

Residuals of Japanese Prisoners-Of-War — Thirty Years Later

Col. Eugene C. Jacobs, M.C.*
U.S. Army Retd.

The Bicentennial of the United States found it the richest, most productive and best fed country in the world. It has been a source of food for many other countries, including several who have not been very friendly.

It is not surprising that chronic deficiency diseases and their residuals are rarely diagnosed in this country. When seen, they are usually secondary to other conditions, such as alcoholism, malignancy, mental illness, faddism or senility rather than starvation per se.

It is not surprising that our medical textbooks consider chronic deficiency diseases as rather mild, frequently reversible, and often without residuals. It is not surprising that our well-trained physicians diagnose chronic deficiency diseases only after all other conditions have been ruled out.

Seeing thousands of Americans with far-advanced acute and chronic deficiency diseases, is an experience unknown to most American doctors, unless they were so unfortunate as to be incarcerated in the Orient, as when the Japanese Imperial Army overran the Far East.

Shortly after the Naval catastrophe at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, President Roosevelt decided that it was more important to rescue England from Germany than to save our own Philippine Islands from Japan. Within hours, all military supplies including food, designated for the Philippines, were rerouted to other areas.

Within a few weeks (Jan. 11, 1942), it became necessary to reduce rations for all Fil-American Forces in Bataan. Several weeks later, rations for soldiers in the front lines and in fox holes had to be cut again.

Before the "Battling Bastards" of Bataan were overwhelmed by starvation, dysenteries, malaria and the Japanese Imperial Army on April 9, 1942, every gradation of acute deficiency diseases had already appeared. Within a month, a similar fate was suffered on Corregidor, but to a lesser degree.

The Japanese Army had made no preparation to feed, to transport or to house any of the Fil-American forces. The outcome was a hundred mile "Death March" from Bataan to Camp O'Donnell at Tarlac. This forced march lasted over a period of two weeks, and was made essentially without food or water, resulting in the inhumane annihilation of some 17,000 Fil-Americans, and the broken bodies of all survivors. Those captives, who couldn't keep up, were clubbed or bayoneted in full view of the others. During the following forty months of incarceration, another 31,200 prisoners were to succumb to starvation, deficiency diseases, dysenteries, malaria and Japanese indifference and neglect. The survivors were scarred for life, and most of their lives were shortened by many years.

The Prison Camp Diet

A typical daily diet varied greatly. At the very best, it was almost never adequate, being composed of a poor grade of rice and weeds. A half-canteen cup (about 8 oz. or 160 calories) of a thin rice gruel (lugao) twice, and on occasion three times daily, was standard. The rice was a polished variety, but containing much foreign material, as insects and fine gravel. The weeds were from the water buffalo (carabao) wallows and were of questionable nutritional value. At worst, there were days when no food was available.

About once a week, a water buffalo was slaughtered by the Camp Veterinarian to feed some 5000 to 12000 prisoners in camp. After the Japanese chefs removed the choice cuts for themselves, there was never more than a few grams (4-16 calories) of protein for each prisoner. When we complained that "We will all die!" the Japs replied "Everybody must die! American submarines sink Japanese supply ships! We have no food for our own troops!"

Many of the prisoners suffered from amoebic and bacillary dysenteries and their bodies could absorb very little of the food they ate. Actually the prisoners who were taken out of camp on work-details were fortunate as they usually received extra food.

After some six months in camp, the captives were allowed to purchase extra food from the small camp commissary, but severe inflation of the Japanese paper money strictly limited purchases to a can of condensed milk and / or a small number of bananas or mongo beans. Healthier prisoners planted small gardens, but had to guard them closely, as vegetables were frequently stolen before they were ripe.

At Christmas time in 1942, '3 and '4, one or two Red Cross packages (10 lbs. of food and tobacco) were issued to most prisoners. During 1944 no meat was available.

A few prisoners trapped stray dogs for extra food, and some became so hungry as to eat lizards, grasshoppers and earthworms. Even with food from every available source, the daily diet rarely reached 100 calories. Fat and salt were almost never available.

During May, June and July of 1942, some 1287 Americans died in Cabanatuan P.O.W. Camp (No. 1). The death-rate continued as high as 20 to 50 per day until the arrival of the Red Cross packages (Christmas), when it miraculously dropped to one or two per month. After the end of the War, Graves Registration recovered 2637 bodies from Cabanatuan cemeteries.

(Continued on page 5)

803rd Engineers

At every A.D.B.C. Convention the 803rd has the largest unit attendance. We hope this trend continues and we are able to share friendships with one another.

As at the last few conventions we plan a luncheon Thursday, May 11, 1978. Time and place will be on the Bulletin Board.

Each year we try to remember this or that name but can't. This year let's all write or type the names of all the men we can remember, together with present address, in lieu of this, their old address. Maybe we could list all those deceased and those killed in action. How about some old pictures? You guys who can't attend send your list to Joe Vater, 18 Warbler Dr., McKees Rocks, Pa. 15136. If we get a good enough response we'll print a list for all.

Mabuhay A.D.B.C.

I understand there are a number of Filipinos now residing in the United States and a few Americans also who were members of the AVENGERS, a Filipino Unit made up of reserves and scouts and other Filipino Units who took off to the hills and formed this group.

Col. Hanson was elected C.O. of the Unit in 1942 and at this time the AVENGERS did not belong to any Unit and were termed FREEDOM FIGHTERS. Later on they joined USAFIP-NL under the command of Col. Volkman. At that time the term GUERRILLA forces was added to their name by the Japanese.

Col. Hanson at the time was a 1st Lt. and his people called him KALAHATI meaning half Filipino which of course was not true but acceptable to his Command. He was referred to as Sgt. Lt. Capt. and even Admiral by his group who knew nothing of rank other than leader. The name HABENERO which was Hanson's official name, was taken from a cigar ban which he kept for the duration. The Unit operated between Pampanga and Bataan Mountains.

I would especially like to contact the following people who were GUERRILLA leaders at the time. Their names are: Volkman, Ramsey, Blackburn, Lapham, Barker, Powell, Strough, Fertig, Yay, Bruce. If they are still alive, it would be great to be able to correspond with any of these people and those of my AVENGER group.

At the close of 1942 the AVENGER group as such was no longer in existence as we had people coming and leaving our group and were constantly increasing enabling us to form other Units.

MABUTI

T. V. Hanson, (HABENERO)
P.O. Box 426,
San Diego, California 92112

Physical Cruelty

Physical cruelty began with the seizure of the first captive and continued until the release of the last prisoner. "Slapping" with the hand, the rifle or the saber was a way of life with the Japanese. It was a part of their system of discipline. Adding language difficulties to this, the average Jap became a barbarian and a beast. If he merely suspected an infraction of the rules by a prisoner, one or more of the various types of Oriental torture could be expected. Many Japanese were openly sadistic, achieving considerable satisfaction and even delight in torturing their victims. Supreme delight was reached when the Jap had his captive kneel, and then with a long sweep of his samuri sword, beheaded him.

In general the Japs seemed to despise the American prisoners, blaming them for any and all problems that they encountered. They delighted in watching the prisoners labor under nearly impossible conditions, such as carrying loads well in excess of 100 lbs., farming barefooted, laboring for many hours without a break (Yasume), farming without being able to squat down, etc. The Japs had many ways of making ordinary labor as menial and unpleasant as possible.

Our treatment under that Japanese as P.O.W.s was certainly in marked contrast to that received by the Japanese, whom the United States interned. We enjoyed none of the good food, good clothing, good shelter or good medicines that the Americans gave their prisoners.

Prisoner-of-War Residuals

Following World War II, an adequate diet supplemented with required vitamins, resulted in rapid improvement of most of the acute symptoms of deficiency diseases, but most Japanese P.O.W.s of six months or more were left with one or more of the following residuals: 1-6

amblyopia	irritability
angina	malaria
arrhythmia	muscle cramps
congestive Heart Disease	neuralgias
deafness	nightmares
dysentery	nyctalopia
hernia	parasthesia
hyperesthesia (burning feet)	polyneuritides
impaired memory	tinnitus
insomnia	tuberculosis

During the 33 to 35 years since liberation, many of the former prisoners, who had suffered serious residuals, have died. Most of the surviving ex-prisoners have several permanent residuals, and have been rated by the Veteran's Administration from 0 per cent to 100 per cent disabled. Public Law 91-376 (Aug. 12, 1970) has made it possible for most former prisoners of six months or longer during World War II, to have received some degree of disability. Yet, former prisoners are continually being brought to my attention, because they have been unable to convince the Veteran's Administration that they have a "Service connected permanent disability," even after surviving the gamut: Bataan, the Death March, several years incarceration from Cabanatuan and Bilibid to Formosa, Japan, Korea and Manchuria via the "Hell Ships."

P.O.W. Residuals Complicated by the "Good Life"

Many prisoners, on returning home and discovering the "Good Life" vowed they would never again "Go Without." They over-ate, over-drunk, over-smoked and over-medicated. Just as detrimental, they under-exercised. Unfortunately, many returning prisoners craved the things they missed in prison camp, — diets rich in fat, cholesterol and salt besides cigarettes, and hard and soft drinks.

Unfortunately, many ex-prisoners have chain-smoked since World War II, complicating their P.O.W. residuals with such Tobacco Diseases⁷⁻⁹ as:

amblyopia	peptic ulcer
bronchitis	thrombo-angiitis obliterans
bronchiectasis	Strokes
diabetes	Various cancers:
Heart Attacks	lips, tongue, bronchial
hypertension	esophageal, gastric, etc.

Unfortunately, some have become chronic alcoholics, further damaging their brain, heart, liver, stomach, nerves, etc, and a few have become addicted to drugs, damaging the brain, nerves and the genes.

The complications (residuals) of the "Good Life" have added further confusion relating to "Service Connection" of disabilities for physicians of the V.A.

Conclusions

It is my experienced and honest opinion that any former Japanese P.O.W. of six months or longer, who has been through the trials and tribulations of Oriental oppression, inhumane treatment during Death Marches, multiple prison camps and Hell Ships, as well as the tortures that only the Oriental mind can fathom, plus the stress of modern life in these United States, should be considered to have at least 50 per cent "Service Connected" permanent disability, and most often, 100 per cent.

(Continued on page 6)

Dear ADBC Friends:

Thank you for keeping me in mind for the drawing. It is kind of you, and others, for sending me the latest news also. You see I just past my 80th birthday, 1 / 27 / 78. During October 77, I had a stroke which placed me in the local hospital for 15 days during which time I had an angiogram and later a Carotid artery operation. Really I have not recovered from that and I find weaknesses at the time. My Surgeon says that is normal and I may take months to fully recover. My wife has been ill for 5 years. During my illness she was with my son and daughter-in-law. She took the flu several weeks past and of course Ralph had to follow. We are both over the flu.

Because of the above circumstances, I had to give up all attendance at meetings and I usually had about 5 meetings per week. I had been a Service Officer in Charge of the Maryland Veterans Commission for 22 years just before retirement in 1967 and that job consisting of 4 Md Counties kept me rather busy. So now I am really retired from ALL organizations as far as attendance is concerned. But for a man of 80 I can be thankful for the health I have and am proud of the fact that I can be near my wife to help her during her struggle to get well. I should be glad to do that for her since we have been married nearly 58 years. Ralph Jr. was our first child. As long as he was with us he was a kind and considerate son which helps us now in our many memories of him. He was a very good son and we can now believe he is at rest awaiting the Great Day when we can see him again in Spirit.

Respectfully yours,
Ralph S. Tagg GS

Q — I converted my insurance to the VA Modified Life plan. Three years later I became totally disabled and my insurance premiums were waived. At age 65 my insurance will be reduced to \$5,000. I have the option to purchase an equal amount of VA Ordinary Life insurance. Will the premiums on this also be waived?

A — Yes. In the case of an insured whose premium payments are waived because of total disability, the additional amount of Ordinary Life insurance may be issued, for which premiums may also be waived because of total disability.

**PLAN TO BE IN ST. LOUIS
FOR THE NATIONAL
CONVENTION —
A GOOD TIME
WILL BE HAD BY ALL.
WE NEED YOU TO BE
IN ATTENDANCE.**

Bibliography

1. Jacobs, E.C.: Effects of Starvation on Sex Hormones in the Male.
J. Clin. Endocrin. 8:227-233 1948.
2. —: Gynecomastia Following Severe Starvation (Refeeding Type).
Ann. Intern. Med. 28:792-797 1948.
3. —: Oculo-Oro-Genital Syndrome: A Deficiency Disease.
Ann. Intern. Med. 35:1049-1054 1951.
4. —: Memoirs of a Medical Prisoner-of-War in the Philippines.
Mil. Med. 135:991-997 1970.
5. —: From Guerilla to P.O.W. in the Philippines.
Med. Opin. & Rev. 5:99-119 1969.
6. —: Diary of a "Hell Ship" Journey.
Med. Opin. & Rev. 6:66-79 1970.
7. —: Smoking Versus Myocardial Infarction.
Mil. Med. 133:908-910 1968.
8. —: Smoking.
Amer. Coll. Health Assoc. 17:52-53 1968.
9. —: Smoking: Insidious Suicide & Personal Air Pollution.
Mil. Med. 135:678-681 1970.

Addendum

It is interesting to note the recent reactions of some of our current movie heroes, when asked to take parts in a forthcoming war movie being filmed in the Philippine Islands. Several turned down the parts unless they could be paid some \$1-2 Million per week. Another begged off: poor health. Can you imagine fighting a War with characters like these?

formerly Chief of medicine at the Hospital in Japanese Prisoner-of-War Camp No. 1 at Cabanatuan in the Philippine Islands.

MacArthur's Birthday

Remembered

The General Douglas MacArthur Memorial Foundation Inc. Philippines celebrated the 98th birth anniversary of the late General of the Army Douglas MacArthur with the unveiling at 9 a.m. of a marker indicating the former wartime headquarters of the general as commanding general of the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFPE) during World War II at No. 1, Victoria Street Intramuros.

Lawyer Tomas T. Nufable, president of the foundation said a short program was held on the occasion. The marker was unveiled by US Ambassador David D. Newsom and Rear Admiral Hunt Hardisty, US Navy commander in the Philippines, assisted by Mrs. Amparo M. Aspiras, Mrs. Annie Bagatsing, Mrs. Juanita G. Santos, Ambassador Helena T. Benitez and Mrs. Ermilenda G. Gacad.

Other participants of the unveiling program are administrator Juan L. Gacad, opening remarks, chairman of the board of trustees. Gen. Douglas MacArthur Memorial Foundation, Inc. Alejo S. Santos will give the closing remarks. Prof. Esteban A. de Ocampo, chairman, national historical institute, accepted the marker in behalf of the Institute from the Foundation President.

Bob Neil

BELLE VERNON — It took quite awhile but Robert M. Neil of nearby Speers Hill, finally received the medals due him for service in World War II.

Neil, 57, was awarded the medals yesterday at a ceremony at the Speers War Memorial.

The presentation was made possible through the work of U.S. Rep. Austin J. Murphy, D-Charleroi, who interceded with the Defense Department on Neil's behalf.

Murphy did the same earlier this year for a World War II veteran from the Finelyville area.

Neil was a sergeant in the Army Air Corps, stationed at Bataan, when his base was taken by Japanese forces, and he was a prisoner of war for more than three years.

At the ceremony yesterday, he received:

The Good Conduct Medal, American Defense Medal with Bronze Star, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Medal, Philippine Defense Medal, World War II Victory Medal and the Purple Heart.

From: Organization Chairman

To: All Former Members of the 31st Infantry

Subj: 31st Infantry Reunion

Last year in San Diego, we held a reunion of the 31st Infantry. Approximately 47 members and their wives were present.

We are now planning on holding our 2nd reunion in St. Louis, Missouri, in conjunction with the National ADB&C Convention.

Arrangements have been made to hold a business meeting on Wednesday, 10 May 1978, from 1:00 P.M. to ? for the purpose of organizing a 31st Infantry association and also to elect officers. During this afternoon, we will meet and talk with many former buddies. We are going to have a separate section set aside during the National dinner on Friday evening, May 12th, for all 31st Infantry members.

In order that we know how many members and guests will be present, it is requested that you notify me of your plans; i.e., full name of each member attending, and your guests.

We know of 135 members and hope that all of you can attend this meeting to renew old acquaintances and talk over old times.

In comradeship,
William Snieszko

WHEREAS many American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor have exhausted all their appeals to the Veterans Administration and

WHEREAS the Veterans Administration is exempt from Judicial review and

WHEREAS the Senate Veteran's Affairs Committee has been hearing testimony on Senate Bill S364 which will give the Veteran the right to go to a Judicial Court with an attorney to have his case reviewed and adjudicated,

Be it hereby resolved the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor write Senator Alan Cranston stating we whole heartedly support S364 which is long overdue.

Submitted by,
John M. Emerick
6074 Pleasant Street
Finleyville, Pa. 15332