

Original - as dictated to the typewriter - late in 1945 - to his wife -
by E.29806 W.O.II (C.S.M.) JOHN BROWN THOMSON
Royal Rifles of Canada, Quebec, Que. - as a Prisoner of War of the Japanese
from the FALL OF HONG KONG at 2:00 A.M. December 26, 1941 to the welcome aboard
the American U.S.S. WISCONSIN in Tokyo Bay in August 1945.

We in ~~North~~ Shamshuipo Camp had heard that the LISBON MARU had been torpedoed and sunk by a submarine. The Japs blamed the Americans and no doubt it was an American submarine. Did the Commander of that Submarine know there were prisoners aboard? Definitely not. The Japs raised a big hue and cry to us about the dirty ^{naturally} Americans sinking a ship loaded with prisoners of war. We in Hong Kong felt very depressed about the loss of lives, ~~but~~ at the same time, knowing that war is war and you never know when your turn is coming, it gave us a boost to learn that American submarines were in China waters. Incidentally, this was only a fore-runner of what was to come. In the early months of 1945 a Japanese ship rarely ventured outside harbour waters, and those that did were immediately sunk. We were building them - freighters - for the Nips, under ~~our~~ armed guard, but most of them would barely float and one good hit by a torpedo was the finishing touch.

So when the draft call came early in 1943 for 600m Canadians to "go to a small Island, but a very powerful Island, and where you would be treated very well and would have lots to eat, good shoes and clothing and plenty of medicine and good doctors and lots of rest," it was necessary to find the required number. We did not have 650 Canadians in so-called good health but many of the boys volunteered and we were able to meet the quota. We had to meet it, or else. In any case, on our particular draft, which was the first to include Canadians, there were 1300, 650 Canadians and the balance mainly British. I wish I could tell you all the details. Some of them would possibly be boring. Briefly, we 650 had been on call for four days, we were wire-fenced off from the rest of the camp, meaning that we were in ~~quarantined~~ isolation and supposedly pure, which means free from Dyp & Dys, the twin killers, as the Jpsth authorities did not wish to have the "Island" to which we were going contaminated by any disease which these White prisoners might carry with them.

After a number of postponements from day to day, and night to night, we were told finally on the afternoon of Jan. 18, 1943, to fall in with our belongings. Our belongings were then searched by the Japanese guards. This took place on the street which ran down through the centre of the camp. After lying around for some three hours we were told to go back to our huts as we were not leaving at that time, but to keep ourselves in readiness to leave at a moment's notice. As previously mentioned, we had been in so-called quarantine for a number of days, but word had got around the camp that we were definitely leaving this time, and when we returned to our huts they had been stripped of anything and everything we had left behind, even to the beds. ~~Every~~ Most everyone had so little that the temptation to steal was difficult to overcome for many of the prisoners. Fortunately, we did not have long to stay in the huts. About two o'clock in the morning we were routed out again and lined up. About 5:00 a.m. ~~were~~ we were marched up the main street of the camp and halted at the main gate. There each section leader had to report to a hut being used by the Japs as an office of some kind, and was handed fifty ~~ten-yen~~ military ten-yen notes, one for each man in his section, purportedly to have been supplied by the Red Cross. I am not sure yet just how the Red Cross managed this, or how much it cost them, but it was certainly welcome as most of us were broke and ten yen looked like a lot of money, even if it was the stuff they printed and supplied for use in captured territories. Incidentally, after our arrival in Japan, - there had been no opportunity to spend any of this during the trip - it was all called in and exchanged for the standard yen used in the home islands.

We finally marched out of Shamshuipo Camp as it was breaking day, 1300 of us, divided equally between Canadians and British. We passed down Nathan Road, the main street of Kowloon, until we came to the docks. Just over a year previous to this we had come swinging up this thoroughfare in full battle order with the bands playing and being welcomed by the populace, both foreign and native. During our three week sojourn there prior to the commencement of hostilities I think most of us had also come up this street by taxi, street-car and the famous rickshaw. I purposely use the word "famous" as they will ever remain so to many of us, and particularly to those who insisted on the coolie runner riding and the Canadian army pulling. And if you wished to be high-brow, you could have a sedan chair with four coolies carrying it on their shoulders and you perched up ~~in~~ in the air some ten feet off the ground. It was bad enough falling out of a rickshaw but it could be a serious matter to unload precipitately from a chair, so most of us declined the honour and used the lowly rickshaw. With our "big" money as compared to the ~~Dimeys~~ ~~were~~ we were able to get the very best, much to the disgust of our British friends. They asked us not to be so generous with the natives as ~~it~~ we were spoiling it for them. Fortunately, we were not free long enough to do any serious damage to the British pocket-books and now that the war is over, no doubt the garrison there will be able to revert to their placid, overbearing routine. However, for three weeks they had plenty of opposition!

After a few more hours' delay, we were finally bundled on to lighters and taken out to a large ship lying in the harbour. She turned out to be the TATUTA MARU, one of the N.Y.K. boats. However, our enthusiasm was shortlived, as we soon found that very little space had been allotted to the prisoners as she was loaded with Japanese troops. Some ^{of us} were quartered in third class state-rooms normally holding fourteen but there were so many of us that we had to take turns at sleeping and also using the floor. The huge majority of the boys were in the holds and in passage-ways and on the stairs, in fact we were packed in like ~~sardines~~ the proverbial sardine, but the sardine has no worries once he gets into the can. He is never thirsty or hungry, does not need any fresh air and never has to relieve himself. We of course were exceedingly lucky in comparison with all other movements of prisoners that I have ever heard about. We sailed on the afternoon of the 19th and arrived in Nagasaki on the 22nd. We had a good ship and made no stops so now that we know how the other boys travelled from Manilla, Singapore and Hong Kong, we consider ourselves truly lucky and thankful to whatever twist of fate that put us on the "TATUTA MARU". It was not pleasant by any means. While I would like to expand on the treatment experienced on other ships, this account is confined to things personally witnessed, and knowing Johnny Jap so well I have no hesitation in believing the stories I have heard of the cruelties and hardships inflicted on helpless and sick men.

The feeding problem was a difficult one. Men were detailed to report at the galley where they received a bucket of rice and sometimes "soup" to go with it but owing to the "sardine" formation, the physical distribution was well nigh impossible. .

My section of 50 men was the first aboard the TATUTA MARU and ~~landed~~ ~~in~~ were put in three third-class state-rooms. We were all jubilant at this "break" and had the impression that the 1300 of us had the ship to ourselves and were rejoicing at having hit it so lucky. Shortly after our arrival in the state-rooms, a guard came along and called for a working party. Some 20 of us followed him down to the bottom of the ship, where we were put to work stowing supplies which were being loaded. These consisted of flour, sugar, bully, ~~rice~~ and quite a large supply of various kinds of biscuits. As I remember it, the Japs had not bothered to remove the Red Cross markings from the biscuits, but all of it ~~was~~ ^{had} obviously come from the Red Cross shipment which had been received in Hong Kong the previous November. At that time we were still not completely disillusioned and felt that the Japs had held this out from distribution in Hong Kong in order to have it for the use of the prisoners during transport and later in Japan. Now, needless to say, our theory was unfounded as we saw none of these supplies either during the trip or after landing at Nagasaki.

After finishing the working party we returned to our quarters and found them over-run with Royal Scots, and then it dawned on us that maybe we were not so lucky after all. As it turned out, with the usual Jap efficiency (?), they had spread out the first ones on, to make them feel good for a short time, and then jammed in the remainder, which of course was not the fault of the Royal Scots or any other of the prisoners. Just another example of rank inefficiency, as I thought at the time, but I later learned that this was a standard method used by our little friends to break morale. Well, they tried in every way to accomplish this for three years and eight months, and I am proud to say that, with very few exceptions they were totally unsuccessful, insofar as our Canadian boys were concerned. I make that qualification about the Canadian boys as after our arrival in Japan we had very little contact with any other prisoners until May 1945 so am not in a position to speak from first hand knowledge.

Landing at Nagasaki

The TATUTA MARU pulled into Nagasaki Harbour on the morning of Jan 22nd 43. We were called up from below in sections and got our first glimpse of daylight. We were formed up on the main deck and waited patiently for hours, just standing there and being checked for "quantity," to make sure no one had escaped. Finally, we were told we would be completely "fumigated" so as not to take any germs on to land. This fumigation process was quite an eye-opener. As we walked past a given point in single file, a Nip sprayed us with something out of a gadget that looked like a small fire extinguisher, the spraying taking place on the outside only. I am sure the Japs were proud of their health ingeniousness, but anyway they went through the motions and that was all that counted so far as they were concerned. After another long wait we were put on tugs and transported to land. We were kept on the docks for some hours until darkness had fallen. During this time we had a treat! Every man received five, or in some cases six, flat buns and quite a good quantity of cigarettes. The buns were fresh and really quite edible, and they also contained some sugar, not much but enough that it could be tasted. I think I can say without fear of contradiction from the boys that our ~~skat~~ treatment on the docks in Nagasaki was the nighlight of our trip to the land of the setting sun. From what we were able to see of the city, it consisted mainly of shacks set in a beautiful natural setting. A very good natural harbour and picturesque, with some industries along the western shore. Our vision was of course strictly limited and any of the boys with the propensity to explore were out of luck as we were strictly guarded.

After darkness fell, we were marched through the city for about half an hour and arrived at the railway station. Our first ~~top view~~ ^{view} of that wonderful island to which we were going was not at all impressive, but as I shall later explain it was indicative of any of the places we saw in Japan. Apparently we were "honoured guests" for we were loaded into passenger coaches, but once again the "sardine" method was used. The Canadian Army was quite adept in the use of the "sardine" method so we had had some experience. The Japanese railways use the narrow gauge and their coaches are similar to ours only definitely not quite so wide and ~~wide~~ that ~~Japanese~~ wide spread which most of the Japanese men and women have makes us wonder now how they manage. In our case it was not so bad as we had already been trimmed down. The coaches could seat about 50 and we were piled in to the tune of about 80 so it was rather difficult to get to the little room at the end of the car without walking on someone's ~~head~~ anatomy. Our food during the train trip was quite good, in Japanese fashion. It was put on at intervals, and was served in thin flat wooden boxes, which contained mainly rice, and white rice at that, a small piece of pickled fish and an assortment of pickled vegetables. We received three meals a day and enjoyed them, if that is the correct term to use.

During the trip when the train stopped at a large station such as Osaka loud speakers proclaimed to the populace that it contained prisoners from the South who were being brought to Japan and this was evidence that the Japanese were fighting a victorious war. In other words, a general pep talk so that the natives would continue with their endeavours. They would come close to the train and look in ~~at~~ the windows at us but I must say in the interests of truth that during these various stops none of the spectators were truculent. To my knowledge, none of us at any time while travelling from Hong Kong to Yokohama ~~were~~ was spat upon or insulted by civilians in anyway. Of course, we had Army guards at all times, who were all-powerful

and the civilian populace were terrified of them, as you who take the trouble to read this will later find out.

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On the morning of Jan 24th, after two nights and day on the train, we pulled into the main station at ~~Tok~~ Yokohama, where we were transferred from the steam train to an electric train. By this time our party had been reduced to 500 Canadians, the others having been put off at various points on the trip north.

Five hundred Canadians arrived in Tokyo on the morning of Jan. 24, 1943. Many were suffering from dry and wet beri-beri, pellagra, ^{Malaria} dysentery and the after effects of dyptheria, as well as many minor ailments. We were marched from the steam train through the station (a miniature Grand Central) and put aboard an electric train. The Japs in Tokyo really had a first-class electric train service, something like you would see in New York or London insofar as schedules are concerned. They came and departed exactly on the minute and woe betide anyone who was caught half in and half out. With a great deal of scrambling, most of us managed to get aboard, although ~~some of our stretcher cases~~ our Medical Orderlies, through no fault of their own, were not able to get all of our stretcher cases aboard. This ride lasted for only about 30 minutes, when we were detrained, formed up and put in charge of Jap gendarmes. Believe it or not, our kit bags were placed on trucks and transported to our new camp. We were marched through a semi-industrial semi-residential section for about three miles, when we turned in off the road (not a street) and found ourselves in a so-called parade area about 30 ft wide by 80 feet long between two fairly large ~~huts~~ one-storey huts with sloping roofs. We were in ten sections, fifty men to a section, as we had left Hong Kong although during the travelling and marching the men had become mixed so that no group was as it had been when leaving. However, that made very little difference to us as we were all dead tired and only wanted some place to lie down and relax. However, that was not to be our lot. After being lined up in sections, with our Medical Officer out in front, we were then given numbers (a piece of cardboard with a safety pin stuck through it and a piece of cloth wrapped around it and your number printed in ink on the front of it.) Woe betide the man who did not have his number prominently displayed on his shirt or coat front after that. After the numbering ceremony, we were then presented to the Commanding Officer in charge of all prison camps in the Tokyo-Yokohama area. He was a Colonel and thought he was pretty tough. Unfortunately, his speech to us, a copy of which I later found in English in the Interpreter's office and which I copied, was destroyed by the American bombers some months later so it is impossible to quote it word for word. In substance, it stated we were not welcome as we were prisoners of war - something that a Japanese soldier would never become - but since we had been sent to Japan to work, we would ~~be~~ not be killed outright but would have to do as we were told and work hard for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Later on, a decision would be made as to what would be done with us. Meantime, it was the express determination of the Japanese people to conquer "your country" and erase it from the face of the earth. Our people would in future be governed by the Japanese. Very encouraging! Particularly when at that time the Nips had been travelling steadily southward and had not yet met any really serious reverses. They were riding the crest of the wave and any with whom we came in contact sincerely believed that they were unbeatable and would have one-third of the world, i.e. from the North to the South Pole and from Hawaii to the western border of India. Just how they hoped to reconcile "Uncle Joe" Stalin with this line of thinking is not understood as at all times they were playing up to Russia and boasting of the good relations that existed between them. Gradually, as the German pressure on the Russians receded, the more friendly, from a propaganda standpoint, did the Japs become to them. The Nips had their

wires crossed somewhere.

But while winning, why should they worry about the consequences. The old familiar saying - They had the world by the tail with a down-hill drag. What a sad awakening lay before them, the poor unfortunate, misguided coolie, which after all comprises about 90% of the race. Uneducated, a fanatical belief in the inviolability of their Emperor, who could do no wrong, no respect for human life or ~~women~~ their own women, people who had lived under the yoke of the big "Forty Families" of the empire for generations, who bowed and ~~scraped~~ scraped to their Images, both dead and alive, who sold their daughters ~~into~~ into lives of prostitution, (from which they could never escape unless someone was willing to buy them out of it) in order to clear the "mortgage" from the two or three acres of rice paddy which they worked, a people who would suffer agonies (when they were sick) to deliver the evil spirits out of their bodies by placing burning wicks on their backs and allow them to burn down into the flesh. Many of our Canadian boys had to undergo this latter form of "treatment" to cure them of beri-beri or any other disease they may have had. In passing I think I should say that this particular ~~form~~ procedure was not a form of torture for the prisoners in the estimation of the Japanese medical authorities, but that they sincerely believed it had curative effects. People who lived in squalor, filth and disease, the like of which cannot be imagined even in the worst congested areas of our large cities on this Continent. Sanitation was unknown. Any man, woman or child would ~~squawk~~ relieve themselves in public, even to "squatting" on the public thoroughfares and using whatever they had handy or, as in many cases, using nothing at all, to clean themselves. I have seen hundreds of mounds of excretion lying on the public thoroughfares. Their ~~habits~~ habits are indescribable, both from a sanitation and moral standpoint. But this mode of living is natural to them. That is all they have ever had. I on a number of occasions complained to our Camp Commandant about the low standard of the Jap staff and guards in our camp and that the Japanese Army should put people with more sense of responsibility in the prison camps, and one day he frankly owned up and told me that the Japanese Army was using this type of individual on that type of work because there were not enough educated people in Japan to put in charge of that kind of work. I thought that a terrible admission to make. On the other hand, he may have been "pulling my leg" and covering up the real reason that coolies were given uncontrolled authority over prisoners, that reason being that coolies would have no compunction over killing ~~or~~ or torturing a prisoner. However, I found that some of the so-called educated class of officer and n.c.o. in the Imperial Japanese Army took great delight in torturing any defenceless prisoner whose face he did not like, therefore it all boils down to that inherent streak of cruelty with which ~~is~~ every Jap is blessed, irrespective of the thin veneer of courtesy and kindness which some of them have developed for surface appearances.

I shall now tell you about our experiences in a prison camp in Japan. This will deal in first-hand information only and will not therefore be applicable to all prison camps in Japan, my idea being to narrate those experiences with which our group had to contend.

In October 1943 the Japanese Army issued orders in our camp that every prisoner must keep a diary. I never learned the exact reason for this but since the diaries of all men were periodically called in for inspection to see what had been written, it was only natural that the boys made purely superficial entries. If one put in what he thought, he would be beaten up if detected, and as the great majority of the boys made entries merely to conform with the Jap orders, it can be well imagined that there was very little of interest to be read. Most merely listed what they had to eat at each meal, so there ~~were~~ were monotonous pages of the date and "Rice and Soup" as under:

Nov. 1st: Breakfast - Rice and Soup
Dinner & Rice and Soup
Supper - Rice and Soup

Nov. 2nd: Breakfast - Rice and Soup
Dinner - Rice and Soup
Supper - Rice and Soup.

Incidentally, that will give an idea of the monotony of prison camp life. Day in and day out, always the same routine. The entires would occasionally, but not often, be varied with a small additional item of interest - "Fish for supper" - but do not get the impression from this that we had a helping of fish. Possibly a few minnows, six at the most, more often three or four, boiled in deep fat - peanut oil or what have you. The reason for this additional note in the diary was on account of the delicious sensation created on the palate. The poorest families in any country of the world, even Japan or China, never had to exist on such a monotonous diet, in addition to which there was never enough of it. We received only enough to be able to crawl out in the morning and go to work. By ten a.m. many men would be ravenously hungry, the noon "meal" would alleviate this for a short period, and by three p.m. the same feeling existed. Supper would help, then wait for roll call, and into bed. Up in the morning at 5:30 and repeat the same performance, day after day, month after month, year after year. Usually we had three holidays a month. During the cold weather these were mostly spent in bed trying to keep warm. In the summer one tried to wash his underwear, if he had any, or sit out on the parade ground and talk or read, if you had anything to read, and absorb the sun. Fire drill was also a frequent occurrence, when we would all be called out to fight imaginary fires in different parts of the camp. It may be uninteresting to read of the fire fighting equipment but as a matter of future interest I think it would be worth the trouble to ennumerate it, as best I can from memory:

Straw bags and mats (to beat out the flames or incendiaries)
Long poles with a hook on the end, for demolition. (These were similar to what the loggers use on the Pacific Coast for handling logs in the water.) For practical purposes they would not demolish an out-house.

A rickety ladder or possibly two at times if they could be found. Anywhere from five to twenty-five buckets, wooden or tin. Later on we were supplied with a "pump" and a length of hose and when this was received, the Japs really thought they had reached the penultimate in fire-fighting equipment for prison camps. This gadget held about ten gallons of water and was worked by hand, just like the old ^{well} pump back home on the farm, although not quite so efficient, or else the hose broke out. There were three small concrete water containers placed at "strategic" points and woe betide the prisoners if these were not always full. They constituted the main water supply for fighting fire. Therefore, there was a chain gang, during practices, fill^{ing} the concrete water containers and another chain gang taking water from the tanks and throwing it on the fire. Those filling the tanks secured their water from the wash basin taps, so all in all it was a very proficient operation. Fortunately, we never had to fight a real fire.

I neglected to mention more long poles with straw ropes attached to the end, which were designed to beat out a fire at a height of ten or fifteen feet, in place of the straw mats. There may have been other modern contrivances but my memory fails me.

This firefighting business was a continual bugbear but in one way it helped to break the monotony and the boys endured it with their usual high spirits.

In addition to diaries, we had "Cash" Books. These had to be kept up to date with every transaction entered and of course were called in for periodic inspection at random. In other case if the J.D.O. had imbibed a few drinks of sake, or was feeling a little belligerent, he would hold everybody on parade at roll call and along with his assistants would take a group or groups and ask for their Cash Books. When these were presented you also had to produce the amount, if any, which you may have had shown as a balance. If you had more, or less, you were then in for Jikko or Umpan, but after a couple of these surprise inspections the boys learned to always have the right amount on their person or easily available, so that before long the Cash Book regulation became a joke, as did many of their other regulations once we became experienced in the Japanese ability and mentality.

I should also mention the medical operation of the camp. First of all, before going into any details, I would like to renounce with the greatest vigor the so-called medical profession of Japan. Whether or not their Doctors, when they graduate, ~~are~~ take the oath of allegiance to their profession and their fellow man, I do not know, but if they do, then I can only say that the Japanese Medical ^{people} ~~profession~~ ^{are} is a blot to the world's most humanitarian profession and should be expelled therefrom until the present bunch of Jap quacks is eliminated from the face of the earth. Even a half-decent Jap layman had more respect for the medical credo and its responsibilities than did any of the Jap doctors with whom we came in contact. Bullies and Butchers! ~~All~~ They sacrificed what sense of decency they may have had at one time for the benefit of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and in my opinion this is one of the worst calamities that the Japanese race will have to live down. I am not going to quote many instances as it will make sordid reading. Two vericocele operations performed without anaesthetic, in the same "hospital" immediately following one another, on two Canadian prisoners of war. These cases were not urgent but our Canadian medical

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officer thought they should be done, but he had not the vaguest idea that the operations would be performed without anaesthetic. The Japs claimed they had run out of anaesthetic but instead of delaying the operations, they went blindly ahead. I am glad to say that the two boys concerned are now at home in Canada and feeling well.

In the matter of dental work, the cases of wanton brutality are too numerous to mention.

Another form of "treatment," which by the way the Japanese took themselves, was what we called "Moxibustion." This consisted of placing six lighted wool tapers on a man's back, three up and down on each side, and allowing them to burn out. The effect of this procedure was apparently to burn out the evil spirits, but actually I think they used it in order to create more temporary pain and take your mind off your real sickness. There was a course of this treatment continuing for days - until you got better - and could go to work. Many a Canadian can show you his "Moxibustion."

Before describing further generalities, I think it might be interesting to quote some entries in my diary, which were actually made at the time. None of these entries is complete as owing to Jap inspections only notes were made.

Explain about my writings and diary
etc previous to this.

- Oct. 23, 1943 - Cold last night but improved today. Potatoes for breakfast. Grub pretty skoshi but fried squid for supper.
- Oct. 24, 1943 - Cold today and dull. Tenko inside this morning as too dark outside.
- Oct. 27, 1943 - Two years ago we sailed from Vancouver for Hong Kong, little realizing what our end would be. Thank you, Mackenzie King!
- Oct. 31, 1943 - Had Bean Sprout Soup, quite good. Hope we get some Red Cross Supplies soon as food "Tai-han Skinai."
- Nov. 3, 1943 - Fleas bad last night and delirious patient in hospital so did not sleep very well. Had fire practice today.
- Nov. 4, 1943 - Another bad night. Pop and Stewart both delirious (pneumonia) and carried on conversation intermittently during night. If their condition was not serious it would have been humorous as Pop's mind was working along that line.
- Nov. 5, 1943 - Pay Day. Hospital tax raised to 20% to purchase medicine, especially for pneumonia patients. Diarrhoe epidemic seems to be considerably better.
- Nov. 9, 1943 - Men upset owing to lack of food. Tempers short.

Augst 16th 1945 - Sendia camp No. 1. Five hundred and sixty three prisoners of war which included Javanese, British and 200 Canadians. Were informed by the local Japanese camp authorities to appear in the new mess hall to listen to a Japanese nationwide broadcast being given by the Japanese Emperor. While we had heard through the local Japanese guards that there was a possibility of peace being declared we had nothing definite to go on. so naturally we were all excited when we told to come and listen to the Emperor's speech. Unfortunately the reception was indistinct and in Japanese. and when it was finished we were actually none the wiser with the exception that we knew that something must have taken place when the Emperor made a speech.

The next day, August 17th, the regular one o'clock shift did not go down into the mine and then the local Japanese authorities told us that "it was not necessary to work anymore" and we the prisoners, naturally formed one conclusion which was "If the Nips are not sending us down into the mine to-day, then the war must be over". We all relaxed and congratulated each other that we had "come through". The afternoon of August 17th was spent in quiet rejoicing that such a thing could happen to us as we had been preparing to spend another winter in the enemy's hands. The next morning we all awakened in a spirit of suspense wondering if it could be true. We had our breakfast in the usual way, sun was shining brightly in our valley and suddenly there was a roar of sound over our valley camp. We all dashed out of our huts and looked up into the lovely blue sky. and we saw something that it is not within my realm of words to describe. They came over in dozens - carrier planes, tree-hopping over the hills surrounding our camp (the fighter boys from the carriers had been over our camp many times before while the ward was still on and in those days they meant business.) This time they came over in the same way with their machine guns and cannons lined up for action but we knew by their performan that they were coming over with the pacific purpose of saying "Hello", to us and not with any idea of blasting Hell out of the Japs.

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In my opinion, in which, I think all the British, Javanese and Canadians will agree, these were the finest moments that were ever experienced by any human being. While I have mentioned the British, Javanese and Canadian prisoners, I must specially prefer to one U.S. Naval Reserve (JG) Lt. who had been with the Canadians for more than three years and a half, who came from San Yose, California. While the fighter planes were putting on a "circus" I went up to this American Naval officer and said "Isn't that lovely?" and he and I had always been good friends but in this case he did not answer me. He just looked at me. The next day he came to me and said, "Tim, I'm sorry about yesterday but damn it all I was so choked up I could not speak." These carrier planes were off the "Lex" and they came over for three days - in the early morning around five o'clock, about noon and again in the late afternoon with machine guns and cannons wide open. They were not only saying hello to us but they were making very certain that we were not being "pushed around" any more.

I had seen a number of these small black fighter planes which we knew were from carriers, over our camp previous to the surrender of the Japanese and during these flights the pilots naturally did not have any time for us as they were busy looking for their targets and Nip army concentrations. In those days it seemed to us that they were tough and looking for trouble but when the boys came over after it was all over, while they were still looking for trouble in the event that their help was needed the planes appeared very friendly to us. They not only appeared friendly but they were actually so. The pilots, observers, Photographers and all members of the crew of the "Lex" dropped written notes of greetings into our camp along with parcels of cigarettes, coffee, sugar, milk, bread, canned food etc. which they on the "Lex" had taken from their own stores and passed on to us.

The boys in the little black planes from the carriers swooped down over our camp regularly ~~and~~ for two days, putting on a "circus" which the folks at home had never seen. Our camp was surrounded by high hills, the

planes
 would skim the tree tops coming from all directions and zoom down within fifty feet of the ground at the risk of their lives and climb out, flip over and go out of sight on their bellies and then return flying flat over the tree tops and bank over at a steep angle and the pilots would stand up out of the cock-pit and with that lovely American salute, the hand from the forehead "High - ya- boys".

On the third day, slips of paper were dropped from the fighter planes at two o'clock in the afternoon saying that the B29's would be over in one hour and would drop food and clothing. I want to show, now, what the organization was how the organization for the relief of prisoners of war was put into effect by the American Navy so I quote below a copy of the outline which was dropped to us by the fighter planes one hour in advance of the arrival of the B29's from Saipan

It should be understood that while the boys from the "Lex" had delved into their own precious supplies during the first two days of our liberation, to give us some cheer and comfort and something of the things we had missed for years. It was the B29's who came from the main base stores that dropped us extraordinary quantities of food and clothing. The boys on the B29's and those at the base in Saipan not only wanted to give us food and material but also knew that it would add to our enjoyment to see these articles floating down out of the sky from brightly ~~exposed~~ glowing colors. Therefore, when a B29, which of course could not come down into the camp area, came over our camp, the supplies left the plane on a large wooden rack and then floated down to earth attached to a parachute. It is quite possible that each color of a parachute during combat would signify some definite information to those to whom it was dropped but in our case when a B29 opened there appeared a myriad of colors floating down through the air against the azure background of the sky. Many of the drums, full of supplies, were too heavy for the tested strength of the parachute attached to them with the result that the drum would ~~break~~ break away from the

the parachute and many of these drums landed a great distance from the camp amidst a holocaust of beautiful sliced peaches, chocolate bars, soup sugar etc spread over a wide area. While this was disheartening to over 500 men ~~whowerestarving~~ there was the consolation that the prisoners after tramping over the hills for a number of miles to retrieve these articles, on many occasions found the local Nips rifling these treasures and immediately inflicted corporal punishment on them which was something that the prisoners had not had the pleasure of doing before.

Before boarding an LSM we were told that we were being taken out into Tokyo Bay to board a warship, where we would be given quarters for a few days until arrangements could be made to take us out. We sailed through dozens of ships of all types on the way to "our" warship, and very shortly pulled up alongside the largest man-of-war I had ever seen. It reminded me of gazing up at a tall building since in the LSM we were practically on the surface of the water. The ship's band was playing an especial welcome to us, 115 Canadians, and once again our hearts rose in our throats at this sign of friendship and courtesy.

We were immediately taken aboard and welcomed by the Captain of the Ship and his Executive Officer, and as usual when coming in contact with Americans, the first thing to do was EAT. Tables were set up on the main deck and we all fell to. That was about a year ago and I can still remember it all so vividly. Ham and Eggs, beautifully cooked, the ration being a thick slab of fried ham and three eggs, and of course all the toast, butter, potatoes, canned milk and sugar and coffee that one could possibly consume. And when you had finished that, all you had to do was go back again and get a refill, and finally the Chief Petty Officer who was looking after ~~our~~ us would pick up a large pan of ham or eggs or anything else and come around to the tables with it. "Have some more, boys, there is lots of it." So naturally we all had a grand feed. I consumed two complete breakfasts, with the result that I could eat barely any lunch, which annoyed me a great deal. I did take some ice-cream though and would have eaten it, I guess, if it had killed me as this was the first we had seen for many long years.

After breakfast we were assigned to our quarters. I do not think there will be any objection to stating that we were on the USS WISCONSIN, one of the newest of the U.S.Navy's 45,000 ton battleships, with a crew of nearly 3,000 men. Some of the crew had already been sent home to the States and this was only the tenth of September 1945. Our quarters were off the main deck and while I am not a Navy man I would consider that this location was the choice of the ship. Mattresses and white sheets on the beds and how lovely they looked to us. Our first taste of civilization! We were also allowed a large area of the deck. The weather was fine and warm and cots were placed on part of our deck area with awnings strung overhead so that the boys did not have to lie on their beds or sit on the deck during the day. Boxes of apples, piles of magazines, chocolate bars, ice cream, coke, all seemed to appear "out of the blue" and I must confess that my limited knowledge of the English language makes it impossible to describe just how much we all appreciated this kindness.

To get back to our arrival on the ship, after breakfast was finished I was ~~immediately~~ interviewed by the Chief Medical Officer of the ship. Were any of the boys not feeling well, was there anything we needed in a medical way, what can we do for you? I suggested two things: First, that it was possible some of us might be carrying a few bugs around with us and in order not to contaminate the ship, would it not be advisable to have us all fumigated. All the clothing we had on had been given to us the night before on shore so there was little chance of it being lousy or flea-ridden, but our packs, with what little they contained, should receive attention. They were then all placed in a large container on the deck and decontaminated.

Second, would it would be possible to have a medical inspection? This was immediately arranged, with four doctors in attendance. We lined up in four ranks and passed through. We had received a medical inspection the previous night at the "processing" centre on shore, but this had been only to pick out the sick men and get them on to the hospital ships. (Incidentally, our camp~~s~~ had been free for some three weeks before we were taken out to Yokohama and the boys had been allowed to travel around the country-side scrounging for food and also there was a city of some 25,000 about a mile from camp, which was a favorite spot for the boys to visit and after ^{nearly} four years of imprisonment (some of the Jap girls did not look too bad, and leave it to a Canadian soldier to find his way around), it seemed advisable to make the inspection complete. As it turned out this was fortunately unnecessary, but 33 of the boys were put in the sick-bay for various other kinds of treatment. None of their troubles was serious to our way and they had all been working in the mines three weeks before, but nevertheless into the sick-bay they were put and given treatment. This naturally meant a great deal of extra work for the doctors and medical staff, but no ailment was too small, and here I would like to pay tribute to those in the medical section who looked after us so well and willingly. Nothing was too much trouble, but this attitude prevailed throughout the entire ship! ~~Little~~ ^{Big} courtesies were always being extended, but what impressed us so much was the innumerable little courtesies which were at all times being shown by the officers and men of the ship.

of thinking,

After having existed on rice for so long, I was somewhat worried at the size of the meals that we were being allowed to consume, so I asked the Chief Medical Officer the next day if there was any danger of hurting ourselves. "The food they are getting is good for them, let them eat all then can, they deserve it" was the reply I received. So that was that. And he was right. There were one or two ^{minor} exceptions, but not enough to offset the real joy which the taste of good food and lots of it gave to all of us. I do not know whether or not our food was supervised by a medical officer, but I am sure they felt that lots of good food, reading, rest and relaxation in general was what our mentalities needed. I think they had something there.

From the main deck of the Wisconsin we could see the entire Bay and while we were told that a number of ships had departed, including the USS MISSOURI on which the Japs signed the surrender papers, there were still dozens upon dozens of fighting ships still there, and they made the most impressive array of fighting strength that I had ever seen or ever will see. Amongst all the U.S. Navy ships there were a few British so it was a showing of combined ~~power~~ ability and power to warn aggressors that it does not pay to be an aggressor. Battleships, Carriers, Cruisers, Destroyers, Troopships, Landing Barges, Supply ships, etc.etc., a really thrilling sight.

Unfortunately, our stay on the Wiskie was all too short. Naturally, we were all anxious to get home as quickly as possible and as many of the prisoners were being flown out, we felt that the sooner we left Tokyo Bay the sooner we would be home. The Wiskie was expected to sail for the States within a week or ten days but it was not certain just when she would arrive as she might have to make calls or participate in manouvers, but with all our desire to get home we were hoping that we would be allowed to stay and come across the Pacific on her. This was not to be, which of course was only natural. Some of us had two days and some three on the Wiskie as our group

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was broken up for purposes of flying out. We parted from the Wiskie with a deep sense of gratitude for all that had been done for us. Before leaving I was asked by the Padre to speak over the ship's loudspeaker to the members of the ship's company and this I felt to be a real honour. Also before our departure, we witnessed a ship inspection by the Admiral on board, who was in charge of a group of ships in Halsey's Fighting Task Force. He paid us the courtesy of inspecting us also. We did not look very smart but could at least line up and stand stiffly to attention while he was in our area. I think here I will not be criticised for giving a little detail of this inspection. I had asked the Master-at-Arms, who did such a wonderful job looking after us all, what we should do in case the "Old Man" decided to look us over. He said to call the boys to attention and as the Admiral approached I should salute him and from then on, I would be on my own. I had never been inspected by an Admiral before. So when he came along to our area, I saluted very smartly (I hope it was not the Japanese form of salute) and the Admiral put out his hand to shake hands. "How are you boys getting along?" Just fine sir. "We are glad to have you with us." "It sure is nice to be here." "Are you getting everything you need." "Not only all we need sir, but much more." "That's fine, if there is anything we can do for you any time, dont hesitate to say so." "Thank you very much." He then passed along and chatted with a number of the other fellows.

I should also mention that we were given another clothing issue while on board the Wisconsin, underwear, shirts, pants, socks, hankies, etc.

We were also entertained at the movies each night, and while there I had the pleasure of seeing "The Fighting Lady" and what made the picture more thrilling was the fact that the Lady was lying just a few hundred yards from us at the time.

Should any of those who were on the Wisconsin at that time happen to read this effort of mine, I would like to take this means of saluting them one and all and to offer, on behalf of ~~the~~ 115 Canadians, our sincere thanks for their many kindnesses and hospitality.

There have been many theories advanced for the downfall of the Churchill (Coalition) Government, but whatever may have been the actual cause, it is indeed a pity that Winston had not been left in office for at least another term.

This sad factor, combined with the sad passing of Franklin D. Roosevelt, has resulted in a chaotic world today. If Churchill had been left in power and if Roosevelt had been spared, the democratic countries of the world would have had leadership and cooperation today. The British Labour Government is an eyesore to the world and it is becoming more plainly apparent that the Truman policy can well be classed amongst the "weak sisters" of Freedom. After all the grand and wonderful fighting which those American boys did, it seems to me that they are now being badly let down by their own Government, both in home affairs and foreign policy.

Oh, for another partnership of the Roosevelt-Churchill type to arise, one that would work together ~~as~~ as they did and settle their differences amicably and give and take between themselves, for the ultimate betterment of the entire world.

I have always for twenty-five years preached that the United States and Britain must control the world if we were to have freedom for all and I feel sure that this would have been accomplished if one had been allowed to live and the other had not been kicked out of office by a bunch of short-sighted Englishmen.

I am not writing an eulogy for Churchill and Roosevelt - ~~in writing~~ none of us are perfect - but there we had the finest example of goodwill and good fellowship that the world has ever seen between two great powers.

I feel sure that had Joe Stalin, after the war, been able to deal with Roosevelt and Churchill, there would not be the uneasiness existing throughout the world today. Britain now ~~is~~ while still strong, is in second place to Russia and the United States and like a minority in Parliament holds the balance of power insofar as politics and voting are concerned. Fortunately, owing to the basic principles surrounding the two great English speaking countries, they will probably strive through in common accord and if a show-down should ever come will line up together in defence of that heritage that has been handed down to them. Meantime, this petty squabbling goes on between everyone. Granted, the United States of America does not wish to appear as a bully and is therefore practicing tolerance as an example to the rest of the world. But, will it do any good in the final analysis? I repeat that the Roosevelt-Churchill combination, through their common decency and far-sightedness, would have cleaned up the Peace Conferences in a very short time.. Firmness and Justice. If Truman had the confidence of the American people as Roosevelt had it, he and his Administration could really go places, but without that support he has naturally declined into the realm of "weak sister" in world politics. When we in the Japanese prison camps heard of the death of F.D.R., which by the way the Japanese exclaimed to everyone with great glee, as he personally was their worst enemy in their minds, we knew that the world had lost a great friend.

The Japs thought it was great because they would now be able to make peace

with America (And incidentally hope to retain some of their conquered possessions.) Unfortunately for the Nips, the American drive continued and then they began to wonder maybe it was not this guy Roosevelt alone but the entire American people. BUT IT WAS ROOSEVELT THAT LED THEM INTO IT and the Yankee boys decided to finish the job, which they did in no uncertain manner.

It may sound strange to Canadians and other members of the British Commonwealth that the Canadian prisoners of war in Japanese camps had as their war-cry: - "COME ON YOU YANKS!"

And many a time that prayer was uttered.

Fortunately, there was enough momentum left after Roosevelt's death to continue the job he had started the Nation to do. When we were released from prison and the coal mines, it was the Yankees who saw to it that we had food, medical attention and dozens of other courtesies, and were shipped home. We who were prisoners in Japan proper were looked after by the Yankees and treated the same as though we were in the American Navy, Army or Air Force. There was no discrimination in the least and we got the best and I want to say now that the best was excellent, and lots of it, whether it was food, entertainment, or just common courtesy, the latter being definitely outstanding. Nothing was too good for us, expense was nothing, everything was free - all on Uncle Sam and the American Red Cross. It is a well known fact that the Canadians and the Canadian Red Cross did a wonderful job in the Second World War and this narrative has no intention of ridiculing their efforts. But apparently when it was all over in the Far East, the Canadian Government either had not the ability or the decency to try and look after their ill-fated expedition which they had blindly sent off to either certain death or imprisonment. We were assigned to the care of the American Navy along with the U.S. Marines and U.S. Navy boys, for which we are now truly thankful. But at the time, we felt that our own Government should have had planes and ships there to take care of us. The war in Europe had been over for months. Of course, I must admit that certain "Brass" and other officers were despatched to the Far East in the interests of the Canadians, but their practical value was nil. When we were brought down by train from our camp north of Tokyo and detrained at Yokohama, I did hear someone say that there was a Canadian officer around to look after us but I did not see him, and I was in charge of 114 men of a Canadian Regiment, and we were in Yokohama over night and then spent two days of the USS Wisconsin in Tokyo Bay, but still no sign of any Canadian representative, either military or Red Cross. I should make it clear that we had no complaints at our treatment by the Yankees, ~~but~~ and they made us quite at home, but sometimes we did feel that our own Government could avoid the impression that we were charity patients. The American Red Cross was there and did a wonderful job. Where was ours? Some of the Canadian prisoners of war were handed over to the British (not in Yokohama) and when we found out that we were to be under the Yankees we all felt pretty good, and as it turned out, we sure had the best. I wish to emphasize one point here. All during the time that we were with the Yankees, I never heard a cross word spoken by any man whose job it was to get the prisoners of war out, whether they were Canadian, American, British or Javanese. Discipline had been relaxed now that the war was over but there never was any sign of insubordination - on the contrary a friendly spirit prevailed - either at Yokohama, on board the USS Wisconsin, the C-54 from Yokohama to Guam, in hospital at Guam, or on the troopship from there to San Diego.

Everything was in that well known Yankee friendly spirit. I am talking now of fighting men and those boys who had done such a wonderful job at fighting were just as anxious to do a good job at repatriation. And they succeeded 100%.

Ours was the first troopship to land at San Diego bearing prisoners of war. There were some 450 Americans and 50 Canadians and some 1800 navy and marine boys on it, the USS Lamar. We called her the Hedy Lamarr but unfortunately there were no movie queens on board, in fact nothing that wore skirts. On arrival at San Diego we were given a splendid reception by bands, Hollywood "Queens" and the Red Cross. Here we did run into representatives of the Canadian Red Cross, ladies who lived in Los Angeles or vicinity who came down to San Diego to welcome us. It was nice to see them but they were not Canadians. They were British who had settled in California many years ago and who were voluntarily helping out, and we owe them a deep debt of gratitude for their help while we were there. The Canadians were the first off the boat and I was the first to step on to the dock, after a fourteen day trip from Guam in a troopship packed full of human bodies.

I cannot stress too much our feeling of being "left out in the cold" insofar as our own Government and people were concerned. No one seemed to bother about us. Everyone was having too good a time at home, so let George (in this case Uncle Sam) do it. Possibly it was just as well as Uncle Sam did a wonderful job. The fifty Canadians were driven out to Camp Hahn, about 110 miles from San Diego, for the night. We were in two modern busses and enjoyed the trip immensely. We stopped at a small town, the name escapes me at the moment, for lunch and then some of the boys wandered off and apparently found a tavern or two, so the conducting Canadian officer and the Red Cross ladies were very concerned in case some of them would not show up. I was asked to round them up "because some of them may be missing." I replied "The boys are home, let them do what they want after all these long years, and if we find that we are being delayed too long, I will go and find them." For some unknown reason I did not feel like a beer which was why I had gone back to the bus after consuming a very good meal. Of course, I never could drink beer after a meal, so that may have had something to do with it.

Anyway we got away pretty well on time, the boys having had a beer or two, and continued our journey through the hills and arrived at Camp Hahn and got settled for the night. Here we met some Canadian army personnel who outfitted us with battle dress, great-coats, shoes, cap, etc.etc. during the evening and we also had a cursory medical inspection and spent the evening in the Welfare Hut with the Red Cross Ladies et al.

I had gone to bed about 11 p.m. and was just dozing off when a Canadian officer came into the hut (I was sleeping on a single bed with mattress and white sheets and blankets) and said that a number of the boys had left camp in their uniforms and gone into Riverside, about 8 miles away. He was rather worried about this and was checking up to see how many were absent. I told him to go to bed, that if the boys had broken camp they would be back in time for our departure in the morning and everything would be alright. Peculiarly enough, some of them had quite a night of it as so soon as they arrived in Riverside the local populace took them to their hearts as it were and gave them a grand time. Unfortunately, the American

M.P's. who were responsible for us, received orders to go in to Riverside and round up the Canadians and get them back to camp. The Yankees were not very thorough but tried to carry out their orders to the extent that they themselves would not get into trouble. I was not in Riverside that night but some of the boys told me what a grand time they had and of the hospitality of the people. It seemed a pity that some of them had to be picked up by the M.P's. and brought back to camp but I might say (as I dont think anyone will get into trouble about it now) that the M.P's. were naturally with our boys and brought in only a few. Their sympathies were with us, although their orders were not, and many of the boys had a marvellous time being entertained in the nicest homes in Riverside. By being entertained I should point out that that means music, food, talk, possibly a drink or two, but mainly good cheerful clean hospitality. That was what the boys enjoyed so much after all their years in confinement, and I would like to pay a special tribute to the citizens of Riverside, Calif., for their kindness that night to a few Canadian boys.

I must not forget to mention how wonderfully well we were looked after by the Red Cross that evening in Camp Hahn. The ladies could not do enough for us. Although most of them were on the elderly side, the boys realized just how much the ladies were doing for them and really did all they could to make everything a success. For instance, a Red Cross lady would say "I Want someone to carry a few cases of Coke" and immediately there would be a dozen wanting to help. To close this off, I want to say that I enjoyed the evening immensely and am very appreciative of the work which the good ladies of the Red Cross did that evening.

Next morning we had a big breakfast at the U.S.Army mess hall, more than one could possibly eat, and later on we boarded busses and were driven into Los Angeles, where we arrived about 5 p.m., with the Red Cross Ladies still looking after us and seeing that we were well taken care of.

One of the ironies (or analogies) of war.

I guess everyone is familiar with the phrase "digging in" as it is applied in the Army. For those who have never appreciated this expression, digging in means a hole in the ground or a trench or any other means so long as it affords some kind of protection from enemy shells, snipers, or etc. In war, digging in is a very important matter. However, I find that there are other forms of "Digging In." And this applies very strongly to the Home Front. While men in action dig in to save their lives, the Home Front digs in to pile up worldly wealth, and from I have seen since my return to Canada a very excellent job has been accomplished. They are dug in so strongly that when the man who was willing to give his life returns to civilian life he finds that during his absence he has been by-passed and those gallants on the home front are away out in front. Of course, the law demands that he get his old job back or one just as good, but it does not mention anything about - other things being equal - putting him in the position that he would ordinarily have had had he stayed at home and dug himself in. In my opinion this is one of the worst travesties of justice that is known in our current way of life. If everyone had stayed at home, then we would all be working for Hitler now. I have noticed many inferior ^{ity} complexes recently because the old conscience is working. "I have you to thank for my preservation and my good job. I suppose I am a bit of a heel, but I just did not have the courage and I also knew that with so many away it would be easier to climb to the top. Anyway, in a few years time, and I am young, it will all be forgotten about and I will be able to go around with my head in the air, and plenty of 'bulls on the ranch' and money in the bank." Yes, dear friend, I am beginning to think that it was only the dumb guys that went away to war. We can have our old jobs back, or the equivalent thereof - because it is the law - and work under someone who was the office boy or the apprentice when we went away.'

Democratic Honours and Awards.

Looking over the list of civilians who have been "honoured" since the termination of hostilities makes one wonder what it is all about. Oh yes, a few were toosed out to certain representatives of certain elements as a sop to try and keep them in line. Possibly that is good business. Then glance at the long list of elderly portly gentlemen who sacrificed their leisure to help at the hundreds of jobs that had to be done. They did a wonderful job and should have the gratitude of every citizen. But while they were doing that job they were being handsomely paid, in most cases and none of them had to work or think very hard as they had plenty of assistants. To the Dollar A Year men should go a special tribute as they were genuinely sincere, because no matter how much money one has there is always the urge for more, and I admire the small group of "Dollar A Year" men. DECORATIONS AND HONOURS should go to only those who were willing to take a chance on their life! This, the more so, when thousands of "The Boys" have been overlooked insofar as being shown any recognition for good work done, not to mention monetary considerations. A man in the Army drawing his \$1.50, etc. per day, and \$35.00 a month for his wife, and risking his life, and another man drawing \$20,000. a year and risking nothing, and getting in addition a kind of public recognition such as a C.M.G., O.B.E., or etc. For What? Because he had the opportunity to make a few dollars!

JAPANESE PRISON CAMPS

Report by E.29806 W.O.II (C.S.M.) JOHN BROWN THOMSON
Royal Rifles of Canada, Quebec, Que. - as a Prisoner of War of the Japanese
from the "Fall of HONG KONG" at 2:00 A.M. December 26, 1941
to the welcome aboard the American U.S.S. WISCONSIN in
Tokyo Bay in August 1945.

(Dictated to his wife, Mrs. J. B. Thomson) *Bertha G. Thomson*

(in Hong Kong)

We in Shamshuipo Camp/had heard that the LISBON MARU had been torpedoed and sunk by a submarine. The Japs blamed the Americans and no doubt it was an American submarine. Did the Commander of that submarine know that there were prisoners aboard? Definitely not. The Japs raised a big hue and cry to us about the dirty Americans sinking a ship loaded with prisoners of war. We in Hong Kong naturally felt very depressed about the loss of lives. At the same time, knowing that war is war and you never know when your turn is coming, it gave us a boost to learn that American submarines were in China waters. Incidentally, this was only a forerunner of what was to come. In the early months of 1945 a Japanese ship rarely ventured outside harbour waters, and those that did were immediately sunk. We were building them - freighters - for the Nips, under armed guard, but most of them would barely float and one good hit by a torpedo was the finishing touch.

So - when the draft call came early in 1943 for 600 Canadians to "go to a small Island, but a very powerful Island, and where you would be treated very well and would have lots to eat, good shoes and clothing and plenty of medicine and good doctors and lots of rest" it was necessary to find the required number. We did not have 600 Canadians in so-called "good health" but many of the boys volunteered and we were able to meet the quota. We had to meet it - or else. In any case, on our particular draft, which was the first to include Canadians, there were 1300 in all - 650 Canadians and the balance mainly British. I wish I could tell you all the details. Some of them would possibly be boring. Briefly, we 650 had been on call for four days. We were wire-fenced off from the rest of the camp, meaning that we were in isolation and supposedly "pure", which means free from Dip & Dys - the twin killers, as the Jap authorities did not wish to have the "Island" to which we were going contaminated by any disease which these White prisoners might carry with them.

After a number of postponements from day to day, and night to night, we were told finally on the afternoon of January 18, 1943, to fall in with our belongings. Our belongings were then searched by the Japanese guards. This took place on the street which ran down through the centre of the camp. After lying around for some three hours, we were told to go back to our huts as we were not leaving at that time, but to keep ourselves in readiness to leave at a moment's notice. As previously mentioned, we had been in so-called quarantine for a number of days, but word had got around the camp that we were definitely leaving this time, and when we returned to our huts they had been stripped of anything and everything we had left behind, even to the beds. Most everyone had so little that the

temptation to steal was difficult to overcome for many of the prisoners. Fortunately, we did not have long to stay in the huts. About two o'clock in the morning we were routed out again and lined up. About 5:00 a.m. we were marched up the main street of the camp and halted at the main gate. There each section leader had to report to a hut being used by the Japs as an office of some kind, and was handed fifty military ten-yen notes, one for each man in his section, supposedly to have been supplied by the Red Cross. I am not sure yet just how the Red Cross managed this, or how much it cost them, but it was certainly welcome as most of us were broke and ten yen looked like a lot of money, even if it was the stuff they printed and supplied for use in captured territories. Incidentally, after our arrival in Japan - there had been no opportunity to spend any of this during the trip - it was all called in and exchanged for the standard yen used in the home islands.

We finally marched out of Shamshuipo Camp as it was breaking day, 1300 of us, divided equally between Canadians and British. We passed down Nathan Road - the main street of Kowloon - until we came to the docks. Just over a year previous to this we had come swinging up this thoroughfare in full battle order with the bands playing and being welcomed by the populace, both foreign and native. During our three weeks sojourn there prior to the commencement of hostilities I think most of us had also come up this street by taxi, street-car and the famous rickshaw. I purposely use the word "famous" as they will ever remain so to many of us, and particularly to those who insisted on the coolie runner riding and the Canadian army pulling. And if you wished to be high-brow, you could have a sedan chair with four coolies carrying it on their shoulders and you perched up in the air some ten feet off the ground. It was bad enough falling out of a rickshaw but it could be a serious matter to unload precipitately from a chair, so most of us declined the honour and used the lowly rickshaw. With our "big" money as compared to the Limeys, we were able to get the very best, much to the disgust of our British friends. They asked us not to be so generous with the natives as we were spoiling it for them. Fortunately, we were not free long enough to do any serious damage to the British pocket books and now that the war is over, no doubt the garrison there will be able to revert to their placid, overbearing routine. However, for three weeks they had plenty of opposition!

After a few more hours' delay, we were finally bundled on to lighters and taken out to a large ship lying in the harbour. She turned out to be the TATUTA MARU, one of the N.Y.K. boats. However, our enthusiasm was shortlived, as we soon found that very little space had been allotted to the prisoners as she was loaded with Japanese troops. Some of us were quartered in third class staterooms normally holding fourteen but there were so many of us that we had to take turns at sleeping and also using the floor. The huge majority of the boys were in the holds and in passage-ways and on the stairs - in fact, we were packed in like the proverbial sardine, but the sardine has no worries once he gets into the can. He is never thirsty or hungry, does not need any fresh air and never has to relieve himself. We, of course, were exceedingly lucky in comparison with all other movements of prisoners that I have ever heard about. We sailed on the afternoon of the 19th and arrived in Nagasaki on the 22nd. We had a good ship and made no stops so now that we know how the other boys travelled from Manila, Singapore and Hong Kong, we consider ourselves truly

lucky and thankful to whatever twist of fate that put us on the TATUTA MARU. It was not pleasant by any means. While I would like to expand on the treatment experienced on other ships, this account is confined to things personally witnessed, and knowing Johnny Jap so well, I have no hesitation in believing the stories I have heard of the cruelties and hardships inflicted on helpless and sick men.

The feeding problem was a difficult one. Men were detailed to report at the galley where they received a bucket of rice and sometimes "soup" to go with it but owing to the "sardine" formation, the physical distribution was well nigh impossible.

My section of 50 men was the first aboard the TATUTA MARU and were put in three third-class staterooms. We were all jubilant at this "break" and had the impression that the 1300 of us had the ship to ourselves and were rejoicing at having hit it so lucky. Shortly after our arrival in the staterooms, a guard came along and called for a working party. Some 20 of us followed him down to the bottom of the ship, where we were put to work stowing supplies which were being loaded. These consisted of flour, sugar, bully and quite a large supply of various kinds of biscuits. As I remember it, the Japs had not bothered to remove the Red Cross markings from the biscuits, but all of it had obviously come from the Red Cross shipment which had been received in Hong Kong the previous November. At that time we were still not completely disillusioned and felt that the Japs had held this out from distribution in Hong Kong in order to have it for the use of the prisoners during transport and later in Japan. Now, needless to say, our theory was unfounded as we saw none of these supplies either during the trip or after landing at Nagasaki.

After finishing the working party we returned to our quarters and found them overrun with Royal Scots, and then it dawned on us that maybe we were not so lucky after all. As it turned out, with the usual Jap efficiency (?), they had spread out the first ones on to make them feel good for a short time, and then jammed in the remainder, which of course was not the fault of the Royal Scots or any other of the prisoners. Just another example of rank inefficiency, as I thought at the time, but I later learned that this was a standard method used by our little friends to break morale. Well, they tried in every way to accomplish this for three years and eight months, and I am proud to say that, with very few exceptions they were totally unsuccessful, insofar as our Canadian boys were concerned. I make that qualification about the Canadian boys as after our arrival in Japan we had very little contact with any other prisoners until May 1945 so am not in a position to speak from first hand knowledge.

Landing at Nagasaki

The TATUTA MARU pulled into Nagasaki Harbour on the morning of Jan 22nd 43. We were called up from below in sections and got our first glimpse of daylight. We were formed up on the main deck and waited patiently for hours, just standing there and being checked for "quantity," to make sure no one had escaped. Finally, we were told we would be completely "fumigated" so as not to take any germs on to land. This fumigation process was quite an eye-opener. As we walked past a given point in single file, a Nip sprayed us with something out of a gadget that looked like a small fire extinguisher, the spraying taking place on the outside only. I am sure the Japs were proud of their health ingeniousness, but anyway they went through the motions and that was all that counted so far as they were concerned. After another long wait we were put on tugs and transported to land. We were kept on the docks for some hours until darkness had fallen. During this time we had a treat! Every man received five, or in some cases six, flat buns and quite a good quantity of cigarettes. The buns were fresh and really quite edible, and they also contained some sugar, not much but enough that it could be tasted. I think I can say without fear of contradiction from the boys that our ~~best~~ treatment on the docks in Nagasaki was the highlight of our trip to the land of the setting sun. From what we were able to see of the city, it consisted mainly of shacks set in a beautiful natural setting. A very good natural harbour and picturesque, with some industries along the western shore. Our vision was of course strictly limited and any of the boys with the propensity to explore were out of luck as we were strictly guarded.

After darkness fell, we were marched through the city for about half an hour and arrived at the railway station. Our first ^{view} ~~impression~~ of that wonderful island to which we were going was not at all impressive, but as I shall later explain it was indicative of any of the places we saw in Japan. Apparently we were "honoured guests" for we were loaded into passenger coaches, but once again the "sardine" method was used. The Canadian Army was quite adept in the use of the "sardine" method ^{as} so we had had some experience. The Japanese railways use the narrow gauge and their coaches are similar to ours only definitely not quite so wide and ~~with~~ that ~~Japanese~~ wide spread which most of the Japanese men and women have makes us wonder now how they manage. In our case it was not so bad as we had already been trimmed down. The coaches could seat about 50 and we were piled in to the tune of about 80 so it was rather difficult to get to the little room at the end of the car without walking on someone's ~~head~~ anatomy. Our food during the train trip was quite good, in Japanese fashion. It was put on at intervals, and was served in thin flat wooden boxes, which contained mainly rice, and white rice at that, a small piece of pickled fish and an assortment of pickled vegetables. We received three meals a day and enjoyed them, if that is the correct term to use.

During the trip when the train stopped at a large station such as Osaka, loud speakers proclaimed to the populace that it contained prisoners from the South who were being brought to Japan and this was evidence that the Japanese were ^{after} fighting a victorious war. In other words, a general pep talk so that the natives would continue with their endeavours. They would come close to the train and look in ~~at~~ the windows at us but I must say in the interests of truth that during these various stops none of the spectators were truculent. To my knowledge, none of us at any time while travelling from Hong Kong to Yokohama ~~where~~ was spat upon or insulted by civilians in anyway. Of course, we had Army guards at all times, who were all-powerful

and the civilian populace were terrified of them, as you who take the trouble to read this will later find out.

On the morning of Jan 24th, after two nights and ^aday on the train, we pulled into the main station at ~~Tok~~ Yokohama, where we were transferred from the steam train to an electric train. By this time our party had been reduced to 500 Canadians, the others having been put off at various points on the trip north.

diphtheria

Five hundred Canadians arrived in Tokyo on the morning of Jan. 24, 1943. Many were suffering from dry and wet beri-beri, ^{malaria} pellagra, dysentery and the after effects of diphtheria, as well as many minor ailments. We were marched from the steam train through the station (a miniature Grand Central) and put aboard an electric train. The Japs in Tokyo really had a first-class electric train service, something like you would see in New York or London insofar as schedules are concerned. They came and departed exactly on the minute and woe betide anyone who was caught half in and half out. With a great deal of scrambling, most of us managed to get aboard, although ~~some of our stretcher cases~~ our Medical Orderlies, through no fault of their own, were not able to get all of our stretcher cases aboard. This ride lasted for only about 30 minutes, when we were detrained, formed up and put in charge of Jap gendarmes. Believe it or not, our kit bags were placed on tracks and transported to our new camp. We were marched through a semi-industrial semi-residential section for about three miles, when we turned in off the road (not a street) and found ourselves in a so-called parade area about 30 ft wide by 80 feet long between two fairly large ~~huts~~ one-storey huts with sloping roofs. We were in ten sections, fifty men to a section, as we had left Hong Kong although during the travelling and marching the men had become mixed so that no group was as it had been when leaving. However, that made very little difference to us as we were all dead tired and only wanted some place to lie down and relax. However, that was not to be our lot. After being lined up in sections, with our Medical Officer out in front, we were then given numbers (a piece of cardboard with a safety pin stuck through it and a piece of cloth wrapped around it and your number printed in ink on the front of it.) Woe betide the man who did not have his number prominently displayed on his shirt or coat front after that. After the numbering ceremony, we were then presented to the Commanding Officer in charge of all prison camps in the Tokyo-Yokohama area. He was a Colonel and thought he was pretty tough. Unfortunately, his speech to us, a copy of which I later found in English in the Interpreter's office and which I copied, was destroyed by the American bombers some months later so it is impossible to quote it word for word. In substance, it stated we were not welcome as we were prisoners of war - something that a Japanese soldier would never become - but since we had been sent to Japan to work, we would ~~be~~ not be killed outright but would have to do as we were told and work hard for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Later on, a decision would be made as to what would be done with us. Meantime, it was the express determination of the Japanese people to conquer "your country" and erase it from the face of the earth. Our people would in future be governed by the Japanese. Very encouraging! Particularly when at that time the Nips had been travelling steadily southward and had not yet met any really serious reverses. They were riding the crest of the wave and any with whom we came in contact sincerely believed that they were unbeatable and would have one-third of the world, i.e. from the North to the South Pole and from Hawaii to the western border of India. Just how they hoped to reconcile "Uncle Joe" Stalin with this line of thinking is not understood as at all times they were playing up to Russia and boasting of the good relations that existed between them. Gradually, as the German pressure on the Russians receded, the more friendly, from a propaganda standpoint, did the Japs become to them. The Nips had their wires crossed somewhere.

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But while winning, why should they worry about the consequences. The old familiar saying - "They had the world by the tail with a down-hill drag". What a sad awakening lay before them, the poor unfortunate, misguided coolie, which after all comprises about 90% of the race. Uneducated, a fanatical belief in the inviolability of their Emperor, who could do no wrong, no respect for human life or their own women - people who had lived under the yoke of the big "Forty Families" of the empire for generations, who bowed down scraped to their Images, both dead and alive; who sold their daughters into lives of prostitution (from which they could never escape unless someone was willing to buy them out of it), in order to clear the "mortgage" from the two or three acres of rice paddy which they worked - a people who would suffer agonies (when they were sick) to deliver the evil spirits out of their bodies by placing burning wicks on their backs and allow them to burn down into the flesh. Many of our Canadian boys had to undergo this latter form of "treatment" to cure them of beri-beri or any other disease they may have had. In passing, I think I should say that this particular procedure was not a form of torture for the prisoners in the estimation of the Japanese medical authorities, but that they sincerely believed it had curative effects. People who lived in squalor, filth and disease, the like of which cannot be imagined even in the worst congested areas of our large cities on this Continent. Sanitation was unknown. Any man, woman or child would relieve themselves in public, even to "squatting" on the public thoroughfares and using whatever they had handy or, as in many cases, using nothing at all to clean themselves. I have seen hundreds of mounds of excretion lying on the public thoroughfares. Their habits are indescribable, both from a sanitation and moral standpoint. But this mode of living is natural to them. That is all they have ever had. I, on a number of occasions complained to our Camp Commandant about the low standard of the Jap staff and guards in our camp and that the Japanese Army should put people with more sense of responsibility in the prison camps, and one day he frankly owned up and told me that the Japanese Army was using this type of individual on that type of work because there were not enough educated people in Japan to put in charge of that kind of work. I thought that a terrible admission to make. On the other hand, he may have been "pulling my leg" and covering up the real reason that coolies were given uncontrolled authority over prisoners, the reason being that coolies would have no compunction over killing or torturing a prisoner. However, I found that some of the so-called educated class of officer and N.C.O. in the Imperial Japanese Army took great delight in torturing any defenceless prisoner whose face he did not like; therefore, it all boils down to that inherent streak of cruelty with which every Jap is blessed, irrespective of the thin veneer of courtesy and kindness which some of them have developed for surface appearances.

I shall now tell you about our experiences in a prison camp in Japan. This will deal in first-hand information only and will not therefore be applicable to all prison camps in Japan, my idea being to narrate those experiences with which our group had to contend.

In October 1943 the Japanese Army issued orders in our camp that every prisoner must keep a diary. I never learned the exact reason for this but since the diaries of all men were periodically called in for inspection to see what had been written, it was only natural that the boys made purely superficial entries. If one put in what he thought, he would be beaten up if detected, and as the great majority of the boys made entries merely to conform with the Jap orders, it can be well imagined that there was very little of interest to be read. Most merely listed what they had to eat at each meal, so there ~~were~~ were monotonous pages of the date and "Rice and Soup" as under:

Nov. 1st: Breakfast - Rice and Soup
Dinner 2 Rice and Soup
Supper - Rice and Soup

Nov. 2nd: Breakfast - Rice and Soup
Dinner - Rice and Soup
Supper - Rice and Soup.

Incidentally, that will give an idea of the monotony of prison camp life. Day in and day out, always the same routine. The entries would occasionally, but not often, be varied with a small additional item of interest - "Fish for supper" - but do not get the impression from this that we had a helping of fish. Possibly a few minnows, six at the most, more often three or four, boiled in deep fat - peanut oil or what have you. The reason for this additional note in the diary was on account of the delicious sensation created on the palate. The poorest families in any country of the world, even Japan or China, never had to exist on such a monotonous diet, in addition to which there was never enough of it. We received only enough to be able to crawl out in the morning and go to work. By ten a.m. many men would be ravenously hungry, the noon "meal" would alleviate this for a short period, and by three p.m. the same feeling existed. Supper would help, then wait for roll call, and into bed. Up in the morning at 5:30 and repeat the same performance, day after day, month after month, year after year. Usually we had three holidays a month. During the cold weather these were mostly spent in bed trying to keep warm. In the summer one tried to wash his underwear, if he had any, or sit out on the parade ground and talk or read, if you had anything to read, and absorb the sun. Fire drill was also a frequent occurrence, when we would all be called out to fight imaginary fires in different parts of the camp. It may be uninteresting to read of the fire fighting equipment but as a matter of future interest I think it would be worth the trouble to enumerate it, as best I can from memory:

Straw bags and mats (to beat out the flames or incendiaries)
Long poles with a hook on the end, for demolition. (These were similar to what the loggers use on the Pacific Coast for handling logs in the water.) For practical purposes they would not demolish an out-house.

A rickety ladder or possibly two at times if they could be found. Anywhere from five to twenty-five buckets, wooden or tin. Later on we were supplied with a "pump" and a length of hose and when this was received, the Japs really thought they had reached the penultimate in fire-fighting equipment for prison camps. This gadget held ^{well} about ten gallons of water and was worked by hand, just like the old pump back home on the farm, although not quite so efficient, or else the hose broke out. There were three small concrete water containers placed at "strategic" points and woe betide the prisoners if these were not always full. They constituted the main water supply for fighting fire. Therefore, there was a chain gang, during practices, fill^{ing} the concrete water containers and another chain gang taking water from the tanks and throwing it on the fire. Those filling the tanks secured their water from the wash basin taps, so all in all it was a very proficient operation. Fortunately, we never had to fight a real fire.

I neglected to mention more long poles with straw ropes attached to the end, which were designed to beat out a fire at a height of ten or fifteen feet, in place of the straw mats. There may have been other modern contrivances but my memory fails me.

This firefighting business was a continual bugbear but in one way it helped to break the monotony and the boys endured it with their usual high spirits.

In addition to diaries, we had "Cash" Books. These had to be kept up to date with every transaction entered and of course were called in for periodic inspection at random. In other case if the J.D.O. had imbibed a few drinks of sake, or was feeling a little belligerent, he would hold everybody on parade at roll call and along with his assistants would take a group or groups and ask for their Cash Books. When these were presented you also had to produce the amount, if any, which you may have had shown as a balance. If you had more, or less, you were then in for Jikko or Umpan, but after a couple of these surprise inspections the boys learned to always have the right amount on their person or easily available, so that before long the Cash Book regulation became a joke, as did many of their other regulations once we became experienced in the Japanese ability and mentality.

I should also mention the medical operation of the camp. First of all, before going into any details, I would like to renounce with the greatest vigor the so-called medical profession of Japan. Whether or not their doctors, when they graduate, ~~are~~ take the oath of allegiance to their profession and their fellow man, I do not know, but if they do, then I can only say that the Japanese Medical ^{people are} ~~profession~~ is a blot to the world's most humanitarian profession and should be expelled therefrom until the present bunch of Jap quacks is eliminated from the face of the earth. Even a half-decent Jap layman had more respect for the medical credo and its responsibilities than did any of the Jap doctors with whom we came in contact. Bullies and Butchers! ~~are~~ They sacrificed what sense of decency they may have had at one time for the benefit of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and in my opinion this is one of the worst calamities that the Japanese race will have to live down. I am not going to quote many instances as it will make sordid reading. Two vericocele operations performed without anesthetic, in the same "hospital" immediately following one another, on two Canadian prisoners of war. These cases were not urgent but our Canadian medical

officer thought they should be done, but he had not the vaguest idea that the operations would be performed without anesthetic. The Japs claimed they had run out of anesthetic but instead of delaying the operations, they went blindly ahead. I am glad to say that the two boys concerned are now at home in Canada and feeling well.

In the matter of dental work, the cases of wanton brutality are too numerous to mention.

Another form of "treatment," which by the way the Japanese took themselves, was what we called "Moxibustion." This consisted of placing six lighted wool tapers on a man's back, three up and down on each side, and allowing them to burn out. The effect of this procedure was apparently to burn out the evil spirits, but actually I think they used it in order to create more temporary pain and take your mind off your real sickness. There was a course of this treatment continuing for days - until you got better - and could go to work. Many a Canadian can show you his "Moxibustion."

Before describing further generalities, I think it might be interesting to quote some entries in my diary, which were actually made at the time. None of these entries is complete as owing to Jap inspections only notes were made.

Explain about my writings and diary
etc previous to this.

- Oct. 23, 1943 - Cold last night but improved today. Potatoes for breakfast. Grub pretty skoshi but fried squid for supper.
- Oct. 24, 1943 - Cold today and dull. Tenko inside this morning as too dark outside.
- Oct. 27, 1943 - Two years ago we sailed from Vancouver for Hong Kong, little realizing what our end would be. Thank you, Mackenzie King!
- Oct. 31, 1943 - Had Bean Sprout Soup, quite good. Hope we get some Red Cross Supplies soon as food "Tai-han Skinai."
- Nov. 3, 1943 - Fleas bad last night and delirious patient in hospital so did not sleep very well. Had fire practice today.
- Nov. 4, 1943 - Another bad night. Pop and Stewart both delirious (pneumonia) and carried on conversation intermittently during night. If their condition was not serious it would have been humorous as Pop's mind was working along that line.
- Nov. 5, 1943 - Pay Day. Hospital tax raised to 20% to purchase medicine, especially for pneumonia patients. Diarrhoea/epidemic seems to be considerably better.
- Nov. 9, 1943 - Men upset owing to lack of food. Tempers short.

Augst 16th 1945 - Sendia camp No. 1. Five hundred and sixty three prisoners of war which included Javanese, British and 200 Canadians. Were informed by the local Japanese camp authorities to appear in the new mess hall to listen to a Japanese nationwide broadcast being given by the Japanese Emperor. While we had heard through the local Japanese guards that there was a possibility of peace being declared we had nothing definite to go on. so naturally we were all excited when we told to come and listen to the Emperor's speech. Unfortunately the reception was indistinct and in Japanese, and when it was finished we were actually none the wiser with the exception that we knew that something must have taken place when the Emperor made a speech.

The next day, August 17th, the regular one o'clock shift did not go down into the mine and then the local Japanese authorities told us that "it was not necessary to work anymore" and we the prisoners, naturally formed one conculsion which was "If the Nips are not sending us down into the mine to-day, then the war must be over". We all relaxed and congratulated each other that we had "come through". The afternoon of August 17th was spent in quiet rejoicing that such a thing could happen to us as we had been preparing to spend another winter in the enemy's hands. The next morning we all awakened in a spirit of suspense wondering if it could be true. We had our breakfast in the usual way, sun was shining brightly in our valley and suddenly there was a roar of sound over our valley camp. We all dashed out of our huts and looked up into the lovely blue sky. and we saw something that it is not within my realm of words to describe. They came over in dozens - carrier planes, tree-hopping over the hills surrounding our camp (the fighter boys from the carriers had been over our camp many times before while the war was still on and in those days they meant business.) This time they came over in the same way with their machine guns and cannons lined up for action but we knew by their performance that they were coming over with the pacific purpose of saying "Hello", to us and not with any idea of blasting Hell out of the Japs.

In my opinion, in which, I think all the British, Javanese and Canadians will agree, these were the finest moments that were ever experienced by any human being. While I have mentioned the British, Javanese and Canadian prisoners, I must specially refer to one U.S. Naval Reserve (JG) Lt. who had been with the Canadians for more than three years and a half, who came from San Yose, California. While the fighter planes were putting on a "circus" I went up to this American Naval officer and said "Isn't that lovely?" and he and I had always been good friends but in this case he did not answer me. He just looked at me. The next day he came to me and said, "Tim, I'm sorry about yesterday but damn it all I was so choked up I could not speak." These carrier planes were off the "Lex" and they came over for three days - in the early morning around five o'clock, about noon and again in the late afternoon with machine guns and cannons wide open. They were not ^{only} saying hello to us but they were making very certain that we were not being "pushed around" any more.

I had seen a number of these small black fighter planes which we knew were from carriers, over our camp previous to the surrender of the Japanese and during these flights the pilots naturally did not have any time for us as they were busy looking for their targets and Nip army concentrations. In those days it seemed to us that they were tough and looking for trouble but when the boys came over after it was a ll over, while they were still looking for trouble in the event that their help was needed the planes appeared very friendly to us. They not only appeared friendly but they were actually so. The pilots, observers, Photographers and all members of the crew of the "Lex" dropped written notes of greetings into our camp along with parcels of cigarettes, coffee, sugar, milk, bread, canned food etc. which they on the "Lex" had taken from their own stores and passed on to us.

The boys in the little black planes from the carriers swooped down over our camp regularly ~~xxx~~ for two days, putting on a "circus" which the folks at home had never seen. Our camp was surrounded by high hills, the

planes

would skim the tree tops coming from all directions and zoom down within fifty feet of the ground at the risk of their lives and climb out, flip over and go out of sight on their bellies and then return flying flat over the tree tops and bank over at a steep angle and the pilots would stand up out of the cock-pit and with that lovely American salute, the hand from the forehead "High - ya- boys".

On the third day, slips of paper were dropped from the fighter planes at two o'clock in the afternoon saying that the B29's would be over in one hour and would drop food and clothing. I want to show, now, ~~what the organization~~ was how the organization for the relief of prisoners of war was put into effect by the American Navy so I quote below a copy of the outline which was dropped to us by the fighter planes one hour in advance of the arrival of the B29's from Saipan

It should be understood that while the boys from the "Lex" had delved into their own precious supplies during the first two days of our liberation, to give us some cheer and comfort and something of the things we had missed for years. It was the B29's who came from the main base stores that dropped us extraordinary quantities of food and clothing. The boys on the B29's and those at the base in Saipan not only wanted to give us food and material but also knew that it would add to our enjoyment to see these articles floating down out of the sky from brightly ~~xxxxxx~~ glowing colors. Therefore, when a B29, which of course could not come down into the camp area, came over our camp, the supplies left the plane on a large wooden rack and then floated down to earth attached to a parachute. It is quite possible that each color of a parachute during combat would signify some definite information to those to whom it was dropped but in our case when a B29 opened there appeared a myriad of colors floating down through the air against the azure background of the sky. Many of the drums, full of supplies, were too heavy for the tested strength of the parachute attached to them with the result that the drum would ~~xxxx~~ break away from the

the parachute and many of these drums landed a great distance from the camp amidst a holocaust of beautiful sliced peaches, chocolate bars, soup sugar etc spread over a wide area. While this was disheartening to over 500 men ~~whxxxxxxxstxxxxx~~ there was the consolation that the prisoners after tramping over the hills for a number of miles to retrieve these articles, on many occasions found the local Nips rifling these treasures and immediately inflicted corporal punishment on them which was something that the prisoners had not had the pleasure of doing before.

Before boarding an LSM we were told that we were being taken out into Tokyo Bay to board a warship, where we would be given quarters for a few days until arrangements could be made to take us out. We sailed through dozens of ships of all types on the way to "our" warship, and very shortly pulled up alongside the largest man-of-war I had ever seen. It reminded me of gazing up at a tall building since in the LEM we were practically on the surface of the water. The ship's band was playing an especial welcome to us, 115 Canadians, and once again our hearts rose in our throats at this sign of friendship and courtesy.

We were immediately taken aboard and welcomed by the Captain of the Ship and his Executive Officer, and as usual when coming in contact with Americans, the first thing to do was EAT. Tables were set up on the main deck and we all fell to. That was about a year ago and I can still remember it all so vividly. Ham and Eggs, beautifully cooked, the ration being a thick slab of fried ham and three eggs, and of course all the toast, butter, potatoes, canned milk and sugar and coffee that one could possibly consume. And when you had finished that, all you had to do was go back again and get a refill, and finally the Chief Petty Officer who was looking after ~~us~~ us would pick up a large pan of ham or eggs or anything else and come around to the tables with it. "Have some more, boys, there is lots of it." So naturally we all had a grand feed. I consumed two complete breakfasts, with the result that I could eat barely any lunch, which annoyed me a great deal. I did take some ice-cream though and would have eaten it, I guess, if it had killed me as this was the first we had seen for many long years.

After breakfast we were assigned to our quarters. I do not think there will be any objection to stating that we were on the USS WISCONSIN, one of the newest of the U.S.Navy's 45,000 ton battleships, with a crew of nearly 3,000 men. Some of the crew had already been sent home to the States and this was only the tenth of September 1945. Our quarters were off the main deck and while I am not a Navy man I would consider that this location was the choice of the ship. Mattresses and white sheets on the beds and how lovely they looked to us. Our first taste of civilization! We were also allowed a large area of the deck. The weather was fine and warm and cots were placed on part of our deck area with awnings strung overhead so that the boys did not have to lie on their beds or sit on the deck during the day. Boxes of apples, piles of magazines, chocolate bars, ice cream, coke, all seemed to appear "out of the blue" and I must confess that my limited knowledge of the English language makes it impossible to describe just how much we all appreciated this kindness.

To get back to our arrival on the ship, after breakfast was finished I was ~~interviewed~~ interviewed by the Chief Medical Officer of the ship. Were any of the boys not feeling well, was there anything we needed in a medical way, what can we do for you? I suggested two things: First, that it was possible some of us might be carrying a few bugs around with us and in order not to contaminate the ship, would it not be advisable to have us all fumigated. All the clothing we had on had been given to us the night before on shore so there was little chance of it being lousy or flea-ridden, but our packs, with what little they contained, should receive attention. They were then all placed in a large container on the deck and decontaminated.

Second, would it would be possible to have a medical inspection? This was immediately arranged, with four doctors in attendance. We lined up in four ranks and passed through. We had received a medical inspection the previous night at the "processing" centre on shore, but this had been only to pick out the sick men and get them on to the hospital ships. (Incidentally, our camp~~s~~ had been free for some three weeks before we were taken out to Yokohama and the boys had been allowed to travel around the country-side scrounging for food and also there was a city of some 25,000 about a mile from camp, which was a favorite spot for the boys to visit and after ^{nearly} four years of imprisonment (some of the Jap girls did not look too bad, and leave it to a Canadian soldier to find his way around), it seemed advisable to make the inspection complete. As it turned out this was fortunately unnecessary, but 33 of the boys were put in the sick-bay for various other kinds of treatment. None of their troubles was serious to our way and they had all been working in the mines three weeks before, but nevertheless into the sick-bay they were put and given treatment. This naturally meant a great deal of extra work for the doctors and medical staff, but no ailment was too small, and here I would like to pay tribute to those in the medical section who looked after us so well and willingly. Nothing was too much trouble, but this attitude prevailed throughout the entire ship! ~~Little~~ ^{Big} courtesies were always being extended, but what impressed us so much was the innumerable little courtesies which were at all times being shown by the officers and men of the ship.

of thinking,

After having existed on rice for so long, I was somewhat worried at the size of the meals that we were being allowed to consume, so I asked the Chief Medical Officer the next day if there was any danger of hurting ourselves. "The food they are getting is good for them, let them eat all then can, they deserve it" was the reply I received. So that was that. And he was right. There were one or two ^{minor} exceptions, but not enough to offset the real joy which the taste of good food and lots of it gave to all of us. I do, not know whether or not our food was supervised by a medical officer, but I am sure they felt that lots of good food, reading, rest and relaxation in general was what our mentalities needed. I think they had something there.

From the main deck of the Wisconsin we could see the entire Bay and while we were told that a number of ships had departed, including the USS MISSOURI on which the Japs signed the surrender papers, there were still dozens upon dozens of fighting ships still there, and they made the most impressive array of fighting strength that I had ever seen or ever will see. Amongst all the U.S.Navy ships there were a few British so it was a showing of combined ~~power~~ ability and power to warn aggressors that it does not pay to be an aggressor. Battleships, Carriers, Cruisers, Destroyers, Troopships, Landing Barges, Supply ships, etc.etc., a really thrilling sight.

Unfortunately, our stay on the Wiskie was all too short. Naturally, we were all anxious to get home as quickly as possible and as many of the prisoners were being flown out, we felt that the sooner we left Tokyo Bay the sooner we would be home. The Wiskie was expected to sail for the States within a week or ten days but it was not certain just when she would arrive as she might have to make calls or participate in manouvers, but with all our desire to get home we were hoping that we would be allowed to stay and come across the Pacific on her. This was not to be, which of course was only natural. Some of us had two days and some three on the Wiskie as our group

was broken up for purposes of flying out. We parted from the Wiskie with a deep sense of gratitude for all that had been done for us. Before leaving I was asked by the Padre to speak over the ship's loudspeaker to the members of the ship's company and this I felt to be a real honour. Also before our departure, we witnessed a ship inspection by the Admiral on board, who was in charge of a group of ships in Halsey's Fighting Task Force. He paid us the courtesy of inspecting us also. We did not look very smart but could at least line up and stand stiffly to attention while he was in our area. I think here I will not be criticised for giving a little detail of this inspection. I had asked the Master-at-Arms, who did such a wonderful job looking after us all, what we should do in case the "Old Man" decided to look us over. He said to call the boys to attention and as the Admiral approached I should salute him and from then on, I would be on my own. I had never been inspected by an Admiral before. So when he came along to our area, I saluted very smartly (I hope it was not the Japanese form of salute) and the Admiral put out his hand to shake hands. "How are you boys getting along?" Just fine sir. "We are glad to have you with us." "It sure is nice to be here." "Are you getting everything you need." "Not only all we need sir, but much more." "That's fine, if there is anything we can do for you any time, don't hesitate to say so." "Thank you very much." He then passed along and chatted with a number of the other fellows.

I should also mention that we were given another clothing issue while on board the Wisconsin, underwear, shirts, pants, socks, hankies, etc.

We were also entertained at the movies each night, and while there I had the pleasure of seeing "The Fighting Lady" and what made the picture more thrilling was the fact that the Lady was lying just a few hundred yards from us at the time.

Should any of those who were on the Wisconsin at that time happen to read this effort of mine, I would like to take this means of saluting them one and all and to offer, on behalf of ~~the~~ 115 Canadians, our sincere thanks for their many kindnesses and hospitality.

There have been many theories advanced for the downfall of the Churchill (Coalition) Government, but whatever may have been the actual cause, it is indeed a pity that Winston had not been left in office for at least another term.

This sad factor, combined with the sad passing of Franklin D. Roosevelt, has resulted in a chaotic world today. If Churchill had been left in power and if Roosevelt had been spared, the democratic countries of the world would have had leadership and cooperation today. The British Labour Government is an eyesore to the world and it is becoming more plainly apparent that the Truman policy can well be classed amongst the "weak sisters" of Freedom. After all the grand and wonderful fighting which those American boys did, it seems to me that they are now being badly let down by their own Government, both in home affairs and foreign policy.

Oh, for another partnership of the Roosevelt-Churchill type to arise, one that would work together ~~as~~ as they did and settle their differences amicably and give and take between themselves, for the ultimate betterment of the entire world.

I have always for twenty-five years preached that the United States and Britain must control the world if we were to have freedom for all and I feel sure that this would have been accomplished if one had been allowed to live and the other had not been kicked out of office by a bunch of short-sighted Englishmen.

I am not writing an eulogy for Churchill and Roosevelt - ~~in writing~~ none of us are perfect - but there we had the finest example of goodwill and good fellowship that the world has ever seen between two great powers.

I feel sure that had Joe Stalin, after the war, been able to deal with Roosevelt and Churchill, there would not be the uneasiness existing throughout the world today. Britain now ~~is~~ which is still strong, is in second place to Russia and the United States and like a minority in Parliament holds the balance of power insofar as politics and voting are concerned. Fortunately, owing to the basic principles surrounding the two great English speaking countries, they will probably strive through in common accord and if a show-down should ever come will line up together in defence of that heritage that has been handed down to them. Meantime, this petty squabbling goes on between everyone. Granted, the United States of America does not wish to appear as a bully and is therefore practicing tolerance as an example to the rest of the world. But, will it do any good in the final analysis? I repeat that the Roosevelt-Churchill combination, through their common decency and far-sightedness, would have cleaned up the Peace Conferences in a very short time.. Firmness and Justice. If Truman had the confidence of the American people as Roosevelt had it, he and his Administration could really go places, but without that support he has naturally declined into the realm of "weak sister" in world politics. When we in the Japanese prison camps heard of the death of F.D.R., which by the way the Japanese exclaimed to everyone with great glee, as he personally was their worst enemy in their minds, we knew that the world had lost a great friend.

The Japs thought it was great because they would now be able to make peace

with America (And incidentally hope to retain some of their conquered possessions.) Unfortunately for the Nips, the American drive continued and then they began to wonder maybe it was not this guy Roosevelt alone but the entire American people. BUT IT WAS ROOSEVELT THAT LED THEM INTO IT and the Yankee boys decided to finish the job, which they did in no uncertain manner.

It may sound strange to Canadians and other members of the British Commonwealth that the Canadian prisoners of war in Japanese camps had as their war-cry: - "COME ON YOU YANKS!"

And many a time that prayer was uttered.

Fortunately, there was enough momentum left after Roosevelt's death to continue the job he had started the Nation to do. When we were released from prison and the coal mines, it was the Yankees who saw to it that we had food, medical attention and dozens of other courtesies, and were shipped home. We who were prisoners in Japan proper were looked after by the Yankees and treated the same as though we were in the American Navy, Army or Air Force. There was no discrimination in the least and we got the best and I want to say now that the best was excellent, and lots of it, whether it was food, entertainment, or just common courtesy, the latter being definitely outstanding. Nothing was too good for us, expense was nothing, everything was free - all on Uncle Sam and the American Red Cross. It is a well known fact that the Canadians and the Canadian Red Cross did a wonderful job in the Second World War and this narrative has no intention of ridiculing their efforts. But apparently when it was all over in the Far East, the Canadian Government either had not the ability or the decency to try and look after their ill-fated expedition which they had blindly sent off to either certain death or imprisonment. We were assigned to the care of the American Navy along with the U.S. Marines and U.S. Navy boys, for which we are now truly thankful. But at the time, we felt that our own Government should have had planes and ships there to take care of us. The war in Europe had been over for months. Of course, I must admit that certain "Brass" and other officers were despatched to the Far East in the interests of the Canadians, but their practical value was nil. When we were brought down by train from our camp north of Tokyo and detrained at Yokohama, I did hear someone say that there was a Canadian officer around to look after us but I did not see him, and I was in charge of 114 men of a Canadian Regiment, and we were in Yokohama over night and then spent two days of the USS Wisconsin in Tokyo Bay, but still no sign of any Canadian representative, either military or Red Cross. I should make it clear that we had no complaints at our treatment by the Yankees, but they made us quite at home, but sometimes we did feel that our own Government could have avoided the impression that we were charity patients. The American Red Cross was there and did a wonderful job. Where was ours? Some of the Canadian prisoners of war were handed over to the British (not in Yokohama) and when we found out that we were to be under the Yankees we all felt pretty good, and as it turned out, we sure had the best. I wish to emphasize one point here. All during the time that we were with the Yankees, I never heard a cross word spoken by any man whose job it was to get the prisoners of war out, whether they were Canadian, American, British or Javanese. Discipline had been relaxed now that the war was over but there never was any sign of insubordination - on the contrary a friendly spirit prevailed - either at Yokohama, on board the USS Wisconsin, the C-54 from Yokohama to Guam, in hospital at Guam, or on the troopship from there to

Everything was in that well known Yankee friendly spirit. I am talking now of fighting men and those boys who had done such a wonderful job at fighting were just as anxious to do a good job at repatriation. And they succeeded 100%.

Ours was the first troopship to land at San Diego bearing prisoners of war. There were some 450 Americans and 50 Canadians and some 1800 navy and marine boys on it, the USS Lamar. We called her the Hedy Lamarr but unfortunately there were no movie queens on board, in fact nothing that wore skirts. On arrival at San Diego we were given a splendid reception by bands, Hollywood "Queens" and the Red Cross. Here we did run into representatives of the Canadian Red Cross, ladies who lived in Los Angeles or vicinity who came down to San Diego to welcome us. It was nice to see them but they were not Canadians. They were British who had settled in California many years ago and who were voluntarily helping out, and we owe them a deep debt of gratitude for their help while we were there. The Canadians were the first off the boat and I was the first to step on to the dock, after a fourteen day trip from Guam in a troopship packed full of human bodies.

I cannot stress too much our feeling of being "left out in the cold" insofar as our own Government and people were concerned. No one seemed to bother about us. Everyone was having too good a time at home, so let George (in this case Uncle Sam) do it. Possibly it was just as well as Uncle Sam did a wonderful job. The fifty Canadians were driven out to Camp Hahn, about 110 miles from San Diego, for the night. We were in two modern busses and enjoyed the trip immensely. We stopped at a small town, the name escapes me at the moment, for lunch and then some of the boys wandered off and apparently found a tavern or two, so the conducting Canadian officer and the Red Cross ladies were very concerned in case some of them would not show up. I was asked to round them up "because some of them may be missing." I replied "The boys are home, let them do what they want after all these long years, and if we find that we are being delayed too long, I will go and find them." For some unknown reason I did not feel like a beer which was why I had gone back to the bus after consuming a very good meal. Of course, I never could drink beer after a meal, so that may have had something to do with it.

Anyway we got away pretty well on time, the boys having had a beer or two, and continued our journey through the hills and arrived at Camp Hahn and got settled for the night. Here we met some Canadian army personnel who outfitted us with battle dress, great-coats, shoes, cap, etc.etc. during the evening and we also had a cursory medical inspection and spent the evening in the Welfare Hut with the Red Cross Ladies et al.

I had gone to bed about 11 p.m. and was just dozing off when a Canadian officer came into the hut (I was sleeping on a single bed with mattress and white sheets and blankets) and said that a number of the boys had left camp in their uniforms and gone into Riverside, about 8 miles away. He was rather worried about this and was checking up to see how many were absent. I told him to go to bed, that if the boys had broken camp they would be back in time for our departure in the morning and everything would be alright. Peculiarly enough, some of them had quite a night of it as soon as they arrived in Riverside the local populace took them to their hearts as it were and gave them a grand time. Unfortunately, the American

M.P's. who were responsible for us, received orders to go in to Riverside and round up the Canadians and get them back to camp. The Yankees were not very thorough but tried to carry out their orders to the extent that they themselves would not get into trouble. I was not in Riverside that night but some of the boys told me what a grand time they had and of the hospitality of the people. It seemed a pity that some of them had to be picked up by the M.P's. and brought back to camp but I might say (as I don't think anyone will get into trouble about it now) that the M.P's. were naturally with our boys and brought in only a few. Their sympathies were with us, although their orders were not, and many of the boys had a marvellous time being entertained in the nicest homes in Riverside. By being entertained I should point out that that means music, food, talk, possibly a drink or two, but mainly good cheerful clean hospitality. That was what the boys enjoyed so much after all their years in confinement, and I would like to pay a special tribute to the citizens of Riverside, Calif., for their kindness that night to a few Canadian boys.

I must not forget to mention how wonderfully well we were looked after by the Red Cross that evening in Camp Hahn. The ladies could not do enough for us. Although most of them were on the elderly side, the boys realized just how much the ladies were doing for them and really did all they could to make everything a success. For instance, a Red Cross lady would say "I Want someone to carry a few cases of Coke" and immediately there would be a dozen wanting to help. To close this off, I want to say that I enjoyed the evening immensely and am very appreciative of the work which the good ladies of the Red Cross did that evening.

Next morning we had a big breakfast at the U.S. Army mess hall, more than one could possibly eat, and later on we boarded ^{the} busses and were driven into Los Angeles, where we arrived about 5 p.m., with the Red Cross Ladies still looking after us and seeing that we were well taken care of.

One of the ironies (or analogies) of war.

I guess everyone is familiar with the phrase "digging in" as it is applied in the Army. For those who have never appreciated this expression, digging in means a hole in the ground or a trench or any other means so long as it affords some kind of protection from enemy shells, snipers, or etc. In war, digging in is a very important matter. However, I find that there are other forms of "Digging In." And this applies very strongly to the Home Front. While men in action dig in to save their lives, the Home Front digs in to pile up worldly wealth, and from I have seen since my return to Canada a very excellent job has been accomplished. They are dug in so strongly that when the man who was willing to give his life returns to civilian life he finds that during his absence he has been by-passed and those gallants on the home front are away out in front. Of course, the law demands that he get his old job back or one just as good, but it does not mention anything about - other things being equal - putting him in the position that he would ordinarily have had had he stayed at home and dug himself in. In my opinion this is one of the worst travesties of justice that is known in our current way of life. If everyone had stayed at home, then we would all be working for Hitler now. I have noticed many inferior¹⁰⁰ complexes recently because the old conscience is working. "I have you to thank for my preservation and my good job. I suppose I am a bit of a heel, but I just did not have the courage and I also knew that with so many away it would be easier to climb to the top. Anyway, in a few years time, and I am young, it will all be forgotten about and I will be able to go around with my head in the air, and plenty of 'bulls on the ranch' and money in the bank." Yes, dear friend, I am beginning to think that it was only the dumb guys that went away to war. We can have our old jobs back, or the equivalent thereof - because it is the law - and work under someone who was the office boy or the apprentice when we went away!

Democratic Honours and Awards.

Looking over the list of civilians who have been "honoured" since the termination of hostilities makes one wonder what it is all about. Oh yes, a few were tossed out to certain representatives of certain elements as a sop to try and keep them in line. Possibly that is good business. Then glance at the long list of elderly portly gentlemen who sacrificed their leisure to help at the hundreds of jobs that had to be done. They did a wonderful job and should have the gratitude of every citizen. But while they were doing that job they were being handsomely paid, in most cases and none of them had to work or think very hard as they had plenty of assistants. To the Dollar A Year men should go a special tribute as they were genuinely sincere, because no matter how much money one has there is always the urge for more, and I admire the small group of "Dollar A Year" men. DECORATIONS AND HONOURS should go to only those who were willing to take a chance on their life! This, the more so, when thousands of "The Boys" have been overlooked insofar as being shown any recognition for good work done, not to mention monetary considerations. A man in the Army drawing his \$1.50, etc. per day, and \$35.00 a month for his wife, and risking his life, and another man drawing \$20,000. a year and risking nothing, and getting in addition a kind of public recognition such as a C.M.G., O.B.E., or etc. For What? Because he had the opportunity to make a few dollars!