Jones, Charley		
Jones, Chester	Boise, ID	
Jones, Humphrey	Stockton, CA	
Jones, Jesse	Millville, CA	
Jones, Rex		Wake Dec. 1941
Judd, Clayton	Los Angeles, CA	Osaka
Kahinu, Sidney	Honolulu, HI	Mar. 26, 1943
Kahn, Albert	Kohala, HI	
Kahn, Clarence	Oakland, CA	
Kapaole, Adam	Honolulu, HI	
Kapinos, George	Auburn, WA	
Kay, Logan	Florida	
Keech, Evan	Homedale, ID	
Keech, Leo	Homedale, ID	
Keeler, Ora	Waterloo, IA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Kelley, Sidney	Rosilia, WA	Sesabo
Kelly, Fred	Electric City, WA	Fukuoka #18 March 9, 1943
Kelly, George	Lomita, CA	
Kelly, Jay	Richmond, CA	
Kelly, Martin	Roseburg, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Kelly, Sam	Electric City, WA	Fukuoka #18 Dec. 2,1944
Kelly, Thomas	Lomita, CA	
Kelso, Orval	Emmett, ID	Fukuoka #18 April 8, 1943
Kennedy, Buren	Medford, OR	
Kennedy, Thomas	San Francisco, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Kent, Lloyd	Los Angeles, CA	Fukuoka #18 March 1, 1944
Kephart, Rodney		
Kerr, Samuel	Sterling, CO	
Keyes, Walter	Pasco, WA	
Keyser, George	Boise, ID	Osaka
Kidd, Murray	Boise, ID	
Kidwell, Charles	Alton, IL	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Kim, Robert	Honolulu, HI	
Kimes, Realto	Kansas City, MO	
King, Fred	LaGrande, OR	
King, Lloyd	Roswell, NM	
King, Raymond		

Kinney, Jerry	Ventura, CA	
Kinney, Maurice	Boise, ID	
Kirk, John	Sitcum, OR	
Kiser, Hugh	Melba, ID	
Kmiec, Alfred	Idaho	
Knight, Frederick	Florida	
Knowles, Iran		
Knox, Elbert	Cuba City, Wi	Wake Jan. 15, 1942
Kon, Sing Wong	Kohala, HI	
Kong, Henry	Honolulu, HI	
Koski, Edwin		
Kraus, Oral	Caldwell, ID	
Krenger, R.		Wake Dec. 1941
Kroeger, Woodrow	Nampa, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Krohnert, Albert	Roseville, CA	
Kryson, Gordon	Palm Springs, CA	
Kulick, Thomas	Boise, ID	
Kurt, Nicholas	Spokane, WA	
L'Esperance, Paul		
Lambirth, George	Umatilla, OR	
Lamkin, Frank	Los Angeles, CA	
Lancaster, Robert	Mt. Home, ID	Wake Dec. 1941
Landreth, T.C.	Khittles, CA	
Lane, James	Boise, ID	
Lane, Victor	Oklahoma City, OK	
Lange, John		
Lanning, Frank	Alhambra, CA	
LaPay, John	Aloha, OR	
Larson, Andrew	Omaha, NE	Fukuoka #18 Feb. 17, 1943
Larson, Julius	Glendale, CA	
Laubuch, George	Milton-Freewater, OR	
Lawrence, Clyde	Boise, ID	
Lawson, William	Idaho City, ID	
Lawyer, Luther	North Platte, NE	
Leaney, Larry	Hollywood, CA	Fukuoka #3
Lee, Ben Yin	San Francisco, CA	
Lee, Clement	Honolulu, HI	
Lee, Gee Kow	San Francisco, CA	
Lee, Gin	San Francisco, CA	
Lee, Joseph	Honolulu, HI	
Lee, Kooh Wah		
Lee, Lenzie	Roanoke Rapids, NC	
Lee, Quong	San Francisco, CA	
Lee, Suey		
Lee, T. Bailey	Boise, ID	
Lehtoho, Eric	Michigan	Wake Dec. 1941
Leilinoe, George	Honolulu, HI	
Lemke, Myton		Wake Dec. 1941
Lemmon, Ralph	Pasadena, CA	

Lendewig, Lloyd	San Francisco, CA	Osaka Feb 3, 1945
Leng, Shee	San Francisco, CA	
Lent, Oscar	Portland, OR	
Leong, Kam	Honolulu, HI	
Leong, Robert		
Leong, Thomas	Honolulu, HI	
Lepinski, Ray	St. Cloud, MN	
Letcher, Ardel	Huntington Park, CA	
Levonian, Levon	Los Angeles, CA	
Lew, Sing Mee	San Francisco, CA	
Lewis, Seigel	Fresno, CA	
Lewis, Walter	North Bend, OR	
Light, Rolland	Boise, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Lile, Woodrow	Carbon, KS	
Lilly, David		Wake Dec. 1941
Lim, Kong	San Francisco, CA	
Lim, Wing Gim	Oakland, CA	
Linder, John	Wilder, ID	
Lindquist, William	Hayward, CA	Fukouka #18 Feb 22, 1943
Ling, Henry	Honolulu, HI	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Lippy, William	Boise, ID	
Loaslie, Merlin		
Lock, Hang	San Francisco, CA	
Lockridge, Harold	Monterey Park, CA	
Loosli, Merlin		
Lovelace, Philip	Twin Falls, ID	Kawasaki 1944
Loveland, C.R.		
Lowman, Joseph	San Francisco, CA	
Ludington, Don		
Luleich, Otto	Metaline Falls, WA	
Lum, Ambros	Honolulu, HI	
Lyall, Thomas	Alameda, CA	
Lyle, Harry	Billings, MT	
Lythgoe, Gene	Selah, WA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Mace, Frank	Alberta, Canada	
Mackie, Elmer	Portland, OR	Wake Executed May 2, 1942
MacLean, Hector	Milford, PA	
MacPherson, William	San Francisco, CA	
Madarieta, Angel		
Mahler, Oscar	Eureka, CA	
Maiden, George	Holland, OR	
Maiden, George		
Malanya, Clifford	Rathdrum, ID	
Mallery, Ray	Denver, CO	
Mallo, Frank	Reseda, CA	
Manson, William	S. Pasadena, CA	Osaka 1944
Mansur, Elbert	Boise, ID	
Maple, Robert		
Marable, Bill		

Marable, John	Taskwood, AK	
Marcotte, Clayton	California	
Marcoux, John	Manchester, NH	
Marsh, Benjamin	Compton, CA	
Marsh, John	Los Angeles, CA	
Marshall, Irving	Lowville, NY	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Marshall, Lawrence	Harrison, AK	
Martin, Jack	Boise, ID	
Martin, John	Pomeroy, WA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Martin, Ralph		
Martin, Robert	Los Angeles, CA	
Martin, Robert G.	San Francisco, CA	
Martin, William	Covington, KY	
Marz, Joseph		
Masoner, Wilber	Rupert, ID	
Massey, Gerlin	Arkansas	
Mathson, Lloyd	Mitchell, NE	
May, Homer	Vancouver, WA	
Mayberry, Charles	Ogden, UT	
Mayer, Herman	Colton, WA	
McCay, William	Jerome, ID	
McClure, Manfred		
McCullah, Wesley	Riddle, OR	
McCulley, Charles	Honolulu, HI	Fukuoka #3
McCurry, L.S.	Boise, ID	
McDaniel, James	Los Angeles, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
McDonald, Harry	Boise, ID	
McDonald, Joe F.		
McDonald, Joseph T.	Reno, NV	Wake Dec. 1941
McEvers, Ralph	Portland, OR	Fukuoka #18 March 22, 1943
McGallister, William		Wake Dec. 1941
McGee, Guy		
McGill, Warren	Meridian, ID	
McGinnis, Robert	Richmond, MO	
McInnes, Thomas	Tacoma, WA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
McIntosh, Robert		
McKay, Alvin	Spokane, WA	
McKee, Gerald	Corvallis, OR	
McKee, William	Boone, IA	
McKeenhan, Lloyd	San Francisco, CA	Fukuoka Feb. 25, 1943
McKinley, Jack		Wake Dec. 1941
McKinney, Richard	San Francisco, CA	
McLeod, John	Boise, ID	
McMurren, Virgil	Los Angeles, CA	
McNichols, Joseph	Venice, CA	
McPherran, George	Boise, ID	
McQuitty, Frank	Grinnel, KS	
McTee, John	Rock Springs, WY	
Mead, Arthur	Phoenix, AZ	

Meek, John	Portland, CA	
Meiners, Darwin	Seaside, OR	
Mellor, Charles		
Mendiola, Joe	Twin Falls, ID	
Menezes, Arthur	Honolulu, HI	
Menique, Ramon	Boise, ID	
Mercer, Ray		
Meyer, Lester	San Francisco, CA	Fukouka #18 April 29, 1943
Migacz, Frank	West Allis, WI	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Migacz, Melvin	West Allis, WI	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Miles, Richard	Donnelly, ID	
Miles, William	San Francisco, CA	Fukouka #18 July 16, 1943
Miller, Benjamin	Yakima, WA	
Miller, Charles	Enfield, IL	Fukoaka #18 Feb. 14, 1943
Miller, D.W.	Dardanell, AK	
Miller, Don	Oakland, CA	
Miller, Don K.		Wake Dec. 1941
Miller, Frank	San Mateo, CA	Fukuoka #18 April 27, 1943
Miller, Irvan	Price, ND	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Miller, Jack	Stockton, CA	
Miller, Joe		
Miller, Silas	Nampa, ID	Fukuoka #18 March 21, 1943
Milliken, Charles	Arizona	
Minkler, John	Spirit Lake, ID	
Mitchel, Elmer	Homedale, ID	
Mitchell, Howard	Duchesne, UT	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Mitchell, Wayne	Duchesne, UT	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Mittendork, Joseph	Mayor, AZ	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Moe, Charles	Grants Pass, OR	
Moening, Charles		
Mongrain, Stanley	Montana	
Montagriff, Raymond		
Moody, Bernard	Monrovia, CA	
Moon, Clarence	Lewiston, ID	
Moore, George	Los Angeles, CA	
Moore, Harry	Roscoe, CA	
Morcatte, Clayton		Wake Dec. 1941
Morris, Cleo	Meridian, ID	
Morris, Mathew		
Moser, Walter	Twin Falls, ID	
Mueller, Carl	Long Island, NY	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Muir, William	Willits, CA	
Murdock, William	Elko, NV	Osaka
Murphy, Gerald	Eugene, OR	
Mussman, John	Lewiston, ID	
Myers, Charles	Chico, CA	
Myers, Ivan	Hopland, CA	
Myers, Leroy		
Myers, Richerd	Clarkston, WA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943

Nagele, Raymond	St. Johnsville, NY	
Nault, Norman		
Nead, Ralph	Oilman, IA	Japan
Neblet, Norman	Eagle Rock, CA	
Nelles, Carl	Brooklyn, NY	
Nelson, Bert	Wendell, ID	
Nelson, Edward	Wheatland, WY	Woosung Oct. 5, 1942
Nelson, J.A.		
Nelson, John	Omaha, NE	
Nelson, Lloyd	Roseburg, OR	
Nelson, Willard	Boise, ID	
Newell, Emmett	Ola, ID	
Newell, Glen		
Newhart, Dencil		
Newhoff, Benjamin	San Francisco, CA	Osaka
Neylan, Robert	Oakland, CA	
Ng, Shew	San Francisco, CA	
Nicholas, Harry	Deforest, WI	Fukuoka #18 Dec. 16, 1942
Nicholas, Oral		
Nicks, Quinton	Pine Bluff, AK	Fukuoka April. 2, 1943
Niklaus, John	North East, PA	Fukuoka Jan. 26, 1943
Nokes, Charles		
Nonn, Leo		
Norbury, Harry	Grants Pass, OR	
Nutley, Joe		
Nye, Edwin		
Nygard, Andrew	San Francisco, CA	Fukuoka #18 March 15, 1943
O'Guinn, Allan	Montebello, CA	
O'Hearn, Richard	Townsend, MT	
O'Neal, John	Glendale, CA	Fukuoka #18 Feb. 27,1943
O'Neill, Joseph	Bakersfield, CA	Osaka 1944
Oakes, Raymond	San Francisco, CA	
Ockel, William	Los Angeles, CA	
Olmstead, Clifford	Millsville, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Olsen, Lawrence	Ashland, OR	
Olson, Haftor	Columbus, NE	
Olson, Lawrence O.	Fairfield, MT	
Olson, Theodore	Portland, OR	
Oolman, Everett		
Oriva, Edward	Los Angeles, CA	
Ortendahl, Leonard	Bel Aire, CA	
Osburn, David	Medford, OR	
Ow, Yu Yen	San Francisco, CA	
Pace, John	Casa Grande, AZ	
Packard, Forrest	Meridian, ID	
Pagoaga, Richard		
Papock, Herbert		
Park, Hio	Honolulu, HI	
Parks, Robert	Vallejo, CA	

Parrott, William	Alberta, Canada	
Patterson, Howard	Cody, WY	
Pawlofske, Richard	Portland, OR	Fukuoka #18 Feb. 17, 1943
Pay, Alexander	Ocean Park, CA	
Payne, Chester	Morhouse, MO	
Payne, Herman		
Pease, Gordon	Midwest, WY	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Peepe, William	Crescent City,CA	
Penner, Omer		
Pennington, William		
Pepple, Lloyd	Bonanza, OR	
Peres, Edgar	San Francisco, CA	
Perrine, Donald	Oakland, CA	
Petereson, Robert	Aberdeen, ID	
Peterson, Charles	Watsonville, CA	
Peterson, Elmer	Allendale, ND	
Peterson, H.L.		Wake Dec. 1941
Peterson, Hjalmar	Boise, ID	Fukuoka #18 Nov. 2, 1942
Peterson, Oscar	Jerome, ID	
Peterson, Roland	Southgate,CA	
Pfost, Orlie	Gooding, ID	Fukuoka #3
Pinkney, Harold	Los Angeles,CA	
Pitcher, Henry	Goleta, CA	
Pitochelli, Edward	Glendale, CA	
Plananansky, Oscar		
Plananski, Oscar	Hemingford, NE	
Pohl, Herbert	New Jersey	
Polak, John	Townsend, MT	
Polinsky, Alex		
Poon, Harry	San Francisco, CA	
Popson, John		
Porter, Theodore	San Pedro, CA	
Pratt, Archie	San Francisco, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Preston, Donald	Lewiston, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Price, Arthur	San Francisco, CA	
Price, Edward	Boseman, MT	
Priebe, Gustaf		
Proteau, George	Portland, OR	Fukuoka #18 March 30, 1943
Proteau, George	Portland, OR	
Proteau, Lawrence	Portland, OR	Fukuoka #18 March 23, 1943
Pryor, Lindley	Los Angeles, CA	
Puccetti, Elmer	Sacramento, CA	Fukuoka #18 March 12, 1943
Purcell, Delbert	Ione, Wa	
Quigley, James	Coquille, OR	
Quille, Larry	Anaheim,CA	
Quinn, Clifton	Boise, ID	
Quinn, Raymond	Boise, ID	
Ramsey, Alfred	Riddle, OH	
Rankin, Morton	Caldwell, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943

Raspe, Herman	Los Angeles, CA	
Ratekin, Chester		
Ray, Oscar	Boise, ID	
Ray, William	Downers Grove, IL	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Read, Forrest	Idaho	
Reed, Harry	San Francisco, CA	Fukuoka #18 Aug. 19, 1943
Reed, Russell	Phoenix, AZ	
Reed, Warren	Los Angeles, CA	
Reese, Ivan		
Reeves, Wayne		Wake Dec. 1941
Reid, Raymond	Kane, PA	
Reilmann, Ted		
Rensberg, Harold	San Francisco, CA	
Revell, James	Price, UT	
Reynolds, Henry	Nampa, ID	
Reynolds, John	Guide Rock, NE	
Reynolds, William	Brightwook, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Rice, James	San Bernardino, CA	
Rice, William	Grants Pass, OR	
Riddle, Lonnie	Yuba City, CA	Woosung July 18, 1942 Shot by gua
Riddle, Pearson		
Riebel, Chester	Grants Pass, OR	
Rieger, Gregory		Wake Dec. 1941
Riendeau, William	Oakland, CA	
Rienke, Donald	Port Chicago, CA	
Riffel, John	Asusu, CA	Fukuoka #3
Ritter, Commodore		Wake Dec. 1941
Rivers, Albert		
Roban, Joseph	LaGrande, OR	
Robbins, Paul	Boise, ID	Fukuoka march 26, 1943
Robbins, Sheldon	Los Angeles, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Roberston, Arnold	Chico, CA	
Roberston, Charles	Manderson, WY	
Roberts, Raymond	Grants Pass, OR	
Robertson, Dale	Salt Lake City, UT	Osaka Feb. 1945
Robertson, Harley	Salt Lake City, UT	
Robnett, Elzo	LaGrande, OR	
Rogde, Gerhart		
Rogers, Jerold	Mesa, AZ	
Rogge, John		
Rogge, Warren	Watsonville, CA	
Romine, James	Spokane, WA	
Rosandick, George		
Rose, Benjamin	Inglewood, CA	
Roth, Fred	Nampa, ID	
Rout, Richard	Watsonville, CA	
Row, Earl	Jasonville, IN	
Rucker, Raleigh	Circleville, OH	
Rudolph, Robert	Gilroy, CA	

Rumpel, Fred	Parma, ID	
Russell, L.H.	Honolulu, HI	
Rutledge, Raymond	Cambridge, OH	
Ryan, William	Portland, OR	
Sager, James	Cottonwood, ID	
Samms, George	Metaline Falls, WA	
San Nicolas, Jose		
Sanders, Harry	Terra Haute, IN	
Sanford, Thomas	Williams, OR	
Santos, Elvyn	California	
Sappington, Clinton		
Sardons, Michael	Bronx, NY	
Sater, Harry	Inglewood, CA	
Savitz, Harvey		
Schaefer, Fred	Nampa, ID	
Schemel, Charles	Union Town, WA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Schieferstien, John	Grants Pass, OR	
Schmaljohn, George		
Schmidt, Henry	Lowell, WY	
Schmidt, Julius	Columbus, OH	
Schoeningh, Herman	Petuluma, CA	
Schottler, Herman	San Francisco, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Schrader, Herman	Salt Lake City, UT	
Schultz, John		
Schweizer, Emil	Boise, ID	
Schwenke, Ralph	Centralia, IL	
Scott, Chester	Florida	
Scott, Lawrence	Sheridan, WY	
Scott, Robert	Los Angeles, CA	
Seastrom, Hilmar	Jefferson, IA	
Seelke, Fred	Encino, CA	
Sellesth, Oscar	Alameda, CA	Fukuoka #3
Serdar, Tony		
Serven, Martin	California	
Shamel, Walt		
Shank, Lawton	Angola, IN	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Shattles, Stephen	Los Angeles, CA	
Shenkman, David	Los Angeles, CA	
Shepard, Orbin	Portland, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Sherard, Eliza	Maysville, MO	
Sherman, Glenwood	San Jose, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Sherwood, Gerald	Boise, ID	
Shields, Hugh	Council Bluffs, IA	
Shim, Adam	Kohala, HI	
Shim, Edward	Kohala, HI	
Shim, Van Ray	Rickrall, OR	
Shriner, Gould	Sioux City, IA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Shumaker, John	Valley, WA	
Sigman, Russell	Idaho Falls, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943

Silverman, Sam	San Francisco, CA	
Simeona, K.	Kailua, HI	
Simmons, Stanley	Georgia	
Simmons, Sterling	Augusta, AK	
Simpers, William	Wapiti, WY	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Simpson, Lawrence	Gilroy, CA	
Six, Daniel	Boise, ID	
Skirvin, Olin	Los Angeles, CA	
Slafer, Ed		Wake Dec. 1941
Slagle, Jack	San Francisco, CA	
Smalley, Roger	Scottsdale, AZ	
Smith, Abner	Boise, ID	Kiangwan July 15, 1944
Smith, Charles	Grant, FL	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Smith, Chas	Forsyth, MT	
Smith, Eugene	Los Angeles, CA	
Smith, George	Philadelphia, PA	
Smith, Harold	Roseburg, OR	
Smith, Harold H.	Cleveland, ND	
Smith, Joe Donald	Emmett, ID	
Smith, Joseph	Oakland, CA	
Smith, Kenneth	Oakalnd, CA	
Smith, Lewis	Rogue River, OR	
Smith, Wayne	Beatrice, NE	
Smith, William A.	Gould, AZ	
Smith, William I.	Ponoma, CA	
Smyth, Edwin		
Smyth, Frank		
Snipes, John		
Snyder, Floyd	Wahoo, NE	
Sorensen, John		Wake Dec. 1941
Spang, Mathias	Nampa, ID	
Sporer, Robert	Roseburg, OR	
Spurlin, William	Shelbtville, IN	
St. John, Francis	Liberty, IL	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Stames, Russell	Southgate, CA	
Staten, Mark	Los Angeles, CA	Woosung Feb. 18, 1942
Steffes, Albert	St. Cloud, MN	
Stephens, Roy	Tahoka, TX	
Stevens, Clifford	Shull Valley, AZ	
Stevens, Fred	Sioux City, IA	
Stevens, Paul	Bell, CA	
Stevenson, Clinton		Wake Dec. 1941
Stewart, Victor	Alhambra, CA	
Stewart, J. Earl		
Sthole, Carl	Los Angeles, CA	
Stites, Howard	Grant Island, NE	
Stoddard, Ira	Boise, ID	
Stoffe, Thomas		
Stone, Clinton	Portland, OR	Fukuoka #18 March 20, 1943

Stone, James	Los Angeles, CA	
Stone, Willis	Honolulu, HI	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Streblow, Alvin	Wisconsin Rapids, WI	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Streeter, Mark	Lewiston, ID	
Strickland, Cecil		
Stringer, Wesley	Grants Pass, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Sturdevant, Marshall		
Sullivan, Donald	Longview, WA	Wake Executed May 2, 1942
Susoe, Arthur	Hillsborough, OR	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Sutherland, Hudson	Portland, OR	
Swanson, Norman		
Sweet, Larry	Los Angeles, CA	Fukuoka #18
Swieberg, James		
Swobe, Elmer	San Francisco, CA	
Talbot, Marshall		
Tallmon, Donald	Portland, OR	
Tart, LeRoy	Raeligh, NC	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Taylor, Allen	Brownsville, TN	
Taylor, Donald	Vancouver, WA	
Taylor, Harold	Long Beach, CA	
Taylor, Jack	Thousand Oaks, CA	
Taylor, William		
Tellier, Clair	Hayward, CA	
Teters, N.D.	Boise, ID	
Thatcher, Frank	Chico, CA	
Thayer, Frank	North Platte, NE	
Thomas, Owen	Portland, CA	Fukuoka #18 April 30, 1943
Thomas, Russell		
Thompson, Glen	Cadiz, OH	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Thompson, Walter	Boise, ID	
Tice, Henry	Fort Worth, TX	
Tom, Yen Tick	San Francisco, CA	
Toohey, Richard	San Francisco, CA	
Topham, Elgin	Kenosha, WI	
Toy, Art	San Francisco, CA	
Trammel, James	Medford, OR	
Troxel, Roy	Ringling, OK	
Truy, Joseph	Havana, Cuba	
Tucker, Earl	Gold Hill, OR	Executed October 7, 1943
Tumelson, Obie	Coeur d'Alene, ID	
Tunnicliffe, John		
Turner, Floyd	Pittsburg, CA	
Turner, Lester	Ontario, OR	
Tuttle, Virgil	Witt Springs, KY	
Unger, Lewis	Capser, WY	
Valov, John	Bell, CA	
Van Valkenburg, Ralph	Oakland, CA	Executed October 7, 1943
Vance, Walter	Skedell, OK	
Vancil, Vernon	Snyder, CO	Executed October 7, 1943

Vant, Glen	Modesto, CA	Executed October 7, 1943
Varney, Charles	Culbertson, NE	
Vasquez, Albert	Los Angeles, CA	
Vent, Glen		
Villa, Edward	Portland, OR	Fukuoka #18 March 21, 1943
Villines, Charles	Boise, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Vincent, Ernest	Los Angeles, CA	
Vlist, Denis	Bremerton, WA	
Wade, Edwin	Boise, ID	
Walden, Glen		
Walker, George	John Day, OR	Fukuoka #18 May 4, 1943
Wallace, Anthony		
Wallace, Donald		
Wallin, John	Portland, OR	
Walter, Joseph	St. Louis, MO	
Walter, Larry	Portland, OR	
Wanderwilt, Dick	Boise, ID	
Ward, Jack	Meridian, ID	
Ward, Leonard	Medford, OR	
Ward, W.C.		
Wardle, Isaac	Boise, ID	
Wardle, Miles	Boise, ID	
Wardle, Porter	Boise, ID	
Wattles, Gurdon	Glendale, CA	
Weatherbee, Jacob	Hawaii	
Weaver, Olive	Bell, CA	
Wedin, Lawrence	Anaheim, CA	
Weible, Charles	Idaho	
Weingarten, Lester		Wake Dec. 1941
Weldon, William	Oregon	
Wells, Thomas	Los Angeles, CA	
West, Carl		
West, Edward		
Westby, Graydon	Boise, ID	
Wester, William	Boise, ID	
Wheeler, Raymond	Arrowhead, CA	
White, Amos	Rahway, NY	
White, J. Edward	Goffery, SC	
White, Raymond	Terre Haute, IN	
Whitehouse, Sherman	San Francisco, CA	
Whitney, Hans	West Point, CA	
Whittenburg, Woodrow		
Whittom, Dorman	Washington	
Wiedenmayer, Albert	Johnsville, NY	
Wieler, Paul	Hollywood, CA	
Wiggenhorn, John		
Wilcox, George	Dallas, OR	
Wilcox, Leo	Santa Monica, CA	Fukuoka #18
Wildam, Ora		

Wilder, Howard	San Jose, CA	
Wilderson, William	Kennard, NE	
Wilkerson, Earl	Corsicano, TX	
Wilkin, Robert	Berkeley, CA	Ohasii Aug. 18, 1945
Williams, Donald	Oakland, CA	Fukuoka #18 March 9, 1943
Williams, Kenneth	Honolulu, HI	
Williams, Lloyd		
Williams, N.V.	Tunfunga, CA	
Williams, Vinson	Los Angeles, CA	
Williamson, Frank	Alameda, CA	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Williamson, James	Los Angeles, CA	Kiangwan March 10, 1943
Williamson, Richard	Pomeray, OH	
Wilper, Redmond	Boise, ID	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Wilson, Earl	Portland, OR	
Wilson, John	New Jersey	
Wilson, John	Grants Pass, OR	
Wind, Walter	Long Beach, CA	
Wing, Walter		
Wise, Frank	Oakland, CA	
Wojtysiak, Edward	Flint, MI	
Wolf, Jack	Emmett, ID	
Wong, Bing Sing	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Bing Y.	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Chin Chow	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Gan Woo		
Wong, Guey, Suey	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Hing Shuck		
Wong, Hong	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Kay Ming	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Kwok Hoy	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Robert	Honolulu, HI	
Wong, Saem What	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Thyn Wah	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Wah Jing		
Wong, Wing Nguey	San Francisco, CA	
Wong, Wong Yee	San Francisco, CA	
Woods, Charles	Lockland, OH	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Woodward, George		
Wooley, Raymond	Akron, OH	
Worley, William	National City, CA	Fukuoka Feb. 27, 1945
Wung, Clarence	Honolulu, HI	
Yarina, Mike		
Yeager, H.H.		Wake Dec. 1941
Yeamans, Arthur	Mt. Home, ID	
Yee, Foon	San Francisco, CA	
Yerham, Vahren	San Francisco, CA	Osaka
Young, Edmund	Grants Pass, OR	
Young, Edwin	Rathdrum, ID	
Young, J.O.	Nampa, ID	

Young, R. Herndon		
Young, Roland	Rathdrum, ID	
Yriberry, Robert		Wake Dec. 1941
Yu Yen Ow		
Yuan, Quock Jing		
Yuen, Harry	Honolulu, HI	Executed Oct. 7, 1943
Zen, Fred	San Francisco, CA	Fukuoka #18 Feb. 28, 1944
Zimmerman, Ed	Astoria, OR	
Zivic, John		
Zivic, Michael	San Francisco, CA	
Zivic, Thomas		

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Charles Appelhanz
Signature of Author

May 11, 2001
Date

Hell in the Pacific
Title of Thesis

Mary Cooper
Signature of Graduate Office Staff

May 31, 2001
Date Received