

I went to the Philippines in 1937 and worked in the Southern part of Luzon in a mining district called Paracale which was only a few feet above sea level. Most of the mines were mining 300 to 500 ft. below sea. In Chile I was mining 12,000 ft. above sea level. The San Mauricio was the best producer and the month's production was \$150,000 U.S. and the tonnage handled was 300 tons a day.

The climate was too tropical for me. I wanted cooler climate so I went up to Baguio which is in the northern part of Luzon and around 5,000 ft. above sea level. Baguio is the summer capital-- during March, April, May and June the heat in Manila is terrific and the people that can go to Baguio do so. The climate here is ideal, never too cold or too hot. There are three months of heavy rains-- real typhoons and I have seen 23" of rain in three days.

There are several large gold mines in Baguio - The Bengnet Consolidated Company produced nearly a million dollars per month from three mines - the largest of which handled 2,000 tons daily. There was one high grade copper mine north of Baguio, and its copper was sold to Japan. The Islands had two iron mines, one in the Paracale district. Their sole market was Japan.

There are a great number of different dialects used in the Islands - the government is trying to get the people to learn and use tagalog. The tribe found in and around Baguio are called Igorots, they are the best miners. It was a common sight to go through the mine and see the Igorots working without shoes and safety hat. The Illicanos, a tribe from the lowlands came up to Baguio to work in the gold mines. He is a good miner, but does not get along with

the Igorots. He is more Americanized. In Baguio the U. S. Army had a small army stationed at Camp John Hay. This camp was more of a rest camp and Colonel Horan was in charge when war broke out.

Seven o'clock in the morning on December 8, 1941, we heard over the radio that the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. An hour and a half later nine planes flew high over our mine toward Camp John Hay and one of our fellows remarked how well our boys kept in formation and that they were ready for the Japs. Just about then the planes dived and we heard the bombs explode. Several Americans and a great number of Filipinos were injured and killed. That was the beginning of a hectic life.

We all put in large supplies of food stuff and built underground shelters. At no time did we believe that the Japanese would take the Islands. We kept our radios tuned in with Manila. Jap planes flew over our mine several times a day. At night all lights were blacked out and it was quite a job trying to keep the mill going on night shift.

There was a wild scramble when we heard that the Japs had landed. The natives were all quitting their jobs and going home. I tried to keep enough of them on the job to bring out the machines, pumps, mine cars and destroy the dynamite.

In Baguio army rifles and ammunition was given to anyone that wanted them. Our mine was located on top of a ridge and we could look down on Kinnon road which was 1000 ft. below us. This road led to the coast and Manila.

Rumors were going around that the Japs were coming up Kinnon road and the Naguilan road. Camp John Hay called us on the phone several times to find out if we could see any Japs coming up the road.

A jeep with a machine gun and four officers came to the mine one day and looked down Kinnon Road. We were asked to put a watch man and if he saw Japs coming to call up.

All the mines were told to destroy gasoline fuel oil and dynamite. The night of December 20, oil tanks, gasoline tanks were blown up - dynamite destroyed. It sounded as if the Japs had already arrived.

At 2 A. M. on December 21, we called on the phone and told that it was best that all American families go to Manila, and to be ready by 6 A. M. It was our last chance to go to Manila. Mrs. Ladis and I packed up the two suit cases/^{we}were allowed to take. At five o'clock we decided that we would stay - we both knew Manila and the climate there, and to be running around with three daughters 8, 7 and 5 years old wasn't a very good idea. We had plenty of food in our home -- why leave it.

Most of the families that did go down were separated. The mining engineers left their families in Manila, and they went to work on the underground storages at Corregidor. Several of them were killed there and the remainder were taken prisoners and sent to Japan. Some of them were on the ship that was sunken by one of our submarines.

Rumors were getting wilder each day. The army left Baguio and went out into the mountains. Some got through to Manila, while others stayed out in the mountains for over a year. A few American families after hearing wild rumors that the Japs were murdering and raping --took to the Baguio hills.

It was around the 26th that the Japanese finally came into Baguio. The Americans and British who decided to remain in Baguio had concentrated themselves at Brent School a few days before the Jap's arrival.

On the 28th of December, 1941, four trucks loaded with dirty -

looking Jap soldiers with rifles and bayonets came to our mine.

We were loaded in trucks, and allowed to take a little food, clothing and bedding. We were taken to Camp John Hay and as we went through Baguio, we saw Japs. Soldiers and Japs civilians were looting American and Chinese stores. When we arrived at Camp John Hay, the Americans and British from Brent School were already there --They had to walk the distance, which was nearly a mile, carrying their personal belongings.

There were nearly 500 internees, most of whom were missionaries, a great number of whom came down from China to miss the war. We had one dormitory and an out building containing a kitchen, dining room and store room. The building was built to take care of 100. Every available place was occupied - I found space out on the porch for my family. People slept on and under dining room tables and in the kitchen. Two fellows moved in the store room, but that didn't last long. Several empty cans were found.

There was no electricity - no water. Water had to be brought in in containers from Baguio and it was rationed. No water was wasted for washing - it was only for drinking and cooking. The men were put right to work to dig and build latrines. It was a tough job to dig and no drinking water.

A week later the men were moved to an adjoining dormitory. Because of the fact that the men's building was less crowded, it was decided that the men would do the cooking in their kitchen for both houses. I became one of the cooks.

A White Russian, who had British papers was interneed with us and he was a first class cook. He was put in charge of the kitchen.

We all knew that we would be out of concentration within six weeks. Even the soldiers at Bataan and Corregidor heard of the large convoy that was on its way to help us out.

We elected a committee of nine members to run our camp. We had to buy our own food - we paid so much a week per person and smaller rate for children. All the food that was brought in from Brent School and other places was placed in the store room. We had a very good assortment but it didn't last long. For a short time, we had for breakfast rice or oatmeal, with milk and sugar, a piece of bread and cup of coffee. No lunch, for the first two weeks - until it was decided to take the soup or raw vegetable from the dinner meal and give it out as lunch. For dinner at night, we usually had stewed meat and boiled rice and a vegetable.

Six feet from the buildings was a barbed wire fence. In the day time we were allowed to use the two tennis courts. One for women and children and the other for the men. On week days you would see a long line of women and ten feet away opposite them, a long line of men. On Sunday's, the men and women were allowed to come together from 5:30 to 6:30. Everybody dressed up and when the guard blew the whistle at 5:30 the two lines converged and the couples went off arm in arm around the courts.

We were searched by the Japanese and everything/^{which} was over 100 pesos (\$50.00) was taken from us. All bonds, checks, money orders - insurance policies had to be turned over to them. About three weeks later what money we had left, had to be turned into the Japanese and this money was to be used in buying food.

During the 2nd and 3rd weeks several cases of dysentery broke out, and the patients were sent to Notre Dame Hospital, where Filipino doctors took very good care of them. The Chinese were brought in with us - they had a dormitory near the men. The Chinese were roughly handled. There were over a thousand Chinese in the district and most of them took to the hills, only 300 came in.

While at Camp John Hay we were allowed to loot the surrounding buildings. We needed mattresses, mosquito nets, blankets, sheets, knives, forks, dishes and cooking utensils. We did a gretty good job of looting because when were moved to Camp Holmes we were able to set up a good blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, grinding room (for rice, corn).

During our stay at Camp John Hay, the Japs did not permit schools and only one Sunday (Easter) we were allowed church services. While at Camp John Hay, the missionaries were all taken to Baguio and questioned. They all came back with the exception of three. Two joined us at Camp Holmes and the third was murdered by the Japs. They gave him the water cure and beat him up.

We were moved to Camp Holmes, which is about five miles from Baguio on April 23. It was a very good move for us - Camp Holmes was a Philippine constabulary camp and was located in the rich Trinidad valley where vegetables are grown. There was no fence around the building - we had plenty of room to move about and we ~~was~~^{made} up a baseball diamond. Baseball was played about every day for the first two years.

There were three dormitories - men had one room, women and children had another and the Chinese had the third. The Chinese were kept here only three months and the Japs decided to let them out. The men moved into their barracks and the women moved into the one we had vacated. We were allowed to visit our families during the daytime - a small fence was put up in order to keep the men and women at a safe distance. Mrs. Ladis and the three children had a corner in the barracks - they were allotted floor space, 10' by 12'. The home made ^{bed} for four took up most of the floor space. Two bed sheetshung up served as walls - In the men's dormitory, I had a floor space 3 1/2' by 7'.

It was at Camp Holmes that we were allowed to have schools and hold church services. Permission was also given to allow us to put on some sort of entertainment on Saturday nights. No dancing was allowed for the

first 2 1/2 years. The Japs brought in one motion picture during the three years and it was terrible.

Our meals consisted of rice, a teaspoonful of sugar and coffee for breakfast. A soup or baked sweet potato for lunch. For dinner rice, a vegetable and a stewed meat or a meat gravy.

We were allowed to bring in all the food we could buy. Mining companies and missionaries started sending in money. Filipinos also sent in food stuffs and money. We were allowed to borrow money from Filipinos through the Jap office.

The committee was afraid to open a community store - they thought that the Japs would stop bringing in rice, vegetables and meat if we had the money to buy. I had contacts outside so I started a store. I brought in sugar, fruits, eggs, vegetables, rice and meat. I brought in a hind quarter of beef - cut it up into steaks, roasts and made hamburger out of the scraps. The demand for meat was so great that I had a cow brought in once a week. A Mechanical Engineer, born and reared in Texas, knew how to butcher a cow, so he and I really went into the meat business.

Behind each of the dormitories small kitchens were set up for private cooking. Rice bread, rice cookies, rice puddings, rice hot cakes, fried rice, was cooked in tin cans, frying pans and baking pans-pans which were turned out in our blacksmith shop. Not as plentiful as rice-eggs, meat and vegetables were cooked.

We had a hospital, equipment and medicines we looted from Camp John Hay. In our camp we had 6 American doctors, 5 of them were missionary doctors in China. They did wonderful work. We had an American dentist, his was was rough but good. He used a box for a chair.

A year after we were interned the American families who took to the hills decided to come into camp. They were a sorry lot - two American women were killed by Japs. Most of them had malarial, one of the men lost the use of one leg due to infantile paralysis. One of the American women gave birth to a daughter shortly after they went into the hills. The youngster was about the healthiest of the entire lot.

We always knew that in six months more we would be out. We were allowed to read the Manila Bulletin published by the Japs and printed in English. It was all one sided - they played up their victories and several times our navy was sunk by theirs. The Japs private believed that their forces had landed in the States - they tried to tell that to us but we knew different. No mail was allowed to come in and we could not write home.

The Japanese intended to concentrate all American and British in Manila. For that reason we did not start a garden. There were two concentration camps besides ours, one in Manila at Santa Tomas, where there were over 4,000 internees, another was located about 25 miles south of Manila at Los Benos, and there were 2,500 Americans here.

During the later part of 1943 - the people were very much disheartened - money and extra food was hard to get. We were getting less food from the Japs - corn, rice and vegetables were all we were getting - no meat, fish or sugar.

On Christmas day, 1943, we received our first Red Cross package of food, clothing and shoes. It was a Christmas package that the 500 will never forget. Men, women and children all lined up to get their package. There was 47 lbs. of food for each one. The parcel consisted of powdered milk, cans of corned beef, canned pork, liver spread, coffee, sugar, salmon, cheese, canned butter, raisens, prunes, cocoa, chocolate rations, soap and cigarettes. The food was wonderful --first time in two years that we had cheese, butter, candy.

We all received a pair of shoes. We drew lots to see who would get fitted first. I didn't do so badly. I got a pair just one size too large.

I took the 150 packages of cigarettes that my family received and smuggled them out. The Filipino that I was dealing with gave me \$4.00 U.S. a package. I had him buy rice, sugar, etts --

All extra food, packages and newspapers were stopped. The Japs again cut down on our rice, corn and vegetables. Wire fences were put up by the Japanese soldiers. No one had enough energy to play ball. Everybody had to work in the garden.

Two of our single fellows escaped and joined the guerillas. Several of their friends were taken to Baguio for questioning. They came back - they were beaten - hung up by their thumbs. They carried the bruises for months.

We still had hopes of getting out in a few months and on October 19, 1944, we saw our planes flying over the coast and heard the bombing.

We felt it wouldn't be very long before the Americans would land on Luzon - just a matter of days. We found out later that our troops landed in Leyte. This is how we heard it. In our camp we had an expert on radios - the Japs asked him to repair their radio. He did, but it took him three days. He had a set of ear phones, and for three days he got all the news. There were two privates watching him, but he put it over on them.

Dec. 27, 1944 we were told that we would go to Manila - 300 to leave within 24 hrs. That evening Mrs. Ladic and I went down to the garden and picked 60 lbs. of sweet potatoes. There were several others that had the same idea. We were taken to Manila in trucks and were packed in like sardines. The trip should be made in 5 hrs. - it took us 18 hrs. to get there. Nearly everyone had a few cans left from their Red Cross pkg. which was given a year before. We had a few cans of butter, corned beef and salmon left, and it came in handy. The package should last one person a month, but we rationed it. In my family we would take a can of corned beef and use half of it tonight and the rest tomorrow night. Toward the end we would open one can a week.

We were put in Old Bilibid prison in Manila. In the same prison there were 800 soldiers from Bataan and Corregidor. We were separated by a concrete wall. We were so tired and dirty that we took mattresses that were full of vermin and bedbugs and slept on them. The next day we had to destroy the mattresses and clean the wooden beds.

There were 170 American soldiers buried in our section of Old Bilibid; some of the graves were less than 25 feet from our kitchen. They were not buried very deeply because the odor of decaying bodies was prominent.

The prison was filthy - the latrines were open - the places were full of flies and mosquitos. We started cleaning up - used large mosquito nets to cover the latrines. A great number of the internees were taken down with dysentery and dengue. We had no medicine, and only corn for food, which is very poor food for patients.

Our menu was corn must for breakfast - no lunch - corn mush with sweet potato greens as a vegetable. The corn was filthy and full of weevils. We would wash the corn and then grind it and make corn mush.

Every day we saw our bombers flying over and dropping bombs around us. The Japs put out heavy anti-craft fire. There were no dog fights over Manila after we arrived there. Our boys knocked the Japs out of the air when they landed at Leyte in October.

Out of the thousands or more bombers that flew over us, we saw a B-24 get hit and go into flames. Three men parachuted out, one of the parachutes caught on fire. The two that made it safely were picked up by the Guerrillas

The Japs were blowing up the oil storages around us - this was done at night. We heard heavy gun fire for several days and were told that the Guerrillas were east of us.

Around 7 O'clock at night on February 3, 1945, we heard heavy firing and a fellow on the 2nd floor yelled out that American tanks and soldiers were coming down the street. We did not believe him at first, but when hell broke loose, we knew that there was something new going on outside.

Everybody was happy - no one gave a thought to danger - this was what we had waited for for three years and five weeks. There were only around 700 men of the 1st Cavalry division that took the northern part of Manila over. Our prison was surrounded by tanks--while at Santa Tomas the soldiers went right into their camp. Our Jap guards made all the internees on the 2nd floor go down to the 1st floor. They set up machine guns on the roof and had a good supply of hand grenades. The rest of us that lived in cell

blocks were told to go in our cells and remain there.

The Japs guarded us closely. At eleven A. M. the next day the Japs guards took their machine guns, hand granades and went our of our section into the section occupied by our section into the section occupied by our soldiers. That was the last we saw of them. We were told that they mounted the prison towers and sniped at our troops. We heard the snipers for several days.

The first American soldier came into the Old Bilibed at night on Feb. 4th. On Feb. 5th a great number came in and they never saw a happier crowd in their life. The soldiers took their own rations, - candy and gum and passed them out.

It was on the 5th that the Japs started burning and blowing up Manila. We watched it from the roof of our building. I have seen pictures of the burning but they do not come up to the actual thing. That night, at 8 o'clock, we were ordered to pack up an overnight bag and what bedding we could carry, and go out the back way.

The fires and explosions were very close to our walls, and rumors were that Old Bilibid was mined.

All able bodied men and women and children had to walk - This was our first chance to see the military prisoners. They had to go out through our section and most of them were stretcher cases. They were the ones that suffered. Three died that night. They had malaria, dysentery, beri-beri. Mrs. Ladic had dysentery and she was taken out on a stretcher.

The three children and I walked 8 long blocks. We all were carrying something. We were finally picked up by a Jeep and taken to a shoe factory. We all slept on the floor and the next morning we had our first Army meal. The breakfast was bacon and eggs, bread, jam and coffee. While we were lined up I saw another fellow with some oatmeal. He got it down the street from another outfit. I left my children in line and went down the street. I came back with a can of oatmeal with cream and sugar and we ate that while we were lined up for breakfast. It is hard to describe how good food tastes, that oatmeal was the first in three years and to have sugar and cream and wheat bread.

On the evening of the 6th we returned to Bilibid to find that everything we left was looted by the Filipinos. Everybody had valuable possessions that they hung onto for three years, and lost them that night. Maybe the Filipinos thought that we would not return and that the articles would be destroyed. Due to the looting our patients were sent to Santa Tomas. That night and for several nights we slept on the floor. The Army brought in cots as soon as they could.

We remained in Bilibid. It was a hot spot. It took our troops 2 1/2 weeks to move 2 miles in Manila. The Japs dug into the Wall City and our boys had a hard time to get them out. Shells flew over us continually day and night. We saw the dive bombers giving the Japs a workout.

The last Jap plane flew over Manila February 15. It was looking for our large guns and dropped a bomb that fell outside of our wall, killing

a tank corp captain, 3 Americans and 8 Filipinos living across the street. We were sleeping less than 30 feet from that bomb - it cracked the wall and threw small fragments in our cell block.

The military prisoners were the first ones to leave Manila. Mrs. Ladic and other civilian patients were taken from Santo Thomas and flown to Leyte. On March 11th the three children and I made the trip in a plane to Leyte. It was at Leyte that my family got together again.

We boarded the new troop ship "Admiral Capp" at Leyte - which was convoyed to Admiralty Islands. As we were pulling up the anchor the officer at the loud speaker said - "Hear This" - A bugler then played "Californis, Here I come."

We arrived in San Francisco on April 8th - we were all dressed in Army clothes - the Army and Navy took wonderful care of us. Most of us gained over 40 pounds in less than 6 weeks.

It was a great feeling to get back to the States - the children had a great deal to see. They were just babies when they went to the Philippines. The oldest one said - "Dad, I've been in jeeps, trucks, landing barges, air plane, large boats, but we haven't been on a street car yet."

One more thing - when the bell-hop opened the door of our room - one of the youngsters said - "Doesn't it look beautiful - do we live here?"