

T H E P A L A W A N M A S S A C R E

Palawan Prison Camp was located at the Filipino constabulary barracks at Puerto Princessa Palawan, which overlooked the Bay. This camp held about 300 American Prisoners of War, August 22, 1944, when 150 of them were sent to Manila.

These prisoners were used to work on air fields and to clear land for auxiliary airfields.

This camp was started about July, 1942. At first conditions were fairly good - but then the guards were changed and conditions grew worse. Shortly after the camp was formed five of the prisoners escaped, eighteen of the men were held hostage and were to be shot if the five escapees were not found. Later the five were found but in the meantime the eighteen men were tied to coconut trees and beaten daily. After the escapees were brought into camp - the eighteen P.W.'s were released.

The five escapees were tied, beaten daily almost to unconsciousness, then after two or three days of beatings and without food the five escapees were taken out and shot.

On September 14, 1944, after half of the detail had left for Manila the conditions in the camp became almost intolerable.

Men on detail (on the airfield) were beaten on the slightest provocation. Sometimes their arms, legs, jaws were broken. Sometimes the men themselves broke their arms to keep off the work detail because of the inhumane beatings by their captors.

On October 19, 1944 Puerto Princessa had its first air raid by B-24's. The air raids by B-24's continued day after day - the conditions in the camp grew worse.

Men were beaten until they could hardly stand, and if they fell, they were kicked and the beating sometimes continued until they were unconscious and even killed. If a friend tried to help, they were given the same type of medicine.

On December the 14th, the detail went out in the morning as usual. About noon for some unusual reason the detail was called in with the explanation that an air raid was imminent.

They were told to get in their bomb shelters.

Companies A.B.C. which had the largest shelters was located along the barracks. Company C bomb shelter had an escape hatch. Corporal ^REufus Smith, Marine and Glen W. McDole, Marine had a shelter which extended to the edge of the cliff which was 50 to 60 feet above the beach. An opening above the beach was made by removing a piece of the coral which was large enough for a man to slip through and slide down the embankment to the beach.

1st Lieutenant Carl L. Mango, Medical officer, Captain Fred T. Bruni, U.S. Army Reserve, Henry Carlisle, D.D.S., L. T. Knight, U.S. Navy and a warrant officer by the name of Glen C. Turner, W.O.J.G. had a small bomb shelter of their own.

Douglas William Bogue, U.S.M.C. with two others, S.R. Kozuch, P.F.C. (Marine) and one name unknown had a small shelter near the one of Rufus Smith and Glen W. McDole.

(There were several filled gasoline drums and boxes of dynamite near the barracks.)

As soon as the men were in the bomb shelters the Japanese filled vats with gasoline and dumped them on the shelters of A.B.C. companies, however, forgetting to dump gasoline on Bogue, Smith and McDole's bomb shelters.

After the gasoline was dumped on the shelters, the Japanese

> threw lighted torches in the ^SShelters which ignited the gasoline.

As the fire raged, the men tried to leave but were machinegunned or bayoneted as they left their shelters.

Bogue and his two companions seeing what happened made a break for it. Only Bogue was able to get through the fence and down to the beach. His two companions were shot as they were climbing the fence.

Bogue made it to the beach by going through the fence, and Kozuch and the other prisoner were shot down as they tried to go through the fence. Bogue after killing three Japanese with their own machine gun hid in the rock until night and then swam over the Bay and was picked up by friendly Guerrillas.

Captain Mango ran out of his bomb shelter with his clothes on fire but he was shot and bayoneted, Captain Fred Bruni, Warrant Officer Glen C. Turner and Lieutenant Knight were burned inside the shelter.

Corp. Rufus Smith, McDole and ten others managed to get through the opening down to the beach after seeing what was happening outside their shelter. Corp. Rufus Smith was the last to leave. Smith after seeing what was happening on the beach ran back and concealed himself in a small crevice close to where two Japanese guards were standing. He remained there until the guards left and then watched the Japanese dump the rest of the gasoline on the ^SShelters containing the dead American prisoners and bayoneted those on the outside who were still alive or moving. The Japanese then dynamited the ^SShelters to give the appearance that the area had been hit by American bombers. (The prisoners had painted a P.O.W. on the tin roof of one of the barracks before the Japanese stopped them.)

After it became dark Corp. Rufus Smith slid down the embankment to the beach and swam to the other side. He had been struck in the hip with a stray bullet - also on his way over he was bitten by a dog

shark. On reaching the other side he met some friendly Filipinos who led him to the rangers.

McDole was separated from Smith. Smith later learned that Glen W. McDole hid himself in a garbage pit. He was later shot but managed to swim the nine miles across the Bay to safety.

McDole rescued Barta who was shot and soon both men ^{were} picked up by friendly Filipino Guerrillas. (Most of these Guerrillas were boys 15 to 17 years old.)

Daniels (Army) was picked up by some friendly Filipinos and then turned over to the Rangers. Elmo Deal managed to make it down to the beach and was shot a number of times. He was still alive when the Japanese Patrol came along. He was again shot and bayoneted. With 23 wounds and left to die (he could not swim) he was picked up by friendly Filipinos and turned over to the Filipino Guerrilla band.

Neilson (Army) was shot in the leg while swimming the Bay - he swam under water until he came up under a previously shot down Jap plane. He stayed under the Japanese plane until it became dark and then swam over the Bay to safety.

In the large bomb shelter (which included Private Willard R. Yeast) some of them got out and made it to the beach only to be machine-gunned down by the Japanese on the cliff or by the patrol boats in the Bay.

Of the 150 men - eleven escaped, the rest of the 139 were burned, bayoneted, machine gunned on the cliff by the patrol boats shooting at the prisoners on the beach.

Koblos, Pacheco, Petrie, Smith, Balchios and Nielson were flown out by plane. McDole, Barta and Bogue were picked up later and left by plane.

"Pop" Daniel and Elmo Deal were taken out by Submarine.

Later the Rangers caught Lieutenant Sato, the Camp Commandant and 39 of the Japanese who participated in the inhumane slaughter. They were sentenced and hanged.

A similar incident took place in Corregidor, when the Americans moved in; all the prisoners were killed. Captain Bulfomonte, a medical doctor was in this group. Not one single prisoner escaped. There were about a hundred prisoners killed.

At Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp - Rangers picked up a memorandum on a Japanese officer, who had orders to destroy all 600 to 1,000 prisoners of war in that camp. This was told to Lieutenant William Gentry who was at Cabanatuan and rescued by the Rangers.

I mentioned this in detail as this might have happened to us if the Americans had invaded Taiwan.

All the prisoners were given a thorough examination. My weight was up to about 115 pounds by now. One of the psychiatrists checked me over and asked if I had gotten sick on my meal. I told him that I had, and related what had happened to me and some of the prisoners when we ate a large amount of meat. He asked me if I thought it was just my imagination. I said "yes", but I kept trying to eat.

Delete this is
not a
diary

Through the help of files generously furnished to me by Lieutenant Hubert Dwight Hough, U.S. Navy, I was able to disentangle the names of who was or who wasn't killed in the Massacre.

Lieutenant Hubert Dwight Hough (Navy) left on the August 22, 1944 detail for Manila. The ship, however, did not leave the harbor until September 19, 1944.

Apparently, only Captain Fred T. Bruni, 192nd Tank Battalion, Private W. R. Yeast, 192nd Tank Battalion and Lieutenant Carl E. Mango, Medic, did not survive the Palawan Massacre. Private Amato and Captain Harry S. Hickman, 194th Tank Battalion, Medic, left on the August 22, 1944 ship.

Sergeant Massey and Private Million must have switched off to another detail.

Contacts made with various survivors through the kind effort of Lieutenant Herbert Dwight Hough and personal conversation with Corporal Rufus (Willy) Smith, Marine, I was able to piece the Massacre together where some of our Tankers died.