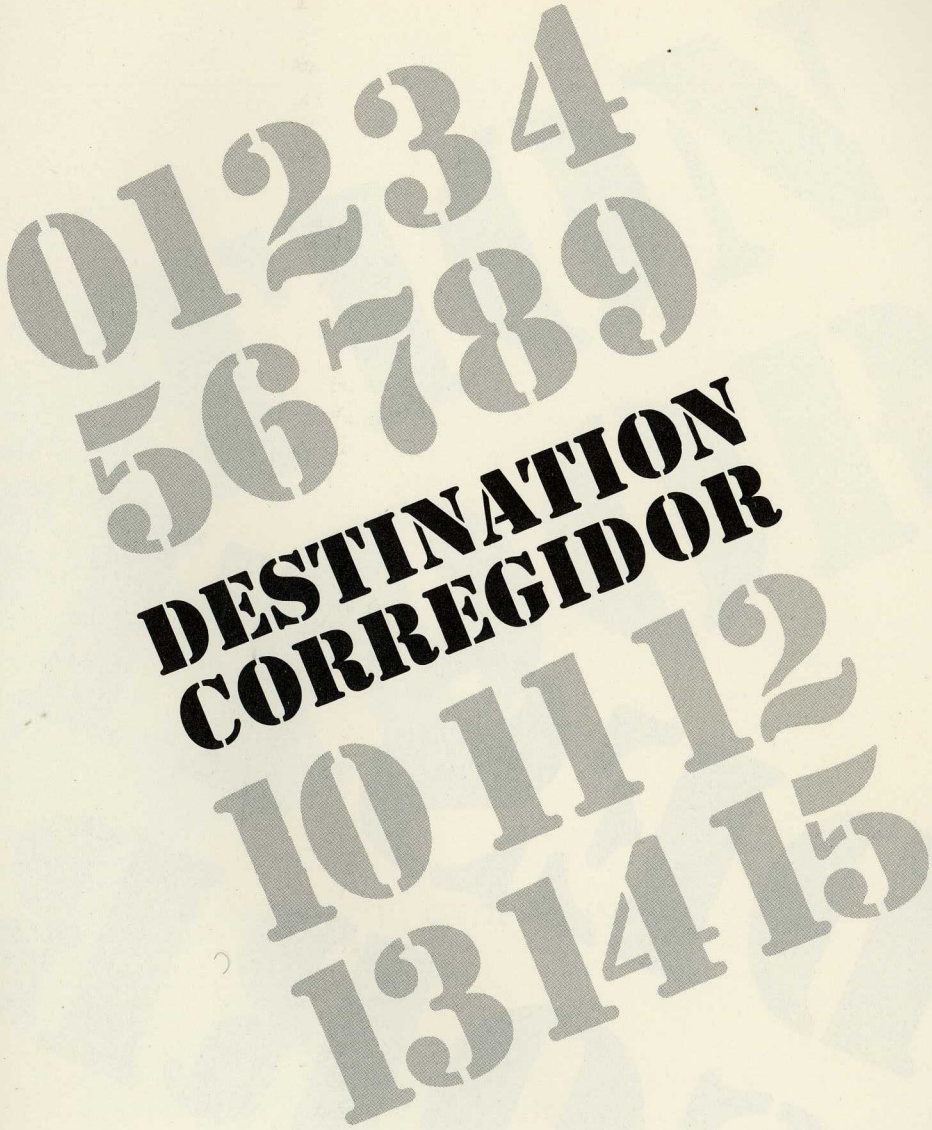
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FOREWORD

In the long and crowded course of its military history, the greatest humiliation suffered by the United States was the surrender of the Philippines to Japan in 1942. Not even final victory could eradicate the nation's sense of shame at having failed the Philippine ally we had promised to protect. Even more painful was our inability to bring reinforcements of men and arms to the aid of our own troops beseiged on Bataan and Corregidor.

The Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor had temporarily broken the power of the U.S. Navy in the Pacific. That the Japanese Navy was held in check at all was as near a military miracle as men could hope to achieve; the fact that the Navy lost no carriers at Pearl Harbor made it possible. But in the Philippines, U.S. forces were overwhelmingly outnumbered and outgunned from the start. The Asiatic Fleet, with one heavy cruiser, one light cruiser, and a few World War I destroyers, was forced in the first few days to retreat to the Netherlands East Indies.

None of the Army Air Corps squadrons had oxygen; there was no equipment for producing it in the Philippines; and the Japanese bombers merely had to fly at an altitude they could not reach, an altitude the obsolete U.S. antiaircraft ammunition could not reach either. The Japanese bombers could make their runs at leisure while the Zero fighter planes in escort pounced on the P-40s under them as opportunity presented.

The U.S. ground forces had a nucleus of American troops, backed by units of the Philippine Scouts, but most of the strength

was in untrained Filipino reservists who were called on to face an enemy battle-hardened in the China war. They fought well in the beginning; but, though they did not immediately realize it, they were doomed. Almost at once they went on half rations; and after the Japanese took control of Bataan, there was no way for reinforcements or supplies to reach them except through Corregidor; and any attempt to reach Corregidor by sea or air offered only the slenderest of chance of success.

Destination Corregidor is the story of U.S. efforts made in the first four months of 1942 to get supplies through the Japanese blockade. Of the ships dispatched from Australia, Java, and Hawaii, only three freighters succeeded in reaching their destinations in the Philippines.

The supplies they delivered still had to be carried to Corregidor through waters controlled by the Japanese Navy, a task undertaken by small interisland vessels manned entirely by Filipino crews. There was, during the war, a tendency to look down on these native skippers and men who, as the author shows, displayed loyalty and patriotism in the face of extreme adversity.

There were other efforts to reach Corregidor. U.S. submarines, loaded with capacity cargoes of food and ammunition in Java and Australia, eluded Japanese warships to offload at Corregidor in the dark of night. But their deliveries were so small, compared to the great needs of the beleaguered army, as to be scarcely more than a drop of water to a man dying of thirst. Their greatest

service was in providing escape for government officials and certain technically trained men.

Most dramatic of all, in the final days before Corregidor surrendered to the Japanese, was the flight, from Australia, of two Navy PBY flying boats, to unload medical supplies and evacuate refugees, for the most part Army nurses. One plane returned safely to Australia, the other was lost in an accident. Its passengers were captured; the crew arrived safely in Australia.

These are the highlights of a story written around accounts of desperate expedients, frustration, foot-dragging, cowardice and great courage, enterprise and drama. It seems strange that we have had to wait so long for this history, which Mr. Underbrink has related so accurately, of a brave endeavor.

Walter D. Edmonds
Booneville, New York

PREFACE

When Japan commenced hostilities against the United States on 7 December 1941, the country found itself in a war for which it was not well prepared. In the Philippine Islands, which lay like stepping-stones from Japanese-held Formosa in the north, 1,100 miles southward to Borneo, whose rich oil fields were an immediate Japanese goal, the situation was especially bad.

The newly established United States Army Forces in the Far East numbered 120,000 men, but consisted mostly of Filipino reservists, some 12,000 trained Philippine Scouts, and only 10,000 regular U.S. Army troops. The Far East Air Force numbered less than 150 planes, and many of them were close to being obsolete. Antiaircraft weapons were World War I types, with ammunition ineffective against high-altitude aircraft. The U.S. Navy's Asiatic Fleet qualified as such by having an admiral in command; but only one eight-inch cruiser was assigned, the destroyers were all World War I vintage, the submarines were armed with torpedoes that proved defective in combat, and support vessels were old, slow, and underarmed, as were the Catalina flying boats.

Despite obvious hostile moves by the Japanese late in 1941, it was the stated opinion of Lieutenant General Douglas MacArthur that they would not actually start combat operations until the monsoon season ended, in April, 1942. Defense of the Philippines was based on the assumption U.S. forces could then hold out for six months, the time believed necessary for the U.S. fleet to fight its way across the Pacific. The futility of such thinking was em-

phasized by the fact that within three months, U.S. forces in the Philippines were short of food, ammunition, and medical supplies—urgently needed supplies had to move over an 8,000-mile-long route across the Pacific, where Japan had complete control.

All Japanese invasion forces moved under an umbrella of land-based air support, but any U.S. attempts at resupply in the Philippines, dependent on small slow-moving surface craft, was hampered by the fact that all U.S. Air Force strength in the area was knocked out in the first day of fighting.

Nevertheless, during the opening months of the war—until the fall of Corregidor became imminent in April, 1942—the U.S., without regard to cost or the hazards involved, attempted by every possible means—surface ships, aircraft, and submarines—to run the Japanese blockade and supply American forces in the Philippine Islands.

It was, in the end, a futile gesture, for tragically inadequate quantities of food, ammunition, and medicine ever reached the men on Bataan and Corregidor. Yet politically and morally the United States had a solemn obligation to aid the beleaguered outpost, at whatever cost. Ships, aircraft, and submarines took part in the desperate venture, and all of them, and especially those men who took them deep into enemy territory, deserve recognition.

Such is the purpose of this book.

ROBERT L. UNDERBRINK
Carlinville, Illinois

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DESTINATION CORREGIDOR

CHAPTER 1

WAR COMES TO THE PHILIPPINES

By 0800 on 8 December 1941, the United States military and naval units in the Philippines had received word of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that morning. Because Pearl Harbor is east of the International Date Line, the actual date of the surprise attack there was, of course, 7 December. An obvious state of war existed between the United States and the Empire of Japan. Major General Lewis H. Brereton, chief of the United States Far East Air Force, repeatedly throughout the morning requested permission to send Flying Fortresses to bomb Japanese air bases on the island of Formosa, but orders were not forthcoming until almost noon. Then, as 19 of the big four-engine B-17s were being loaded with bombs at Clark Field, 50 miles north of Manila, two large V-shaped formations of 54 twin-engine enemy bombers hit the airfield from the northwest. The planes were right on target, and their bombs plastered the field with heavy explosions. As the bombers completed their run, 34 Zero fighter planes made a series of blistering low-level strafing attacks which completed the destruction of the field. At the same time, another hundred bombers and fighters hit Nichols Field.

The situation at Clark following the Japanese attack was chaotic. The air was filled with choking dust, and a pillar of thick, black smoke towered into the sky, visible for miles around. Buildings and hangars were in shambles, many in flames. Twisted, burnt-out skeletons of aircraft were strewn about the

field. A dozen B-17s and 30 P-40s were completely destroyed, and all the others heavily damaged. Fighter pilots who had lost the desperate gamble to get aloft were entombed in their shattered and burning aircraft. Nearly a hundred men were dead; the cries of wounded filled the air as the survivors began climbing out of the slit trenches. The attack at Clark Field, along with other almost simultaneous air strikes elsewhere in Luzon, nearly destroyed the Far East Air Force, giving Japan virtual control of the air throughout the Philippines.

The U.S. plan for defending the Philippines was based on General MacArthur's sending the heavy bombers of the Far East Air Force to destroy enemy invasion forces before they could land on Philippine shores. The virtual destruction of the FEAF by the crushing attacks at Clark and Iba Fields during the first day of war shattered all hope for a strong defense of the islands. In a single blow, the Japanese eliminated the one major obstacle to their expansion southward.

When it became obvious that Japan intended to invade the Philippine Islands, which blocked her drive southward to the oil-rich Netherland East Indies, it was also evident that the tiny, overage U.S. Asiatic Fleet could offer little opposition to Japan's beefed-up navy. A famous flotilla with a long and colorful history, the Asiatic Fleet on paper looked a good deal more powerful than it really was. In December 1941, under command of Rear Admiral Thomas C. Hart, it consisted of the heavy cruiser *Houston*, the light cruisers *Marblehead* and *Boise*, 13 World War I destroyers (all overage), and 29 submarines. There were also 6 motor torpedo boats, 32 elderly PBY flying boats and some two dozen gunboats, minesweepers, tenders, and tankers, all old, slow and underarmed.

In contrast, the Japanese Combined Fleet numbered 10 battleships, 36 cruisers, 10 carriers, and more than 90 destroyers. The force assigned to invade the Philippines consisted of 2 battleships, 13 carriers, 45 destroyers, and a hundred transports, supported by almost 500 aircraft based in Formosa.

In the event of war, the Asiatic Fleet had orders to support the defense of the Philippines as long as feasible; however, withdrawal to British or Dutch bases was left to the discretion of its commander. Such a move would enable the flotilla to join forces with naval units of Great Britain, the Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand. It was hoped that this combined armada might be able to halt, or at least delay, the Japanese drive south.

On the evening of 8 December, Admiral Hart ordered the surface units of the fleet to withdraw to Balikpapan, Borneo. The following day Admiral William Glassford, in *Houston*, rendezvoused off Panay with the light cruiser *Boise*, the aircraft tender *Langley*, and two destroyers. They led the flotilla south toward the Netherlands East Indies. With the departure of the striking elements of the Asiatic Fleet, the brunt of U.S. naval resistance in the Philippines fell upon the 29 submarines left to operate out of Manila Bay. They were to remain as long as possible, doing what damage they could; but it proved only a brief period, and their efforts counted for little.

At daybreak of 10 December the Japanese commenced amphibious landings at Aparri in the far north, and at Vigan on the northwest coast of Luzon. Aside from mosquito-like attacks by the FEAF, the invasion was unopposed. Shortly before noon the Japanese air force again hit the Philippines in force, striking at Del Carmen Field, just below Clark, and at Nielson and Nichols Fields a short distance southeast of the Philippine capital.

The remnants of the Far East Air Force managed to scramble some 35 fighters on 10 December as an enemy raid came in, but they were hopelessly outnumbered by 52 Zeros and some 80 bombers, and experienced irreplaceable losses. At about the same time, 81 enemy bombers plus an estimated 100 fighters hit the Cavite Naval Base and the concentration of shipping in Manila bay. Flying at 20,000 feet, well above the ceiling of Air Force fighter planes, and out of reach of antiquated three-inch anti-aircraft guns, the enemy bombers made leisurely but altogether effective bombing runs. Manila, the Navy Yard at Cavite, and Nielson and Nichols Fields were bombed and strafed for nearly two hours.

From his office on the third floor of the Marsman building, Admiral Hart sadly viewed the almost complete destruction of the naval base at Cavite. Ship repair facilities, warehouses, the power plant, barracks and officers' quarters, in fact most of the base and much of Cavite town was left in flames. The submarine *Sealion* and the minesweeper *Bittern* were destroyed by direct hits. Their loss was bad enough, but the loss of more than 200 irreplaceable torpedoes was immeasurably worse. Casualties, according to estimates by Admiral Rockwell, Commandant of the Sixteenth Naval District, numbered more than 500 killed or wounded. High winds added to the fire damage, and the follow-

ing morning, with the fires out of control, everything that could be salvaged was moved to Corregidor Island.

Allied merchant shipping in Manila Bay on Wednesday, 10 December 1941, totalled more than 200,000 tons. Among these ships was the 3,000-ton cargo vessel *Taiyuan*, skippered by Captain J. D. Fraser. The old China coaster had cleared Hong Kong early on 8 December, shortly before the Japanese commenced hostilities against the city, steamed south at best speed, and entered Manila Bay at around 0900 that morning. As the ship dropped anchor, Second Officer John Reid noted the large amount of shipping in the bay and decided that it made a beautiful target for enemy bombers.

Reid had the morning watch. A little before noon he heard the drone of distant aircraft and looked up to see silver-colored planes against the blue sky. As he walked past Number 2 hold, he heard the clatter of antiaircraft guns firing from Cavite. Then came the piercing whistle of the bombs as they plunged out of the sky, making heavy explosions in the Navy Yard and great splashes in the bay.

At that instant the ship took a direct hit, there was an enormous blast and a flash of fire, and Reid found himself lying on his back on a pile of coal in Number 2 'tweendeck. His clothing was torn and, though he had apparently broken no bones, he was bleeding about the head and face, and had a pounding headache. Though badly shaken, Reid was amazed at having survived the explosion of the bomb. As he staggered to his feet and tried to organize his thoughts, there was a muffled detonation toward the bow, and he felt the ship shudder as she was hit by a second bomb. Thick black smoke began filling the bunker, and he realized the vessel was on fire. He painfully made his way to the deck and sounded the fire alarm. Luckily the fire was quickly brought under control, but the ship was taking water fast and beginning to settle by the head. Fraser held a hurried conference with his officers, then decided to ease the ship aground on the sandy beach. Fortunately it was high tide, and the *Taiyuan* was soon out of danger of sinking.

By that time the raid had ended, and a U.S. Navy patrol boat came alongside to check on the condition of the freighter. A Navy doctor came aboard, bandaged Reid's head, and suggested that he enter the hospital for a complete examination; but the officer was feeling much better, and since it was evident all hands would be needed to get the *Taiyuan* ready to continue her

voyage south, he put off going into the hospital. Ship repairs were begun at once.

About the time Japanese bombers were busy over Manila Bay, a British task force under Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, RN, was steaming north from Singapore to strike a Japanese invasion force reported landing on the Malayan peninsula. The force consisted of the battleship *Prince of Wales*, battle cruiser *Repulse*, and four destroyers. The ships were without cover. They were sighted by an enemy plane, and then attacked by a total of nearly one hundred shore-based bombers. Following a fierce 90-minute battle, during which the *Prince of Wales* was struck by 7 torpedoes and 2 bombs, *Repulse* by 14 torpedoes and a single bomb, both warships went down. The loss of these two vessels, the most powerful Allied warships in the ABDA (American, British, Dutch, and Australian) Area meant that the combined naval might of the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, and Australia stood little chance of halting the southward movement of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

Another merchantman at anchor in Manila Bay on 10 December was the 3,500-ton *Anhui*. Just prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the *Anhui*, under the command of Captain Louis Evans, had been evacuating British nationals and their families from Shanghai to Singapore. While en route she was diverted to Australia, and had stopped at Manila. Captain Evans's ship had better luck than the *Taiyuan:* though heavily jarred by several near misses, *Anhui* received only minor damage during the air raid.

When the vessel docked the following morning, the passengers, who included more than 400 women and children, went ashore. Hamish MacDonald, supernumerary chief engineer, put his wife and ten-month-old son in a taxicab, with the understanding that they would be at the Avenue Hotel until Captain Evans received new orders. Expecting to be reunited with his wife and son in a day or two, he returned to the ship. MacDonald was naturally surprised, minutes later, when *Anhui* got underway, but was shocked when he learned that Captain Evans had orders to take his ship south to Australia without further delay. MacDonald, upset by this turn of events, discussed the fate of his wife and son with several of the other officers. They suggested that his family would be quite safe in Manila—the United States would never allow the Japanese to take the Philippines. Even so, the men wondered about the voyage before them.

MacDonald figured he would be back in the Philippines within a few weeks and felt certain that the ship's agent would look after the passengers in the meantime. The voyage to Sydney lasted 14 days. By that time the Philippines were being invaded, and Hamish MacDonald was becoming increasingly worried about his wife and infant son; yet there seemed nothing he could do to help them. Though no one knew it at the time, the *Anhui*, with MacDonald on board, was destined to return to the Philippine Islands under the most hazardous circumstances.

On the same day that the *Anhui* took flight, Admiral Hart informed the many cargo vessels in the bay that they "had a fair chance of escape if they sailed southward without delay." The Admiral regretted that the Navy would be unable to provide escort. A few ships sailed that night, and the withdrawal continued for several days. Fortunately, no enemy forces were met as they ran south toward and through Makassar Strait. Around midnight, as many of the cargo vessels scurried to safety, enemy minelayers, accompanied by a light cruiser and two destroyers, began laying mines in the Surigao Strait, between the islands of Leyte and Mindanao. Fifty miles long and ten to twenty miles wide, the Surigao channel soon proved one of the few routes by which relief ships could reach MacArthur's forces.

By 12 December the Japanese completed their landings at Aparri and Vigan, and advance detachments were moving inland. Major General Jonathan M. Wainwright, commander of the four-division North Luzon Force, ignored the enemy in upper Luzon while preparing for the main landings which he felt would be made in the Lingayen Gulf, closer to Manila. Minor landings were also made that day at the small port of Legaspi, at the opposite end of Luzon some 200 miles southeast of the Philippine capital. Major General George M. Parker's South Luzon Force, scheduled to defend an area less distant from Manila, made no attempt to oppose the Japanese. The enemy the United States had planned against for nearly half a century was going to win the first phase of the war in less than six months.

CHAPTER 2

BACK TO BATAAN

On the morning of 24 December 1941, Brigadier General Charles C. Drake, Chief Quartermaster of the United States Army Forces in the Far East, was informed by Brigadier General Richard G. Marshall, MacArthur's Deputy Chief of Staff, that War Plan Orange, a fighting withdrawal to the Bataan peninsula, was in effect. Prior to that time, U.S. strategy had been to halt the enemy at the beaches, and this sudden shift from offensive to defensive operations placed the quartermasters in a very difficult position.

Over the past two weeks they had moved a total of 35 trainloads of supplies to depots at Tarlac and Guagua in the north, and to Los Banos below Manila, thus assuring the troops in the field adequate quantities of rations and ammunition. Now they had the much more difficult task of moving vast quantities of supplies across Manila Bay or by land around the bay into the Bataan peninsula. Luckily, Corregidor and the three smaller island fortresses guarding Manila Bay had supplies enough to last the 7000-man Harbor Defense Force for six months.

War Plan Orange called for the stocking of Bataan and Corregidor with 180 days of supplies for a combined garrison of 50,000 men. Since General MacArthur's orders raised the force on Corregidor and its satellites to 100,000, General Drake immediately ordered additional supplies to the Rock. At the same time, Colonel Fred A. Ward, head of the Army Transport Service,

began combing the Pasig River and the Manila Port Area for craft, especially barges and tugs, which could be used to move supplies to Bataan.

Long before the war, in studying the problem of moving large stocks of quartermaster supplies to the peninsula, General Drake had concluded that under ideal conditions it would take at least 14 days to complete the transfer. Unfortunately, the quartermasters were allowed only half that time when the possibility of the withdrawal became a reality, and the force was twice that envisioned in War Plan Orange.

War Plan Orange had a long history. After the Spanish-American War ended in 1898, a Joint Army-Navy Board developed a series of war plans covering U.S. involvement in another war. In these plans, each nation which might conceivably become an enemy was identified by color, and the plans came to be known as the "color plans." War Plan Orange, which envisioned a war between the United States and Japan, formed the basis for the U.S. defense of the Philippines more than three decades later.

War Plan Orange-3, the revision completed in April 1941, assumed that Japan would be the aggressor; there would be little initial assistance from the United States, and the islands would have to be defended with the forces and equipment at hand. No attempt would be made to hold all of the islands, but the American and Philippine defense establishment was expected to defend the Manila Bay area until the U.S. Pacific Fleet could fight its way across the Pacific to the Philippines with strong reinforcements, a matter of six months. The Bataan peninsula was the key to this defense. An effort would be made to retain the island of Luzon, but if that proved impossible, the defenders would stage a slow withdrawal to Bataan.

When General MacArthur was recalled to active duty and given the Philippine command in July 1941, he declined to accept the defensive concept embodied in War Plan Orange-3. MacArthur envisioned a military force of sufficient stature to destroy any enemy attacking the Philippines. The government in Washington, receptive to MacArthur's proposals, took immediate steps to strengthen the Philippine garrison. By the end of November 1941, the Far East Air Force possessed 35 Flying Fortress bombers and nearly 100 fighter planes—with more aircraft on the way—and ten reserve divisions of the Philippine Army were being mobilized and trained.

General MacArthur had long anticipated a Japanese attack on the Philippine Islands, but he felt it would not occur until April 1942, when the monsoon season ended. Had his hunch proven correct and had the Philippines received the troops, aircraft, and other materials of war scheduled for delivery before spring, the Japanese would have encountered a powerful and determined resistance. They might have taken the islands, but it would have been a costly conquest. The Japanese, probably anticipating the U.S. build-up, jumped the gun and ran the schedule to suit their own needs.

In response to MacArthur's requests, the War Department had begun sending reinforcements to the Philippines; the outbreak of war found the *Pensacola* convoy, in the vicinity of the Phoenix Islands, en route to Manila. Under the protection of the heavy cruiser *Pensacola* and the subchaser *Niagara* were four troop transports: *Chaumont, Republic, Holbrook, Meigs;* two American merchantmen: SS *Admiral Halstead* and SS *Coast Farmer;* and the Dutch merchantman MS *Bloemfontein.* They carried 4,600 men, including a full field artillery brigade of 20 75mm guns and the ground elements of the 7th Heavy (Bomber) Bombardment Group; 18 P-40 fighter planes and 52 A-24 attack bombers; half a million rounds of .50-caliber ammunition and 2,000 five-hundred-pound bombs.

Directly following the attack at Pearl Harbor, the convoy was diverted to the Fiji Islands, then ordered to Brisbane, Australia. Not withstanding the urgent need in the Philippines for every man and piece of equipment in the convoy, it might as well not have sailed. Only the *Coast Farmer* ever reached the Philippines. And she ventured only as far as Mindanao where her cargo was, on 15 February 1942, shifted to the small interisland steamers *El Cano* and *Lepus*, still a long way from Corregidor.

On 12 and 13 December, the Japanese, determined to wipe out what remained of the Far East Air Force, sent hundreds of planes in renewed attacks on various targets in central Luzon. Clark Field was again bombed and strafed, and Zeros worked over the Naval Base at Olongapo, destroying seven of Patrol Wing Ten's PBY flying boats—a heavy blow to the Navy. The interference offered by the few remaining Air Force P-40s was negligible, and by sunset there was little left of American air power, either Army or Navy, in the Philippines. Henceforth the few remaining fighter planes would be used only for reconnaissance missions.

In Manila Bay, Captain Fraser and his men labored steadily getting the disabled *Taiyuan* ready to sail. Cargo and coal had been shifted to get at the damaged areas, and cement boxes were installed to make the hull watertight. The vessel was refloated around midday on 13 December, and as she stood out of Manila Bay en route for Surabaya, Officer Reid, his head still in bandages, noticed that fires were still burning at the Naval base on Cavite. *Taiyuan* pushed south during the night and entered the Sulu Sea the following morning. Ahead lay the Celebes Sea, the Makassar Strait, and temporary safety, but the old China coaster was destined to return to the Philippines, prior to fall of Bataan and Corregidor.

On the day the *Taiyuan* departed Manila, General MacArthur received a War Department message informing him that reinforcements in the *Pensacola* convoy would be forwarded to the Philippines as soon as they reached Australia. Concerned with the safety of the ships as they steamed north, MacArthur approached Admiral Hart for escort vessels. But Hart gave him little encouragement, and General MacArthur complained to Washington that the Asiatic Fleet Commander was taking a defeatist attitude. By that time the Admiral had concluded the Philippines were lost, and the following morning he ordered the surviving PBYs to Java.

For a few days, although badly shot up and far outnumbered, the 14 remaining four-engine B-17 bombers of the Far East Air Force attempted offensive operations from Del Monte, Mindanao. Sometime on 14 December permission was requested to withdraw the Flying Fortresses to Darwin, Australia, 1500 miles to the south. Approval came through the next day. While the bombers prepared for the long flight to Australia, the fate of the Philippine garrison was being weighed in Washington, D.C. by General George C. Marshall, U.S. Army Chief of Staff. Early on Sunday morning, 14 December, Brigadier General Dwight D. Eisenhower arrived in Washington to see General Marshall about an important new assignment—a solution to the pressing problem of reinforcing the Philippines. Eisenhower had served under MacArthur in the Philippines for three years, understood conditions in the Far East, and seemed the ideal man for the job. With the Pacific Fleet out of action, Eisenhower concluded that the only hope of getting desperately needed supplies to the Philippines lay in aircraft, submarines, and surface blockade runners. Obviously, submarines and aircraft could transport only

limited supplies, but a few freighters could do wonders—assuming they reached the Philippines.

Eisenhower had another conference with General Marshall during which he outlined the proposed plan of action. Admitting that the Philippine garrison was doomed, he said that regardless of cost or risk, "... we must do everything for them that is humanly possible." He planned to use ships, planes, and even submarines to transport food, ammunition, and medicines north from Australia either to the Manila Bay area, or to ports in the southern islands. It was a long gamble, but there was no other way.

Since all supply efforts would have to be made from Australia, its retention was essential and its build-up as a major base was to be given first priority. Only slightly less important was retention of the eastern extremities of the Netherlands East Indies, since short-range fighter aircraft, desperately needed in the Philippines, would have to refuel at some of the Dutch islands as they hopped up from Darwin. The advance base in Australia would support all Allied operations in the Far East, with reinforcement of the Philippines its primary mission.

Eisenhower's plan for supplying the Philippines coincided exactly with the views held by General Marshall and Secretary of War Stimson, and President Roosevelt had already expressed himself in favor of all possible assistance for MacArthur. General Marshall gave his wholehearted approval to Eisenhower's plan, then added, "Do your best to save them."

Major General George H. Brett, who was attending a strategy conference in China, was to have command in Australia; and an outstanding Army supply officer, Colonel Stephen J. Chamberlin, was ordered from Washington to Australia to serve as Brett's chief of staff. Army personnel in the *Pensacola* convoy, then approaching Brisbane, would form the nucleus of the new command, which was to be called U.S. Army Forces in Australia. The War Department asked USAFIA to give top priority to the movement of aircraft and supplies from Australia to the Philippine Islands.

Meanwhile the situation was worsening in the Philippines. Late on the night of 21 December, 85 Japanese army and navy transports, with a powerful escort, moved into the Lingayen Gulf 120 miles north of the Philippine capital. It was the main invasion force: the Japanese 14th Army, 43,000 seasoned troops under the command of Lieutenant General Masaharu Homma,

which at first light began landings at three points along the coast.

By afternoon the invaders had brushed aside Philippine Army troops and had made contact with an enemy detachment pushing south from Vigan. Other Japanese units fought a pitched battle with U.S. troops in Rosario and seized the town. Even then a well-coordinated attack by General Wainright's North Luzon Force might well have driven the Japanese into the sea. But the lack of training, equipment, and communication made such an attack impossible. The loss at Rosario made it clear to General MacArthur that his poorly trained USAFFE could not halt the enemy at the beaches.

It was also on 22 December that General Marshall regretfully turned down MacArthur's plea for fighter planes to be delivered by carriers, adding that the Philippine commander "would have to rely on the ability of cargo ships and aircraft to make their way northward."

While the Japanese 14th Army completed its landings at Lingayen and prepared to drive for Manila, the Philippine-bound *Pensacola* convoy arrived at Brisbane, Australia. The P-40 fighter planes and A-24 attack bombers were unloaded, and Air Corps personnel hurriedly began preparing them for the 4000-mile flight to the Philippines by way of Darwin and the Dutch East Indies. However, MacArthur asked that the remainder of the troops, equipment, and supplies be sent north at once. He believed the convoy could reach the Philippines if the Navy would provide a suitable escort. But the Japanese Navy had virtual command of the sea and the air in the archipelago—and the United States Navy could afford little protection for the Manila-bound vessels.

The successful invasion of Luzon by the Japanese compelled General MacArthur to sharply revise his strategy for defending the Philippine Islands. On 23 December, the USAFFE Commander ordered the withdrawal to the Bataan peninsula, as set forth in War Plan Orange. MacArthur intended to fight a delaying action in the mountains and jungles of Bataan until the United States could send help. But it soon became apparent that help would never come in time.

Prior to 8 December 1941, supplies just received from the states had been stored on Bataan: 3000 tons of canned foods, principally meat and fish; 100,000 type "C" rations; and 300,000 gallons of gasoline in 55-gallon drums, which were the main

source of gasoline after the withdrawal to Bataan. But, on Luzon, rations, gasoline, ammunition, and other supplies which would have been invaluable on Bataan were destroyed because it was impossible to move them. The lack of motor transport was especially unfortunate. The bulk of the stocks had to be transported by barges, which were excellent carriers, but they could be towed only about three miles an hour; and since the round-trip distance from Manila to Bataan is a full 60 miles, they made only a few trips before the city fell.

The arduous process of supplying both the North and South Luzon Forces during the withdrawal to Bataan was complicated by the shortage of supplies and supply officers, the urgency of transporting food stocks and equipment to the peninsula, and the destruction of goods that could not be saved. And the fact that the troops had received little training and were undisciplined further increased the difficulties of supply. Prior to the opening of hostilities, the Chief Quartermaster had requested additional trained supply men, but the Army was unable to fulfill his request. A supply strength of four percent is considered a normal complement, yet the Quartermaster Corps, with only 1300 officers and men, attempted to handle the supply for an army of more than 100,000.

A particularly vexing problem was the supply of rice, the basic item in the Filipino soldier's diet. Prior to the war, the Army purchased rice and certain subsistence items locally, and as a result, there was little on hand when the Japanese attacked. Quartermaster officers immediately began buying all available rice; 5000 tons had been acquired and stored at Cabanatuan, 50 miles north of Manila, by 23 December. The trouble came when orders were issued for the retreat to Bataan, and the quartermasters attempted to move the rice. In an effort to assure civilians an adequate supply of staples, the Commonwealth Government had decreed that neither rice nor sugar was to be removed from the provinces without governmental approval. General Drake vigorously protested this restriction and repeatedly asked for permission to transport both commodities to Bataan, but the Government ignored his appeals. As a direct result the USAFFE was deprived of enough rice to have supplied Bataan for a year.

Also lost were 2000 cases of canned fish and corned beef and a stock of clothing stored in Tarlac, but owned by Japanese wholesalers. Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Lawrence, commander of the Quartermaster Depot at Tarlac, tried to confiscate these

supplies, but USAFFE Headquarters issued specific orders to the contrary. Lawrence was warned that he would face a court-martial if he took control of the Japanese-owned stocks of food and clothing.

While the quartermasters moved rations, supplies, and ammunition to the peninsula, the North and South Luzon Forces prepared to carry out the fighting withdrawal outlined in War Plan Orange. It was to be a delaying action by Major General Jonathan M. Wainwright's North Luzon Force and Major General Albert M. Jones's forces in south Luzon. Even as they commenced delaying tactics above and below the Philippine capital on 24 December, General Brereton closed down the operations of his shattered Far East Air Force and Admiral Hart prepared to move Asiatic Fleet Headquarters to the Netherlands East Indies. Asiatic Fleet submarines continued to operate out of Manila Bay until the end of the year, but plagued by defective torpedoes, they accomplished little. From Fort McKinley, Brereton radioed Darwin, Australia, that effective 1600 24 December, FEAF Headquarters was transferred to the southern continent. That night the Navy flew General Brereton and several of his staff out of the Philippines in a PBY flying boat. At noon on Christmas Day Admiral Hart placed Rear Admiral Francis W. Rockwell in command of the remaining U.S. naval forces in the islands, and sailed in the submarine *Shark*. By that time General MacArthur, Philippine President Quezon and their families, U.S. Army and Navy Headquarters, and the upper echelons of the Commonwealth Government had moved to Corregidor Island from Manila.

Following its first aerial bombardment on 10 December, Manila suffered increasingly frequent attacks. General MacArthur declared Manila an "Open City" on 26 December, yet the Japanese bombed it solidly the next morning. Earlier raids had hit military targets, but this one hit the city. Churches, colleges, and cathedrals received special attention. The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception was attacked three times. The two-hour raid damaged 14 churches and colleges, set large areas of the city on fire, and killed many civilians. Francis B. Sayre, U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippines, assured Americans and Filipinos that aid from America was certain, but the Manila *Tribune* also reported that the Office of the High Commissioner was no longer accepting securities for safekeeping. No reason was given for the suspension.

While Manila was being heavily bombed and strafed on Saturday, 27 December, General Wainwright's men began their fighting withdrawal from Luzon to Bataan. General MacArthur accurately assessed the seriousness of his situation when he radioed the War Department:

> *Enemy penetration in the Philippines resulted from our weakness on the sea and in the air. Surface elements of the Asiatic Fleet were withdrawn and the effect of the submarines has been negligible. Lack of airfields for modern planes prevented defensive dispersion and lack of pursuit planes permitted unhindered day bombardment. The enemy has had utter freedom of naval and air movements.*

By the time that report reached Washington, Colonel Ward and his men had moved almost 100 barges across Manila Bay to the east coast of Bataan. Unloading points had been set up at Mariveles, Cabcaben, and Lamao. Sporadic enemy air activity hampered operations during the hours of daylight, but many barges were handled on the night of 27-28 December, and the remainder of the cargo was removed on succeeding nights.

As the crews labored in the darkness, most of Manila's port area was on fire and burning petroleum stocks sent thick, black smoke columns into the sky. The streets of the capital were strangely deserted and a feeling of doom was in the air. Aside from a few stragglers, some rear echelon personnel hastily closing shop and a scattering of last-minute demolition squads, the USAFFE had gone and enemy soldiers would soon be at the gates of the city.

On Sunday, 28 December, General Wainwright's North Luzon Force occupied a line across the central plain and MacArthur told Washington he was attempting to "hold hard." On that same day the U.S. Army transport *Holbrook* left Brisbane, Australia, for the Philippines. Accompanied by the subchaser, *Niagara*, she carried two field artillery regiments, their equipment and supplies. The fast Dutch merchant ship *Bloemfontein* was soon to follow.

While the *Holbrook* and the *Niagara* steamed northward, the evacuation movement continued on Luzon. Aside from the soldiers and civilians who obtained water transportation across Manila Bay, evacuees and their equipment had to pass over the escape route provided by two narrow blacktop highways. Sec-

tions of the 100-mile road ran across country completely open to air observation. From 24 December until the end of the year the highways were usually crowded with a slow-moving stream of buses, trucks, ambulances, heavy guns, and thousands of soldiers and civilians on foot. For some unexplained reason Japanese planes made no serious attempt to attack the troops and civilians who were retreating to Bataan—one of the few lucky breaks experienced during that hectic time.

On the evening of 30 December, General Richard Marshall, MacArthur's Deputy Chief of Staff, instructed the South Luzon Force under General Jones to get north without further delay, and by the following night the American and Philippine soldiers below Manila were withdrawing precisely on schedule. Though frustrated in his desire to grapple with the Japanese, General Jones had, in the course of the brief campaign in the south, seen his troops destroy numerous rail and highway bridges, which effectively delayed the enemy.

At about the same time, the Army Transport Service hurriedly loaded the last of the barges and destroyed or gave away supplies which could not be removed from Manila. Along the northern front, General Wainwright's North Luzon Force, though pressed sharply by the enemy, held its ground while the South Luzon Force continued its withdrawal. Every hour that the troops could hold the enemy gave their comrades in Bataan that much more time to prepare the final defenses.

By the night of 6 January 1942, all United States Army forces were in Bataan and both Wainwright and Jones had reason to feel proud of their men. Though largely comprised of Filipino soldiers with little training and less equipment, the North and South Luzon Forces had carried out a difficult and dangerous withdrawal while under constant pressure from the enemy. Against the broad sweep and the great battles of the Pacific War, these tiny rearguard actions seem insignificant, yet they enabled General MacArthur to hold off the Japanese while he removed his garrison to the Bataan peninsula. As Walter D. Edmonds wrote later in *They Fought With What They Had*, "The time that had been gained was the key to the whole stand on Bataan. It made possible the removal of Air Corps and service troops, hospitals and heavy machinery, and Quartermaster stocks that would otherwise not have reached Bataan at all. But it was a hair-raising business from beginning to end."

There is, however, another side of the coin. In a surprisingly

brief period of time, the Japanese had carried out one major invasion and a number of minor landings on the island of Luzon, captured Manila, and forced the withdrawal of MacArthur's army into the Bataan peninsula. They had obtained control of Philippine waters while driving the U.S. Asiatic Fleet south to the Netherlands East Indies, and had destroyed the American Far East Air Force as an effective fighting unit. The only U.S. air activity henceforth was confined to difficult, long-range flights from Australia and to sporadic reconnaissance flights over Luzon. For all practical purposes Japan had driven Allied defenses south to the Malay Barrier. Though General MacArthur's men would continue the fight, the full tide of Japanese aggression had, by early January 1942, swept over and around them and was soon to threaten the sea lines between the United States and Australia.

With the capture of Manila, Japanese forces in the Philippines gained possession of the foremost center of American influence in the Far East and achieved the major objective laid down by Imperial General Headquarters. The fall of the capital ended the shipment of supplies across the bay to Bataan. By the first week in January, when General Drake and his quartermasters began inventory of the stocks on Bataan and Corregidor, efforts to move any part of the *Pensacola* convoy to the Philippines had proven futile. Perhaps it is just as well that the American and Philippine troops in the islands were unaware of their plight. At least for a time they could hope for the food, ammunition, and medicines they were to need so desperately a short time later.

In Washington, the New Year was only three days old when the War Plans Division of the General Staff completed a study of the possibility of sending powerful reinforcements to the Philippines. Entitled "Relief of the Philippines," and largely compiled by Brigadier General L. T. Gerow, it acknowledged complete Japanese control of the air and the sea in the Philippines plus a preponderance of land forces, and indicated that recovery of the Philippines "would require the *immediate* combined effort of available land, sea and air resources of the United States, the British and the N.E.I." The paper warned that time was paramount.

Such an effort, however, would require the immediate transfer of U.S. naval units from the Atlantic to the Pacific, endangering supply lines between the United States and Great Britain. The memo further stated that nearly 1500 aircraft would have to be

made available from existing U.S. stocks and lend-lease commitments. The study made it quite clear that a strong reinforcement of the Philippine garrison was not feasible. But the negative conclusion of the report in no way affected U.S. determination to do everything possible to aid General MacArthur and his forces.

On the same day that the war plans study ended all hope for a concerted effort to relieve the Philippines, MacArthur asked General Marshall for blockade runners and suggested that submarines be pressed into service. The U.S. Navy, with good reason, disliked this approach, and when Admiral Hart indicated he had more urgent assignments for his undersea craft, General MacArthur complained to Washington a second time that the Asiatic Fleet Commander was taking a defeatist view. Though additional pressure was brought into play before the way was clear for use of the submarines, ten million dollars was earmarked for the organization and dispatch of blockade runners to the Philippine Islands.

The most direct route for supplying the Philippines was from Hawaii to Wake Island, thence through the Marianas and the Carolines. However, the loss of Guam and Wake gave Japan control of this route. For all practical purposes by early January 1942, the Philippines were virtually isolated. Unarmed and unescorted cargo ships might steam north from Australia, but the Japanese were poised to strike the Netherlands East Indies, and such movements were becoming increasingly hazardous.

As part of MacArthur's optimistic plan for destroying the enemy before they got a foothold in the Philippines, advance depots had been established at Tarlac, Guagua, and Los Banos on the island of Luzon. A similar depot was set up at Cebu, a city on the island bearing the same name, some 400 miles south of Manila. This supply post was designed to support three army divisions responsible for the defense of the Visayan Islands (central Philippines) and the island of Mindanao. The withdrawal movement to Bataan reversed the role to be played by the advance depot at Cebu: henceforth, the southern depot's main objective was support of its parent force, the USAFFE troops bottled up on the peninsula.

General Drake's 5 January inventory of USAFFE stocks disclosed an alarming food situation and a serious shortage of 3-inch antiaircraft ammunition. Though hindered by frequent bombings, a shortage of dock workers and, worst of all, a lack of

time, the Army Transport Service had moved an estimated 300 barges—approximately 300,000 tons—of food and other vital supplies across the bay to Bataan, but about half of the barges were still anchored off shore.

Food stocks on Bataan and Corregidor, including those on hand prior to the war and hurriedly moved there during the withdrawal, included: a 30-day supply of a very unbalanced dry ration, a 50-day supply of canned meats and fish, 40 days of canned milk, 30 days of flour and canned vegetables, a 20-day supply of rice, and even lesser amounts of sugar, salt, syrup, and pepper. Coffee, vinegar, canned and fresh fruits, fresh meat, potatoes, onions, and cereals were almost nonexistent. Five million pounds of flour on the cargo vessel *Si-kiang* had been lost when the ship was bombed and sunk in Manila Bay. Finally, there was the emergency reserve of 500,000 type "C" rations.

As General Drake studied the inventory, he saw that the Philippine garrison, which exceeded 100,000 men, could not possibly last the six-month period laid down in War Plan Orange. He immediately recommended to General MacArthur that the soldiers and civilians on Bataan and Corregidor be placed on half rations, and such orders were issued.

When General Drake urged the War Department to immediately dispatch rations, ammunition, and medical supplies, he was informed that the Commanding General of American troops in Australia, Lieutenant General George H. Brett, had been directed to forward the needed supplies without delay. Extensive efforts were indeed made to supply Bataan and Corregidor by surface craft, aircraft, and submarines. The risk was high. Valuable ships, planes, and cargo were lost. And the results, despite heroic endeavor by many men, were disappointing, as the defenders of Bataan and Corregidor best knew.

CHAPTER 3

AID TO CORREGIDOR

Following the decision in mid-December 1941 to establish a huge U.S. base of operations in Australia, the War Department produced Plan X, a hastily written document that outlined the build-up of a logistics base down under for the prompt dispatch of troops and war materials north to the Philippines. An initial objective was a 60-day supply of all items, including ammunition, in both Australia and in the islands. Plan X further indicated that Brisbane was to be the main port of entry for Philippine-bound shipments, which would then be rushed overland to Darwin on the far north coast. The movement of supplies, equipment and personnel from Darwin to the Philippine Islands was to be handled as expeditiously as conditions would allow, partly by air but primarily by ocean-going blockade runners. It was a grandiose plan.

Colonel Stephen J. Chamberlin, who was ordered to Australia as General Brett's chief of staff, was selected to carry "G-4 Administrative Order Plan X" to the southwest Pacific. He was the first of several War Department emissaries sent to the southwest Pacific to press for immediate reinforcement of the USAFFE. Prior to his departure on 20 December, Colonel Chamberlin conferred briefly with General Eisenhower.

The flight from Washington halfway round the world to Australia in a B-24 Liberator bomber with bucket seats and auxiliary fuel tanks in the bomb bay proved both arduous and hazardous.

Colonel Chamberlin, Lieutenant Colonel Lester J. Whitlock, and two officers bound for Karachi were the only passengers; the rest of the seats were filled with .50-caliber ammunition for the troops in the Philippines. The close proximity of the ammo and the high-test gasoline was not particularly desirable in the event of a crash.

The plane flew from Washington to Trinidad and Belem in South America, thence to Accra, Khartoum, Kandi, Java and on to Darwin, Australia, with stopovers in Cairo, Bangalore, and Surabaya. It was one of the first U.S. Army flights to the Near East via the South Atlantic and Africa, and the lack of weather forecasts and the imposition of radio silence gave an added dimension to the undertaking. Fully aware that antiaircraft gunners at air bases along the route would be trigger happy, the pilots made straight-in approaches from 1000 feet with wheels down.

The plane remained at Cairo four days while the flyers conferred with various RAF people about the next leg of the flight and the best route to Australia. Colonel Chamberlin had orders to report to General George H. Brett, yet he had no idea where in the southwest Pacific he might find him.

The plane departed Cairo on 1 January 1942. By the time it reached Bangalore, India, the Japanese advance in Burma threatened airfields that the aircraft would normally have used, so they flew directly to Surabaya in the Netherlands East Indies.

In Surabaya, RAF personnel promised to notify Darwin that the B-24 was on its way. A tropical storm was closing in when the aircraft reached Darwin, and the pilot approached the field at a low altitude and executed a fast, power landing. It was just as well, for there had been no warning from Java, and the antiaircraft gunners were naturally eager to knock down unidentified aircraft. Colonel Chamberlin reported to General Brett the following day when the general stopped at Darwin en route to Java and his new assignment as Deputy Commander of the ABDA Theatre of Operations. After a brief conference, Brett ordered Chamberlin to USAFIA Headquarters in Melbourne.

During Chamberlin's trip, the *Pensacola* convoy had arrived at Brisbane. In the absence of General Brett, Brigadier General Henry B. Claggett took command of the contingent and named General Barnes his chief of staff. A temporary U.S. Army Headquarters was set up at Lennon's Hotel, and the officers immedi-

ately tackled the problem of getting reinforcements to the Philippines.

It had first been thought that the 70 aircraft loaded in the *Pensacola* convoy could soon be ferried north, but this was not the case. They lacked such essential equipment as trigger motors, solenoids, and self-sealing fuel tanks. The aircraft remained in Australia until needed parts were flown out from the United States, but by then it was too late. The U.S. forces were hemmed in on the Bataan peninsula, the Japanese were threatening the Malay Barrier, and not one of the planes ever reached General MacArthur in the Philippines.

The aircraft remained in Australia, but General Claggett ordered the *Holbrook* and the *Bloemfontein*, the fastest ships in the convoy, to proceed to the Philippines. Accompanied by the subchaser *Niagara*, the *Holbrook* departed Brisbane 28 December 1941, carrying two field artillery regiments (147th and 148th, less one battalion), ammunition, equipment, and supplies. Dispatch of the *Bloemfontein* was delayed 24 hours pending approval of the Netherlands Government in exile. This vessel carried the 131st FA Regiment, plus equipment and supplies, but was directed to Surabaya, N.E.I. The supposition was that she would be sent to the Philippines following her arrival in Java.

They could not know it at the time, but five U.S. Army officers and one enlisted man on board the troopship *Holbrook* were soon to have a part in the efforts to supply the Philippine outpost. They were Colonel John A. Robenson, who was in command of the troop carrier, First Lieutenants F. H. Andrew and Albert B. Cook, Second Lieutenants R. E. Stensland and Paul Nestler, and a young draftee, Private John E. Lundberg.

The three ships were steaming north through the Great Barrier Reef when, on 31 December 1941, General Brett arrived at Darwin. General Brereton, FEAF Commander, had come down from Java two days earlier and was in the process of moving his remaining B-17s to Malang, Java. Brett understood he was to have command of the American forces in Australia, but was disappointed to learn that his authority did not include Brereton and the Far East Air Force. Brett and Brereton were at that time the ranking U.S. Army officers on the southern continent. The two generals flew to Melbourne, where they had a brief conference with Australian Air Commodore Frank W. Lukis.

The following day, 1 January 1942, they flew on to Brisbane, and General Brett assumed command of the newly created United

States Army Forces in Australia. That very night he held a conference on ways and means of forwarding reinforcements to the Philippine Islands. Brett found that he had been given a man-size assignment. Almost from scratch he was to create a major logistics base designed to maintain and strengthen General MacArthur's forces in the islands. Brett was also to build an enormous Australian-based American air force—landing fields, air depots, and aircraft repair facilities—capable of dealing with the Japanese offensive. This double mission, each an immense undertaking, immediately presented problems of a scale and complexity never before encountered by an American military commander, nor even in fact by the United States Government.

With the stated intention of building a "second England," General Brett loosed upon Washington a steady flow of radio messages stating his needs. Officials in the War Department were bowled over by the breadth and depth of Brett's running requests: staff officers, experienced supply officers, four regiments and four battalions of antiaircraft troops, two air-warning service organizations, and 180 barrage balloons with operating personnel. He further requested two mobile air depots, three engineer battalions, one general service regiment, and three engineer aviation companies. He also asked for 100,000 tons of asphalt, 30 asphalt producing plants, crushing plants, compressors, jackhammers, screening plants for gravel, explosives, landing mats, gasoline storage tanks, fuel trucks, and railroad rolling stock.

Yet the seemingly endless lists were quite realistic in view of the magnitude of Brett's mission. The War Department informed the USAFIA Commander that the lack of shipping precluded fulfillment of his requisitions and insisted that requests emanating from Australia be kept to an absolute minimum. General Brett reminded Washington of the instructions given him, i.e., to support MacArthur and to create a vast air base in depth, and renewed his requests. It was at this juncture that the War Department, becoming increasingly concerned with General MacArthur's plight, pressed the American commander in Australia to "bend every effort to break through the blockade of the Philippines."

General Brett was taken aback. Although the War Department had largely denied him the materials he judged necessary to perform his mission, in the next breath it prodded him to redouble his efforts to relieve the Philippine outpost.

General MacArthur had, since the outbreak of hostilities, re-

peatedly asked the War Department for assistance. He urged an immediate and extensive buildup of air power in the southwest Pacific that would, he believed, halt the Japanese drive to the south. He also requested raids by U.S. carriers, the dispatch of blockade runners, and the organization of an expeditionary force for movement into the southern islands. The USAFFE Commander's pleas were well received in Washington, and President Roosevelt had gone on record favoring all possible aid for the Far Eastern garrison. However, the first wartime U.S.-British strategy conference, held in Washington in late December and early January, reaffirmed Allied plans to defeat Germany first. United States forces in the Far East, along with British, Dutch, and Australian, were to be given all possible support, but the European Theatre was to receive priority.

Though committed to aid MacArthur in the Philippines, the Allied Command made plans to defend the Malay Barrier, the islands of the East Indies that stretch from Burma to New Guinea. To better coordinate this defense, the Washington conference established the joint ABDA (American, British, Dutch, and Australian) Theatre of Operations and designated a British general, Sir Archibald P. Wavell, its commander. General Brett was to serve as Deputy Commander. Wavell's job was to stop the Japanese and to secure both Singapore and the Netherlands East Indies. Almost as an afterthought, ABDACOM was instructed to reinforce General MacArthur and his troops in the Philippine Islands.

On 4 January 1942, only a few days after he arrived in Australia, General Brett learned of the creation of ABDACOM and was informed that he was to serve as Wavell's deputy, and that General Brereton was to have command of all American Air Forces in the new theatre of operations. Both officers were directed to report to General Wavell in Java as soon as practicable. That same day General Brett ordered the *Holbrook* to put in at Darwin to discharge troops and cargo. The military situation had worsened in the Philippines, the Japanese were swarming through the Indies, and the USAFIA Commander decided it too risky to send the lone transport farther north.

Three days later, on 7 January, Brett and Brereton flew to Darwin, remained there all the next day, and then continued on to Java. While General Brett was at Darwin, Colonel Chamberlin, who had just flown more than halfway round the world, met his new commanding officer. Following a brief conference with

General Brett, Colonel Chamberlin, accompanied by Colonel Whitlock, caught an Army plane south to Melbourne. General Barnes welcomed him to the command and appointed him G-4, and gave him the enormously difficult problem of getting reinforcements to the Philippines. Concomitant with this activity, Chamberlin was to organize supply operations for the U.S. Army forces on the southern continent.

Colonel Chamberlin soon discovered that the American military establishment lacked everything: trained men, vital foodstuffs, military equipment, supplies, and ammunition. The Australians could make only a modest contribution to the military buildup; the bulk of the war goods would have to be transported from the United States along the highly vulnerable trans-Pacific shipping lanes. Distance alone, from the U.S. to Australia and thence to the Philippines, proved an overwhelming obstacle. Cargo vessels steamed nearly 7000 miles from San Francisco to Sydney, and there were 4000 more hazardous miles between Australia and Bataan or Corregidor. As the Japanese advance neared Australia and threatened sea lines to the United States, the movement of war goods to the Philippines proved increasingly problematical.

Australia itself presented a host of serious drawbacks. It was an enormous sprawling continent: even by air, Melbourne was 2000 miles south of Darwin. Perth and Fremantle, the only cities of importance in southwest Australia, were 1700 miles from Melbourne and about as far from Darwin. Yet some communications from Washington referred to Australia as "that point." Five different gauges of railway tracks necessitated slow, laborious transshipment. The population and most industry was concentrated along the southeastern coast. Added to this was the fact that scattered settlements in the north, as at Darwin and Townsville, which were located along the coast, lacked even the minimum of air and land defenses and were completely open to attack by the Japanese.

Colonel Chamberlin, as G-4 for the USAFIA, had his hands full. He was striving to set up an adequate supply operation for the American command in Australia; and at the same time, he was struggling to make good the War Department's commitment to General MacArthur and his troops in the Philippines. The severe shortage of trained officers and men handicapped the military establishment. The Australians were unable to supply an adequate number of civilian secretaries and clerks. Even the

most capable Australian stenographers were quite unfamiliar with U.S. Army methods and military terminology. Despite these and other drawbacks, and the difficulties of acquiring suitable offices and housing for Headquarters USAFIA, the command gradually took shape.

One of the Colonel's first tasks was to examine the long lists of personnel, equipment, and supplies which General Brett had requested from the War Department. In view of the job at hand, Brett's requisitions were in Chamberlin's views quite reasonable, yet they had been summarily disapproved. Undaunted, G-4 carefully compiled a new list of troops and materials needed in Australia. The requirements were more balanced, but the total amounts requested were approximately twice those that General Brett had asked for ten days earlier. Chamberlin prefaced the new requisitions with a detailed outline of the serious obstacles confronting the USAFIA in Australia: its geographical features, the backward development of the country as a whole, and its impossible transportation and communication systems. This approach paid off; for in a surprisingly short time the War Department approved the requisitions.

Despite Chamberlin's progress in Australia, by mid-January all efforts to reinforce the U.S. garrison in the Philippines had failed. The enemy had by then completed landings at Tarakan in northern Borneo—and would obviously continue southward—and the Australians were becoming increasingly alarmed that the Japanese would attack, perhaps invade, the continent itself. The move to support General MacArthur had already suffered two heavy blows: diversion of the *Holbrook* and the *Bloemfontein*, and the necessity for the USAFIA to supply the newly established ABDA Command in the Netherlands East Indies.

Throughout this period General MacArthur constantly asked Washington for assistance. He assured the War Department that the Japanese blockade had proven successful only because the Allies believed it so—he was "professionally certain" that blockade runners could safely reach the Philippines and he urged that a broad program of blockade running be instituted. He pointed out that actual tonnage requirements were not large and that successful penetration of the blockade by only a portion of the vessels dispatched would greatly improve the situation.

While at Batavia about 12 January 1942, General Brereton received word from the War Department that the Navy had finally released a submarine for use in the Philippine relief op-

eration. Brereton conferred with Admiral Hart, and Navy Headquarters at Surabaya ordered the USS *Seawolf* to offload all torpedoes—aside from eight in the tubes—and to take on .50-caliber and three-inch ammunition for delivery at Corregidor Island, in Manila Bay.

When the new ABDA Command, with headquarters in Java, was officially activated on 15 January, General Brereton was placed in command of all United States Forces, both ground and air, in Australia and in the Netherlands East Indies. Geography alone made this an impossible command situation. Brereton informed General Wavell that he preferred to remain with ABDACOM, and the British commander agreed to ask Washington to settle the question. Pending clarification by the War Department, General Brereton returned to Australia to iron out problems that had arisen with the buildup of the American military establishment. He reorganized Army operations at Darwin, closed down temporary Headquarters of the Far East Air Force, and sent its staff to Java. Brereton then flew to Brisbane.

On 18 January, while General Brereton was on his way south, General Marshall put new pressure on Barnes in Melbourne to step up efforts to aid the Philippine outpost:

> *MacArthur reports food situation PI becoming most serious. States blockade light, may easily be run by bold action. Imperative organize comprehensive efforts, run blockade and deliver supplies MacArthur. Use funds without stint. $10,000,000 now available. May be spent whatever manner deemed advisable. Arrange advance payments, partial payments for unsuccessful efforts, and large bonuses for actual delivery. Determine method, procedure of payments, but must get results.*

Marshall then sketched a new phase of the relief effort which later came to be known as the Robenson Mission:

> *Organize groups of bold and resourceful men. Dispatch them with funds by air to NEI, there to buy food and charter vessels. Rewards for actual delivery Bataan or Corregidor must be fixed at level to insure utmost energy and daring on part of masters. At same time dispatch blockade runners from Australia with standard rations and small amounts of ammunition each. Make movement on broad front. Use many*

routes, great numbers of small or medium sized boats. Continue incessantly until satisfactory level of supplies secured. Only indomitable determination will succeed. Success must be attained. Risk will be great. Reward will be proportionate.

On the same day that Marshall prodded Barnes to get blockade runners enroute to the Philippines, he decided to send Brigadier General Patrick Hurley to the southwest Pacific as his personal representative. Hurley's job would be to lend energetic, on-the-spot encouragement to the Philippine relief effort. General Hurley, who had served as Secretary of War from 1929 to 1933 and was a close friend of MacArthur's, seemed an excellent choice for this difficult assignment.

Late the following day, 19 January 1942, General Barnes and members of his staff met with a group of Australian military officers and officials of the Commonwealth Government. Colonel Chamberlin read General Marshall's urgent communication regarding aid for General MacArthur and outlined the relief plan formulated by the USAFIA. General Barnes then asked the Australians for assistance.

Commodore Durnford, Royal Australian Navy, pointed out that there were actually three important problems which had to be solved if aid were to be given to the American forces in the Philippine Islands. Appropriate vessels and cargoes, i.e., rations and ammunition, had first to be located. Cargoes must then be loaded with the utmost expediency. And lastly, the ships had to be dispatched from Australia to carefully selected destinations in the Philippine archipelago.

From a list of available shipping, the Committee selected those vessels believed most suitable for attempting the blockade. The U.S. Army, from stocks at Brisbane and Darwin, could furnish part of the rations and an adequate supply of ammunition: two million rounds of .30-caliber and 300,000 rounds each of .45- and .50-caliber ammunition. An additional 2500 rounds of .75mm shells were yet to be located. The Australians were asked to supply 10,000 tons of food supplies, in addition to 3000 tons of rations already promised for Brisbane. Sydney and Brisbane were best located for loading shipping to the Philippines; however, certain supplies might have to be picked up at Melbourne, or at Fremantle on the far west coast.

The Australian Navy would escort the blockade runners along the coast, but the ships were to come under U.S. Navy control as

they continued north. Their movements had to be carefully coordinated between the two areas of command.

Colonel Chamberlin stressed the need for immediate action and utmost security. The organization of convoys was out of the question, and since escort vessels could not be provided, cargo ships carrying rations and ammunition for the Philippine outpost would attempt the blockade on their own. Commodore Durnford pointed out the great risk to all unprotected shipping and urged that naval protection be sought from Admiral Hart in Java. It was also decided that Hart should select routes and destinations that appeared to offer the best chance of success.

The first phase of the relief effort would include 6,000 tons of rations and 1,000 tons of ammunition.

The American *Coast Farmer* (3300 tons) and the Philippine *Don Isidro* (3200 tons), then in Brisbane, were selected for the initial attempt to run the blockade. The 10-knot *Coast Farmer* would load 1000 tons at Brisbane, the *Don Isidro*, nearly twice as fast, would load 2500 tons at Sydney and 1500 tons at Melbourne. The U.S. Army transport, *Mauna Loa* (5400 tons), then in the Darwin area, was considered another likely prospect for carrying food and ammo into the islands.

The subject of finance arose, and Colonel Chamberlin indicated he had adequate funds at his disposal to cover the cost of one million rations, which were to be furnished by the Australian Government. The Committee also considered bonus payments for crews of blockade runners, but the idea was discarded for security reasons.

General Barnes reported the plan to send Colonel John A. Robenson from Darwin to Java to implement relief efforts being mounted in Australia. Robenson and a small staff were to organize ships, crews, and cargoes for dispatch to MacArthur. The Committee agreed upon this additional measure but concluded that Admiral Hart or General Brett, on the scene at ABDACOM, had power to cancel this subsidiary effort if they deemed it a futile venture.

General Brereton arrived at Brisbane at about the time that Barnes and Chamberlin were meeting with the Australians at Melbourne. The Air Corps officer, temporarily in command of the U.S. Army Forces in Australia, found waiting for him equally urgent instructions relative to support of the MacArthur command. By radio General Marshall ordered General Brereton to organize available shipping and to dispatch cargo vessels north

at the earliest possible moment. The U.S. Army Chief of Staff, in Washington, emphasized that the Philippine relief project was to receive priority over all other activities. Unaware of the meeting of the joint committee in Melbourne, Brereton selected three of the six vessels at Brisbane—*Coast Farmer, Don Isidro,* and the *Mormacsun*—and directed that they be loaded with commodities needed in the Philippines. Thus, on 20 January 1942, the two ranking American generals in Australia, Barnes at Melbourne and Brereton at Brisbane, were both attempting to get rations and ammunition to the U.S. forces on Bataan and Corregidor.

General Brereton ran into a maze of red tape when he tried to use the *Mormacsun*, but the *Coast Farmer* and *Don Isidro* eventually sailed for the Philippines. Despite being the faster ship, *Don Isidro* and her urgently needed ammunition were lost when she was attacked by Japanese planes. The first ammunition to reach Corregidor—and there was little of it—was carried by the submarine, *Seawolf*, on a slow haul up from Darwin.

CHAPTER 4

SEVENTY-TWO ROUNDS OF AMMO

Darwin, Australia, was a dismal, lonely frontier town, way out beyond the desolate Australian "out back." In the early days of 1942, it had suddenly become crowded, as shipping fled south from the Philippines. Merchant ships filled the harbor, and part of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet came in from the Malay Barrier to establish a base: the heavy cruiser *Houston*, light cruiser *Marblehead*, several of the old four-piper destroyers, the old *Gold Star*, and the submarine tender *Holland*, which was there to act as mother ship to nine submarines. The U.S. Army transport, *Holbrook*, and the Dutch *Bloemfontein*, carrying the 131st, 147th, and 148th National Guard Field Artillery Units, had put in from Brisbane—they had been ordered to Manila, but none of them were going to make it. Then, on 9 January, the submarine *Seawolf* put in, bringing part of the command staff of Commander Submarines, Asiatic Fleet down from Manila. It had been a tough trip, but the worst part of it was, *Seawolf* was going to go right back again.

On 15 January 1942, *Seawolf* received orders from Commander Submarines, Asiatic Fleet, in Surabaya, which read: ". . . you are to proceed using best sustained speed to Manila carrying .50-caliber ammunition for the relief of Corregidor." Thus *Seawolf* became the first United States vessel to sail to the aid of the more than 100,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and civilians beseiged on Bataan and Corregidor.

Holland could supply *Seawolf* with some ammunition, but her skipper, Commander Frederick B. Warder, knew it wasn't enough. Colonel Robenson, who had been Troop Commander in the *Holbrook*, but was then placed in command of all U.S. Army Forces in Darwin, scouted around and produced machine-gun ammo and a limited supply of three-inch shells. The *Seawolf* transferred to the *Holland* 16 torpedoes, each weighing approximately 3,000 pounds, which made it possible for her to take aboard a heavy cargo of ammunition. That evening, in torrential rain, *Seawolf* commenced loading boxes of .50-caliber and three-inch shells for the troops on Bataan and Corregidor. When Colonel Robenson visited the ship at midnight, the wind had quickened and water was coming down in sheets. For the men transferring ammunition from small boats to the submarine, it was a miserable night.

When the last box was placed aboard *Seawolf* about 1000 the next morning, ammo was coming out of their ears. They had loaded 675 boxes of .50-caliber and 72 three-inch shells. The total weight—36 tons—created problems when the ship submerged, and auxiliary tanks had to be pumped dry before *Seawolf* could dive. The boxes were stacked seven feet high in one compartment, and both torpedo rooms, fore and aft, housed large quantities. The passageways were floored with boxes of ammunition, and some men had to crawl over it to get into their bunks.

The *Seawolf* stood out of Darwin shortly after noon on Friday, 16 January 1942. One of the sailors, surveying the explosive cargo, wondered what would happen if the sub got clobbered with a depth charge. "Don't worry about it," someone said, "If they hit us, they'll just blow us a little higher, that's all."

When well clear of the coast, Commander Warder took his ship down for a test dive. This would reveal whether or not the removal of the torpedoes and water from the diving tanks was an accurate compensation for the heavy cargo. If the sub proved seriously overloaded, she might go down like a rock. For this reason, all hands were nervous during the trim dive, but Lieutenant Holden, the engineer, had figured things right on the button—the submarine functioned perfectly. After checking out all machinery and equipment, Commander Warder brought *Seawolf* back to the surface, swung west of Bathhurst Island and north into the Timor Sea.

During daylight, the ship submerged to 60 feet, making three knots; at night, she surfaced and, following battery charge,

cranked up 18 knots. With about ten hours of darkness each night, the skipper estimated it would take *Seawolf* ten days to make the 1800 miles from Darwin to Corregidor Island.

As *Seawolf* sailed through the Molucca Straits several days later, she came upon a small enemy task force: a cruiser, about half a dozen destroyers, and seven transports. Warder carefully surveyed the vessels through the periscope. He attempted approaches upon the nearest of the destroyers and upon the cruiser, but was foiled by their zig-zag movements, approaching darkness, and heavy rain. Unfortunately, American submarines were not yet equipped with radar equipment. *Seawolf* surfaced two hours later, and reported the force—size, course, and speed—to the Commander, Submarines, at Surabaya. Having received no modification of his mission, Warder resumed course for Corregidor.

Just before dawn off Menado, Celebes, the submarine submerged as usual and commenced deep running with hourly periscope observations. The weather worsened during the day, and the sea became increasingly rough. At 1550 Warder sighted what appeared to be a large tripod mast, the usual indications of a Japanese warship, and *Seawolf* made a high-speed approach, ready to fire torpedoes, but then Warder decided there was something strange about the target. A careful survey through the periscope revealed that the target was actually a sunken schooner. Her decks were awash, the upper part of the mast was broken and hanging down, and two fat sea gulls perched on projections from the hull resembled the belled-out funnels typical of Japanese warships. The War Patrol Diary reported: "Don Quixote and the windmills had nothing on us."

While *Seawolf* loaded supplies and ammunition at Darwin, then proceeded slowly north, things had gone badly on Bataan. Continuous action in the jungle, lack of food and water, and many sleepless nights had taken their toll on the defenders. MacArthur, fully aware of Parker's vulnerable situation, issued orders for a general withdrawal on the night of 22 January, and the First Battle of Bataan came to an end.

One observer noted in his diary that the withdrawal was "a nightmare." Luckily enemy artillery failed to register on the congested movement of troops, vehicles, and equipment—had they done so, the withdrawal would have become a rout. The soldiers —weary, hungry, and with uniforms in tatters—resembled walking dead men. Most of the withdrawal was carried out by night,

but repeated bombings and strafings by Japanese aircraft added to the misery of the troops trying to get ready for another fight. Many of the men realized they had come to the end of the line, for there was to be no further retreat. On 23 January, General MacArthur radioed Washington that with the occupation of the Orion-Bagac line, "... all maneuvering possibilities cease. I intend to fight it out to complete destruction."

Running surfaced at night and submerged during daylight, the *Seawolf* finally reached the narrow Sibutu Passage at the end of the Sulu Archipelago. Though more enemy ships were sighted, none interfered with the submarine as she entered the islands and neared the familiar waters of Manila Bay.

There was a bright moon on the night of 26-27 January 1942, as the *Seawolf* approached Manila Bay. At 0358, when she was about seven miles off Corregidor, one of the officers made a notation in the War Patrol Diary: "There has been considerable searchlight activity on Corregidor, rockets on the peninsula and a small searchlight working vicinity Bagac." Minutes later the submarine rendezvoused with PT 41, the motor torpedo boat which later evacuated General MacArthur to Mindanao. Captain Kenneth M. Hoeffel, Commander of the Inshore Patrol, was on board the boat, which led *Seawolf* through the minefield into the north channel between Bataan and Corregidor.

Warder decided to put his boat on the bottom of the bay until evening, then surface and go alongside South Dock to unload cargo. Since *Seawolf* was short of engine spare parts, especially water coolers for the main engines, the skipper suggested that Lieutenants Bill Deragon, the executive officer, and Dick Holden, the engineer, go ashore in the patrol boat. With luck, they might turn up some spares. Lieutenant Bulkeley brought his PT boat alongside the sub, and Holden and Deragon went aboard. *Seawolf* moved out into the bay, submerged to a depth of 128 feet, and remained on the bottom throughout the day.

While at Corregidor, Lieutenant Holden ran into a number of old friends in the Navy Tunnel, which was a section of the Malinta Tunnel system. Lieutenant Tom Suddath soon gave Holden a brief account of what had happened at Pearl Harbor. Until that time none of the officers in *Seawolf* had any conception of the damage the Navy had received in the attack, and Holden was stunned by Suddath's report. He suddenly felt that the United States—and help for the people on Bataan and Corregidor—was a long way off.

The two officers were back at South Dock that night when *Seawolf* moored alongside, and the soldiers and sailors began removing the ammunition. An army major came aboard and asked Lieutenant Holden if the sub had brought any three-inch shells. The major's face registered disbelief, then utter defeat when Holden informed him that they had brought only seventy-two rounds, and none of them high-altitude shells.

Shells with mechanical fuzes, detonating at 28,000 to 30,000 feet, forced Japanese bombers to operate at extreme altitudes and greatly reduced the effectiveness of their attacks. When *Seawolf* called at Corregidor, mechanically fuzed ammunition was in such short supply that only one of the ten antiaircraft batteries on the island was allowed to use the long-range shells, and this shortage was to plague the defenders until the very end.

Three-inch AA ammunition with powder-train fuzes was plentiful on Bataan and Corregidor, but about one out of every three proved a dud, and their maximum range was 24,000 feet. The ammunition *Seawolf* delivered at Corregidor was the same stuff and of little value to the garrison—but Commander Warder had brought the only three-inch shells available in northern Australia.

While sailors and soldiers unloaded the shells and the heavy boxes of .50-caliber, the northern sky flickered and flared as if illuminated by summer lightning, and there was the muffled rumble of artillery firing in the distance. The First Battle of Bataan was being fought about halfway up the peninsula. One of the soldiers, a member of the 31st Infantry, asked a *Seawolf* sailor if help was on the way. The crewman didn't know, but thought that the Pacific Fleet would be along pretty soon. The GI nodded and said they sure needed fighter planes.

With the last of the ammunition gone, 16 torpedoes and a quantity of submarine spares were loaded and 25 passengers came aboard: a British army major, 12 U.S. Army officers—most of them Air Corps—six Navy pilots, five Navy enlisted pilots, and one Navy yeoman. It was a heavy load of passengers for the small submarine. The Navy evacuees had been ordered out by name from Naval Headquarters in Java.

To *Seawolf*'s well-fed crew, the gaunt passengers wearing dirty fatigue uniforms looked like walking scarecrows. A few of the sailors were irked at having so many evacuees on board, for a submarine is a rather crowded craft at best. But the submariners suddenly decided it was a pleasure to be able to give the "fly

boys" a lift when they realized the rugged time many of them had had on Bataan, often fighting with the infantry.

Shortly before General MacArthur and the Commonwealth Government evacuated Manila, a large quantity of gold and silver was removed from various banks and carefully transported to Corregidor. It was of course imperative that this valuable hoard be kept from the enemy, and when *Seawolf* arrived at the Rock, MacArthur decided the submarine should remove the treasure. At the last minute, however, the General changed his mind and asked that the submarine evacuate Army and Navy pilots. When the Navy agreed to his request, General MacArthur sent word to the evacuees that they should consider themselves worth their weight in gold.

The loading completed, lines were cast off and PT 41 escorted the submarine out through the minefield. While at Corregidor, Commander Warder had been given orders to transport the 25 evacuees to Java, in the Netherlands East Indies, rather than returning to Australia. The submarine and the motor torpedo boat parted company outside the minefield, and *Seawolf* disappeared into the night.

The Army pilots were amazed to find they could have honest-to-God coffee anytime they wanted, and more than one cup if they wished. And they had forgotten the luxury of white table linen. Crowded as it was, the undersea craft was like a luxury liner for the weary and hungry passengers. By necessity the evacuees traveled light. One pilot carried all his gear in one hand: a small canvas kit with a toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste, a partly used bar of soap, and a comb. The submariners chipped in and supplied their guests with clothing, soap, and shaving gear.

Seawolf's cook soon found that the men taken aboard at Corregidor were ravenous, and for good reason. Lieutenant (jg) Tom Pollock, one of the Navy pilots, said he and his men went on a ration of two "so-called" meals a day after they reached Bataan on Christmas night. They were allotted modest quantities of flour for biscuits and pancakes, and contrived a kind of cereal by using ice cream mix and water. A weak soup appeared on the menu day after day, along with hard crackers on the order of World War I hardtack. The Navy men on Bataan were also issued "fresh beef," which due to frequent bombings and power failures had been thawed so often it had gained a powerful odor. But there was little else to eat, so the men sliced it thin and

made gravy to put over rice. In Pollock's words, "It was edible if you didn't breathe while you ate."

As the sub headed south from Corregidor, steaks, ham, lamb, and pork chops disappeared immediately, and it was the same for the tasty pies and pastries the cook whipped up. All that food came from a galley hardly big enough to turn around in. Early one evening the cook mentioned to Lieutenant Deragon that he was going to make raised doughnuts for the passengers and wouldn't stop until they had had their fill. When Deragon returned to the galley at 0400 next morning, the cook was still hard at work, and a group of the evacuees in the wardroom were polishing off the doughnuts as fast as they were placed on the table.

Since the number of bunks in the submarine was limited, the men used the hot bunk system. Though it was difficult for everyone on board to find a place to sit, stand, or lie down, this solved the sleeping problem.

As on the voyage north, *Seawolf* ran submerged during the day but surfaced during the hours of darkness. The submarine steamed through the Celebes Sea, moved southwestward down the Makassar Strait, and made for Surabaya, Java, where Admiral Hart had established headquarters for his Asiatic Fleet. Surabaya was also the major base for units of the Royal Netherlands Navy operating in the Dutch East Indies.

Early on the morning of 7 February 1942, the USS *Seawolf*, nine days and 1500 miles out of Corregidor, moved along the surface of the Madura Strait in the outer approaches to Surabaya where she exchanged recognition signals with a Dutch patrol boat. Shortly after noon, the radio station at Surabaya reported the city was under air attack. Twenty minutes later, lookouts on *Seawolf* sighted two planes circling over the mainland, and Warder took the submarine down to periscope depth, returning to the surface in the late afternoon.

The entrance to the enormous natural harbor at Surabaya was shallow, well-mined, and protected by guns and nets. When Commander Warder was challenged by harbor defense installations, he had one of his sailors flash the proper reply signal, but the defenders refused to accept *Seawolf*'s identification. Messages in English slang finally convinced the Dutchmen that the submarine was friendly, and they dispatched a harbor pilot to guide *Seawolf* through a 12-mile channel, which was heavily mined. The Americans later learned that harbor defense was on

special alert since a Japanese submarine had been reported operating in the waters off Surabaya.

The sub finally reached the inner harbor and moored to Holland Pier. When the passengers gathered their gear and went on their way, the ship's cook noted with pride that they looked better fed than when they had come aboard. A night or two later, the men who had been evacuated from the Philippines gave a beer party for the officers and men of *Seawolf*. It was their way of saying thanks for the ride.

The cargo of ammunition, which the submarine *Seawolf* delivered to Corregidor in late January of 1942, was pitifully small, but the defenders hoped that others would follow. Though the United States Navy could ill afford to spare its fighting ships for noncombat missions, other submarines came to the assistance of the beleaguered garrison. But it was merely a stopgap measure, and in the end the submarines could do little more than evacuate nurses, pilots, and other key personnel. Whatever the outcome, *Seawolf* had done the best she could. For Commander Warder and his men, it was a job well done.

CHAPTER 5

GOLD BY THE TON

On 29 December 1941, only a few days after General MacArthur moved his headquarters to Corregidor, Japanese aircraft began bombing the island fortress. Antiaircraft batteries on the Rock knocked down 13 enemy bombers that first day, driving the Japanese to higher altitudes, but the defenders were desperately short of mechanically fuzed ammunition capable of reaching 30,000 feet. MacArthur appealed to the War Department, which in turn called upon the Navy for assistance. The submarine *Trout*, undergoing repairs at Pearl Harbor, was selected to deliver ammunition to Corregidor. Repairs were rushed to completion; all torpedoes—aside from eight in the tubes—were offloaded; and 3,517 three-inch shells were taken aboard. To make room for the cargo, six 900-pound torpedo skids were moved topside and placed in the superstructure. With ammunition stored in every available space, *Trout* departed Hawaii on 12 January, refueled at Midway four days later, and proceeded by way of the Bonins to the Balintang Passage, above the island of Luzon. She then steamed south down the west coast to Bataan and Corregidor.

The afternoon of 3 February, *Trout* came up for a periscope observation about 15 miles off Corregidor. While her skipper, Lieutenant Commander Frank W. Fenno, Jr., watched through the periscope, Corregidor received a heavy pounding by Japanese aircraft making leisurely bombing runs high in the sky.

Shortly after dusk, *Trout* surfaced and approached the broad

twelve-mile-wide entrance to Manila Bay. She exchanged recognition signals with PT Boat 41 an hour later, and the skipper, Lieutenant John D. Bulkeley, came aboard to pilot the ship to Corregidor. The PT boat led the submarine through the minefields, and by 2040 under a bright full moon, the sub was moored starboard side to South Dock. A working party began unloading the heavy three-inch shells while other men began filling the tanks with diesel oil.

Battered army trucks backed out on the dock and sailors and Philippine Scouts formed human chains handing the ammo, man to man, out the hatch, over the side, and into the trucks. Other crewmen manhandled the heavy skids back to the torpedo rooms, then loaded two 3000-pound torpedoes through the narrow hatch.

Aware of the scarcity of supplies on Bataan and Corregidor, Fenno and his men gladly gave away everything they could spare: canned goods, fresh fruit, cigarettes, and a small stock of medical supplies. The soldiers working on the dock were as hungry for news as they were for food, but the sailors could offer little encouragement. As the men handled the ammunition, they heard the distant rumble of guns from the north, up on the line.

The three-inch shells were finally unloaded. Meanwhile, *Trout* had taken on ten torpedoes and 27,000 gallons of fuel oil, enough for an offensive patrol on her return to Hawaii. But the sub still needed plenty of ballast to replace the heavy cargo of ammunition. Fenno asked Admiral Rockwell, Naval Commander at Corregidor, for 25 tons of ballast, preferably sandbags, but the Admiral turned him down. With Corregidor under almost continuous bombardment, sandbags and bags of crushed rock could not be spared. But Admiral Rockwell had a better idea—there were tons of gold and silver available if the submariners didn't mind using it.

When the Commonwealth Government had been moved to Corregidor in late December 1941, Francis B. Sayre, U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippines, had taken charge of gold, silver, paper currency, and negotiable securities in the banks of Manila, removing them to the island fortress, "Fort Knox of the Philippines," for safekeeping. Since the assets could be used in neutral countries, they must not be allowed to fall into enemy hands.

The gold, silver, securities, and large quantities of United States and Philippine paper bills were placed in a carefully hidden, heavily guarded vault on Corregidor, which contained 583

gold bars, eight million dollars in silver pesos, nearly three million in U.S. currency, and 240 million in Philippine paper money. It took six weeks for Commissioner Sayre's staff to compile an accurate record of the currency and the negotiable securities. Since most of the assets had been entrusted to the High Commissioner by corporations and private citizens, details of the deposits were transmitted to Washington by radio. After the war, the Japanese admitted that the endless flow of messages, names, and numbers gave their cryptographers fits trying to decipher the "secret" communications.

By the time *Trout* called at Corregidor in early February, the paper currency had been destroyed. But it was not so easy to get rid of the gold and silver, and Admiral Rockwell's plan for using it as ballast provided a perfect solution to a pair of difficult problems.

General MacArthur gave immediate approval, as did Vice President Osmena of the Commonwealth Government. High Commissioner Sayre immediately placed Woodbury Willoughby, his financial advisor, in charge of the transfer. Willoughby wakened other members of the staff: E. D. Hester, James Saxon, and Robert Huffcutt; and arranged for Philippine Treasury officials to assist. Captain Leslie Doane, transportation officer of the 60th Coast Artillery, and a small detail of flatbed trucks and soldiers were waiting at the hillside vault when Willoughby and his assistants arrived. Philippine officials, including Vice President Osmena, appeared and the transfer of the assets was begun.

The 265 bars belonging to the Philippine Treasury were of uniform size, about the shape of a cake of laundry soap, and weighed approximately 11 pounds each. The Treasury-owned bars, unwrapped and dirty brown in color, had a high degree of purity and were worth about $6,000 apiece.

The remaining 318 bars, later described as "wrapped in brown paper, tied with string and addressed by hand, just like any package of cookies from Aunt Jane," were owned by gold mining companies in the Philippines. They varied greatly in purity and size—from five or six pounds to as much as forty.

Under careful supervision, the GIs began lugging the gold bars from the vault to the five-ton trucks. The small bricks were surprisingly heavy—it was hard to believe that one could be worth about $23,000. A small stack of bars was placed directly over the axle of each vehicle, and under armed guard, they lum-

bered through the bright tropical night down the rough road to the dock and the waiting submarine.

The entire cargo of 3,517 three-inch shells had been removed from *Trout* by the time the trucks began arriving with the gold. The unloading procedure was simply reversed; the heavy bars were handed man-to-man, from the trucks into the submarine. It took about an hour to load a total of 583 gold bars into *Trout*. After the sub sailed, Willoughby found a block of gold the size of a matchbox still in the vault. He put the small square of gold in his pocket.

Next came the silver in heavy sacks, each containing 1000 Philippine pesos. By 0250, two tons of gold bullion, worth about nine million dollars, and 18 tons of silver coins, valued at approximately $300,000, had been stowed. Willoughby and his assistants provided additional cargo: four pouches of diplomatic mail and more than two dozen bags, boxes, and trunks of negotiable securities. Since dawn was near and Commander Fenno was anxious to move out into the bay, plans were made to deliver detailed records of the securities the next evening, just before the submarine left Corregidor.

Lines were cast off, and *Trout* slid out into Manila Bay, made a stationary dive, and came to rest on the bottom at a depth of 140 feet. During the daylight hours, while the submarine lay hidden in the bay, Japanese bombers continued to attack Corregidor. After dusk *Trout* returned to the surface and a small boat brought Willoughby, Saxon, and Lieutenant Commander T. C. Parker alongside so that additional mail, securities, and records could be transferred to the submarine.

In the rush, Fenno had had little opportunity to verify the cargo, and he indicated this in writing at the bottom of the receipts before signing them. When Willoughby made the final delivery, only minutes before *Trout* got underway, the sub skipper was given terse letters of transmittal from the High Commissioner of the Philippines and President Quezon, which said the gold and silver was his without telling him how much there was.

Again a PT boat led the way through the minefields, and at 1929, with a 20-ton cargo of gold, silver, and negotiable securities on board, *Trout* stood out into the South China Sea and headed north along the west coast of Luzon. Despite the valuable cargo, which made her almost an underwater Federal Re-

serve Bank, *Trout* had welcome orders to operate offensively in the East China Sea.

The submarine steamed through the Bashi Channel and passed up the eastern coast of Formosa. On 9 February, *Trout* entered a broad belt of rugged monsoon weather, mountainous seas, and gale winds, which was to plague the submarine for more than a week. Despite bad weather, *Trout* attacked and sank the 2600-ton *Chuwa Maru* with three torpedoes. Then orders were received to return to Pearl Harbor, and in heavy seas and with visibility reduced to 50 feet, course was set for the Bonin Islands.

Off the Bonins on the night of 19 February, a small ship was sighted, showing a light, then a second blacked-out vessel was spotted close by. The lighted ship was apparently a decoy to attract U.S. submarines; if any took the bait the second vessel would open fire. Fenno, on guard, made a submerged attack at 2105 and fired two torpedoes, but neither made a hit. However, during the brief interval between the firing of the torpedoes, an enemy torpedo passed overhead. A second one was heard as *Trout* crash-dived to 120 feet. Fenno was determined to get one or both of the enemy ships. Carefully calculating the course of the decoy, he made another submerged approach and sent a third torpedo right into it. Following the explosion, the second ship made off at high speed and *Trout* headed for home.

Upon *Trout*'s arrival at Pearl Harbor on 3 March, the 20-ton cargo of bullion, silver pesos, and negotiable securities was transferred to the cruiser *Detroit* for transport to San Francisco, and Fenno received an itemized receipt for the shipment. Several days later, one more bar of gold weighing five or six pounds turned up on *Trout*. One of the ship's officers hastily delivered it to *Detroit* in return for a second receipt. Fenno was glad to be rid of the stray.

For *Trout's* successful mission to Corregidor, Frank Fenno was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and his ten officers and fifty-seven enlisted men were awarded Silver Stars. By every standard, the skipper and his men had performed a great service. Not only had the mechanical-fuze ammunition they delivered at Corregidor enabled the battle-weary defenders to hold off awhile longer enemy bombers attempting to destroy the island fortress, but also *Trout* had provided an ideal means for removing gold, silver, and valuable securities from the beleaguered garrison. For *Trout*, the two enemy ships sunk on return to Pearl Harbor were an unexpected bonus.

CHAPTER 6

MISSION TO JAVA

In the late afternoon of 19 January 1942, Colonel John A. Robenson, U.S. Army base commander at Darwin, Australia, received an urgent radio message from Headquarters, USAFIA, at Melbourne, instructing him to round up six resourceful junior officers of sound judgment and fly to Java on a mission that would be described in a following letter.

The following day Robenson selected Captain S. J. Randall, 1st Lt. F. H. Andrew, 1st Lt. J. C. Boudoin, 1st Lt. A. B. Cook, 2nd Lt. P. M. Nestler, and 2nd Lt. R. E. Stensland. A short time later, he added Private J. E. Lundberg, who turned out to be the mainstay of the mission, to handle the paper work.

Despite the obvious urgency of the original message, it was three days before a plane brought from Melbourne a long, detailed letter spelling out the difficult assignment Colonel Robenson had been given. Stated simply, the Robenson Mission had as its objective the organization in the Dutch East Indies of ships, crews, and cargoes for prompt dispatch to General MacArthur's forces in the Philippine Islands.

Though signed by General Barnes, the communication had been drafted by Colonel Stephen J. Chamberlin. It laid down a comprehensive relief effort in three distinct phases.

The initial objective was the provision of 60 days' rations for an estimated 50,000 men on Bataan and Corregidor—three million rations weighing approximately 8000 long tons. Robenson

and his staff were to arrange for the immediate shipment of rations and ammunition by small, fast cargo vessels from N.E.I. ports. U.S. Army units in that area would furnish stocks of supplies, and additional rations and ammunition would be forwarded from Australia to Makassar on the *Mauna Loa* and the *Coast Farmer*, there to be transshipped to the Philippine Islands in smaller vessels.

The second objective was an additional 60 days of rations and ammunition to be forwarded to Buton Island, Celebes, for transshipment north in small boats. USAFIA promised further instructions on this aspect.

The third objective called for another three million rations and more ammunition to be delivered in the Philippines by small boats obtained in the Netherlands East Indies, or by ocean-going cargo carriers coming north from Australia.

Colonel Robenson was directed to dispatch two of his men to the Celebes, one to Makassar, the other to Buton, while he and the remainder of his staff organized efforts in Java. The Celebes-bound agents were to have ample funds—approximately three quarters of a million dollars—at their disposal to hire ships and crews to deliver cargoes to the Philippines. Recognizing the hazardous nature of the duty, Robenson and his agents were authorized to pay whatever sums were necessary, including large bonuses, to get cargoes safely delivered in the Philippine Islands, preferably in the Manila Bay area.

The colonel was encouraged to seek assistance from nearly everyone in the East Indies, especially the Dutch and the British, both of whom were being informed of his mission. He was directed to purchase supplies as needed and to call upon the U.S. Army, Air Corps, and Navy—even the RAAF—if it appeared they could further his mission. Robenson was reminded that though risks were great, the dispatch of many small vessels on a broad front over many routes would succeed.

To further clarify the importance of Colonel Robenson's assignment, the letter of instructions from General Barnes stated:

> *The success of this plan will depend largely on the energy, initiative and resourcefulness of the personnel who must operate it . . . It may be said, however, that the cost of this venture should not be a deterrent to its accomplishment, nor should any means to attain the objective be eliminated from consideration. All imaginable types of deceit may be*

utilized by you or the masters of these vessels in getting their cargoes into the Philippines . . . The essence of the entire plan is speed. The situation regarding food in the Philippine Islands is desperate.

Colonel John A. Robenson was just the resourceful man to handle this secret mission. Shortly after he became base commander at Darwin, he found himself at odds with the Australian dock workers who, blithely ignoring the fact that there was a war going on and that a very real possibility of a Japanese attack upon Australia existed, proceeded to unload transport ships and cargo vessels strictly at their convenience. Robenson, surveying the situation, made a quick show of force and refused to be bluffed. The dock workers gave no further trouble.

While Colonel Robenson organized his staff, General Brereton, USAFIA Commander at Melbourne, became concerned with the availability of suitable funds for the men being sent into the N.E.I. On 22 January he radioed the War Department a request for ten million dollars, eight to be transferred to Australia by cable, the remainder to be sent to the southwest Pacific by plane. Brereton felt that substantial sums of U.S. currency might ". . . be needed at short notice, since owners and masters in NEI will be reluctant to take risks for profits payable in local currency . . ." General Marshall replied next day that funds were being dispatched as requested.

On that same day Brereton received a message from Admiral Hart at Surabaya, recommending that the *Mauna Loa* and the *Coast Farmer* be sent directly to Mindanao, where small ships were available to carry cargoes to Corregidor. Hart reported that Makassar and Buton were not suitable for transshipment operations, and he warned that cargo ships proceeding north in waters west of 130 degrees longitude would run a heavy risk. Since 130 degrees longitude lies only a short distance west of New Guinea, this ruled out the movement of large cargo carriers into the N.E.I., and it also greatly reduced the number of routes believed open to blockade runners attempting to reach the Philippines from either Java or Australia.

Meanwhile at Darwin, Colonel Robenson disclosed the operations to his men, making certain they fully understood their assignment and the difficulties they might encounter in Java.

The Darwin branch of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia had been instructed to issue Robenson and his men letters of

credit for nearly six and one-half million Dutch guilders on the Javasche Bank of the N.E.I. Lieutenant Andrew chose to go to Buton Island; Lieutenant Stensland to Makassar Town, both in the Celebes. That afternoon Colonel Robenson and the two lieutenants went to the bank, where Andrew was given a letter of credit for 600,000 Dutch guilders, Stensland one for 800,000. Robenson signed a letter of credit for five million guilders. Since the Dutch guilder was worth about fifty cents in U.S. money at the time, Andrew's letter approximated $300,000, and Stensland's $400,000, while the Colonel was armed with a credit of some two and a half million dollars.

Next, Colonel Robenson provided the two lieutenants with written instructions, their part of the overall plan. While Robenson and the others set up shop at Surabaya, Java, the two junior officers were to go to the Celebes to locate vessels and crews willing to attempt the delivery of cargo in the Philippines. They would also arrange for the transshipment of cargoes coming north from Australia, and they had full authorization to purchase suitable foodstuffs on the spot. The Colonel reminded them that the success of their efforts would depend upon their local contacts. Lieutenant Stensland was to call upon the firm of Schmidt and Jondell at Makassar Town. Andrew was to work with the authorities at Buton. Robenson gave them maps of the Philippine Islands and instructed them to wire him in Surabaya a report of their activities every 24 hours. Andrew and Stensland soon found that shipping was mighty hard to come by in the Celebes.

Only hours before Robenson departed for the Indies, he received new instructions cancelling plans for the transshipment of cargoes from the Celebes. Following receipt of Admiral Hart's warning, USAFIA had decided against the delivery in the Celebes of rations and ammunition to be forwarded to the Philippines. The two officers were to be sent to Makassar and Buton, as ordered in the original directive, but their job was limited to the purchase of subsistence and the movement of foodstuffs north by interisland cargo vessels.

Since commercial air transportation was unavailable, the Air Corps agreed to transport Colonel Robenson and his men into the N.E.I. A twin-engine C-39 aircraft and a smaller twin-engine Beechcraft were waiting when the Robenson Mission appeared at Larrakeya, the RAAF field outside Darwin, before dawn on 24 January 1942.

Captain Lewis J. Connelly, flying Lieutenants Andrew and

Stensland to the Celebes in the Beechcraft, took off first. Upon the outbreak of war, Connelly, an experienced commercial pilot in the Philippines, had been commissioned in the Air Corps, and since that time had made hazardous flights all over the southwest Pacific in tired, old unarmed transport planes. The first leg of the journey, from Darwin to Koepang, Timor, was uneventful. But the second leg, the 450-mile hop to Kendari, the airfield nearest to Buton Island, nearly proved to be Captain Connelly's last flight.

His original plan was to fly straight to Kendari, where he would deliver a tire for a grounded B-17 bomber. Andrew was to get off at Kendari and head for Buton while Connelly and Stensland would fly west to Makassar. However, Captain Connelly knew that Japanese aircraft had made several light raids on Kendari, usually between two and three in the afternoon. For some unknown reason—perhaps a hunch on his part—a short distance from Koepang, Connelly elected to go to Makassar first. He explained to Lieutenant Andrew that he didn't have enough gas to reach Kendari, but he could make it to Makassar. Yet this seems strange for the distances are almost identical. In any event, Connelly altered his flight plan. When the men landed at Makassar after dark, they learned that the Japanese had captured Kendari that very day. Had Captain Connelly followed his original plan, the plane would have dropped unwittingly into enemy hands, and the three men would probably never have been heard from again.

Captain Harold G. Slingsby was the pilot of the C-39 which was to carry Colonel Robenson, his four officers, Private Lundberg, a sergeant crewman, and a heavy cargo to Java. Slingsby, down from the Philippines, warned Robenson that they were overloaded 1500 pounds; there was some question as to whether or not he could get the plane off the ground. The colonel retorted that they had orders to leave for Java at once!

The sun was barely over the horizon when Slingsby, at the end of the runway, prepared the C-39 for the precarious take off. To compensate for the heavy load, Slingsby ordered his sergeant crewman and three of the passengers to squeeze into the cockpit; Lieutenant Nestler and Private Lundberg sat on the floor with their backs against the door to the front compartment. The plane lurched down the runway under maximum power. At the halfway mark the transport appeared uninterested in becoming airborne. Finally, at what seemed the last possible moment, the

aircraft left the ground, its propellers virtually chewing their way through the tops of the trees at the far edge of the airfield. It had been a near thing.

The plane, stopping briefly at Koepang, encountered rough weather almost all the way to Java, landing in the late afternoon. Lundberg and several of the others, who had been slightly air-sick, were glad to feel solid ground under their feet.

Air Corps Lieutenant Frank Kurtz, a bomber pilot in the Far East Air Force, met the colonel and his staff at the airport. The FEAF officer had made arrangements for housing the men near the field in barracks normally used by Dutch casual officers passing through Surabaya. The first thing that Private Lundberg noticed was the heavy traffic in the streets. Despite blackout conditions, there was an almost continuous movement of natives to and from the city, and this traffic continued far into the night. The next thing he noticed was the darkness of the blackout. In fact, it was so dark that he stumbled into a drainage canal four-feet deep.

The following morning, Colonel Robenson ordered the men to meet him at the Oranje Hotel in downtown Surabaya, then he went off and left them. Several of them located motor taxis, but Cook and Nestler hired a horse-drawn cart, called a kedo. Since neither of the officers knew Malay, they had difficulty explaining that they wished to go to the Oranje. When the two Americans arrived at the hotel, the Europeans excitedly explained that such vehicles were used only by the natives.

The Oranje, of stucco construction and designed for the tropics, was a comfortable hotel. Colonel Robenson was assigned second-floor suite Number 1, consisting of a large bedroom, sitting room, and bath. The inner room, which had a telephone and opened on to the corridor, was used as headquarters office for the mission as long as Colonel Robenson and his men remained in Surabaya. Lieutenants Cook and Nestler, and Private Lundberg were also assigned accommodations on the second floor of the hotel.

Robenson ordered Lieutenant Cook to obtain from Mr. McLean of the firm, Frazier Eaton, four or five vessels of from 200 to 1000 tons, regardless of the price. Nestler was given an equally important assignment: the purchase of dry rations and canned goods—anything that could be transported to the Philippines. Colonel Robenson believed that they would have little difficulty

rounding up ships, crews, and cargoes. But he soon learned that money wasn't everything.

The colonel, accompanied by Captain Randall, Lieutenant Boudoin, and Private Lundberg, then caught a plane for Bandoeng, Headquarters of ABDACOM, the joint Allied command organized to hold the Malay Barrier. Upon arrival at Bandoeng, Colonel Robenson conferred briefly with Lieutenant General George H. Brett, Deputy Commander of ABDACOM. Brett made arrangements for Robenson to meet Henry A. Quade, the managing director of General Motors Corporation in the southwest Pacific. Hank Quade, an energetic man in his forties, with contacts all over the island, proved a godsend to the Robenson Mission. He forthwith volunteered to assist the Colonel and for the next two weeks devoted himself wholeheartedly to the very difficult problem of getting hold of ships to carry food and ammunition to the MacArthur command in the Philippine Islands.

Quade took Robenson to the Javasche Bank where the Colonel deposited funds provided by his letter of credit and drew out operating capital. The American businessman then introduced Colonel Robenson to a host of Dutch officials who might be able to assist them. They checked food supplies available from the Dutch Army and obtained the services of a Dutch supply officer, Captain W. J. L. de Lange. At that point the Colonel concluded he no longer needed Randall and Boudoin, releasing them to General Brett.

When Private Lundberg went into the hotel dining room for dinner that evening, he discovered that the menu was written in French. Colonel Robenson, who with Mr. Quade was sitting at an adjoining table, leaned over and gruffly told him to take all of the courses on the dinner. Lundberg, following this suggestion, was introduced to Javanese cuisine. As he left the dining room, the Colonel motioned him to his table and instructed him to remain in his room until he called him.

Later that night, Quade and Robenson made a detailed estimate of the situation and decided that Surabaya was the ideal location for their headquarters. However, before returning to the seaport city, they planned to drive to Batavia, the capital of the Netherlands East Indies, the next day.

It was nearly midnight when Colonel Robenson called Lundberg to his suite and dictated for more than an hour. He spoke sharply to Lundberg, reminding him that he was in the United States Army and might have to work both night and day as long

as he was on that assignment. The Colonel made it clear that he expected his dictation to be ready for signature by breakfast. Private Lundberg pounded the typewriter far into the night, but the material was ready for Colonel Robenson next morning.

The three men drove to Batavia on Monday, 26 January 1942, and Quade introduced Robenson to another group of influential men: Mr. J. Kuyper, Chief of Shipping for the N.E.I.; Mr. Walsh, British Consul General at Batavia; Commodore John Collins, Royal Australian Navy; and finally Vice Admiral Conrad E. L. Helfrich, Commander in Chief of the Royal Netherlands Navy. About this time Colonel Robenson began to suspect red tape would be their greatest problem.

The cavalry colonel and his assistant spent the night at Henry Quade's home in Batavia. Private Lundberg, all eyes, was impressed with the number of servants in the household and the elegant way of living. He found the Netherlands East Indies hard to believe. When he had chosen to take typing and shorthand in high school in Batavia, Illinois, in 1934, little did he dream it would one day land him in Batavia, Java, halfway round the world.

Quade and Robenson called on other government officials and shipping executives in Batavia and in Bandoeng during the next two days, with Lundberg, and returned to Surabaya by rail.

While Colonel Robenson was in west Java, Captain de Lange, the Dutch supply officer, joined Lieutenants Cook and Nestler in Surabaya. Their job of locating foodstuffs for the blockade runners was simplified by the arrival of a three-ship convoy—*President Polk, Hawaiian Planter, USS Pecos*—loaded with troops, rations, gasoline, and ammunition. Large quantities of supplies discharged from the *Polk*, expecially dry rations and ammunition, were made available to the Robenson Mission. So far so good. If they could just find the ships.

When Colonel Robenson and Lundberg, accompanied by Henry Quade, arrived, they found de Lange scouring the city for additional foodstuffs, while Cook and Nestler assisted with the unloading of the *Polk* at Holland Pier. Troops of the 131st Field Artillery Regiment, who had come to Java on the *Bloemfontein*, were doing much of the work, since the native stevedores were too small to handle the heavy cases of food and ammunition. But it was slow going.

Lieutenant Cook reported that the *Florence D.*, a small, fast cargo ship anchored in the harbor, seemed ideal for their pur-

poses. When the Colonel learned that the ship was under charter to the United States Navy, he made a beeline for Headquarters, U.S. Asiatic Fleet, located in a large residence in the outskirts of Surabaya. But the Navy flatly refused to release the *Florence D.* Colonel Robenson pointed out that General MacArthur and an army of 50,000 men were literally starving to death up on Bataan and Corregidor and stated in unmistakable language that he was going to move heaven and hell to get supplies into the Philippines. The Navy took the position that the Philippine garrison was doomed, and the dispatch of unarmed and unescorted cargo ships north was inviting their destruction. Robenson refused to give up. He promised to return the next day, and to keep coming back until they gave him the *Florence D.*

As good as his word, Colonel Robenson continued to hound the Navy until finally, on 2 February—perhaps to get rid of him—the vessel was released. Another good break followed: the cargo ship *Don Isidro*, which had been partly loaded at Brisbane, Australia and had circled the Australian continent, had just steamed into Batavia for additional cargo before making her run for the Philippines. Leaving Cook and Nestler to work on the *Florence D.* and Private Lundberg to run the office, Quade and Robenson left for Batavia early the next morning.

While the two were on their way to West Java, Japanese aircraft attacked Surabaya for the first time. Fifty Zeros virtually wiped out the Dutch interceptor force, allowing 20 bombers to concentrate upon the naval base. Following this initial raid, members of the 131st FA, needed to protect the airfield at Singosari, could no longer remove cargo from the *Polk.*

The Philippine *Don Isidro*, built in Germany in 1939, displaced 3200 tons and had a speed of 19 knots. General Brereton, who chartered the vessel at Brisbane on 20 January, worked out the arrangements for compensation and insurance for both ship and crew. Rations and ammunition were loaded, five .50-caliber machine guns were mounted, and a U.S. Army gun crew of 15 soldiers under Second Lieutenant Joseph F. Kane, were assigned to the vessel. Though originally routed directly to the Philippines, the *Don Isidro* was diverted to Fremantle and finally reached Batavia on 2 February. When Colonel Robenson and Henry Quade inspected the ship, Captain Rafael J. Cisneros assured them that he and his men would do their best to deliver food and ammunition in the Philippine Islands. Robenson made

certain that additional cargo and loading crews were available and told the skipper he would provide routing instructions.

While at Batavia, Robenson and Quade considered flying to Singapore, until they discovered that Mr. A. C. Bodeker, an authority on shipping in the N.E.I., was staying at the Hotel des Indies. The Dutchman agreed to make a survey of shipping available for blockade running to the Philippines. Bodeker found 13 vessels of British and Norwegian registry, most of them small China coasters of ancient vintage, that might be pressed into service. When Robenson tried to lay hands on these ships, he ran into red tape shoulder high.

He immediately asked that the ships be held in port until he could originate a formal request for their use. Before the restraining order was issued, however, the British Vice-Consul at Surabaya, where most of the ships lay at anchor, sent six of them on their way, and it was not practicable to have them recalled.

When Colonel Robenson attempted through official channels to obtain the release of the remaining seven vessels, he discovered that he had to have the approval of nearly every person of authority in the Netherlands East Indies: General Wavell, Supreme Commander ABDA; Admiral Hart, Allied Naval Commander; Admiral Helfrich, the Dutch Naval Commander; Commodore Collins, the British Naval Commander at Batavia; the British Consul General at Batavia; and the British Vice-Consul and the Chinese Consul at Surabaya. The Dutch officials, and especially Admiral Helfrich, were in the end, the only people who took any interest in Robenson's dilemma. Helfrich himself charted routes that he felt offered the *Don Isidro* and the *Florence D.* the best chance to reach the Philippines. Though well aware of the dangers involved, the plucky Dutch Admiral confided to Robenson, "I would like to take one of those ships through myself."

All commercial shipping in the N.E.I. technically came under Dutch control at the outbreak of war, yet the Netherlanders were hesitant to requisition ships without the consent of the British Government. Since Admiral Helfrich was quite willing to assist Robenson, the Colonel's real problem was to win British support. Originating a formal request for the ships, he left Quade on the scene to press his case and took a plane back to Surabaya.

Upon arrival, Colonel Robenson received a first-hand report of the activities of the two officers he had sent to the Celebes. Lieutenant Stensland, unable to locate shipping at Makassar, had

flown to Surabaya and was waiting there for Robenson. He reported that Lieutenant Andrew had remained at Makassar overnight then left for the island of Buton. Robenson apparently decided he did not need another officer in Surabaya, and since Stensland was a field artilleryman, Robenson ordered him to the 131st FA at Singosari. Unfortunately, this unit remained in Java until the very end, when most of the men were taken prisoner by the Japanese.

The following day Surabaya received its second bombing raid by 40 bombers and 20 fighters. Robenson, who had missed the first attack, disdained cover, but Lundberg headed for the slit trenches dug in the patio behind the hotel. Robenson, chiding the soldier for being in such a hurry, welcomed the excitement.

From that time on, enemy planes hit the city two and three times a day. One could almost set a watch by the morning raid occurring regularly at half past nine. Additional bombing attacks often took place again at around 1100 and during the afternoon. At the height of an unusually heavy raid, Colonel Robenson counted 54 enemy planes in the sky and seven Allied ships flaming in the bay. The Japanese had little to deter them, for the antiaircraft defenses about Surabaya were entirely inadequate, and the few American and Dutch fighter pilots who heroically went up to meet the enemy were driven out of the sky.

When the Japanese began bombing Surabaya with frightful regularity after 5 February, native taxicab drivers abandoned their cars, and Robenson's men had difficulty obtaining local transportation. Colonel Robenson solved this problem by purchasing two new 1941 Nash automobiles and hiring two native drivers. The native chauffeurs were accustomed to driving in city and country with the speedometer exactly on 50, as was the custom in Java, where distance was measured in kilometers. The speedometers of the American-built Nashes were graduated in miles per hour, so the drivers were going almost twice as fast as anyone else. Lieutenant Cook's driver also abandoned the car whenever enemy aircraft appeared. Cook finally gave his steel helmet to the driver, and the man stuck with Cook as long as the lieutenant remained in Surabaya.

First Lieutenant Franklin H. Andrew, the second member of the Robenson Mission who had been dispatched to the Celebes, flew into Surabaya on Sunday morning, 8 February 1942. In the two weeks since he had departed Darwin, Australia, a great deal had happened to the young officer.

Following their arrival at Makassar on 24 January, Andrew and Stensland had spent the night at the Grand Hotel. The next morning they attempted to convert their letters of credit into local funds. The Javasche Bank had a branch at Makassar; however, since the day was Sunday, the bank was closed. After some difficulty, Andrew contacted the manager, who lived up in the mountains, and he agreed to open the bank and provide them with operating capital.

Lieutenant Andrew drew $150,000 in Dutch guilders, then had a local Chinese craftsman make him a money belt. Stensland also converted a portion of his letter of credit. Local Dutch officials informed them that the Japanese had captured Menado, at the northern tip of the Celebes, and that the situation in general was anything but promising. Even though Kendari was in enemy hands, Andrew decided to attempt to visit Buton Island. He gave $50,000 of his money to Stensland, then started for Bira, a village on the east coast, in a car provided by the local Dutch Army commander. The U.S. Army officer and the Dutch Army sergeant-driver left Makassar at midday, and arrived at Bira at about sundown.

The next morning, even though he had difficulty making himself understood, Andrew hired a boat to take him across the broad Gulf of Bone to the village port of Buton, on the island of Buton. The distance between the two ports was approximately 150 miles; however, the lugger was dependent upon sails. The lieutenant spoke no Malay and not one of the nine-man crew spoke English. The voyage lasted nearly three days, during which Andrew grew "damn tired of rice and fish and cockroaches." Zero fighter planes appearing on three different occasions did not add to his enjoyment of an already miserable passage.

The morning of 29 January, Andrew landed at a point about five kilometers south of Buton. As Andrew made his way toward the settlement, he wondered if he could be walking into a trap. The natives gave him a few curious glances, then went on with their normal pursuits. Although he saw no sign of the Japanese, Andrew entered the village warily, keeping his .45 automatic handy.

He quickly located the Resident Commissioner, a very likable young Dutchman named Van Den Broek. While the official was willing to assist the American, he warned that the Japanese were expected momentarily. Van Den Broek's orders were to remain at Buton to surrender the village; he had already removed his

wife and two children to a nearby island for safety. Lieutenant Andrew thanked the man, then began nosing about the area for motor-driven coastal vessels.

The U.S. Army officer and the Dutch official were at the Commissioner's house at 1720 that evening when nine twin-engine Japanese bombers roared over Buton out of the east. The two men raced for cover, then watched the enemy planes bomb the defenseless village. When the raid was over, three natives had been killed and seventeen were wounded; the radio station, a number of native houses and several warehouses on the waterfront had been damaged. Fortunately, Andrew had sent his radio report to Colonel Robenson at Surabaya a short time before the air attack.

Van Den Broek suggested that the American spend the night in his home. Both of the men were jumpy, and the sound of scattered rifle shots north of the village shortly before midnight increased their uneasiness. The skippers of two luggers, at anchor in the harbor, called at the Commissioner's house a half an hour later. They commanded the only motor-driven craft in the area and wanted permission to leave for Makassar. Van Den Broek ordered the native captains to get underway at once, suggesting that Lieutenant Andrew accompany them. There seemed no point in remaining in Buton for he was sure to be captured. Andrew agreed to leave, but was unable to persuade Van Den Broek to join them.

The return trip across the bay was even worse than the outbound voyage. By then Andrew was suffering from dengue fever and too much sun. Despite engine trouble and a wild monsoon storm that lasted seven hours, the lugger finally reached Boeloekoemka, a small coastal port some distance west of Bira, on 2 February.

When Lieutenant Andrew called upon Mr. Hemsing, the local Dutch resident official, he was given a welcome bottle of beer—his first cold drink in a long time. At Andrew's request, the official tried to reach Lieutenant Stensland by telephone, but it appeared he had left Makassar. When they attempted a second call, the line was no longer in operation. Before the American officer hitched a ride to Makassar—the road was reported still open—Hemsing told him about a naval battle some 300 miles above Makassar on 24 January. This was later called the Battle of Balikpapan. Andrew wondered uneasily how fast the Japanese were moving south.

Back in Makassar that night, Andrew found that Stensland had departed, apparently for Surabaya. The following morning Lieutenant Andrew decided to make another try at finding ships to run the blockade. Assisted by Mr. Weber, of the shipping firm of Schmidt and Jondell, he lined up a pair of 150-ton diesel-driven luggers, with captains and crews willing to try for the Philippines. Weber then helped the officer purchase a large stock of canned goods, including 40 cases of tinned beef.

But Andrew knew time was running short. As he observed in his diary, "The Dutch civil authorities here give me all the help they can, but they are so damn jittery they don't know what they are doing." On the morning of 3 February, while he was gathering cargo for the two coastal vessels, 57 Japanese aircraft, mostly twin-engine bombers, flew over Makassar, obviously on their way to attack Surabaya. Although enemy planes had been criss-crossing and cavorting through the sky over Makassar and Zero fighters had made two low-level strafing attacks, the town had not yet been bombed.

Despite the assistance given Andrew by Mr. Weber and the local authorities, it wasn't until the 5th that the vessels were ready to depart. Lieutenant Andrew paid the crews an amount of money he believed sufficient to induce them to deliver the food supplies to the Philippines. His instructions specified that the ships were to go to Anakan, a small seaport on the northern coast of the island of Mindanao. The U.S. Army commander there would receive the cargoes. Then, as Andrew and the two native skippers were completing final arrangements, Japanese bombers commenced bombing the town. The crews of both ships took to the hills, and the American officer, also under cover, wondered if the whole deal was off. After the raid, the natives straggled back and the two ships made their departure. That was the last that Lieutenant Andrew saw of them; and neither of the vessels ever appeared at Anakan, Mindanao.

There seemed little more that the officer could do at Makassar, and with the Japanese practically on the doorstep, he concluded it was time for him to leave for Surabaya. A Dutch officer reported that a PBY flying boat would call at Makassar to evacuate the governor of the Celebes and his family, and the officer felt certain that Andrew could beg a ride. The American thought this an admirable idea.

The large seaplane landed at Makassar after dark on 7 February. When Lieutenant Andrew joined the governor and his

party for boarding, he was amazed at the amount of luggage they planned to take with them. Such a mountain of trunks, suitcases, boxes, and bags made the officer wonder if there would be room for him too. By midnight the loading was completed; the Dutch PBY took off and headed southwest.

On the 500-mile flight from Makassar to Surabaya, a violent tropical storm tossed the big seaplane all over the sky. The pilot tried to go around or climb over the disturbance, but with no success. It was the worst flight that Lieutenant Andrew ever made; several of the passengers suffered broken bones. The plane landed at Surabaya around 0800, and Andrew made his way to the Oranje Hotel.

He had left Makassar just in time. A Japanese invasion force of six transports, under heavy escort, had departed Kendari on 6 February and was approaching Makassar the night he left; Japanese troops were landing at Makassar about the time the Dutch PBY landed at Surabaya.

Lieutenant Andrew gave Colonel Robenson a full account of his operations in the Celebes. The Colonel told him to check into the Oranje Hotel, get cleaned up, and help Lieutenant Cook with the loading of the *Florence D.*, which he wanted underway as quickly as possible.

The next day, Colonel Robenson received a pencilled report of the food situation on Bataan and an urgent plea for rations and ammunition written by Brigadier General Charles C. Drake, Chief Quartermaster for MacArthur's beleaguered USAFFE command, and delivered by Gerald Wilkinson, a British Army major, evacuated in the submarine *Seawolf*. Drake's report made clear that the men on Bataan and Corregidor were facing starvation.

On 10 February 1942, Robenson received by courier Henry Quade's resignation from the mission, written at Bandoeng the previous day. Quade had remained there to further Colonel Robenson's request for shipping. But by the time the request was submitted to the ABDA Command, which had been moved to Lembang, only four of the original 13 ships deemed suitable for running the blockade were still available. Robenson's proposal had, in fact, been brought to the attention of the High Command twice, and it was decisively scuttled during the second meeting when both British and American naval authorities agreed that it was no longer feasible to move supplies into the Philippines. The implication was that the Philippine garrison was already lost, thus the dispatch of additional cargo ships, which were almost

certain to be captured or destroyed, was a futile undertaking. The four old coastal steamers Robenson had requested were free to go on their way.

Incensed at the outcome of their joint efforts, Quade continued:

> *There is a very great deal I would like to say about this whole matter. During about eleven days of intensive scurrying around trying to locate ships and then to find who had authority to release them, we had almost no cooperation whatever—and apparently very little sympathy. When we finally pinned down the only quarter that presumably had power to act in this matter, our attempts to obtain the ships were completely squelched. No one wanted to take the responsibility of issuing a direct order which was the only way we could get the ships. Considering the scheme as unfeasible ended the matter of the four ships.*
>
> *I regret very keenly that this matter has turned out the way it has in spite of the intense efforts we exerted in trying to cut through the official red tape. Certainly, our efforts deserved a better result. I can only hope that the few opportunities remaining to you will be one hundred per cent successful. It occurs to me that if our Navy is so emphatic as to the unfeasibility of sending out the ships you lined up, you could expect and might possibly receive more support and cooperation from them in making available to you means of transport which they consider has a chance of getting through, particularly as they control all such transport.*
>
> *In spite of the dismal results, I enjoyed working with you on this matter and I assure you I will be only too glad to be of any future assistance that lies within my power.*

During the time Robenson's request was being considered at Lembang, the officer conferred with Captain Manzano and drew up a contract covering the compensation, insurance, and conditions of performance for the forthcoming voyage to Mindanao. The contractual agreement between the U.S. Government and Captain C. L. Manzano, Master of the *Florence D.*, dated 9 February 1942, stated that ship and crew were to undertake a special mission. In return for this service, the Captain was to receive 20,000 guilders, the Chief Engineer half that amount and each of the remaining ship's officers 5000 guilders, and all were to be insured.

The twenty-eight crewmen of the *Florence D.* were to receive four times their normal salaries, and each man was insured for $500. The contract stated: "This bonus to be effective only during the actual time necessary to deliver the cargo and if return passage is made, to be effective from the date of the departure of the *Florence D.*, until its arrival at the port . . ."

Since life insurance companies in the N.E.I. refused to insure anyone involved in the mission, the contract stated that the United States Army, through the Chief Finance Officer in Washington, assumed the life insurance liability of the officers and crew for the amounts indicated. Coverage was effective only for the period required to accomplish their mission, up to 60 days from the date the *Florence D.* left Surabaya. Should death result while engaged in the mission, appropriate compensation would be paid to the beneficiaries set forth in the contract. Madrigal and Company, Manila, P.I., owners of the vessel, were to receive just compensation should the *Florence D.* be lost as a result of enemy action. The agreement also stipulated that Captain Manzano would scuttle the ship rather than to allow it to fall into Japanese hands.

When the ship was nearly loaded, Colonel Robenson gave Captain Manzano a case of beer to be delivered to General Jonathan M. Wainwright in the Philippines. Robenson and Wainwright, classmates at West Point, had "galloped many a dusty mile together," and were friends of long standing. Colonel Robenson remembered the General loved his beer. Included with the package was a letter in which Robenson said ". . . This ship contains . . . practically all the 3″ A.A. ammunition there is in the Far East . . . You're doing a great job . . ."

On 12 February, while Robenson and his men labored to finish loading the *Florence D.* at Surabaya, the 3300-ton *Don Isidro* stood out of Batavia with a cargo of flour, dry rations, and ammunition. Her course, as charted by the Dutch Admiralty, was west from Batavia, south through the Sunda Strait, thence eastward through the Timor Sea. In the vicinity of Bathhurst Island, she was to swing north, through the Arafura and Banda Seas, then make a straight run for Mindanao. MacArthur had recently radioed that blockade runners were to be sent to Anakan, Mindanao, on Gingoog Bay, and that the Anakan Lumber Company would handle unloading operations. But fate had other plans.

That same day, Cook went to U.S. Navy Headquarters for

routing instructions for the *Florence D.* Aside from a single native soldier, the former Headquarters building was deserted. The only information the native had was "everybody gone." Cook returned to the Oranje. Private Lundberg was unaware that the Navy had pulled out, and Colonel Robenson was out of the city. On a hunch, Lieutenant Cook turned on a radio for the regular noon broadcast by Tokyo Rose, who gave all the news, including the move of Navy Headquarters and the new address. Cook went to the address, found the Navy offices and obtained routing instructions for the blockade runner.

The smaller 2600-ton *Florence D.* was now ready to shove off for the Philippines. Within 24 hours after the *Don Isidro* left Batavia, the *Florence D.* left Surabaya. "It might have been wishful thinking," said Colonel Robenson later on, "but somehow as I watched that ship stand down the bay I'd have bet my boots and spurs that she was going to get through to Mindanao. It seemed to me that she just *had* to get through—that God would let no one stop her."

It appeared that Colonel Robenson's efforts were beginning to pay off, and that afternoon General Brett radioed MacArthur at Corregidor the good news that the two blockade runners were on their way. He reported that the total cargo included 500,000 rations, 10,000 rounds of three-inch ammunition, a quarter of a million rounds of .50-caliber, and three million .30-caliber. The *Florence D.*'s cargo also included canned fruits, jams, jellies, candies, cigarettes, and beer—items certain to be welcome on Bataan.

By 13 February 1942, when Robenson and his small staff finally succeeded in their efforts to get cargo ships loaded and underway to the Philippine Islands, the situation in the Far East had taken a disastrous turn. Following their rapid movement into the Philippines and down the length of the Malayan peninsula, the Japanese continued to push southward. Britain's island fortress at Singapore, under invasion attack, was about to surrender, and it was now clear that Sumatra would be next. Japanese troops, supported by strong naval units and protected by an invincible air force, were sweeping through the Indies. Dutch and American fighter planes, attempting to defend the Malay Barrier, had been shot out of the sky; ground forces were hardly worth counting; and the combined but disorganized Allied naval units were helpless against the powerful, well-

trained Imperial Japanese Navy. The ABDA Command, which never really had a chance, began to fall apart.

Against this background of disaster and defeat, it appeared little more could be accomplished by the Robenson Mission. Undaunted, the tough cavalry colonel and his men stayed in Java awhile longer, making still another attempt to send supplies to Corregidor.

CHAPTER 7

NEVER ENOUGH SHIPS

Shortly after the blockade runners *Don Isidro* and *Florence D.* departed Java, Colonel Robenson had an amazing experience. Early one morning he was awakened at the Oranje Hotel by a U.S. Army captain, who identified himself as a special courier. After carefully checking Robenson's credentials, he delivered a package wrapped in dirty white canvas and tied with a length of rope. When Robenson demanded to know the contents of the parcel, the captain suggested that he open it. The colonel did so, and neatly wrapped green packets of U.S. currency spilled to the floor. The captain reported that he had been ordered to deliver the package, said to contain $250,000, to Colonel Robenson at Surabaya, and he added that he had been worried crazy carrying the stuff around. Counting the bills, Robenson was reminded of boyhood tales of pirates opening their money chests. There were packets of all denominations: 50s, 20s, 10s, 5s, 1s—and hundreds of two-dollar bills.

The two officers spent neărly an hour counting the money, a quarter of a million dollars in U.S. currency. Colonel Robenson signed a receipt, and the captain went on his way. The money, apparently the first of eight shipments, had been flown to the southwest Pacific Theatre in response to General Brereton's signal to Washington on 22 January. But no one at Melbourne had informed Robenson that, in addition to the Dutch funds, he would be supplied with U.S. bills. In any event, his letter of

credit called for more money than the bank had on hand, so the shipment of American currency came as a great surprise. Colonel Robenson and Private Lundberg, both armed, headed for the bank. Robenson demanded that the tellers verify the amount before placing it in their vault; he retained $9000 for operating funds.

On Saturday, 14 February, Colonel Robenson was given more ships than he knew what to do with. The Dutch Admiralty had released the four old China coasters, the subject of interminable discussions and endless red tape at Batavia and Lembang a few days earlier. They were the 1300-ton Norwegian *Tunni*, the 1600-ton Norwegian *Proteus*, the 1600-ton Norwegian *Bordvik*, and the 3000-ton British *Taiyuan*.

With cargo available and ships in hand, Robenson thought his troubles were over. But he soon found it nearly impossible to beg, borrow, or bribe officers and seamen to man his blockade runners. First he had to find a master willing to tackle the secret assignment. The proposition was simple: officers and crew would receive handsome bonuses, in addition to their regular pay, for attempting to deliver cargo at a destination to be disclosed later. Colonel Robenson intimated that since the vessel would proceed without escort, the voyage would involve certain risks.

As Robenson observed in his diary:

> *The ordinary American opinion is that anything can be had if one has sufficient money to pay for it. In general, that theory may be true—but a matter of life and death is another thing—the offering of one's life is seldom bought, it is invariably given through love or patriotism. The dealings of these old sea captains of the China coast were not hampered by a love of patriotism—they were interested in no one except themselves and then very much so—their own comforts, as they saw them, their shore pleasures and scotch.*

Robenson approached the masters of various cargo vessels, including the skippers of the four ships only recently made available to him. When, over a bottle of scotch, the colonel disclosed the assignment, the captains usually agreed to make the voyage. But by the next day, they invariably discovered problems making the trip impossible. Sometimes the master reported he had a bad crew and that he did not have time to replace them; or that he could not commit the vessel to such an undertaking without the

consent of the owners, interned in Norway or residing in England. Or the master simply wanted no part of the affair. Colonel Robenson continued his search.

Finally Robenson decided to concentrate on the *Taiyuan*, the largest of the freighters, which had scurried south to Surabaya after being damaged in the Japanese raid on Manila on 10 December.

Second Officer John Reid of that ship, injured during the attack at Manila, had lost his eyesight as they steamed across the Java Sea. In Surabaya doctors discovered that bits of metal from an exploding bomb had lodged in Reid's brain, causing the loss of sight and serious damage to the left ear. An operation was partially successful, and the second mate gradually recovered his sight, but the doctors were unable to repair the damaged left ear, leaving him deaf. By the time Reid left the hospital on 29 January, his vision had returned to nearly normal. But he had other worries. He had left his pregnant wife and then year-old son on the Bund at Shanghai, and both had been interned on 8 December.

When Reid rejoined his ship, he found that the old China coaster had been repaired and loaded with a full cargo of sugar for Calcutta. While *Taiyuan* awaited the formation of a convoy for India, a second cargo ship operated by the China Navigation Company had been torpedoed and sunk in the Java Sea. By the time the survivors returned to Surabaya with frightening tales of the torpedoing, the India-bound convoy was ready to depart, but the Chinese crew on *Taiyuan*, fearing a similar fate, refused to sail. When the cargo vessel was made available to Colonel Robenson on 14 February, the entire Chinese crew was under indictment for mutiny.

On Sunday, 15 February 1942, Colonel Robenson, accompanied by Lieutenants Cook and Nestler, took possession of the *Taiyuan*. Since the Chinese crew were being held as prisoners, the colonel had to get rid of them before the freighter could be brought alongside Holland Pier. Unable to obtain help in the matter from either the Dutch or the British, Robenson resorted to direct action. That afternoon he called upon the Surabaya Chief of Police at his home and explained his predicament. The civil official offered assistance. If the colonel could furnish a place of detention, the chief was willing to take charge of the seamen until the British Government decided where the prison-

ers would be tried. The chief suggested a suitable location, and the Chinese Consul agreed to the plan.

That night Colonel Robenson learned of the surrender of Singapore. The loss of Singapore, "... one of the most bitter and decisive defeats ever suffered by the forces of the British Commonwealth," imperiled the entire west flank of the Malay Barrier defense line. Only one day earlier, 800 enemy paratroops dropped on Palembang, Sumatra, had been annihilated, but a powerful invasion force was approaching by sea. The situation was equally threatening in the east, for by the time Singapore capitulated, the Japanese, with strategic areas in Borneo and the Celebes in firm control, stood ready to grab Timor and Bali. Java, rapidly becoming encircled, faced invasion.

At Surabaya, next day, the Chinese crew was placed in police custody. Robenson and his inspecting officers found the rusty, old freighter "the vilest ship anyone ever saw."

Ordered to have the *Taiyuan* unloaded and thoroughly cleaned, Captain Fraser retired to his cabin and remained drunk for three days, while stevedores commenced unloading the cargo of sugar. By that time Cook and Nestler were hiring natives from Madura, the island north of Surabaya. Larger and stronger than the local natives, the Madura men came to Surabaya in canoes each morning, labored on the docks all day, then paddled back to their home island at night. Lieutenant Cook paid them the equivalent of ten cents U.S. per day, a cent an hour for a ten-hour day, and ignored the complaints of Dutch dock supervisors loudly protesting the wage, since it was far above the going rate.

When Captain Fraser sobered up, he flatly refused the voyage, and all three of the engineers and both wireless operators took the same stand. After consulting with Mr. L. A. Scopes, British Vice-Consul, Robenson fired the lot of them, arranging for their passage by rail to Batavia and by sea to Calcutta. All six were drunk when Lieutenants Cook and Nestler herded them into the night train for Batavia. Unfortunately, Captain Fraser carried off the ship's log.

When J. W. E. Warrior, First Mate, and John Reid, Second Officer, offered to undertake the mission, Colonel Robenson promoted Warrior to Master and Reid to First Officer. At least it was a start. While Cook and Nestler, assisted by the new first mate, supervised the discharge of cargo from the *Taiyuan*, Lieutenant Andrew began searching for additional officers and crew.

With an offer of four times the normal salary plus insurance in case of death, he hit nearly every bar and saloon on the waterfront before he finally lined up men willing to sign on for the voyage.

Aside from the fact he often found Colonel Robenson demanding and unreasonable (Robenson ordered him to remain in the office from breakfast until evening meal), Private Lundberg enjoyed his stay at the Oranje Hotel. During the two months prior to reaching Java, he had had miserable food, but meals at the Oranje were "out of this world." In addition to a large breakfast, Lundberg usually ate two six-course meals each day. In a letter to his parents, he described one meal: celery soup; fish, salad, and boiled potatoes; steak, peas, and fried potatoes; chicken and prunes; ice cream; and fruit and coffee.

Confined to the hotel, Lundberg became acquainted with Abas, his room boy, and Moentari, the Javanese native who looked after "Meester Number One," Colonel Robenson. He had picked up a smattering of Malay, and he was able to carry on a limited conversation with them. He discovered that though both were Mohammedan, Abas had two wives while Moentari had only one. The private casually mentioned to Colonel Robenson that the Colonel's boy had one wife, but his boy had two. Using Lundberg as an interpreter, Robenson suggested to Moentari that he also should have two wives—at least two.

Aside from brief comments by Colonel Robenson or the lieutenants, Lundberg knew little about the worsening military situation in the N.E.I. He had learned of the fall of Singapore over the radio; but most of the newspapers and radio broadcasts were in Dutch. He had talked with refugees from Malaya or the outlying islands, but still believed that powerful reinforcements would soon arrive from the United States. Yet American sailors always kept asking what had happened to the Pacific Fleet. Lundberg discussed things with Voge, a soldier from the 131st Field Artillery, who was also staying at the hotel. But Voge knew little more about the situation than Lundberg.

Colonel Robenson found Mr. Warrior, the newly appointed master of the *Taiyuan*, a cool customer. "A hard-bitten, seafaring Welshman," Walter Edmonds later described him, "who had rubbed the rough edges off a good many other men in the course of knocking about the world, he was extraordinarily resolute where money matters were concerned; and this perilous voyage, on which he was about to embark, was a money matter to him, pure if not simple . . ." As Robenson observed in his diary, "He

could think of more monetary imbursements and advancements than a Philadelphia lawyer, to all of which we had to acquiesce."

On 17 February, Colonel Robenson received word that Brigadier General Patrick J. Hurley, on his way to become Ambassador to New Zealand, was to arrive at the airfield at Malang, 60 miles south of Surabaya, late that afternoon. Hurley, former Secretary of War and close friend of MacArthur, had been sent by General Marshall to make certain a prompt and determined effort was underway to supply the Philippine outpost.

Air Corps General Brereton, of ABDACOM, was flying to Malang on an inspection tour, and Hurley was in the same plane. The LB-30 arrived during a blinding rainstorm—with zero visibility and a ceiling of not more than 100 feet. The field had been bombed repeatedly, and wooden posts marked the water-filled bomb craters. While waiting for the generals, Colonel Robenson heard several young fighter pilots making wagers on the landing. There was even money—some offered odds—that a landing under such weather conditions would end in a crash. The big, four-engine bomber hit the sodden field, sent water and mud flying in all directions, but landed safely. Robenson was relieved, for Hurley was an old and dear friend.

That night Colonel Robenson gave General Hurley a full account of his activities in the N.E.I., reporting that two blockade runners were on their way to the Philippines and that he expected to have the *Taiyuan* ready for departure within the week. Pleased with the progress Robenson had made, Hurley said the *Coast Farmer* had been dispatched from Australia, and two other vessels were being loaded. Next morning, after an early breakfast, Robenson left for Surabaya while the general flew on to Darwin.

Following the first raid on 3 February 1942, Japanese bombers attacked Surabaya and the harbor area again and again. While the big Dutch naval base, second only to Singapore, was given special attention in the first days, bombs were also dropped upon the waterfront area, the airfield, and shipping in the bay. Two and three times a day enemy planes, under heavy escort, swept over the city, bombing and strafing virtually at will. After two weeks of almost incessant bombing, the naval base lay in shambles, warehouses and loading facilities destroyed, the bomb-cratered airfield was barely usable, and many ships had been sunk or severely damaged.

On 18 February, however, Brereton's 17th Fighter Squadron

got in one last lick. A dozen eager P-40s pounced upon nine twin-engine bombers appearing over Surabaya without fighter cover. While General Brereton, along with thousands of jubilant Dutch and Javanese, watched from the city, the American pilots shot down all nine of the enemy planes. It was a great performance, but it proved one of their last missions.

Despite the bombing attacks, increasingly frequent and increasingly dangerous, Lieutenants Nestler and Cook, and First Mate Reid continued loading the *Taiyuan*. Time after time, enemy bombers sent the men racing for cover. Sometimes they took shelter on the docks; at other times they could only flop on deck until the raid ended. Though they had difficulty moving supplies to the dock, labor continued to be their greatest problem. The stevedores invariably fled at the first alarm, usually at 0930, and often failed to return until the next day. Captain de Lange temporarily solved this problem using native convicts working under armed guard. However, with the approach of Japanese aircraft, the prison guards took flight, allowing the convicts to escape.

The day after the 17th Fighter Squadron clobbered enemy planes at Surabaya, the Japanese finally brought Robenson's efforts to a disasterous end. But they did not hit Surabaya that day—the action took place a thousand miles away, in Darwin, Australia.

Since mid-January, ABDACOM had been attempting to reinforce the Dutch and Australian garrison on Timor, a small island northwest of Australia. Timor had become of great strategic importance, as its airfield at Koepang—517 miles from Darwin and 670 from Java—provided the only refueling stop for short-range fighter aircraft desperately needed to defend the Malay Barrier.

In the early morning hours of 15 February, a reinforcement convoy of four troop transports, protected by the heavy cruiser *Houston*, the destroyer *Peary*, and four Australian corvettes, sneaked out of Darwin. Unfortunately, the ships were spotted by an enemy flying boat. At 1100 next day, 36 bombers and eight seaplanes attacked the convoy. The ships scattered and the *Houston* filled the sky with an antiaircraft barrage. Though none of the ships received a direct hit, all were damaged and leaking from near misses by the time the Japanese withdrew. Yet more attacks were certain to follow if the convoy continued to Timor, so ABDACOM ordered the ships back to Australia.

Upon arrival at Darwin on 18 February, *Houston* quickly re-

fueled and departed for Tjilatjap, on the south coast of Java. The transports disembarked troops, then anchored in the bay until there was room to discharge cargo. The return of the *Houston* convoy raised the total number of naval and merchant vessels in port to 47, ranging in size from a 12-ton patrol boat to the 12,000-ton U.S. Army transport *Meigs*.

Following their dispatch from opposite ends of Java, the blockade runners *Don Isidro* and *Florence D.* sailed south of the Malay Barrier and proceeded on an easterly course in the direction of Bathhurst Island, a short distance above Darwin. Off Bathhurst, they were to swing north into the Banda Sea. The next leg of their course would take the vessels through the Moluccas and straight into the Philippines.

The same day the *Houston* convoy returned to Darwin, the *Don Isidro* and the *Florence D.* entered the Timor Sea. That evening they headed eastward at best speed about halfway between Australia and Timor. During the hours of darkness, feverish enemy activity was taking place several hundred miles to the north. A powerful Japanese striking force—four carriers, two battleships, three heavy cruisers, and twenty destroyers under Vice Admiral Kondo—came down through the Banda Sea. It was the largest task force the Japanese had mounted since Pearl Harbor, and in fact included four of the same carriers.

With a light westerly breeze, a smooth sea, and a few fine weather clouds, 19 February dawned bright and clear. At first light the carriers, approximately 250 miles northeast of Darwin, swung into the wind and launched 81 aircraft: 27 high-altitude bombing planes, 27 dive bombers, and 27 fighters. The three forces drew into formation and streaked toward Australia.

The enemy planes first came upon the blockade runner *Florence D.* moving slowly northward some miles above Bathhurst Island, and several dive bombers dropped out of formation and attacked her. With only .50-caliber machine guns, the vessel stood no chance against dive bombers. The *Florence D.* received two direct hits and was burning and out of control when the planes withdrew. Three crewmen had been killed and 14 other men, including Captain Manzano, had been injured. Surviving officers and crew took to the lifeboats and were headed toward Bathhurst when the ship sank in six fathoms.

While a few planes quickly dispatched the *Florence D.*, the remainder of the strike force continued south where, just over the horizon, they sighted the second blockade runner bound for

the Philippines, and several more planes diverted to take care of the *Don Isidro*. Captain Cisneros repeatedly radioed, "Am being attacked by aircraft." A third blockade runner, the *Coast Farmer*, in the Philippine Islands far to the north, heard the distress calls. But no one could help either of the ships under attack.

Although the *Don Isidro's* five .50-caliber machine guns opened fire on the dive bombers, the ship was hit by no less than five bombs. Seven crewmen and four army enlisted men were killed, and Lieutenant Kane, two of his soldier-gunners, and one of the ship's officers, received injuries. The ship was severely damaged and on fire, and barely able to reach Bathhurst, where Captain Cisneros beached her seven miles north of Cape Fourcroy. But the fire was beyond control, and both ship and cargo were a total loss.

In response to the *Don Isidro*'s calls for help, the Australian corvette *Warrnambool*, a survivor of the attack at Darwin, arrived next day to pick up Cisneros and his men. Lieutenant Kane, seriously wounded in the leg and foot, later died in the hospital at Darwin: the remainder of the wounded men recovered. When the call for volunteers to man the *Don Isidro* had been made at Brisbane in January, Kane had flipped a coin with another officer to determine who would command the gun crew. Lieutenant Kane won the toss but lost his life.

The survivors from the *Florence D.* reached the northwest shore of Bathhurst Island, an Australian aboriginal reservation, sometime on the 20th, but by that time Captain Manzano, with extensive burns about the legs, along with several of the others was in bad shape. While the injured stayed behind, those able to travel made their way overland some 30 miles to the Bathhurst mission station. The Australian Navy again dispatched the *Warrnambool*, rescuing the survivors on the beach on the 23rd. By that time the others had already been transported to Darwin in the mission lugger *St. Francis.*

While the dive bombers attacked the blockade runners, the rest of the planes approached Darwin at 0930, about the time the Bathhurst Island mission station warned that aircraft had been sighted. From a height of 14,000 feet, 27 silver-colored bombers in perfect formation commenced bombing the docks and the shipping in the bay. The planes then made a wide leisurely circle and began bombing the town. The first bombs exploded in the harbor, then came direct hits upon the wharves, the hospital, post office, police barracks, and government offices.

Despite the sudden attack, ships under steam took evasive action. Antiaircraft guns, afloat and ashore, filled the sky with a defensive barrage that hindered the Japanese but little, and the accompanying fighters quickly downed eight of nine American P-40s attempting intercept.

As soon as the high-level planes finished their work, 27 dive bombers attacked ships in the harbor, while fighter aircraft made tree-top level strafing runs, hitting houses and public buildings, and cars, people, and dogs—anything that moved. At about that time, 200 tons of depth charges in the Australian cargo ship, *Neptuna,* exploded and the ship disintegrated in an earth-shaking blast.

When the enemy aircraft withdrew 45 minutes later, the harbor and the town was a scene of devastation. Much of the dock area had been destroyed, and warehouses, store buildings, and houses were burning. The bay was filled with sunken, sinking, and burning ships. The destroyer USS *Peary,* and the merchant ships *Neptuna, Zealandia,* and *British Motorist* had been sunk. The American troop transports *Meigs* and *Mauna Loa* were on the bottom, and three other ships—*Barossa, Portmar,* and *Tulagi* —had been beached. Ships damaged included the seaplane tender USS *Preston*; HMAS *Platypus,* HMAS *Swan*; the Australian hospital ship, *Manunda*; the American merchantman *Admiral Halstead*; and five small Australian naval vessels, *Gunbar, Kara Kara, Kookaburra, Kangaroo,* and *Coongoola.*

Between two and three hundred people were dead, an even greater number injured. When the all clear sounded at 1040, the survivors began picking up the pieces. But the day was not over.

At 1155 the depot ship *Platypus* sounded her alarm. Three minutes later, two formations of twin-engine land-based bombers, one from the southwest, the other from the northeast, soared over the RAAF field outside Darwin at 18,000 feet. The enemy formations nearly crossed each other, smothering the field with a destructive pattern of bombs. The accuracy and precision of their attack was reminiscent of the devastating raids at Clark Field and Pearl Harbor. The second attack lasted only 20 minutes, but little remained standing when the Japanese planes headed back north.

The attack virtually wiped out the base at Darwin. Aside from heavy casualties, three naval vessels and five cargo ships had been sunk, four other merchant vessels heavily damaged, and 23 aircraft destroyed. "The town itself was abandoned tempo-

rarily in fear of a return visit, and there was not much left to abandon," was Samuel Eliot Morison's comment later.

When the news of the Darwin attack and the losses of the *Don Isidro* and the *Florence D.* reached Colonel Robenson, it forcefully brought home to him the heavy hazards of trying to get supplies into the Philippine Islands. But they continued loading the *Taiyuan.*

Despite daily bombing attacks and the constant problem of finding stevedores and locating rations, ammunition, and medical supplies—especially quinine—Lieutenant Andrew still searched for men to sail the old ship, but without much luck.

Captain de Lange, the Dutch supply officer, proved a distinct asset to the mission. An accountant in civilian life, de Lange held a reserve commission in the Royal Netherlands Indies Army and had been recalled to duty shortly before the outbreak of war. While searching Surabaya for meat products, de Lange suggested to Robenson that they buy live pigs, then have them slaughtered, dried, and salted. Although the process would take about ten days, Colonel Robenson told the Dutchman to check into the possibility. De Lange shortly reported that he could purchase 3000 pigs in Bali, the exotic island a short distance east of Java. He planned to have the pigs delivered in Surabaya for slaughtering and processing. Colonel Robenson approved the expenditure, and small native cargo ships commenced transporting the pigs to Java.

But the timing was disastrous, for by then the Japanese had landed at Den Pasar, on the east coast of Bali, and maintained a constant air patrol over the narrow passage between that island and Java. About half of the pigs had been delivered when one of the small cargo carriers got caught about halfway across the narrow passage, and enemy aircraft worked it over with a vengeance. The native boat, its crew of eight, and the cargo of some 150 pigs provided the Japanese fighter pilots ideal target practice. Though strafed time after time, the boat neither burned nor sank; but only one of the natives and no more than a dozen of the pigs were still alive when the ship reached Java. Oddly enough, Robenson received a refund for pigs never delivered.

On 21 February, Colonel Robenson received orders to report to General Brett at Lembang. When he arrived at Supreme Headquarters the following day, there was surprisingly little activity and Robenson correctly surmised that the ABDA Command was about to be dissolved. After giving General Brett a

progress report, the colonel spent the night with Hank Quade in Bandoeng. Both men knew that the military situation was desperate. When Quade expressed concern for his employees, nearly 50 in number and of various nationalities, Robenson offered the three ships at Surabaya for escape. He already had considered using one of the vessels to get his men out of Java.

Early the next morning, Colonel Robenson bade Quade farewell, then went to the airfield for a plane back to Surabaya. Robenson wrote later:

> *I shall never forget that ride . . . The sun was peeking over the horizon and the air was moist, cool and thick with the fragrance of flowers. The footpath on both sides was one continuous file of natives, male and female, carrying their flowers to market. The flowers . . . were all white; gardenias, carnations, lilies, fragipani, jasmine . . . no path to an altar was ever more beautiful or more fragrant than that perfumed mile and a half over which I rode to the airdrome that morning, and this at a time when the military authorities were so deeply . . . worried about invasion.*

And invasion was certain to come. That very day Marshall Wavell, Supreme Commander ABDACOM, informed Prime Minister Churchill by radio that he would be able to defend Java only a little while longer.

The *Taiyuan* was nearly loaded when Colonel Robenson returned, and Lieutenant Andrew's persistent efforts to round up officers and crewmen were beginning to pay off, but they were still missing a radio operator.

Soon after Robenson returned to Surabaya, the British Vice-Consul raised serious questions concerning the use of the *Taiyuan* and Warrior's appointment as master. He did not feel that Colonel Robenson had authority to promote the officer, and he warned that the *Taiyuan* could not sail without a logbook. These objections didn't stop the colonel, who by then had figured out how to evade all kinds of red tape. Robenson's instructions, originating with General Marshall in Washington, were to get the job done; when anyone questioned his authority, the colonel made it clear he was acting for the United States Government.

In answer to the objections raised by the Vice-Consul, Colonel Robenson prepared a letter stating that Captain Warrior had been engaged to perform a special mission and would be operat-

ing under the authority of ABDACOM. Robenson also stated that he had instructed Warrior to originate a new log to replace the one carried off by the former skipper, adding that "Such log should have full recognition by all authorities . . ."

In the midst of final preparations to dispatch the *Taiyuan,* Colonel Robenson received orders to close his mission and report to U.S. Navy Headquarters at Tjilatjap, on the south coast, by 1600 the following day for return to Australia. With Sumatra and Timor both in enemy hands, invasion was imminent. ABDACOM, no longer able to defend Java, had been dissolved on 23 February, and General Wavell departed for Ceylon two days later. By the time Robenson was told to close shop, a full-scale evacuation of Java was underway.

Since air transport was out of the question and little reliance could be placed on trains, Colonel Robenson decided they would drive the two Nashes 325 miles to Tjilatjap. But no one knew what the roads would be like nor how long the trip should take —and there were a thousand things to be done before they could leave.

Although Andrew had contacted nearly every radio operator in Surabaya, none seemed interested in his offer. As a last resort, Robenson instructed him to try to wangle a man from the American air base at Malang.

The contract Colonel Robenson drew up for the *Taiyuan* was much like the one used for the *Florence D.* In return for attempting the special mission—the delivery of cargo in the Philippines—Captain Warrior would receive 20,000 Dutch guilders, the Chief Engineer 10,000, and the remaining ship's officers half that amount. However, at Warrior's demand, the contract also included insurance coverage for the loss of a leg, arm, or eye, or combination thereof; loss of personal effects; and clothing allowances. In the event of capture, officers and crew would be entitled to regular wages until released. And finally, ship's officers were to be paid 50 percent of their bonus compensation before the *Taiyuan* departed Surabaya, the remainder to be paid to each officer on his return or by claim of his beneficiary on the Chief Finance Officer, United States Army, Washington, D.C.

Members of the crew, 10 non-natives and 20 Indonesians, were to be paid four times their regular salary and were entitled to clothing allowances of from $10 to $150 and insurance coverage ranging from $500 for the natives to $2500 for the boatsmen.

The contract stated that the United States Army assumed the

role of an insurance company, the period of coverage was limited to 60 days following departure of the vessel from Surabaya, and that life insurance benefits would be paid if death occurred as a result of accident or injury incident to the mission. The China Navigation Company, owners of the *Taiyuan*, were to be paid rental at the rate of $3.95 per deadweight ton per month, and would receive just compensation should the ship be lost as a result of hostile fire, bombing, or capture. If the vessel was lost, officers and crew would be entitled to repatriation to their respective homelands at the expense of the U.S. Government. The final paragraph of the contract stipulated that Captain Warrior would destroy the *Taiyuan* in case of evident capture by hostile forces.

The contract wasn't completed until late that night, but Colonel Robenson left for the Javasche Bank with Lundberg before he started typing the papers. Mr. W. Verploegh Chasse, senior officer, had agreed to open the bank in order that Robenson could close out his accounts and complete the financial arrangements for the *Taiyuan*'s departure.

Mr. Chasse, who provided a conference room, offered to assist the Colonel in every way possible. Present at the meeting that night were Colonel Robenson and Private Lundberg, Captain Warrior and his five officers, Mr. Chasse and several of his men, and the ever-helpful Captain de Lange. The officers from the *Taiyuan* were given half of their bonus payment, and Mr. Chasse offered to transmit funds almost anywhere in the world. All outstanding bills were paid, and Colonel Robenson designated Captain de Lange his agent. The liaison officer was to finish loading the *Taiyuan*, making payments as needed from funds left on deposit at the bank. Bills approved by de Lange would be paid by Mr. Chasse, and unused funds were to be cabled to Australia.

It was after midnight when the accounts were balanced. Colonel Robenson then withdrew his U.S. currency, recounted the money, and he and Lundberg returned to the hotel. Lundberg immediately set to work on the contract and other papers, which had to be typed before they could leave at 0530. It was impossible to make the necessary carbon copies on the lightweight English portable typewriter he had been supplied, and he had to type the contract several times.

During their first weeks in Java, Private Lundberg had found Colonel Robenson almost impossible to please and had come to

dislike him intensely. Robenson always made it clear there was a wide gulf between officers and enlisted personnel. He voiced sharp disapproval when Lieutenants Cook and Nestler took Lundberg with them to the movie one night. Henceforth their contacts with the enlisted man were to be limited to the affairs of their mission. However, Lundberg soon proved his worth, handling his assignments with accuracy and dispatch, and relations between the two had improved by the time they made ready to leave.

While Private Lundberg typed the contracts that night, Colonel Robenson finished his own paperwork about 0300, tried to sleep but got up twice to see how Lundberg was getting along, and even offered assistance. It was the first time Colonel Robenson had ever shown any concern, and Lundberg was surprised and pleased. He explained that no one could help him with the typing and indicated he felt certain he would finish by 0500, when they were to have breakfast. The colonel nodded and returned to his room.

When Private Lundberg finished typing the contracts, he called Colonel Robenson who in turn telephoned Captain Warrior. The skipper of the *Taiyuan* appeared at the hotel a short time later, Cook and Andrew were called as witnesses, and the four signed the documents. Before Captain Warrior left, Colonel Robenson told him that they were still trying to locate a radio operator and that there appeared a possibility the Air Corps unit at Malang might release one of their men. Robenson reminded Warrior that he and Captain de Lange should be able to finish loading the ship that day. It was generally understood that the *Taiyuan* was to depart Surabaya within forty-eight hours.

When Lieutenant Andrew had first contacted the Air Corps unit at Malang for a radio man, the harassed commander, concerned with getting his men out of Java, thought the request ridiculous. But Andrew persisted, adding that a $5,000 bonus would be paid to any Air Corps radio man willing to sign on for the voyage. The night Colonel Robenson was winding up their affairs, the Air Corps reported that Sergeant Wyatt Warrenfeltz had volunteered for the assignment. Only hours before Robenson left Surabaya, he contacted Mr. Chasse and made arrangements for Captain de Lange to pay the $5,000 bonus to Warrenfeltz if he joined the *Taiyuan*.

On that last hectic night in Surabaya, Moentari, the colonel's

room boy, worked late helping the officer pack. When the servant left, the colonel gave him a large tip. Robenson had made arrangements with Bagram's Travel Service for a driver familiar with the roads to Tjilatjap, and shortly after Moentari departed, the chauffeur, M. "Mike" Soewanda, reported to the colonel. When the two men had finished discussing the motor trip, Colonel Robenson asked the driver how much it cost a native to get married. About fifty cents, U.S., was the reply. Moentari normally received this amount per day.

When the Americans loaded the cars at about 0500 on the morning of 26 February, Moentari was not on duty, and a different room boy assisted the colonel. However, the two natives could have been brothers there was such a strong resemblance. Robenson was in a hurry and failed to notice it was not Moentari. When the cars had been loaded, the servant hovered about waiting for a tip. Colonel Robenson became angry and swore at him in English—which the native did not understand—complaining "I gave you enough money last night to buy fifty wives."

At 0530 that morning, after a hurried breakfast, the five Americans set out in the two 1941 Nashes for a wild ride across the island to Tjilatjap, the main port for the evacuation of Allied forces from Java. Colonel Robenson, with his new leather suitcase full of greenbacks, and Lieutenant Cook and the driver from the travel agency were in the first car; Lieutenants Andrew and Nestler, and Private Lundberg in the second vehicle.

Travel was difficult, for the narrow roads were crowded with native traffic enroute to market. The fast-moving automobiles struck numerous chickens along the way, and the Lieutenants' vehicle sideswiped a cart drawn by a carabao and later smashed into the rear of the colonel's automobile. Robenson was not amused.

When they reached Tjilatjap the afternoon of 26 February, the small, sleepy port was a scene of near chaos. Units of various Allied commands were being evacuated through this last open port, and the narrow streets were filled with soldiers and airmen of "all colors and many nationalities—Americans, English, Australian, Chinese, Dutch, Indian."

As directed, Colonel Robenson reported to Captain Roy C. Hudson, USN, who, after some delay, produced their orders for departure. The colonel was to leave for Australia that night in a Qantas float plane; the others were scheduled to sail on the Dutch cargo ship, *Abbekerk*.

While Robenson was at U.S. Naval Headquarters, he received a telephone call from Captain de Lange, reporting that the Air Corps sergeant-radio operator had signed on and that the *Taiyuan* was to depart with the evening tide. Her cargo included 1200 tons of rations, two million rounds of .30-caliber and 15,000 rounds of three-inch antiaircraft ammunition. Barring mishap or enemy action, the *Taiyuan* was scheduled to reach Cebu about 15 March. The master was the only person on board who knew their destination.

When Captain de Lange signed off, Colonel Robenson thanked him for his assistance and wished him good luck. Robenson considered de Lange a bold and fearless officer and could not help wondering what lay in store for him. It was as well he did not know. Captain de Lange, like thousands of other Allied officers and soldiers, was taken prisoner by the Japanese a short time later. He survived imprisonment but committed suicide in Malang, Java, in 1949.

Colonel Robenson then told Captain Hudson he wanted to present him with two nearly new 1941 Nash automobiles. With defenses crumbling and a major evacuation movement underway, the captain must have thought the colonel was joking. Robenson explained that he and his men were simply going to abandon the cars and that it would be better for the Navy to have them, even for only a few days. Captain Hudson reluctantly signed an informal receipt for the automobiles, and Colonel Robenson left.

Because of the crowded conditions and their heavy luggage, Robenson and his men found it difficult to thread their way to the wharf, where the *Abbekerk* was being loaded. The 12,000-ton freighter was high above the pier due to the tide, and a single stairway three feet wide led from the wharf to the main deck. Somewhere among the warehouses, there had formed a slow-moving line of soldiers and airmen, each carrying a barracks bag and various additional luggage. The line crept along the dock, up the stairs, and to the deck of the ship. At the other end it was lost among the warehouses. Although the loading was completely unorganized and many of the men were drunk or openly drinking, there was no fighting. They seemed content to have a place in the line—their last means of escape.

Colonel Robenson instructed the three officers and lone enlisted man to board the *Abberkerk*, with bag and baggage. Lundberg had a barracks bag, typewriter, a large briefcase of im-

portant records, and one other bag; Lieutenant Nestler had his personal gear plus two new army saddles brought to Java in the *Polk*. Though destined for the 26th Cavalry in the Philippines, the saddles had been left at Surabaya, and Nestler had appropriated two of them, one for the colonel and the other for himself.

Robenson placed Lieutenant Cook in charge and told all three of them to look out for Lundberg. The four men were not at all certain the colonel was jesting when, just before he left them, he said, "If and when you get to Australia, you are to contact me immediately through Headquarters at Melbourne." Then Colonel Robenson and the native driver headed back into town and were soon lost in the crowd.

Robenson returned to Navy Headquarters, gave the car keys to a surprised sailor and left both automobiles parked outside. When he reached the Qantas airlines office at the local hotel, he dismissed the native driver with a bonus for his services and a letter of identification. The airlines agent warned the colonel that his suitcase was too heavy—but okayed the bag when Robenson said it contained $250,000. The Colonel made no mention of the fact, but the bag also contained a bottle of scotch.

Late that night Colonel Robenson and eight or ten other passengers were driven to the wharf, where a small boat was waiting. The launch took them out into the bay, and they boarded a twin-engine Lockheed float plane. Shortly before dawn the motors were started, the transport skimmed across the still waters of the bay and lifted into the air. When it became light, Colonel Robenson noticed an Australian general in the seat across the aisle. He later learned he was Sir Gordon Bennett, the commanding general at Singapore, who had escaped after surrendering his troops to the Japanese.

At an altitude of 10,000 feet under a clear sky, the Qantas transport plane winged its way over the broad blue Indian Ocean, moving in the direction of Australia. An enemy reconnaissance aircraft was sighted shortly after noon, and the Qantas pilot altered course temporarily, but the Japanese made no attempt to intercept. That afternoon they landed at Broome, on the northwest coast of Australia. The primitive settlement reminded Robenson of a deserted gold-mining town in the American west. There were more than a dozen planes at the airfield and a number of seaplanes in the bay, because Broome was the main port of entry for evacuees streaming out of Java by air.

Robenson spent the night in an old, dilapidated hotel, and the

next morning—28 February—with the case of American currency, departed by air for Perth, Western Australia. It was well he continued south, for Broome was no longer safe. On 3 March, nine Zero fighter planes attacked the settlement, killing more than 50 persons—including many Dutch women and children just down from Java—and destroying 15 big flying boats, four four-engine planes, and three smaller aircraft.

While Colonel Robenson waited at Tjilatjap, Lieutenants Cook, Andrew, and Nestler, and Private Lundberg slowly made their way to the maindeck of the rusty, old Dutch freighter. The *Abbekerk* was tied up to the wharf with another ship, the *Kota Gedeh*, moored alongside. The latter vessel was embarking troops for India, and the soldiers, along with some RAF men, had to board the *Abbekerk* before they could reach their ship. Night came on and the loading continued under lights until around half past eight when the air raid alarm was sounded. It was impossible for the men to disembark from the two ships, so all lights were extinguished and the evacuees remained in place. But it was a dangerous situation, and the men had a horrible feeling of helplessness. Although no one sighted the plane, the men heard the engine of a single aircraft circling over the port. When the plane departed a short time later, loading was resumed, and soldiers were still boarding at daybreak. Even though the *Abbekerk* was becoming crowded, others waited to board the ship.

Sometime after 1800 that evening the *Abbekerk*, with some 1500 evacuees aboard, followed the *Kota Gedeh* and three other cargo ships out of the harbor. Though ordered to join the latter vessels, the 18-knot *Abbekerk* took a different course and headed due south for Australia. Alone and virtually unarmed, and with Japanese aircraft and enemy warships prowling the waters below Java, the *Abbekerk* stood little chance of ever reaching Australia.

Shortly before noon on 27 February—while *Abbekerk* was being loaded—enemy planes attacked the old aircraft tender *Langley* headed for Java and only some 75 miles from Tjilatjap, carrying 33 Army Air Corps pilots and 32 P-40 fighter aircraft. The nine twin-engine bombers scored five direct hits, and the *Langley* was abandoned a short time later. Her destroyer escorts, *Whipple* and *Edsall*, saved all but 16 of the crew and passengers. *Langley* was still afloat, but doomed. That afternoon, *Whipple* sank her a short distance south of Tjilatjap.

Fleeing south, *Whipple* and *Edsall* joined the oiler *Pecos* off Christmas Island, where by 0800 on 1 March, the *Langley* survivors were transferred to *Pecos*, which headed for Fremantle, while *Whipple* made for Cocos Island, and *Edsall*, carrying the army pilots and army enlisted men, headed for Tjilatjap. Shortly after midday, *Whipple* accidentally intercepted a *Pecos* transmission reporting she was under air attack and sinking. The destroyer reversed course and raced to the scene, but it was nearly 2000 that night before rescue operations began. *Whipple* picked up 232 men and delivered them to Fremantle; the rest perished.

Edsall apparently met her end that same afternoon. Nearing Tjilatjap, she encountered a powerful Japanese force operating south of Java, and the battleships *Hiei* and *Kirishima* finished her off. The Japanese picked up only five survivors from *Edsall*, and none of them survived prison camp.

The crowded conditions on the *Abbekerk* made it difficult for the men to sleep, and there soon developed a scarcity of food and water. Soldiers were posted at the spigots, and men guarded their canteens. With discipline totally lacking, troops and the ship's crew ignored blackout regulations and freely tossed trash and garbage over the side. Despite the unpleasant conditions, the next day dawned bright and clear and the evacuees were in a good mood. The *Abbekerk*, under full steam and leaving a broad, white wake, slid through the Indian Ocean; Australia—and safety—lay over the horizon.

At noon, however, their situation took a frightening turn: the announcement came over the ship's public address system that all three ships *Abbekerk* was to have joined had been sunk by enemy bombers. Japanese submarines were reported in the area, and the evacuees were ordered to act as lookouts. The men on board the Dutch freighter suddenly realized their chances of reaching Australia were not at all encouraging. Since the only gun the ship possessed would be useless against aircraft, the men immediately began improvising mounts for rifles and machine guns, even shot guns.

The quiet of that tense afternoon was shattered at 1630 when a plane came into view, and the alarm sounded. While the evacuees readied their weapons, Private Lundberg prepared to assist an Australian soldier with a .30-caliber machine gun. The enemy aircraft inspected *Abbekerk* from a distance, then swept in out of the sun in a strafing attack. Hurriedly aiming at the

incoming plane, Lundberg and his Aussie buddy trained their machine gun on the plane—and shot down the ship's radio antenna. Fortunately, the heavy small arms fire and the machine guns were more than the enemy pilot expected, so he quickly pulled out of range. Though the plane made three more passes, *Abbekerk* was not damaged. The aircraft disappeared over the horizon, but it was almost certain the Japanese now knew *Abberkerk*'s position.

The ship filled with fear, as the sun dropped over the horizon and evening brought a magnificent full moon, illuminating the whole sea. Blind hysteria and utter disorganization was everywhere. Two men tried to kill themselves. To add to their troubles, the weather turned rough and cold and men sleeping on the bare deck, with only a blanket, were soaked and chilled to the bone. A rumor that MacArthur had reoccupied the land around Manila meant nothing on the *Abbekerk*, where all anyone wanted was to get safely ashore.

Although Japanese cruisers, carriers, and battleships prowling below Java in late February and early March of 1942 destroyed more than 20 Allied vessels, the Dutch freighter *Abbekerk* made a miraculous escape and reached Fremantle on 5 March, unscathed.

The *Taiyuan* did not sail the evening of 26 February as planned, but with Sergeant Warrenfeltz, the new radio operator, and a full cargo on board, remained anchored in the roads. The following evening, Dutch Admiral Doorman led his combined fleet of five cruisers and nine destroyers out to strike an enemy force reported 90 miles north of Surabaya. In the Battle of the Java Sea, the Allied force met decisive defeat.

The Japanese sank the Dutch crusiers *De Ruyter* and *Java*, British destroyers *Electra* and *Jupiter*, and the Dutch destroyer *Kortenaer*. Within the next 36 hours, they also sank the USS *Houston* and HMAS *Perth* in the Battle of Sunda Strait; and the British cruiser *Exeter* and destroyer *Encounter*, and the USS *Pope*, in an action south of Borneo.

In Surabaya the following day, John Reid, the *Taiyuan*'s First Officer, learned that the captain had gone to Bandoeng for permission to sail. On 2 March with Captain Warrior still absent, the Harbor Command informed Reid that the Japanese had landed on Java. They ordered the *Taiyuan* destroyed, and when the First Mate objected, they told him to scuttle her, or they would do it for him. Sending the crew ashore, Reid, Warrenfeltz,

and the chief engineer set off the demolition charges. The three made for shore in the ship's dinghy while the *Taiyuan* and the cargo intended for the men on Bataan sank in the bay.

When Captain Warrior returned the following day, he did not seem surprised that the Dutch had ordered the *Taiyuan* destroyed. Within a short time, the ship's officers and most of her crew were captured by the Japanese. Reid's attempt to escape in a small boat was unsuccessful, and he was taken prisoner in late March. For those who survived, it was the beginning of nearly four years of imprisonment under the most dreadful conditions. But it ended happily for Reid; in August 1945, he learned that his wife and two small children had been repatriated in 1942 and were safe in England.

The arrival of Colonel John A. Robenson at Perth on 28 February, and of his four assistants on 5 March, brought to an end their valiant efforts to move supplies to Corregidor from the Netherlands East Indies. When viewed against the background of the awkward operations of the ABDA Command and the clear absence of sufficient means to halt the oncoming Japanese invasion, it is not surprising that their efforts went for naught. Caught in a disastrous tide of military reverses, Colonel Robenson and his men—dodging both bombs and bullets, battling red tape all along the way—had done everything within their power to aid the Philippine garrison. No man could ask more.

CHAPTER 8

ALL THE WAY TO GINGOOG BAY

On the afternoon of 13 February 1942—the day the *Florence D.* sailed from Surabaya—the SS *Coast Farmer* was hove to, about fifty miles south of the Moluccas in the Halmahara Sea.

She was painted a dull grey, showed no markings, flew no flags, and rode low in the water, for she was carrying a heavy cargo: 2500 tons of rations, 2000 rounds of 81mm mortar shells, 30,000 rounds of .50-caliber and 800,000 rounds of .30-caliber ammunition. Under the command of Captain John A. Mattson, the ship was attempting to run the Japanese blockade of the Philippine Islands.

Risky business—a slow unarmed freighter attempting to sneak through the blockade. It was a desperate gamble, with the odds favoring the enemy. But the effort had to be made, and Mattson and the *Coast Farmer* happened to be handy.

John Anton Mattson, a tall soft-spoken Swede, went to sea at the age of twelve and qualified for his master's papers at thirty. He got his first vessel three years later and took command of the *Coast Farmer* on 18 April 1937. The freighter, a single screw oil burner laid down in 1920, grossed 3300 tons and was 324 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 25 feet deep, and had a standard speed of ten knots. She was operated by the Coastwise Line in the Far East trade.

The ship had loaded in San Francisco in mid-November—rations for U.S. troops at Guam and in the Philippines. The ship-

ment for Guam also included a number of huge steel beams, 73 feet long, suitable for the construction of an ocean pier or a breakwater. Other cargo for the Philippines: a 12-ton gasoline engine, 75 tons of asphalt, practice bombs, bottled oxygen, and half a dozen parachutes. Some 150 tons of mail, letters and Christmas parcels for U.S. military personnel in the Far East, were also loaded.

Shortly before Captain Mattson and the *Coast Farmer* departed San Francisco, the company furnished him with $2500, a sum larger than usual, for advances to the crew when the ship reached Manila. He was also issued two .45-caliber revolvers and a single box of cartridges. Mattson's orders were to take the freighter to Hawaii where the ship would join convoy for the remainder of the voyage.

When Captain Mattson conferred with the Convoy Commander, Captain Norman Scott, USN, in Honolulu about a week later, he explained that he had important cargo for Guam. Scott said that the convoy's destination was Manila by way of the Torres Strait, and the *Coast Farmer* would be unable to call at Guam. When Mattson protested, Scott stated that there was no choice in the matter and that it appeared as though higher authorities, perhaps anticipating trouble with Japan, had already written off the island of Guam. In any event, he continued, the *Coast Farmer* must remain with the convoy.

On 30 November 1941, the *Farmer* left Honolulu and, out of sight of land, joined the group of ships known as the *Pensacola* convoy. The convoy headed for the Phoenix Islands, the first leg of the long voyage.

Eight days out, the *Pensacola* received word that the Japanese had struck Pearl Harbor. Since radio silence was in effect, the heavy cruiser spread the news by flag hoist. The message received by the *Coast Farmer* was accompanied by instructions to camouflage the ship. Crewmen went over the side in stages, and by evening the superstructure and the hull of the ship above the waterline, including the vessel's name and the large American flags on her sides, were covered with a dull grey paint. Captain Mattson surveyed the new wartime garb and was saddened by the sight.

While the crew hurriedly slapped paint on the freighter, the convoy was diverted to the Fiji Islands, while the War Department debated whether the convoy should continue to Manila or return to Hawaii.

On 9 December the U.S. Joint Board ordered Captain Scott and his convoy to return to Honolulu. The withdrawal of the Manila-bound vessels made clear the unstated decision to abandon the Philippines. While it was obvious that General MacArthur desperately needed the material on board the ships in the convoy, the War Department considered reinforcement of Hawaii even more urgent.

In Washington on the following morning, General Marshall discussed the decision to withdraw the convoy with the Secretary of War, saying he did not like to tell MacArthur that the convoy had had to be turned back.

Later in the day, the fate of the convoy was raised at a White House conference. President Roosevelt asked that the ships be allowed to continue to the Far East, and he referred the matter back to the Joint Board, which reversed its original decision and directed the convoy to continue to Brisbane, Australia. At this same meeting the Board decided that Hawaii could be reinforced from the mainland, and the members went on record favoring all possible aid to MacArthur.

Ten days later, on 22 December 1941, the *Pensacola* convoy reached Brisbane. From Brisbane it was hoped that the convoy, with its valuable cargo of men, aircraft, and ammunition, could be dispatched north to the Philippines. General MacArthur felt that the ships could proceed to Manila if given "reasonable naval and air protection." Unfortunately, the Navy, under extreme pressure from the enemy, had no ships or aircraft to spare.

The United States Army commandeered the *Coast Farmer* soon after she anchored in the Brisbane River. A marine commissary firm, Dalagata, was appointed ship's agent to take care of the *Farmer*'s requirements for food, fuel, operating funds, and other essentials. Several days later, Air Corps General Lewis H. Brereton called for the parachutes. Nearly 600 tons of cargo had to be unloaded before the six chutes could be removed. On New Year's morning the freighter was moved downstream to the Pile Light anchorage. For the crew the stay at Pile Light was a lark, for there was little work to be done and the weather was pleasant. But after waiting about two weeks, Captain Mattson sent Dalagata a telegram asking if they had been forgotten. The following day the ship was ordered back to the Dalagata pier, and most of her cargo was unloaded. But the Army was unwilling to accept the practice bombs or the mail. Captain Mattson pointed out that his orders were to discharge cargo, and this

naturally included bombs and mail. The Army finally relented and accepted the mail but refused the bombs, which stayed on the ship until she was sunk by a Japanese submarine in the Tasman Sea on 21 July 1942. The letters and parcels were placed in a warehouse tent at Brisbane, probably for the duration of the war. By that time many of the men for whom the gifts were intended no longer needed them.

Several days later, the Army told Captain Mattson they had a cargo for him but failed to mention its destination. A large consignment of ammunition and an even larger shipment of rations, much of it 50-pound sacks of flour, was loaded. Major George Dietz, an Air Corps officer, came aboard and conferred with the skipper. When the officer learned that the vessel was capable of only ten knots, he exclaimed, "You'll never make it!" He ordered the cargo transferred to the *Mormacsun*, a larger and faster vessel. Another week was spent transferring the ammunition and the rations, but despite orders from General Brereton, the skipper of the *Mormacsun* flatly refused to take his ship north.

The *Coast Farmer* had been at Brisbane nearly a month when the Army prepared to load another cargo into the ship. The second cargo included about 25 tons of onions, even though the ship had no refrigeration facilities. The weather was warm, the onions spoiled, and eventually had to be dumped overboard.

While the second cargo was being loaded, two .50-caliber machine guns were placed in position on the bow and the stern. The two heavy machine guns—hard to come by at that stage of the war—were rumored to have been removed from an aircraft, which had crashed or been shot down. The story was probably true, for Mattson and his men later discovered that the guns had missing parts, could not be fired, and were about as dangerous as a pair of broomsticks.

On 2 February 1942, Major General Julian F. Barnes, Commander of United States Army Forces in Australia, reported to the Adjutant General in Washington that the *Coast Farmer* had loaded 3000 tons of rations and was sailing immediately for Mindanao, where she would transship the cargo to smaller craft bound for Luzon.

The following morning Captain Mattson went to Army Headquarters for a conference with Major Dietz, who told Mattson the Army planned to send the *Coast Farmer* north, but failed to mention her destination. Captain Mattson wondered if Dietz

could mean the Philippines, but he asked no questions. The skipper reported, however, that the ship was nearly loaded and that he had a reliable crew. The major stated that since the forthcoming voyage involved certain risk, the War Department had authorized bonus compensation for officers and crew. The two men spent several hours drawing up the contract.

The terms of the agreement called for the delivery of important military cargo to an "advanced base," but the port of destination was not mentioned. The contract stated that participation in the voyage would entitle members of the ship's company to compensation equal to nine months' pay. It further stated that, in the event of capture, their pay was to continue until they regained their freedom; and a substantial payment would be made in the event of death resulting from enemy action. The two officers signed the documents, each retaining two copies. Major Dietz shook hands with the merchant officer and wished him a safe voyage. As he left Headquarters, Mattson again wondered about the "advanced base."

Late that afternoon an army corporal and 14 enlisted men boarded the *Coast Farmer* to man the machine guns. Captain Mattson was amused when the corporal proudly displayed his .45-caliber revolver, reporting it to be their only weapon. On the captain's orders, temporary quarters were made for the soldiers in Number 3 'tweendeck. A few hours later, two American sailors, a radioman and a signalman, were also assigned to the freighter. The vessel had its own radio operator; however, the U.S. Army provided a second one. The sailors were quartered in the ship's tiny hospital, but Captain Mattson began to wonder how many more men would be placed aboard. In the early evening the Torres Strait pilot, known only as Harry, joined to guide the freighter some 1400 miles through the Great Barrier Reef to Thursday Island.

Shortly after midnight, on the morning of 4 February 1942, under full blackout conditions and with lifeboats ready for launching, the *Coast Farmer* got underway. Although he still did not know the ship's destination, Captain Mattson was well supplied with charts and was confident—barring enemy interference —that he could navigate to any port in the South Pacific.

The ship's officers included: Johann W. Wilkie, first mate; James W. Hanson, second officer; and Henry L. Motes, third mate. Charles Ketterman was radio officer and George W. Smithers, chief engineer. The remainder of the crew: eight able

seamen, the boatswain, six stewards, five engineers, three oilers and three firemen.

The pilot knew the Great Barrier Reef well, and the voyage northward was made without difficulty. Five days out of Brisbane, the *Coast Farmer* anchored at Port Kennedy, Thursday Island. When the pilot left the ship, Captain Mattson sent word ashore requesting new sailing orders. Though the officer expected a launch at any time, he waited all day. By evening the weather had turned bad, the seas were kicking up, and a heavy rain was falling. At about 2200 a small boat drew alongside the vessel. Using a megaphone, the skipper yelled to the man in the boat, "Anything in writing?"

"Nothing," was the reply. "It just came over the wireless. You are to go to Gingoog Bay. Repeat Gingoog Bay."

Mattson had not the foggiest notion of its location but figured he could find the place on the charts. When he yelled an acknowledgement of the instructions, the man in the launch called, "Are you going out tonight?"

"At once."

Because a dangerous reef lay just outside the harbor, the Australian told Mattson that he would have the warning light turned on to help the *Coast Farmer* get underway. The small boat pulled away with a shouted "Good luck!"

Few of the ship's company were awake when the Master posted copies of the bonus agreement in the crew's mess shortly after midnight. But by morning the men knew that Gingoog, a small bay on the northern coast of Mindanao, was their new destination. Some had serious misgivings about this "Gingoog Bay" business, but most of the crew were confident that the skipper would get them in and out safely. The weather improved as the ship entered the Arafura Sea. At ten knots, she would steam approximately 250 miles every 24 hours.

On 12 February, as Japanese troops hammered at the gates of Singapore, the *Coast Farmer* cleared the Ceram Sea, between Ceram and the western tip of New Guinea. The danger of enemy interception had increased; they were within easy range of Japanese patrol planes at Menado, on the eastern tip of the Celebes, 300 miles to the northwest; Ambon, 150 miles south; and Halmahera, 100 miles north. The crew kept a sharp alert for suspicious craft, on the sea as well as in the air. High-flying Japanese aircraft sighted several times either failed to see the freighter or assumed it to be one of their own.

Finally, on 13 February, slowly, ever so slowly, the ship neared narrow Djailolo Strait. The transit—while passing through enemy controlled waters—would have to be made during the hours of darkness. The *Coast Farmer* would be within "spittin'" distance of the Japanese base on Halmahera.

For a full 12 hours—an eternity to the men on board—the ship drifted, waiting for dusk and, hopefully, a dark, cloudy night. Night finally came and they got underway at ten knots. Mattson banked on a combination of luck and skill to get them through the strait undetected. If not—well, no use borrowing trouble.

From the bridge, the captain and the first mate searched the night for any sign of the enemy. When they entered the strait at about midnight, every man felt the tension. The hours crept by as the ship plodded through the darkness. Some four hours later, they cleared the passage and joined the Philippine Sea. A feeling of relief raced through the ship. "Next landfall should be the mountains of Mindanao," the captain noted in the log.

The course now took the ship along the eastern coast of Mindanao, far out to sea, but within easy range of Japanese patrol planes based at Davao, on the southeastern coast. At one point they passed within 70 miles of the enemy air base—20 minutes by air!

On the bridge one night, Wilkie, the first mate, told the skipper he had a hunch they would not get out of the Philippines. He felt certain the Japanese would destroy or capture the ship. Mattson, admitting they might run into trouble, felt the South Pacific was a vast area and the Japanese couldn't be everywhere.

As the *Coast Farmer* steamed northward along the eastern shore of Mindanao, well out to sea, her crew caught infrequent glimpses of the mountains and the coastline. Ahead lay the Surigao Strait and beyond that narrow passage, Gingoog Bay. On the afternoon of 18 February, they approached Dinagat Island and the 30-mile-wide entrance to Surigao. That last leg of the voyage, 150 miles in length, through the strait to Gingoog presented serious risk. Discovery would be disaster, resistance would be futile, and capture would be certain.

Captain Mattson planned to run the strait at night, but he wanted more speed. Luckily, the night was dark, for the weather —as if by request—had turned bad. A heavy rain squall provided excellent cover. The chief engineer revved up the engine, and aided by a favorable current, the ship was soon making nearly 15 knots.

The freighter cleared the Surigao Strait six hours later and headed south by southwest, the most direct route to Gingoog. Mattson saw lights off the port bow and decided they were large fires on the beach. He wondered if Japanese soldiers were huddled about the flames, but hoped and prayed they were not.

On 19 February, 15 days out of Brisbane, the *Coast Farmer* cautiously nosed through the darkness into Gingoog Bay. They had sneaked through the blockade. Now to unload and head for home.

As the light grew stronger and the fog began lifting, officers on the bridge saw several figures climb into a motor launch at a small dock and head for the freighter. When about two hundred yards from the cargo ship, the pilot reversed course, and the motor launch returned to the dock. Captain Mattson ordered his guns manned when the boat approached a second time. Even at a distance, Mattson was confident the men were Americans, for two of the men in the boat were wearing World War I style helmets.

Once on board, they identified themselves as Colonel Ben-Hur Chastaine, U.S. Army Commander of the Agusan Sector; Major Gregory, Executive Officer, and Mr. C. E. Walter, Superintendent of the local Anakan Lumber Company. Chastaine said that rumors reported the *Coast Farmer* had been lost en route. Obviously glad to see the ship, the Colonel inquired about the cargo, especially rations and mortar shells.

"They are having a rough time up north," he said. "It's becoming more and more dangerous to send interisland vessels to Corregidor, and the situation is not getting any better."

After a hurried cup of coffee, the two army officers returned ashore. Walter piloted the *Coast Farmer* to a safe anchorage and directed Mattson to keep up steam so the ship could be run aground if hit by bombs and in danger of sinking. Following Walter's instructions, Captain Mattson ordered the chief engineer to keep the fires burning, but rejected the idea of losing his ship. She was anchored close inshore about halfway between the coastal villages of Anakan and Gingoog. In the early morning, the ship lay in the shadow of Mount Piglagahan, while a second mountain on the opposite side of the bay provided cover in the late afternoon. Japanese aircraft might spot the vessel, but the mountains on either side of the anchorage gave the best possible cover.

At about midmorning, Ketterman, the radio operator, told

Captain Mattson that he had heard a faint distress call from the *Don Isidro*. Though the skipper and his men did not know the vessel's location, it was clear that the *Don Isidro* was under attack and needed help.

Because of the danger of enemy air attack, no effort was made to discharge cargo until nightfall. Since small interisland vessels would have to come alongside the *Coast Farmer* for cargo, protective fenders were needed. Fortunately, a small sawmill, ironically enough, owned and operated by Japanese nationals, was located on shore within sight of the cargo carrier. Captain Mattson, with several of his men, visited the mill. Despite loud protests by the owners, the Americans borrowed a number of large logs suitable for protecting the hull of their ship. The skipper assured the Japanese that he would return the logs when he was finished with them, and he did.

When darkness fell, the small interisland cargo carriers *Lepus* and *Elcano* moored alongside, and Filipino laborers commenced transferring rations and ammunition. Japanese aircraft seldom operated at night, so they worked under floodlights. Walter's laborers handled the cargo as quickly as conditions would permit; however, rough water in the bay, tossing the smaller craft about, greatly hindered the operation. Work was ended at daybreak, and the *Lepus* and the *Elcano* departed for a less conspicuous anchorage.

Since Mattson and Walter decided against further attempts to remove cargo while anchored, the ship docked at Anakan the following night, and the two smaller ships moored alongside. Although the Filipinos had to carry goods from one ship to the other, the transfer went smoother and faster than it had that first night. Rations, mortar shells, and medicines were placed in the interisland ships; the small arms ammunition was unloaded and stored at Anakan. Shortly before dawn, work was halted and all three ships returned to their daylight anchorages. As cargo was being loaded into the *Lepus* one evening, her Filipino skipper showed Captain Mattson the scars and bullet holes made by the machinegun fire of Japanese planes strafing them on the way south from Corregidor. The Filipino considered himself lucky to have gotten off with so little damage, for other interisland carriers had been sunk or captured.

A few days after the *Coast Farmer* arrived at Gingoog Bay, Colonel Chastaine invited Captain Mattson to accompany him to Army Headquarters at Del Monte airfield, where Brigadier

General William F. Sharp, Commander of the Visayan-Mindanao Force had established his headquarters. Del Monte was the most important American airfield in the southern islands, but to call it an airbase was stretching the truth, for it was little more than a natural meadow on one of the Del Monte Canning Company's pineapple plantations. At infrequent intervals during the first four months of 1942, four-engine bombers made long hazardous flights from Australia, landing at Del Monte after dark with cargoes of critical medical supplies for transshipment north to Bataan and Corregidor in old, decrepit light planes.

They made the trip in a Dodge sedan, with a Filipino soldier at the wheel. Mattson soon began to wonder if they would reach Del Monte, for the driver seemed under the impression that he was flying a plane not yet off the ground. At one place a bridge was out, so they crossed the stream on a raft—several native boats lashed together and planked over to form a crude ferry pulled across by natives using long ropes.

Headquarters for the Visayan-Mindanao Force was located in a large, comfortable house formerly occupied by the Del Monte plantation manager. Part of the headquarters was located in two large dugouts. Logs had been placed across the wide trenches to form a roof, and dirt had been spread over the top. As Mattson watched, Filipino soldiers were busy planting pineapple plants to camouflage the area. Colonel Chastaine introduced his guest to General Sharp, who warmly congratulated Mattson on his successful voyage through the blockade, expressing his official and personal gratitude. He assured Mattson that the food, medicines, and ammunition brought by the *Coast Farmer* fulfilled a desperate need on Bataan. After chatting a few minutes, General Sharp invited Mattson to have lunch with him and his staff—a small glass of wine and a serving of pineapple. During the meal other officers expressed their gratitude to the skipper for attempting the hazardous voyage. Captain Mattson said that he and his men had been very lucky on the incoming voyage, and he hoped that their good luck would continue on the run back.

The ride back to Anakan proved even more exciting than the morning drive. The driver raced down the road, sped through small native villages, and scattered chickens and dogs along the way. The car struck several chickens and one dog. The driver prepared to stop after he hit the dog, but the colonel ordered him to keep going.

A short time later, Chastaine gazed skyward, then yelled for

the driver to stop. Mattson jumped from the car as soon as it came to a halt. When he hurriedly joined Colonel Chastaine in the cover of some trees, they observed several twin-engine enemy bombers overhead. Though the aircraft continued on course, the three men waited about ten minutes before continuing on to Gingoog.

In five nights of feverish activity, they discharged the cargo. Very early on 24 February 1942, the *Elcano* and *Lepus*, with rations, medical goods, and ammunition aboard, stood out of Gingoog Bay and headed for Corregidor.

Before the war, in the fall of 1941, on the *Coast Farmer*'s first trip to the Far East, cargo had been discharged at Cebu City, several hundred miles north of Mindanao. There, Captain Mattson had learned that the freighter *Admiral Williams*, out of Hong Kong with a heavy cargo of tin and rubber, had gone on a reef in the Celebes Sea. Sometime later the vessel was refloated and towed to Cebu where its cargo was removed. When the Japanese invaded the Philippines, it was imperative that the valuable cargo of tin and rubber be kept out of their hands.

Prior to the arrival of the *Coast Farmer* at Gingoog, the tin was transported to Cagayan, Mindanao, a short distance west of Anakan. Colonel Chastaine was anxious to get rid of the tin, and Captain Mattson, needing ballast for his empty ship, offered to transport it to Australia. The night after the interisland vessels departed Anakan, the *Coast Farmer* returned to the dock and the Filipino stevedores began loading the shipment of tin, valued at nearly $150,000. With the last of the ingots on board, the opinion of the entire crew was, "Now, let's get the hell out of here!"

Captain Mattson, equally anxious to get underway, planned to sail late in the afternoon and run the Surigao Strait after dark. General Sharp had promised to provide an escort vessel, but nothing came of it and Mattson was not surprised.

Colonel Chastaine and his civilian assistant, C. E. Walter, boarded the vessel shortly before sailing time. When the men shook hands with Captain Mattson, Walter had a "sort of lonesome feeling," and the colonel felt uneasy about the ship's trip back to Australia.

As they got underway, Mattson glanced back at Chastaine and Walter and their men on the dock one last time, then turned his gaze toward the horizon. It was a warm day with not a cloud in sight, and the coast of Mindanao, off to the starboard, looked

lush and green. Mattson thought it a beautiful day, but he longed for sunset and darkness. It couldn't come too soon, for the freighter made a perfect target in the bright sunlight.

Several hours later, running at top speed, they entered the Surigao Strait. Mattson and his lookouts scanned the sea for enemy patrol vessels or mines. There was no moon, and they plowed through the luminous sea. Before leaving Mindanao, the skipper had heard a rumor of a Japanese cruiser prowling the waters about the strait—the last thing in the world he needed. Shortly before dawn, the *Coast Farmer* cleared the passage, and when 40 miles off the coast, altered course due south.

As they steamed south the next few days under scattered clouds and a bright sun and the Philippine Islands dropped behind, the men began to relax. Three nights later, under a bright moon, the blacked-out cargo ship slid through the Djailolo passage off Halmahera and entered the Ceram Sea. Captain Mattson considered this perhaps the last area of real danger—yet the *Don Isidro* and the *Florence D.* had met disaster almost within sight of Australia.

About 0200 the following morning, when some 50 miles off Ceram Island, Mattson was wakened by Second Mate Hanson.

"Skipper, there's a ship approaching on the starboard bow."

They could see the shadowy bulk of a ship outlined against the moon low in the horizon. The darkened vessel was approaching on a parallel course.

"Probably the *Mormacsun* on her way north," said Mattson. If neither vessel altered course, they would pass at a distance of three to four miles, starboard side to.

Mattson ordered Hanson to signal with the blinker light, but suddenly had second thoughts, and stopped Hanson before he made a signal—the unidentified ship might not be the *Mormascun*. In a matter of minutes the two vessels were abeam, then the distance between them increased, and soon the ship was lost in the darkness. Captain Mattson later learned that no other American vessel was in the area at that time. The unidentified ship was probably a Japanese transport on her way north. Her officers either failed to see the *Coast Farmer*, or they saw it and felt it wise to do as Mattson did, and continue on their way.

Twenty-four hours later, a second unidentified vessel was spotted. Again Mattson watched the vessel as it drew near, then continued on course. This time, however, the passing ship was

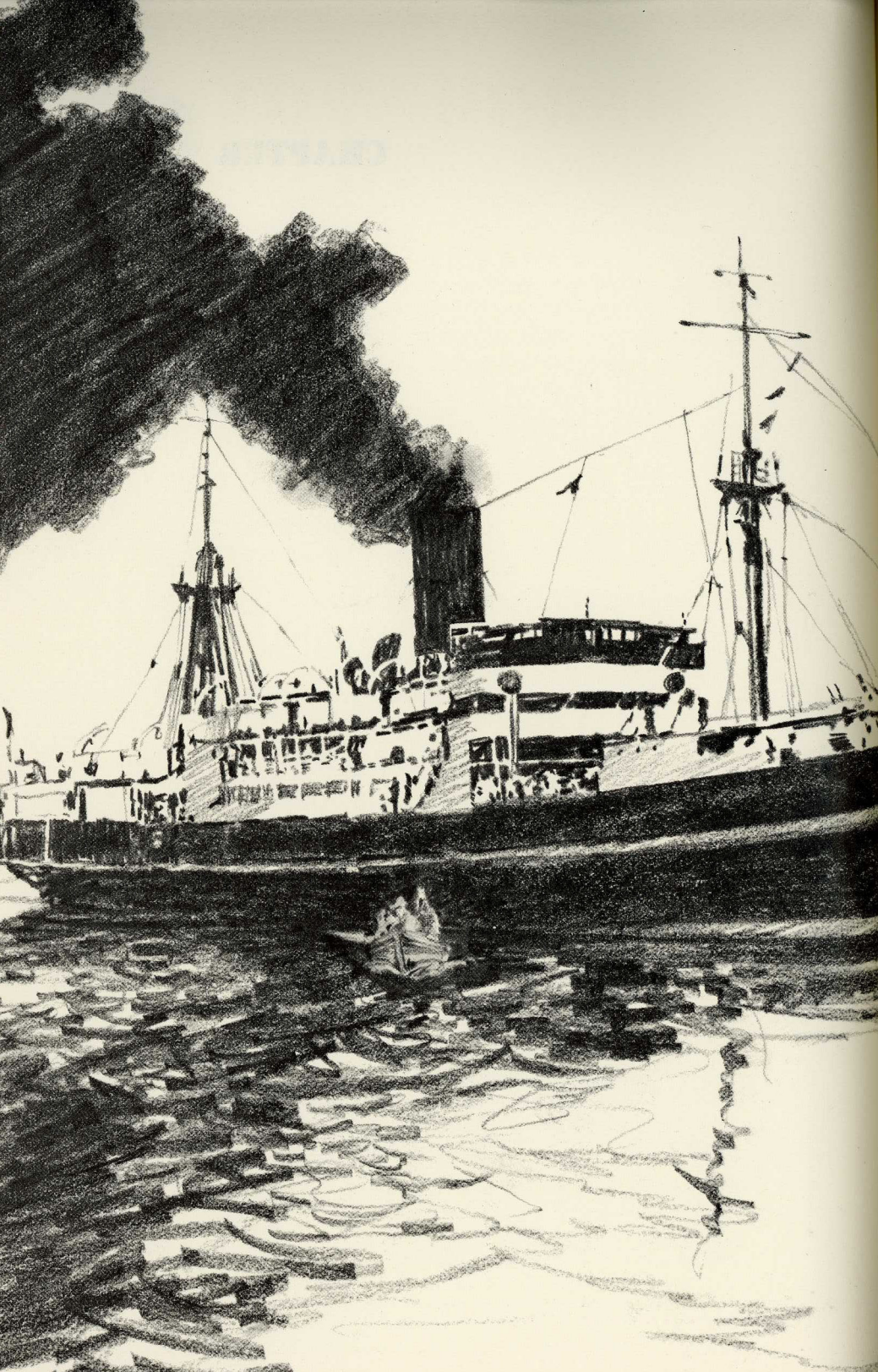
even further away, and there was less likelihood of making contact.

On 16 March, they anchored at Port Kennedy, Thursday Island. Port authorities told Captain Mattson that the area west of Thursday, through which he had just sailed, was full of Japanese mines. They also reported that there were no pilots on hand to guide the *Farmer* through the Great Barrier Reef, so Mattson decided to go south without a pilot. With a light load, the vessel would ride high in the water, lessening the danger of going on a reef. The skipper returned to his ship, and armed with an up-to-date set of charts, they headed out for the last leg of the voyage. They were still in dangerous waters, but the tension they had experienced up north was lessened.

On Thursday, 13 March 1942, after spending 43 days in waters largely controlled by the enemy and delivering military cargo to U.S. forces in the Philippine Islands, the *Coast Farmer* sailed up the river to Brisbane and tied up at the Dalagata pier. That night Major Dietz and his staff gave a celebration dinner for Captain Mattson and the crew of the *Coast Farmer*. Each officer and man received nine months' salary for the voyage, along with a personal letter of commendation from General Brett, USAFIA Commander. For Mattson the celebration had a very different meaning—it was his wedding anniversary. His safe return from this hazardous assignment was the real anniversary gift.

For General MacArthur and his men on Bataan and Corregidor, the arrival of the *Coast Farmer* in Mindanao provided a much-needed boost in morale. The voyage made by the lone cargo ship, and the delivery of desperately needed rations, ammunition, and medicines at Anakan proved that the enemy blockade could be pierced. But Gingoog Bay lay 600 miles from Corregidor. Though Captain Mattson and his crew had, despite heavy hazards, delivered the goods—there still remained the even riskier business of transporting it to the last destination, Corregidor.

CHAPTER 9



FROM SYDNEY TO CEBU

By early February 1942, Australia-based efforts to supply the MacArthur command assumed a new dimension when a total of seven vessels, at various stages of loading, were slated to sail northward into Philippine waters. Prior to that time, the *Coast Farmer* had been eminently successful in piercing the enemy blockade, but both the *Don Isidro* and the *Florence D.* met their doom a short distance off Darwin. Use of a third vessel, the *Mormacsun*, was ruled out when authorities in Washington decided she was too valuable to risk sending into the N.E.I.

Following that decision, the *Mormacsun* was ordered from Brisbane to Perth with rations and ammunition. The ship arrived in Western Australia on 11 February and began moving 2400 tons of cargo to the *Hanyang* and 2900 tons to the *Yochow*, two Chinese vessels under British contract. Though the British Navy delayed release of the ships until the Australian Government assumed responsibility, both were ordered to deliver their cargoes in the Philippine Islands. The ships sailed on 17 February and were approaching the Timor Sea at the time of the Japanese attack at Darwin. When this news came over the air, both crews refused to continue northward. The ships put in at Darwin, unloaded cargoes, and were ordered to Brisbane.

But it fell to two other ships, the *Dona Nati*, a fast Philippine cargo carrier, and the *Anhui*, another vessel formerly used along

the China coast, to play the crucial role in the Philippine relief effort.

On 28 January 1942, Colonel Stephen J. Chamberlin, USAFIA Chief of Staff, instructed Colonel Alexander Johnson, Base Commander at Brisbane, to charter the 5500-ton *Dona Nati*, then in Sydney, for dispatch to the Bataan peninsula for the relief of the Philippine garrison. She was a 15-knot ship bought in Italy in 1939. Arrangements were made to obtain balanced rations from the Australian Army, part to be loaded at Sydney and Melbourne, the remainder at Brisbane, while the U.S. Army would furnish ammunition.

Colonel Johnson hurried to Sydney and conferred with Captain Ramon Pons, master of the *Dona Nati.* Officers and crew, all Filipinos with wives and families in the islands, agreed to undertake the hazardous assignment. While foodstuffs were being loaded, Colonel Johnson and Captain Pons completed the Articles of Agreement.

Ship's company would receive compensation of four months' pay for attempting delivery even though it might fail because of enemy action.

In addition, the agreement stated that the United States would pay a bonus . . . "of nine months' wages to each officer and member of the crew of the *Dona Nati* for the successful accomplishment of their mission . . ." The agreement further stipulated that a payment equivalent to six months' pay would be paid to the dependents of each officer or member of the crew in the event of loss of life or permanent disability as a result of enemy action.

Since the captain's regular pay was $650 per month and that of the chief engineer $550, they would be entitled to $2600 and $2200 respectively for attempting the mission; and an additional bonus of $5850 and $4950 if the voyage were made successfully. In like manner an ordinary sailor earning $50 per month would net $650, $200 compensation and $450 bonus, if the vessel reached its destination.

On 30 January, the day that the Articles of Agreement were completed, General Barnes, USAFIA Commander, radioed the Adjutant General in Washington that arrangements had been made to charter *Dona Nati*, and that the ship was being loaded with food and ammunition for the relief of MacArthur.

After loading foodstuffs at Sydney, the *Dona Nati* sailed to Melbourne for additional rations and 5000 rifle grenades, then headed for Brisbane. On 11 February 1942, while the vessel was

en route to Brisbane, Colonel Chamberlin provided Colonel Johnson with additional instructions concerning the Philippine-bound freighter. During an estimated 72-hour stay at Brisbane, the *Dona Nati* would load more rations and ammunition, and supplies for the Signal, Medical, and Engineer Corps. Chamberlin also directed that part of the latter supplies be placed on the *Anhui* should the *Dona Nati* fail to reach her destination.

Colonel Chamberlin's communications set forth an important change in plans. In accordance with instructions from General MacArthur, the direct voyage to Bataan was cancelled; instead the *Dona Nati* was to proceed to Cebu, island of Cebu, in the central Philippines. Routing instructions, supplied by the U.S. Navy, and a schedule of identification signals to be used by the blockade runner were to be delivered to the master of the *Dona Nati* by Colonel Johnson himself. In a similar manner, an officer-courier from USAFIA Headquarters in Melbourne would give to Captain Pons a secret cipher for use on the voyage.

While the ship loaded at Brisbane, four .50-caliber U.S. weapons and two .303-caliber Australian guns were mounted at vantage points on the bridge, bow, and stern, and an American gun crew of six men was assigned.

When the *Dona Nati* stood out to sea on 18 February 1942, she carried 600 tons of tinned meat products, 600 tons of flour, 600 tons of canned vegetables, 400 tons of rice, 250 tons of biscuits, 200 tons of canned fruit, 100 tons of coffee, 50 tons of jam and 25 tons of peanut butter. She also carried a million and a half rounds of .30-caliber shells, 100,000 rounds of .50-caliber shells, 4000 rounds of 81mm mortar shells, and 5000 special rifle grenades.

The skipper, Ramon Pons, went to sea at age 15, obtained his master's papers ten years later, and took command of the *Dona Nati* in 1940. When the vessel departed Brisbane in February 1942, Juan Goitia was First Officer, Nestor Torre Second Mate, Ismael Salih Third Officer, and Terso Alvarez Chief Engineer. The ship also carried five other officers and 35 crewmen, plus the six-man U.S. Army gun crew.

Routing instructions took the ship wide around New Guinea through the Japanese Mandated Islands, a route surely as dangerous as the one through the Indies taken by the *Coast Farmer*. Prior to leaving Brisbane, Captain Pons discussed the projected voyage with a U.S. Navy officer, who considered she had one

chance in five of making it to the Philippines and back to Australia.

On 22 February, when the vessel was approximately 400 miles east of New Caledonia, course was changed and the *Dona Nati* headed northwest, steaming between the New Hebrides and the Fiji Islands. She then passed east of the Santa Cruz Islands, moving northwest toward the Japanese-held Caroline Islands.

At a point some 400 miles northeast of Bougainville Island in the Solomons, the ship again changed course and the *Dona Nati* headed westward. The first of March found the freighter moving along a track well to the south of, but nearly equidistant between, Palau and the Carolines. Though several aircraft were sighted in the distance, they made no attempt to interfere with the Philippine vessel, and Captain Pons took evasive action whenever the lookouts reported any sign of another vessel. Aside from brief cover provided by intermittent rain squalls, the weather was good, making it a period of extreme danger for the lone blockade runner. For four days and four nights the *Dona Nati* steamed westward at 15 knots within range of enemy warships, patrol bombers, and submarines operating from numerous bases at Palau and in the Carolines.

Mindanao came into view on 4 March, and the ship swung north toward Surigao Strait, between Leyte and Mindanao. Once the Captain changed course to avoid meeting two ships. Finally, shortly after noon on 6 March 1942, the *Dona Nati* tied up at Cebu City.

Lieutenant Colonel John D. Cook, U.S. Army Port Commander; Major Cornelius Z. Byrd, Assistant Superintendent of the Army Transport Service; and Lieutenant Thomas Jurika, Quartermaster Officer, welcomed Captain Pons and his men. Since the skipper and the entire ship's company were uneasy and anxious to get underway, unloading operations were started almost immediately.

Though originally designated a Quartermaster Depot for supplying the Visayan-Mindanao Force, Cebu had become the main port of entry for ships coming north from Australia. Important cargoes received at Cebu, which possessed adequate unloading facilities, were to be sent north in small, fast interisland vessels operating by night—a weak, vulnerable link in the tenuous supply line stretching nearly 4000 miles from Australia to the Bataan peninsula.

A few days before the *Dona Nati* called at Cebu, a group of

Americans and Englishmen, most of them writers and newspaper reporters, had arrived from Corregidor in the *Princesa De Cebu*, a small interisland vessel. Among those at Cebu awaiting the arrival of an ocean-going cargo ship were Melville Jacoby, of *Time* Magazine, and his wife; Clark Lee, of the Associated Press; Charles van Landingham; and Lew Carson, of Shanghai. The Jacobys, recently married in the Philippines, and the other three stayed at the comfortable Liloan Beach Club, fourteen miles north of Cebu. After the extremely bad conditions on Bataan and Corregidor, life at Cebu, cocktails and good food, was a delight; yet all were anxious to get out of the Philippines. Because Liloan Bay provided a splendid area for an enemy landing, each night they took turns standing watch.

Carson, Jacoby, and Lee, under no illusion as to the risks involved, figured they stood about one chance in a hundred of reaching Australia—assuming a blockade runner could reach Cebu. When they spotted the *Dona Nati* at the dock, Lew Carson cheerfully announced, "That's old one hundred to one." Yet they were encouraged when one of the soldier-gunners said they had a quiet trip up, and they made plans to leave with her.

While cargo was hurriedly unloaded from the *Dona Nati*, a second blockade runner, the *Anhui*, with 2600 tons of foodstuffs, stores, ammunition, and three P-40s was stealing north through the Indies. Built in Hong Kong in 1925, the coal-burning 3500-ton *Anhui* was 358 feet long, with a 49-foot beam, and 21-foot draft. Operating along the China coast before the war, the vessel had accommodations for 42 cabin-class passengers, 1750 in steerage.

Under the command of Captain Louis Evans, the vessel had departed Brisbane 22 February and dropped her pilot at Thursday Island a week later. Making 10 knots, she crossed the Arafura Sea, slid north of the island of Ceram, and made for the narrow passage off Halmahera. Early on the morning of 5 March, the funnel and mast of a Japanese warship was sighted to the eastward. Captain Evans immediately made an evasive course change to the west for about an hour. That night *Anhui* steamed through the strait and entered the Philippine Sea.

This was not the first such trip for *Anhui*. Following the attack at Manila on 10 December 1941, the vessel ran south from the Philippines, leaving behind nearly 600 British evacuees. Following the ship's arrival at Sydney the day before Christmas, her

Chinese engine room gang went on strike and the vessel remained motionless for nearly six weeks.

When the U.S. Army approached Captain Evans with the proposal that he attempt to deliver cargo at Cebu, he and his officers reluctantly agreed to tackle the assignment. The Chief Officer was D. McG. Holmes, and the Second Mates were Archibald Roddis and a former commander in the Czarist navy with a name no one could remember. The other three engineers were English, Scotch, and Chinese. In the hope that his wife and small son, left at Manila, had somehow gotten south to Cebu, Hamish MacDonald eagerly signed on as an extra chief engineer.

As in the case of the *Dona Nati*, officers and crew of the *Anhui* were to be paid four months' wages for attempting the voyage and a bonus equal to nine months' pay for successful delivery of cargo at its destination. Insurance coverage amounting to six months' salary was provided each member of the ship's company. For protection against air attack, the vessel was to be provided with six .50-caliber Colt-Browning machine guns and an eight-man gun crew. Part of the cargo was taken aboard at Sydney, the remainder was loaded at Brisbane.

On 13 February, the day before the ship left for Brisbane, the Chinese stokers finally agreed to sign on for the voyage. In Brisbane it took nearly a week to load additional foodstuffs, ammunition, and sundry supplies, and to mount six machine guns. On Saturday, 22 February 1942, the ship got underway and headed northward. Her cargo included 2,500,000 rounds of .30-caliber ammunition, 6000 rounds of 81mm mortar ammunition, medical, signal and engineer supplies, about 450 tons of food, including one ton of pepper, and a shipment of propaganda leaflets specifically requested by General MacArthur.

By early evening of 9 March, the ship was running the Surigao Strait. Archibald Roddis, the Second Mate, who had just come off watch, and Hamish MacDonald were on the bridge around midnight, when the vessel entered the Canigao channel between Bohol and Leyte Islands. In a passing remark, MacDonald wondered what would happen to them if the ship went on the beach. Roddis ignored the question. As the vessel steamed on into the night, the two men talked awhile longer, then turned in.

Not more than half an hour later, the *Anhui* shuddered from bow to stern and, with a dull grinding noise, lurched over one reef and ran aground on another. Captain Evans and his men, using every pound of steam in the boiler, labored to free the

vessel, but she stuck hard and fast. Daylight brought an outlook anything but encouraging.

Although China Navigation Company ships seldom carried a motor launch, by a stroke of great good fortune, a small boat with an outboard motor had been deck-loaded at Sydney. Since it was imperative that the ship maintain radio silence, the motorboat proved a godsend. Captain Evans ordered Roddis and the third engineer, a cheerful young Scotsman named Pollock, to take the boat to Cebu, 50 miles distant, for help.

The two officers, accompanied by two Chinese crewmen, loaded a few provisions into the launch and got underway. Each officer carried a .38-caliber revolver. Powered by a Chapman "Pup" six-horsepower motor, the boat bounced westward close inshore along the northern coast of Bohol. Though hindered by the lack of adequate charts, Roddis was confident they could reach Cebu before dark.

Meanwhile the situation at Cebu City had taken an ominous turn. Shortly after 0400 that morning, Colonel Byrd had sent word for the Jacobys and their companions at the Liloan Beach Club to return to Cebu at once. When they reached his apartment at about daybreak, he told them that the *Dona Nati* would leave earlier than originally planned, and Byrd wanted them to stay close to his place.

Mid-morning brought alarming news. A Japanese destroyer was coming up the south coast headed for Cebu, and the *Dona Nati* must get underway immediately. Lee and the Jacobys could not make up their minds. The *Dona Nati* might be their last chance to get out of the Philippines. Yet the ship could never outrun a destroyer. Still undecided, they hurried to the docks and went aboard as the last of the cargo was being unloaded at top speed. A naval officer Clark Lee had known on Corregidor told the newsman he would be a "damn fool" to go out with the *Dona Nati.* While the crew was battening down the hatches, Lee and the others put their luggage in the cabins. They decided to take the chance.

When Lee returned to the deck, Colonel Byrd was arguing with Captain Pons on the bridge. The captain did not want to sail without routing instructions from Australia.

"Where are my orders?" he yelled. "I will not sail without my orders."

"You already have orders," Byrd shouted in reply.

"Orders, Bah! These are not orders."

Captain Pons had good reason for being upset, but Colonel Byrd had received no routing instructions and the approach of the enemy destroyer meant the port was no longer safe for the *Dona Nati.* Yet Pons realized only too well that, without clearance from USAFIA in Australia, a U.S. submarine might yet kill them.

There was no time for delay. The lines were cast off and the *Dona Nati* backed clear of the dock. But the wind caught the empty ship broadside, making it difficult to swing the bow. Captain Pons finally dropped the anchor and used it to swing the ship about, heading for the north channel. Coastal lookouts reported that the Japanese destroyer should reach Cebu at about noon—and it was 1130 by the time the *Dona Nati,* moving at top speed, steamed north out of the harbor.

Shortly after 1200, U.S. Army officers at Cebu saw the Japanese destroyer entering the south channel as the *Dona Nati,* seven miles distant, steamed up the north channel. Luckily, the 10-mile-long strait between Mactan and Cebu Islands, both narrow and crooked, made it impossible for the enemy to sight the fleeing freighter.

While the *Dona Nati* hurried out the north entrance, hidden by 6-mile-wide Mactan Island, the enemy destroyer commenced shelling the Cebu waterfront area from the south channel. In a matter of minutes the gunboat sank the interisland vessels *Luzon* and *Kanlaon,* and damaged several others. By the time the destroyer withdrew and swung around Mactan, the *Dona Nati,* about fifteen miles away, had disappeared over the horizon above the Bohol shoals.

While the *Dona Nati* pounded across the inland sea, Clark Lee and Mel Jacoby made plans to abandon ship if she were discovered and shelled by the destroyer. Though Jacoby, his wife, and their three companions had a quick noonday meal, they spent most of the time on deck, anxiously peering across the waters to the south. At about 1445, as the freighter moved eastward along the far north coast of Bohol, the radio station at Cebu, returning to the air, announced that an enemy destroyer had shelled the dock area at Cebu for 15 minutes before speeding southeast back down the coast. But the announcer was in error. Following the shelling of Cebu, the destroyer moved north along Mactan Island and sank several more coasters in Liloan Bay.

While frantic activity took place at Cebu, as *Dona Nati* hur-

riedly got underway, the motorboat from the stranded *Anhui* carrying Roddis, Pollock, and the two Chinese crewmen, continued along the northern coast of Bohol headed for help at Cebu. Unaware of the presence of either the enemy destroyer or the *Dona Nati*, the second mate swung around the island across the open water toward Mactan and the south entrance to Cebu harbor. By mid-afternoon, long after both *Dona Nati* and the Japanese destroyer had left the area, the small craft entered the harbor at Cebu and tied up at the wharf.

Roddis and Pollock located Colonel Byrd, and informed him of the *Anhui*'s predicament. Byrd told the two merchant officers that the grounding, while dangerous, might have saved the vessel from destruction at Cebu. Had the *Anhui* arrived as originally scheduled, the ship would either have been caught by the enemy destroyer or, like the *Dona Nati*, been forced to run for her life.

Colonel Byrd and his men made preparations to assist the stranded *Anhui*; however, since most of the ships in the harbor had been damaged or sunk, it was late that night before Lieutenant Jurika, in command of a large launch with Roddis and Pollock on board, was ready to depart. The slow-moving tug, pulling a single barge, proceeded up the north channel and headed east toward Leyte and the Canigao reef. The night was so pleasant that Roddis slept on deck.

Following her narrow escape from Cebu on the 9th, the *Dona Nati* continued eastward at thirteen and a half knots, until her bridge watch sighted a camouflaged ship apparently at anchor close inshore at Bohol Island. When Captain Pons, studying the vessel through his binoculars, ordered the engines stopped, Clark Lee hurried to the bridge. There was no reason to believe that another Allied ship was in the area, and Pons and his officers suspected that the ship might be an enemy submarine tender.

The skipper observed the vessel a bit longer then announced, "Whatever it is, it has run aground between Bohol and Leyte. The channel there is only a few hundred feet wide."

Captain Pons, certain that the grounded ship was Japanese, decided to outfox them. He signalled full speed ahead and swung his ship to the northeast, as if he were going through the San Bernadino Strait between Luzon and Samar. But at nightfall the ship anchored off the tiny coastal village of Inopacan, and Pons sent one of his officers ashore to learn the identity of the stranded vessel.

Within the hour, the young Filipino officer returned to *Dona Nati* with welcome news, "That is one of our ships, the British freighter *Anhui* which came from Darwin with a cargo like ours. It has been aground since yesterday."

Captain Pons may have still been suspicious. In any event *Dona Nati* remained at anchor nearly 48 hours, no more than twenty miles from the stranded *Anhui.*

When the launch from Cebu reached *Anhui* at 1530, Tuesday, 10 March, her crew and Jurika's men began transferring cargo to the barge. First the three crated P-40 fighter planes were unloaded and hidden in the mangrove swamps along the Bohol coast. Clearing the hatches allowed cases of rations and ammunition to be brought topside and placed in the lighter.

Two days later, unloading operations were still underway when the *Dona Nati* approached from the north. Lieutenant Jurika assured Captain Evans that it was a friendly vessel. When the big freighter drew abreast the stranded ship, Jurika went aboard and asked Captain Pons to tow the *Anhui* off the reef. Though the Filipino merchant officer agreed to lend a hand, the two men decided to wait until the next morning for the attempt, and the *Dona Nati* dropped anchor.

Early the next morning, however, Jurika returned to the *Dona Nati* with word that additional vessels and barges were coming from Cebu. Since this would allow the removal of enough cargo to easily refloat the *Anhui*, the *Dona Nati* was free to go on her way.

Reporting that he had only about 30 rounds of ammunition for each of his machine guns, Captain Pons appealed to Lieutenant Jurika for an additional supply. The *Dona Nati* had left Cebu before the skipper had had time to load more .50-caliber shells. Jurika obtained two cases, about a thousand rounds, from the *Anhui*, and Pons was ready to go.

As Captain Pons gave orders to hoist anchor and get underway, a native banca came alongside, and an American naval officer named Green came on deck. A former businessman in Manila, Green had been at Cebu when the *Dona Nati* made her hasty departure. Aware that there had been no time to obtain routing instructions from Australia, the naval officer had notified Corregidor that the outbound blockade runner would return the same way it had come. When Corregidor relayed this message to Australia, the U.S. Navy could alert its units as to the route the friendly vessel would follow. Green's action could save the *Dona*

Nati from being attacked by Allied submarines and patrol aircraft. Captain Pons expressed his gratitude, and when Green returned to the banca, the *Dona Nati* got underway and headed southward along the eastern coast of Bohol. Shortly before noon, the vessel anchored close inshore, awaiting darkness for the run back through the Surigao Strait.

On Friday the 13th, the day after the *Dona Nati* had gone on its way, two more small interisland vessels, *Princesa* and *Zambales*, arrived off Bohol to assist the *Anhui*. Additional cargo was transferred to the lighters, which the coasters had brought from Cebu, and shortly before sundown, the *Anhui*, under full steam and assisted by the ships from Cebu, wriggled free of the Canigao reef, and the little flotilla steamed slowly westward. At about noon the following day, the *Anhui* and the other vessels, with lighters in tow, entered Cebu harbor, and the ship moored alongside pier number 2. Colonel Byrd and Lieutenant Jurika organized crews of stevedores for removal of rations, ammunition, and other supplies from the *Anhui*, while other workers unloaded cargo placed in the barges.

Cook and Byrd gave Captain Evans further details about the Japanese destroyer's unwelcome visit at Cebu the day the *Anhui* had gone aground. When he added that the enemy warship was reported still in the neighborhood, the ship's officers thought it would be expedient to get unloaded and underway as quickly as possible.

Before breakfast next morning, Colonel Byrd sent word to the *Anhui* that an enemy destroyer was again approaching Cebu from the south. Captain Evans ordered everyone on board to join the troops on Busay heights overlooking the city and the harbor. The men from the cargo ship had barely reached the hills behind the town when the Japanese destroyer, moving at speed, slid up the south channel and began prowling the outer harbor. With guns trained toward the waterfront area—and the deserted *Anhui*—the enemy warship nosed about briefly, then, without firing a shot, eased out of the harbor and moved off to the south at high speed.

Watching from the heights, neither Roddis nor MacDonald could understand why the destroyer failed either to shell their ship or send a boarding party. Since the U.S. forces in the area had only machine guns and small arms to defend the city, the Japanese could have captured the *Anhui* with ease. The enemy probably assumed the cargo ship would remain at Cebu and

could be captured anytime they wanted to take the port. But Captain Evans and his men had other ideas.

While the remainder of the cargo was being unloaded at Cebu, Hamish MacDonald talked with various U.S. officers, trying to get word on the fate of the civilians—including his wife and their ten-month-old son—interned in Manila. All the way to Cebu, the young engineer had hoped and prayed that somehow his wife and son had been evacuated south. But his hopes were dashed. It obviously would be futile for him to try to reach Manila; there was simply nothing he could do to help them.

By late evening on Monday, 16 March 1942, the *Anhui* had unloaded and was prepared to depart. There was no cargo to be carried south, but several naval officers and a few sailors, survivors of Lieutenant John Bulkeley's PT-Boat Squadron, came aboard for the run back to Australia.

Moving at 10 knots, the ship made it through the Surigao Strait on the night of 16-17 March, clearing the Philippines without further incident. Yet they still had a long way to go.

On Friday night—the 13th of March—while the *Anhui* and her escort vessels made for Cebu, the *Dona Nati* neared Surigao. Fortunately, it had begun raining several hours earlier and the rain continued to fall as the freighter made her way through the narrow channel. Clark Lee stayed on deck until midnight. When he felt the ship roll with the long Pacific swells, he knew they were safely clear of the Philippines.

Though Captain Pons declined to reveal their route, Lee and his companions, with a map and a compass, were able to determine the ship's approximate location each day. Aside from brief rain squalls, the weather was balmy as the *Dona Nati* made her way southeastward below Palau and the Japanese-fortified Carolines. Despite constant threat of discovery by enemy ships and patrol bombers, all went well for the next four days. Then, at 1630 on Wednesday, 18 March 1942, the klaxon blared three times, the alarm for surface raiders. Clark Lee grabbed his life jacket and ran to the bridge as the ship swung to the north, heading for a nearby rain squall. Though Captain Pons had sighted a formation of ships in the distance, the heavy rain encountered in the squall provided timely cover. The rain continued off and on until dark, Pons resumed their course, and the ship steamed steadily southeastward into the night.

Danger loomed again at 1130 the following morning when the lookouts spotted three vessels, apparently a tanker refueling two

submarines. Lee, Jacoby, and their companions put on life jackets as Captain Pons swung the ship a full 90 degrees, from southeast to southwest, and the *Dona Nati* steamed away at best speed. When they later resumed course and the unidentified ships were sighted a second time, the *Dona Nati* again took evasive action, returning to its original southeasterly course after sundown. Lee and his friends were still afloat and heading for Australia—but it had been a harrowing afternoon.

Under generally clear skies, the *Dona Nati* moved southward between New Caledonia and the Fiji Islands, then ran across the Coral Sea. Following the 22-day voyage from Cebu, the ship slid up the Brisbane River on Monday, 30 March 1942. Just as she pulled alongside the dock, one of the engines cracked a piston. According to the chief engineer, "The motors wouldn't have turned another time."

After leaving Surigao, the China coaster *Anhui* headed southeastward toward New Britain and the Solomons Islands, passing about 100 miles from the Japanese base at Palau.

Four days later, she successfully dodged a warship, probably an enemy destroyer, off the Admiralty Islands. On 26 March, as the vessel approached the broad channel between the Bismark Archipelago and the Solomons, the men began to feel that the worst was behind them.

But a short time later, the bridge watch sighted a single-engine aircraft and sounded general quarters. Though the plane, believed American, buzzed the ship at low altitude, her identity was uncertain. It is probable that the aircraft was equally uncertain as to the vessel's identity. When the soldier-gunners on *Anhui* commenced firing as the plane approached a second time, it dropped four bombs which straddled the ship, hurling huge quantities of water over the deck, but causing no damage. Apparently out of bombs, the aircraft turned north and disappeared over the horizon.

Several days later, as the *Anhui* approached Australia, two more aircraft appeared. General quarters were sounded and the men braced themselves for another attack. Fortunately, the two float planes were quickly and positively identified as being patrol craft from a U.S. cruiser. After making certain the *Anhui* was an Allied vessel en route to Sydney, they allowed her to continue on her way.

At 0500, 3 April 1942, having made a long and dangerous 5700-mile voyage into the Philippines, the *Anhui* reached Sydney,

Australia. The day happened to be Good Friday, but for Captain Evans, his officers and men it was an unusually *"Good Friday."*

Despite grave dangers and serious obstacles, the *Dona Nati* and *Anhui* had boldly run the enemy blockade and delivered a huge cargo at Cebu: more than 10,000 tons of rations, four million rounds of small-arms ammunition, 8000 rounds of 81mm mortar shell, three P-40 fighter planes, and miscellaneous medical, signal, and engineer supplies. Their arrival at Cebu was, in fact, the high point in the Philippine relief effort, the *Anhui* being the third and last oceangoing blockade runner ever to reach the Philippine Islands. With rations, ammo, and critical supplies now successfully delivered as far north as the island of Cebu, Major Byrd and his men still faced the difficult problem of moving the cargo nearly 400 miles north through the Japanese-patrolled inland seas to the beleaguered garrison at Bataan and Corregidor. And the closer to Corregidor one went, the longer the miles became.

CHAPTER 10

RUN BY NIGHT

In mid-January 1942, only a short time after General MacArthur withdrew U.S. Army Forces to Bataan, efforts were made to bring foodstuffs to Corregidor from areas within the Philippines. Though the Japanese had imposed a general air and sea blockade about the Bataan-Corregidor defense perimeter, it was in the beginning only lightly maintained, and small interisland vessels, moving by night, were able to reach "the Rock" from time to time. By early March, however, Japanese gunboats, on constant patrol beyond the range of Corregidor's largest guns, had established a tight blockade. From that time on, an occasional submarine and light aircraft provided the only means of delivering food and medical supplies to the embattled garrison.

The operation of the interisland blockade runners fell into three fairly distinct phases: food obtained locally, larger quantities of foodstuffs brought north from the island of Panay, and longer voyages to the Visayas for cargo brought from Australia. Though the first-phase commodities gathered surreptitiously in nearby Batangas and Cavite provinces offered the quickest source, stocks were necessarily limited and risks great, for the operation was constantly endangered by frequent enemy patrols. Panay, a two-night run from Corregidor and with unlimited supplies, presented perhaps the best and least dangerous source of foodstuffs. More distant Cebu and Mindanao, which by mid-March had substantial quantities of balanced rations, large stocks

of ammunition, and medical, engineer, and signal supplies, offered the ideal source for war materials and subsistence items most needed on Bataan, but they required long, hazardous voyages by highly vulnerable interisland vessels.

Painfully aware of their limited stocks of food on Bataan and Corregidor, General Drake, Chief Quartermaster, USAFFE, considered ways and means of running the blockade. He was confident that a blockade-running system would be successful provided these precautions were taken:

Maintain utmost secrecy in the execution and formulation of plans.
Select fearless and resourceful agents in the provinces.
Keep all communications in code and at an absolute minimum.
Operate blockade runners on dark, moonless nights; ignore the usual routes; use less frequented passages; and hide in isolated coves during the day.
Use only small, fast motor ships, preferably not more than 500 tons.
Do not use coal or oil-burning vessels.
Employ only loyal and courageous masters possessing the ability to smell out danger and familiarity with the waters of the archipelago.

When General Drake, discussing the supply situation with Major Manuel Roxas, aid-de-camp to General MacArthur, suggested the use of blockade runners to bring food supplies from Panay, Roxas expressed enthusiasm for the proposal. Major Roxas, a former resident of the province, assured General Drake that Panay could supply the blockade runners with enough rice to feed the Bataan-Corregidor garrison a very long time. Drake, encouraged by the major's remarks, indicated that he planned to discuss the proposal with General Sutherland; Roxas offered to talk with President Quezon.

Both Sutherland and Quezon gave immediate approval, and on 18 January 1942, the Commonwealth President radioed Governor Hernandez at Capiz, Panay, instructions to prepare for shipment 15,000 cavanes of rice (a cavane is a measurement of 2.13 bushels). Governor Torres at Tacloban, Leyte, received a similar request for 5,000 cavanes. Quezon, informing both officials that shipping instructions would follow, then radioed Governor Abellana at Cebu, asking the number of ships available for

charter at Cebu capable of carrying cargoes of one to two thousand sacks of rice. To expedite operations at Panay, General Drake sent a personal communication to his friend, General Bradford G. Chynoweth, the local U.S. Army Commander, requesting that he assist Governor Hernandez.

Though fast and well armed, the Coast Guard Cutter *Apo* was considered unsuitable as a blockade runner because she burned coal, and the *Bohol II*, otherwise ideal, was judged too small to send south. But the modern 2000-ton motor vessel *Legaspi* appeared ideal for the mission.

On 20 January, Captain Lino Conejero, the *Legaspi*'s skipper, and Captain Jose Amoyo, master of the *Bohol II*, were called to President Quezon's quarters in Malinta Tunnel, the extensive underground headquarters for both USAFFE and the Commonwealth Government. When informed of the plan to send *Legaspi* to Capiz, Panay, Captain Conejero reported that his ship was ready to sail, and he indicated a willingness to undertake the voyage.

Admitting an unfamiliarity with Capiz, Captain Conejero requested that Captain Amoyo join *Legaspi* as pilot. Amoyo informed President Quezon that since Capiz was his hometown and he was familiar with the area, he was willing to accompany Conejero. The Commonwealth President said officers and crew would receive double pay, insurance coverage in the event of death, and a liberal bonus if the mission were successful.

Before the two merchant officers departed Malinta, President Quezon took them to see General MacArthur, who expressed his gratitude for their willingness to undertake the hazardous assignment. The USAFEE Commander reported a desperate shortage of food supplies. Though MacArthur felt *Legaspi* had an excellent chance of returning safely to Corregidor, he instructed Conejero and Amoyo to destroy the ship if there was any possibility of it falling into enemy hands.

Since Captain Conejero spoke little English, Captain Amoyo assured both MacArthur and Quezon that with the help of God, they would return to Corregidor with the needed supplies. "I am depending on you," said General MacArthur, as he shook hands with the two Filipino officers.

Later that day Major Roxas informed the two captains that MacArthur and Quezon wanted them to sail for Capiz the next day; Amoyo was to go along as pilot. While *Legaspi* was being prepared for the voyage, Conejero and Amoyo examined their

charts for isolated areas within one night's run, suitable for hiding out during the day. They would try to reach Varadero Bay, northern Mindoro, a voyage of approximately 80 miles, the first night, and Romblon Island, 100 miles farther south by the end of the second night.

The following day, 21 January 1942, they again met briefly with President Quezon for final instructions. Boarding *Legaspi* in the afternoon, Roxas brought mail for Panay, a letter to his mother, and several letters to Governor Hernandez from President Quezon. He also reported that Hernandez had been instructed to gather a shipment of rice at Culasi, the tiny port serving Capiz. The U.S. Navy supplied Captain Conejero with codes to be used during the voyage south.

After dusk, 54 Navy officers and eight enlisted men, under the command of Captain John Dessez, and some one hundred Philippine Army officers boarded *Legaspi* for transport south for possible evacuation to Australia. Captain J. L. McGuigan, USN, Industrial Manager at the Cavite Navy Yard prior to the war, was one of the officers.

In complete darkness that night, a PT boat approached the *Legaspi*, and with the coaster following, the two ships slowly made their way through the minefields. When well clear of the danger zone, the escort flashed "All clear. You may proceed," and *Legaspi* was on her own. The darkened ship, at 10 knots, steamed southward into the South China Sea.

At about the time *Legaspi* was sent to Panay, General Drake dispatched several of his men to Batangas and Cavite provinces, a short distance south of Corregidor. Under the guise of farmers or fishermen, the Filipinos were to gather supplies at Looc Cove, on the western coast of Cavite. The shores of the cove were fairly steep except at its head, where there was a sandy beach backed by trees. Put ashore in the night, the agents began purchasing rice, bananas, coconuts, and livestock, a difficult and dangerous assignment, for the few trails through the hills along the coast created problems of transport, and Japanese patrols frequently appeared in the provinces.

As General Drake's agents gathered foodstuffs in Cavite and Bantangas, two 800-ton motor ships, *Bohol II* and *Kolambugan*, were chartered at Corregidor for the run to Looc. Because of the danger of capture or of being sunk, the vessels had to complete the 30-mile round trip during the hours of darkness.

Bohol II made its first trip without incident. But when the ship

approached the cove the second time, several nights later, the agent ashore signalled that the Japanese were reported nearby. Despite the danger, *Bohol II* entered the cove, hurriedly loaded foodstuffs and returned to Corregidor. On her third attempt to call at Looc, the agent warned that it was not safe to land anymore and the ship returned empty.

During the period between 20 January and 1 March 1942, each of the vessels made two successful round trips to Looc bringing to Corregidor approximately 1600 tons of foodstuffs, including rice, bananas, beans, and sugar, as well as chickens and pigs. With a garrison, including civilian refugees, of more than 100,000 to feed, General Drake and his men needed every pound of food they could lay their hands on. Unfortunately, by March, increased enemy patrol activity in both Batangas and Cavite ended all efforts to obtain food locally.

On the night of 21-22 January 1942, the motor vessel *Legaspi*, completely blacked out and with lookouts in both wings of the bridge, pushed southward at full speed between the Lubang Islands and the Batangas shore. There was no moon, but the weather was clear and a northeasterly wind whipped up a choppy sea. At around 0200, as the ship approached the seven-mile-wide Verde Island Passage, Amoyo and Conejero scanned the Batangas shore for any sign of the enemy.

One hour later, *Legaspi* slipped into Varadero Bay, a small partially protected bay on the southeastern coast of Mindoro. At daybreak, Captain Conejero moved his ship to a more protected anchorage off Puerto Galera, a small coastal village where most of the passengers and crew went ashore and spent the day. The townspeople, fearing the ship was a Japanese transport, were relieved to learn that she belonged to the MacArthur command. Conejero and Amoyo, first questioned cautiously by the local chief of police, were finally invited to have breakfast in his home.

At 2000, well after sundown, the darkened *Legaspi* stood out and headed southeast toward Romblon Island at ten knots. The only excitement of the night came when a playful dolphin was mistaken for a torpedo.

Next morning, *Legaspi* docked in Port Romblon, on the island of the same name, where Conejero made arrangements to receive fresh water and discharge cargo. The skipper assured the people on the dock that his ship was not Japanese. When the army and navy men, en route to Cebu, were informed that *Legaspi* would

remain in port until after sundown, most of them went ashore to spend the day shopping and sightseeing.

A half hour before midnight, *Legaspi* set sail for Capiz, the final destination. The voyage had gone well and Amoyo believed they stood an excellent chance of reaching Panay safely, for the distance from Romblon to Capiz, northern Panay, was only 75 miles, an easy overnight run. Shortly after daybreak on the morning of 24 January 1942, the blockade runner entered the breakwater and approached the wharf at Culasi, near Capiz, but the two captains were alarmed to find no cargo waiting.

Since Capiz was as far south as *Legaspi* would go, her passengers disembarked, making their way to Iloilo or Cebu as best they could. Captain McGuigan and several other navy officers caught an ancient, travel-worn bus across the island to Iloilo on the south coast, where they reported to General Chynoweth.

Governor Hernandez, appearing at the wharf at Culasi soon after *Legaspi* arrived, greeted his old friend, Amoyo, who, in turn, introduced Captain Conejero. When the two merchant officers had given Hernandez the mail from President Quezon and Major Roxas, they inquired about the lack of cargo.

The governor acknowledged that he had received instructions from Corregidor but added that General Chynoweth believed the message had been sent by the Japanese. A short time later, a Philippine Army officer, representing General Chynoweth carefully questioned Conejero and Amoyo. Although the officer appeared convinced that *Legaspi* had indeed been sent south by General MacArthur, he reported that General Chynoweth wanted to question the two captains further; however, it was three long days after *Legaspi* arrived at Capiz before Conejero and Amoyo met General Chynoweth. The U.S. Army Commander of the Panay sector required Captain Amoyo to give him a complete account of the voyage. Amoyo explained the origin of the mission, his part in the affair, and detailed their run south from Corregidor. Following this explanation, he assured the general that their mission had been authorized by both General MacArthur and President Quezon. General Chynoweth ended the conference with the report that he had radioed Corregidor requesting confirmation of *Legaspi*'s mission.

Shortly after the conference with Conejero and Amoyo, General Chynoweth released the rice, and loading operations were begun. On that same day, Chynoweth informed MacArthur by radio that *Legaspi* had arrived and was being loaded. The Panay

Commander reported that he was expediting the operation and would notify USAFFE of the vessel's departure.

That same day General William F. Sharp, Commander of the Visayan-Mindanao Force, offered to lend a hand in the interisland effort. In a radio message to General MacArthur, Sharp reported that he had 20 to 25 interisland boats which could be used if immediate shipments were desired. He recommended that he be given full power to requisition and ship foodstuffs to Bataan and Corregidor.

MacArthur's reply, "Will advise if require action . . . ," was somewhat surprising, in view of the fact that three weeks earlier General Drake had recommended, and he had approved, half-rations for the defenders of Bataan and Corregidor.

On 29 January, General Sharp notified General MacArthur that Capiz was ready to load a second vessel. He also forwarded a request for a naval escort for *Legaspi.* In his almost immediate answer, MacArthur warned that radio messages concerning ship movements should be reduced to an irreducible minimum, and said he would provide escort if the weather permitted.

On that same day, General Sharp forwarded another communication reporting that Captain Conejero expected to sail Friday or Saturday and that he needed navy escort from northeast Mindoro to Fortune Island.

In four days the *Legaspi* loaded a full cargo of foodstuffs: rice, salt, sugar, dried fish, fresh fruit, eggs, and canned goods. By 31 January, one week after her arrival in Panay, she was ready to head for Corregidor. Shortly before midnight, she stood out and pushed slowly northward at 10 knots.

While *Legaspi* anchored at Romblon that first day of February, General Chynoweth radioed MacArthur that the ship was en route and requested that the master be notified if escort would be provided. Within hours the ship was informed that escort would be made available as requested.

When they departed Romblon that night, Captain Amoyo noted with disgust that there was a full moon increasing the danger of interception. Despite the moon, the vessel reached Varadero Bay at about 0600 and lay at anchor close inshore all day. With a short, though admittedly hazardous, run before them, they left Varadero Bay at midnight and moved northwestward. Three hours later, *Legaspi* was joined by two motor torpedo boats which provided the usual escort through the mine fields.

The morning of 3 February 1942, *Legaspi* lay at anchor off Corregidor Island. Conejero and Amoyo received the congratulations of General Drake and Major Roxas, and then were taken to see General MacArthur, who said, "My good captains, I am very proud of you . . .". The two merchant officers then had a brief audience with President Quezon, who gave them a warm and sincere welcome. But both were saddened at the sight of the brave man in a wheelchair, slowly wasting away with tuberculosis.

Colonel Fred Ward, Superintendent of the Army Transport Service, assigned Lieutenant James Baldwin, one of his most capable officers, the job of unloading the *Legaspi.* Baldwin, a shipping company supervisor before the war, was the ideal man for the job. He and his men made preparations to remove cargo after nightfall, as soon as it was safe to come alongside North Dock.

Encouraged by the safe return of *Legaspi,* General MacArthur made an important change of command in the south. By special courier, with orders issued 3 February 1942, he informed General Chynoweth that his Panay Command was being removed from General Sharp's Visayan-Mindanao Force. Henceforth Chynoweth would report directly to USAFFE Headquarters at Corregidor. MacArthur emphasized that "This move is being taken to expedite the forwarding of necessary supplies from your area to the garrison here . . . The enemy thus far has not instituted a blockade of this immediate harbor and we have . . . succeeded in moving shipping under cover of darkness. The greatest secrecy in the movement of ships must, however, be maintained."

MacArthur's letter to Chynoweth included a list of desired foodstuffs, broken into categories of first and second priority, but the bulk of each shipment was to be 10,000 sacks of rice and 5,000 of sugar. Additional foodstuffs requested included coffee, yeast, salt, beans, dried fish, bananas, bamboo shoots, dried fruit, potatoes, and onions.

On the same day that General MacArthur took the Panay sector under his direct command, General Sharp submitted a detailed proposal for the organization of blockade runners from Mindanao. He listed 26 vessels under his control, suggesting they be used to transport food supplies to Corregidor. The vessels were *Elcano, Surigao, Condesa, Emilia, P. Aboitiz, Augustina, Princess of Cebu, Governor Smith, Governor Taft, Princesa, Katipunan, Dumaguete, La Estrilla Caltex, Cia de Filipinas, P.*

Escano, Luzon, Lepus, Bolinao, Princess of Negros, Kanloan, Regulus, Venus, Tagbilaran, Opon, Pickitt, and *Mayon.* Sharp proposed that each boat be assigned two officers, one American and one Filipino, and a detail of soldiers to insure that the crew would make a valid attempt to run the blockade; and he requested authority to offer rewards to all taking part in the effort. The Mindanao commander reported it was his understanding that ten million dollars had been made available to General Brett in Australia for transporting supplies to the Bataan-Corregidor outpost.

Two days later, Brigadier General Lewis C. Beebe, G-4 USAFFE, asked General Drake's opinion of Sharp's proposal. Drake pointed out that since the Army Transport Service, under Colonel Ward, was charged with the operation within the Philippines of all U.S. Army-controlled vessels, General Sharp was exceeding his authority in the matter, and he suggested the establishment of a branch of the Army Transport Service, preferably at Cebu because of its deepwater facilities for handling large ocean-going freighters. The Chief Quartermaster observed that the ten million dollars made available to Brett (the fund Colonel Robenson and his men drew upon in Australia, before flying to Java) was outside the jurisdiction of the USAFFE Command.

On that same day, 6 February 1942, Captains Conejero and Amoyo, making plans for another trip south, decided to alter their itinerary. Since they had called at Varadero Bay twice, they thought it wise to hide in Pola Bay, 35 miles farther down the coast of Mindoro, on the second voyage. After *Legaspi*'s 1000 tons of foodstuffs had been unloaded, the vessel, provisioned and refueled, lay ready for a nighttime departure. In the late afternoon, a Navy patrol craft delivered 68 Philippine Army officers to be transported to Panay.

Shortly before *Legaspi* departed Corregidor, Major Lorenzo Santamaria, a Philippine Army officer on General Drake's staff, joined Conejero and Amoyo. At 1830, a small naval craft, the ex-*Perry*, led the ship through the minefield and sent her on her way with the skipper shouting "Good luck and bring us back some beer."

Colonel Garcia, commander of the Philippine Army contingent, offered his officers as lookouts, and Captain Conejero readily accepted. When Amoyo came on duty at midnight, the darkened ship was moving southeastward at full speed under a

starry sky. At a point approximately seven miles off Pola Bay at 0330, Captain Amoyo turned the command over to Conejero. By 0600, *Legaspi* lay at anchor off Pola, another coastal village. Conejero and Amoyo spent the day at the mayor's home, returning to the ship that evening. Shortly before midnight *Legaspi* got underway again.

The ship made an uneventful night run to Romblon, took refuge there the following day, and continued south to Culasi, Panay, the next night. As soon as *Legaspi* docked, the Philippine Army officers disembarked. Major Santamaria organized loading operations and within a short time, various foodstuffs and heavy sacks of rice were being taken aboard.

The day before *Legaspi* arrived at Panay on her second voyage, General MacArthur, accepting General Drake's suggestion, ordered a branch of the Army Transport Service established at Cebu, and on 8 February he informed General Sharp at Del Monte that because of anticipated increase in shipments from Australia, it had been decided to establish a branch of the Army Transport Service at Cebu to handle cargo arriving from Australia. Major Cornelius Z. Byrd was designated as Assistant Superintendent of the Army Transport Service at Cebu, with authority to charter those vessels Sharp had named earlier.

On the night of 10 February 1942, Major Byrd approached a worn P-40 fighter plane on the landing strip at Cabcaben, Bataan. Though it was essentially a one-man craft, Byrd, en route to Cebu, squeezed into the cockpit behind the pilot. Two hours and 350 miles later the P-40 and its two passengers landed at an airfield outside Cebu City. A straight flight from Cabcaben to Cebu would have carried the plane almost directly over Culasi, Panay, where *Legaspi* was taking on cargo.

At the time that Major Byrd was appointed Assistant Superintendent of the Army Transport Service, Colonel John D. Cook, Commander of the Quartermaster Depot at Cebu, was made Port Commander. When Byrd arrived in the Visayas, the two officers joined forces with a single objective: the rapid movement of foodstuffs north to Bataan and Corregidor.

On 11 February, about the time Byrd set up shop in Cebu, General MacArthur instructed General Sharp in Mindanao to complete arrangements for the reception of the *Don Isidro* and *Coast Farmer* and to transship their cargo. He added that Major Byrd would release the interisland ships to Sharp as needed, and asked Sharp to inform Major Byrd when they were ready to sail

to Corregidor. He also asked to be informed immediately whenever ships from Australia arrived at Gingoog Bay.

The following day Colonel Ward at Corregidor had information from Byrd, at Cebu, concerning the blockade runner *Princesa*, en route north with 700 tons of rice and miscellaneous foodstuffs. Major Byrd reported that the vessel should reach Corregidor in approximately seven days, adding that neither *Don Isidro* nor *Coast Farmer* had been heard from.

While Major Byrd flew south and established a sub-office of the Army Transport Service, Filipino laborers continued loading *Legaspi* at Culasi. Unfortunately, before the ship was fully loaded, General Chynoweth, probably prompted by a rumor of an enemy warship in the area, sent urgent orders for *Legaspi* to depart at once. One hour before midnight, on the night of 13-14 February, *Legaspi* got underway for Romblon, where she docked shortly after daybreak.

Following a quiet night run from Romblon to Varadero Bay, where *Legaspi* remained all day on 15 February, Captain Conejero commenced the 75-mile voyage north to the Rock, after darkness had fallen. Corregidor became visible about 0500 next morning. *Legaspi* plowed steadily northward another ten miles before rendezvousing with two PT boats, which led her through the minefields.

Conejero, Amoyo, and Santamaria went ashore to Malinta Tunnel where the two sea captains talked with Major Roxas while Major Santamaria reported to General Drake. When the two merchant officers were talking with President Quezon a short time later, General MacArthur entered the room, shook hands and said, "So you are back again. I am very proud of you both and will see that you receive a commendation."

When the USAFFE Commander had departed, President Quezon confided to the two sea captains that he planned to go south with them on *Legaspi's* next trip. Both Conejero and Amoyo, alarmed by Quezon's proposal, discouraged the ailing president. They warned that, while *Legaspi* had been very lucky, it would mean almost certain capture for Quezon if they ran into trouble. President Quezon promised to reconsider his plan.

While the two merchant officers were at Headquarters that afternoon, two large Japanese guns began shelling Corregidor from the Cavite shore. Conejero and Amoyo were ordered to move the *Legaspi* to a more protected anchorage, but before they reached her three or four large caliber shells had exploded

in the water not more than a hundred yards short of the vessel. After dark the ship returned to the dock. Before daylight, Lieutenant Baldwin's unloading operations were halted and *Legaspi* returned to the North Channel. The ship came back to North Dock that night, and by dawn of the following day, she was unloaded and ready for another trip.

Lieutenant Baldwin visited *Legaspi* twice that day; he delivered Distinguished Service Cross awards to both Conejero and Amoyo and returned in the afternoon with written orders for *Legaspi*'s departure.

With a number of U.S. Navy officers and some Philippine pilots as passengers, *Legaspi* went through the minefields about dusk. Minutes later a fast motor launch roared out from Corregidor and approached to within hailing distance: *Legaspi* was to return to the North Channel at once. When the vessel had reversed course and arrived off Corregidor, Baldwin came aboard with word that enemy warships had been sighted in the vicinity of Lubang Island, directly in *Legaspi*'s path. Conejero and his men were thankful they had been recalled in time.

Early the next morning, a second interisland vessel, *Princesa*, came through the minefields and anchored in the North Channel near *Legaspi*. The ship had made the 400-mile voyage from Cebu with 700 tons of foodstuffs and gasoline.

Though *Legaspi* remained at Corregidor overnight, Captain Conejero made plans to depart after dark the next night, 20 February. They arrived at Culasi, Panay at 0500 on 23 February. As soon as the passengers disembarked, Filipino laborers began loading sacks of rice into the hold.

In addition to *Legaspi* and *Princesa*, other interisland cargo ships were attempting to supply Bataan and Corregidor. Around the middle of February, Major Byrd dispatched the *Cia De Filipinas* from Cebu with 300 tons of corn and rice. Moving stealthily by night and hiding in isolated coves during the day, the vessel made her way northward. However, on 21 February—while *Legaspi* was on the way to Panay the third time—*Cia De Filipinas* was discovered by the Japanese, bombed, and sunk off Mindoro.

Another ship, the *Elcano*, had better luck. Having taken aboard 1100 tons of ammunition and balanced rations from *Coast Farmer* in Gingoog Bay, Mindanao, *Elcano* started for Corregidor on 21 February, arriving there safely five days later. The *Elcano* ship-

ment was the only cargo brought into the Philippines by *Coast Farmer* ever to reach the MacArthur command.

But food that reached its destination was frequently in horrible condition. Packing boxes had broken open, producing piles of miscellaneous canned goods, mostly without identifying paper labels. Sacked flour and sugar had spilled among the cans, and had to be shovelled back into new sacks. Onions and potatoes had rotted in the tropical heat and had to be destroyed almost before the eyes of starving men. Delays in unloading were bad enough, but the loss and destruction of food needed by weakened and hungry men was nearly heart-breaking.

On 24 February while *Legaspi* was still at Panay, *Princesa* departed Corregidor for a return voyage to Cebu. The little ship was about 200 feet long, and her twin diesels had a top speed of ten knots. A PT boat guided *Princesa* through the minefields, and the interisland vessel headed for Pola Bay, Mindoro.

Despite rumors of enemy patrol vessels off Batanagas, *Princesa* reached Pola Bay safely, arriving at the port soon after dawn on 25 February. After sundown, she steamed southeastward during the night, then hid out in Looc Bay, Tablas Island, the following day. Though *Princesa*, en route to Estancia, Panay, passed Culasi on the night of 26-27 February, Captain Maneja either ignored the fact or was unaware that *Legaspi* was in the port.

Departing Estancia in the late evening, the ship reached the small port of Barilli on the west coast of Cebu on the morning of 28 February. Clark Lee, the Jacobys, and the rest of the passengers left ship at Barilli and obtained motor transport to Cebu City, remaining there until they sailed on the Australia-based *Dona Nati.*

The last day of February, 1942, proved a day of disaster for the interisland vessels attempting to supply the MacArthur command. *Legaspi*, holed at Romblon, was nearing her last voyage; and before the day was out four other cargo ships met their ends.

At around 1000 that morning, two Japanese planes raided Bugo, Mindanao, a short distance west of Gingoog Bay. The small cargo carriers, *Augustina* and *Amelia*, moored alongside the dock there in an end-to-end position, were unloading cargo. *Augustina* sustained only minor damage, but *Amelia*, two trucks parked alongside, and much of the dock were left in flames. Before *Augustina* caught fire, Colonel Melville Crusere and Captain Roy Gray raced down the burning pier and cut her lines.

While the ship drifted away from the dock, the two officers rounded up some of her crew and moved her to a secluded anchorage.

When *Augustina* returned to Bugo after nightfall, a Japanese destroyer slipped into the bay, threw a searchlight on the ship and opened fire at close range. *Augustina*, hit repeatedly, caught fire and sank at the dock; other shells exploded on the wharf and in the cannery and set fire to an oil storage tank.

During that day, the 2000-ton *Mayon*, loading cargo at Nasipit, some 50 miles east of Bugo, was attacked and burned by two planes from the Japanese 31st Air Unit.

On the same day, the 1500-ton U.S. Army-chartered *Don Esteban* was also Corregidor-bound with a valuable cargo of foodstuffs loaded at Iloilo, Panay, and Cebu City. While at her daylight anchorage half a mile off Mamburao, western Mindoro on the 28th of February, *Don Esteban* was attacked by three Japanese aircraft. The bombs missed but machine-gun fire ignited gasoline in her cargo, forcing Captain Afable and his crew to abandon ship. Though still afloat, *Don Esteban* was engulfed in flames by the time the officers and crew reached the shore.

All the while *Legaspi* lay at anchor at Romblon. When darkness fell the night of 28 February-1 March, the ship steamed out into the Sibuyan Sea for the 100-mile run back through the Verde Island Passage to Varadero Bay, Mindoro. At first light of dawn and in a heavy rain squall, *Legaspi* neared the entrance to Varadero Bay, her last refuge before running for Corregidor. It was then that two vessels were spotted lying at anchor inside the bay. Conejero sounded the alarm bringing Major Santamaria and First Officer Suarez to the bridge, and the crew to their stations. As darkness faded and the rain slackened, the anxious officers determined that the two vessels were warships. The ships, having sighted *Legaspi*, hoisted the British ensign.

Captain Conejero and his companions, taken by surprise, first thought they were in the clear. Then the skipper muttered, "No British ships in this area . . ."

"They're Japanese!" yelled Captain Amoyo.

As Conejero rang full speed and swung *Legaspi* seaward, the nearest of the warships, a minesweeper, started to get underway.

Realizing they could not outrun the enemy gunboat, Amoyo and Conejero decided to beach the *Legaspi*. While Captain Conejero headed the ship toward the shore, Amoyo helped Major Santamaria burn codes and other important papers. As the men

on the bridge grabbed life jackets, the Japanese vessel, the 1100-ton minesweeper *Yaeyama*, coming down the bay, signalled *Legaspi* to "heave to." Though the radio operator on the interisland vessel frantically radioed Corregidor that they were being attacked by enemy warships, there was no time for USAFFE to send help.

Gaining speed and growing larger by the minute, the enemy opened fire with deck guns, making a direct hit in the radio shack at 0705. Minutes later, two more shells exploded in the first-class section while other hits destroyed the port side life boats.

Interested in capturing the ship, the Japanese ceased firing about the time *Legaspi,* moving at top speed, ran aground west of Escanesco Point. As the minesweeper closed in, the crewmen hurriedly poured gasoline over the cargo and set it afire, then went over the side into shallow water and raced for shore, taking cover behind the rocks.

By the time Amoyo, Conejero, and Santamaria reached the rocks, the enemy gunboat was spraying the burning cargo ship and the beach area with her machine guns. When it became clear the *Legaspi*, blazing throughout, was lost, the Japanese stopped shooting and returned to Varadero Bay, and Captain Conejero and his officers and crew, including several wounded men, struggled inland. Although their run of good luck had ended, they had made certain *Legaspi* did not fall into enemy hands. Four crewmen from *Legaspi* reached Cebu more than three weeks later, to report that 16 crewmen had been captured, but that Conejero, Amoyo, Santamaria, and Suarez had been last seen hiding in the mountains of Mindoro.

Following her early morning attack upon *Legaspi*, the minesweeper *Yaeyama* added another victory to her credit by capturing *Lepus*, Corregidor-bound with 1300 tons of cargo from *Coast Farmer*, off Paluan Island.

Aware that interisland ships were attempting to supply the Bataan-Corregidor garrison, the Japanese moved more warships into the Visayas. On 3 March 1942, two days after the loss of *Legaspi*, General MacArthur radioed Washington that an enemy cruiser and several destroyers had shelled Cebu City and Argao, on the island of Cebu, and Damaguete City, Tolong Bay, and two other areas of Negros Island. He also reported that a Japanese destroyer had shelled and destroyed the wharf at Bugo—apparently the night the enemy surprised *Augustina*—and that

four enemy transports, protected by a cruiser, were landing troops at Zamboanga City.

Four days later, two more coastal vessels heading for the Rock were discovered by the Japanese. The *Regulus*, carrying 500 tons of subsistence items, was captured off Ilin Island, Mindoro; the *Governor Smith*, with a similar cargo, was bombed and sunk off Coron Island.

For all practical purposes, the operation of the interisland blockade runners came to an end the first week in March when General Sutherland, aware of the increasingly heavy losses, ordered that no more vessels attempt to sail to or depart from Corregidor. Sutherland's order meant that Colonel Cook and Major Byrd at Cebu, with thousands of tons of rations, ammunition, and other valuable cargo delivered at great risk by *Dona Nati* and *Anhui*, had no authority to transship needed supplies north to Corregidor. General Drake protested the halting of the interisland effort. Though aware the boats stood little chance of reaching the Rock, he felt the critical food situation justified the risk.

As if to prove General Sutherland was correct, a Japanese destroyer shelled Cebu City—as *Dona Nati* ran for her life—on 10 March 1942, and the intercoastal ships *Fortuna, Candesa, Basilan, Governor Wood, Antonio, Parcita, Maayo, Opon, Tagbilaran,* and *Dumaguete* were sunk, damaged, or scuttled by their crews.

Before General Sutherland left with MacArthur for Australia on 11 March, he repeated to General Drake his order halting all movement of the interisland blockade runners.

By 20 March, when Wainwright, promoted to a Lieutenant General, became commander of the U.S. Forces in the Philippines, the daily ration, rice and a bit of meat, seldom exceeded 1000 calories. Yet the airtight enemy blockade made it impossible for ships of any size—other than submarines—to carry foodstuffs to the Rock.

Five days later, on 25 March 1942, Colonel Stuart Wood, Wainwright's intelligence chief, drew up a proposal for using a few heavy bombers from Australia to temporarily dislocate the blockade around Corregidor, which would allow a fleet of interisland cargo vessels to bring food supplies into the defense perimeter. Accepting Wood's plan, General Wainwright radioed MacArthur in Australia that the Japanese appeared ready to terminate the Bataan campaign, and that the U.S.-Philippine troops, due to hunger and illness, could not hold them off. He

pointed out that 14 ships were loaded with 90 days' provisions in Cebu, but the Japanese had Manila Bay blocked. He asked MacArthur to send a squadron of heavy bombers to Mindanao for one week and was confident that this would dislocate the blockade and allow ships to reach Corregidor.

Following extensive air reconnaissance of the area between Mindanao and Corregidor to pinpoint location of enemy warships, the cargo ships would be dispatched from Cebu and Iloilo at dusk. While the fleet of interisland vessels, escorted by three motor torpedo boats, pushed northward at 10 knots, the heavy bombers were to arrive at Mindanao. By the next day, the cargo carriers should be in the vicinity of Romblon Island. On the basis of additional reconnaissance by fighter planes, the heavy bombers would strike Japanese destroyers on station off Manila Bay allowing the cargo ships to reach Corregidor.

General MacArthur promised air support around 1 April, and Colonel Cook and his men in the Visayas made ready to dispatch the cargo-laden coasters and the motor-driven bancas as soon as the bombers arrived in the Philippines. Unfortunately, the planes failed to appear until 11 April—two days after U.S. forces had surrendered on Bataan, and one day after Japanese troops captured Cebu and Iloilo. The Corregidor-bound vessels, awaiting air support that came too late, were destroyed at their moorings to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy.

Even though three ocean-going cargo ships—*Coast Farmer, Dona Nati,* and *Anhui*—had come up from Australia, delivering 10,000 tons of cargo in the central Philippines, only about one tenth of the rations, ammunition, and miscellaneous supplies (via *Elcano*) reached Bataan and Corregidor. General Drake estimated that an additional 7000 tons of foodstuffs was lost on the interisland carriers. Total shipments delivered amounted to 4900 tons, 1600 tons in *Bohol II* and *Kolambugan* from Cavite and Batangas, 700 tons in *Princesa* from Cebu, 1500 tons in *Legaspi* from Panay, and 1100 tons in *Elcano* from Australia.

For a brief interval, the interisland blockade runners had provided the besieged garrison with valuable foodstuffs, but the Japanese, imposing a stronger and more vigilant blockade about Corregidor and the entrance to Manila Bay, soon put an effective end to all hope for further relief from that quarter. A soldier in Corregidor needed no course in strategy and tactics to realize that loss of control of the sea meant that someone was going hungry.

CHAPTER 11

PIG BOAT PARADE

Seawolf and *Trout* were the first submarines to aid the American command in the Philippine Islands, but others followed. Throughout the discouraging months of February, March, and April 1942, and, in fact, up until the last hours that Corregidor remained in American hands, the submarines kept trying. It was at best a poor, stopgap measure, for the slow-moving undersea craft could carry only limited amounts of cargo. Yet they made the effort, for the American and Philippine troops on Corregidor deserved all possible help.

In late January 1942—about the time that Colonel Robenson set up shop in Surabaya, Java—the USS *Sargo* entered that port following a long, unsuccessful patrol off French Indo-China. Lieutenant Commander T. D. Jacobs and his men had made eight submerged attacks, firing 13 torpedoes, without a single hit. Jacobs was convinced the Mark-14 torpedoes were faulty, and tests later proved this the case. By the time the submarine reached Surabaya, morale was at rock bottom.

Not long after *Sargo* moored alongside Holland Pier, Jacobs was called to Admiral Glassford's office at Navy Headquarters. The Admiral said that American troops on the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines were desperately short of rifle ammunition, and he ordered *Sargo* to deliver a cargo of .30-caliber to Parang. Admiral Glassford made it clear that Jacobs was to avoid the main shipping lanes and that *Sargo* was

to attack only in self defense. Eager to take another crack at the enemy, Commander Jacobs had no heart for the mission to Mindanao. Yet he recognized the importance of the delivery and made preparations to sail.

On 3 February 1942—the day Japanese aircraft first attacked Surabaya—*Sargo* offloaded her eight spare torpedoes, 225 rounds of three-inch ammunition, and practically all small-arms ammunition. She kept only eight torpedoes, six forward and two in the stern, loaded in the tubes. The following day 666 cases of .30-caliber were loaded. The one million rounds of ammunition weighed nearly 40 tons.

At mid-afternoon, 5 February, the *Sargo* followed the Dutch submarine K-11 out the western entrance to Surabaya Harbor and steamed northward into the Java Sea. Half an hour later, Commander Jacobs took the submarine down for a trim dive, making certain the undersea craft was functioning properly before making course for Polloc Harbor, on the western coast of Mindanao. Then, running surfaced by night and submerged during daylight, *Sargo* crossed the Java Sea, ran through the Straits of Makassar, and steamed northward into the Celebes Sea.

Dawn of 14 February found the submarine coasting up western Mindanao, and by noonday she was making a submerged reconnaissance of Polloc Harbor. Moving at two knots and showing only a foot of periscope, *Sargo* eased into the harbor and approached to within one mile of the pier. Jacobs carefully surveyed all activity in the harbor and ashore. The sight of the American flag flapping in the breeze gave assurance that the port remained under U.S. control. Alert for Japanese air and sea patrols, Jacobs reversed course, cleared the harbor and stood out to sea to await darkness.

At 1816 the submarine re-entered the harbor and used a blinker gun to contact U.S. Army personnel ashore, who replied with a flashlight. As soon as *Sargo* dropped anchor, a 50-ton barge was brought alongside, and soldiers and sailors commenced transferring 100-pound cases of ammunition.

The senior U.S. Army officer and several of his detachment boarded the submarine for a meal while the cargo was being unloaded. The army officers were delighted with the ammunition, and Jacobs had a feeling there would be quite a scrap before the Japanese took Parang.

By 2157, the last of the cases had been transferred to the barge. As *Sargo* prepared to get underway, 24 U.S. Army Air

Corps enlisted men hurriedly boarded the submarine for transport to Surabaya. The Java-bound evacuees, former ground crew of the 14th Bombardment Squadron, had remained at Del Monte airfield when the B-17 bombers left for Australia shortly after the outbreak of war.

Aside from an overload of passengers, *Sargo* experienced no difficulty as she ran south from Mindanao. On the evening of 22 February, eight days out of Parang, the submarine moored to Holland Pier, Surabaya, and unloaded the Air Corps men. With the defenses of the Netherlands East Indies nearing collapse, *Sargo* remained at Surabaya only a few days before being ordered south to Australia. Yet as a result of *Sargo*'s special-delivery run to Parang, the U.S.-Philippine troops had plenty of ammunition when the Japanese invaded western Mindanao.

In mid-February 1942, about the time *Sargo* was delivering ammunition to Parang, the *Swordfish*, patrolling in the Surigao Strait, was ordered to Corregidor. She reached Manila Bay on the night of 19-20 February, took on fuel and 13 torpedoes, then submerged before daylight. The following evening *Swordfish* received Philippine President and Mrs. Quezon, and their three children; Vice President Osmena, Chief Justice Santos, and three Philippine Army officers for evacuation to Panay.

Swordfish was escorted through the minefield by a PT boat, and the submarine stood out into the South China Sea. When the boat rolled in the rough open sea, Mrs. Quezon and the two little girls became seasick, but 15-year-old Manuel, enthralled with the submarine, thoroughly enjoyed a tour of the vessel given him by the skipper, Lieutenant Commander Chester C. Smith. The youngster also went for the navy food in a big way.

Although the passengers experienced discomfort due to the excessive heat and the confined quarters when the vessel was submerged, the 300-mile run to San Jose, Panay, was made without incident. *Swordfish* arrived there at midnight on 21-22 February, established contact with the local U.S. Army Command, and transferred her passengers to a motor tender. Then in accordance with orders received at Corregidor, the submarine headed back and made a second call at the Rock at 0200, 24 February. Twenty minutes later the converted yacht *Mary Ann* delivered more passengers: U.S. High Commissioner Francis B. Sayre, Mrs. Sayre and their son; and eight members of Sayre's staff, Mr. and Mrs. Woodbury Willoughby (he still had the *Trout*'s missing gold bar in his pocket), Mrs. Janet White, Miss

Anna Belle Newcomb, Mr. Evett D. Hester, Mr. Cabot Coville, Mr. James Saxon, and Mr. John Mueller; and five enlisted men. The submarine immediately cleared the minefield and moved out into the South China Sea.

Though there were rumors that the evacuees would be taken to Pearl Harbor, Commander Smith's orders directed him to proceed to Surabaya, Java, at best speed. Mrs. Sayre and the other women passengers found the muggy heat and the crowded conditions aboard the submerged submarine almost unbearable. The air-conditioning system performed well, but it could not cope with the increased personnel. Mrs. Sayre gained temporary relief when she visited the galley and opened the refrigerator for ice water. The fleeting touch of cold air was pleasurable beyond description.

Since the boat submerged during the day, the passengers counted the hours until sunset. When they surfaced after dark, the conning tower hatch and the forward torpedo hatch were opened allowing fresh air to sweep through the craft. While the officer of the deck and four lookouts in the conning tower, and a fifth man at the forward hatch scanned the sea and the sky for ships and aircraft, batteries were charged and air tanks filled.

Several nights out of Corregidor radio intercepts indicated that a naval battle was developing north of Surabaya—a prelude to a Japanese invasion of eastern Java. Soon thereafter the submarine was directed to Fremantle, Western Australia, an additional voyage of some 1600 nautical miles. Though Commissioner Sayre wanted to dispatch several radio messages to Washington, Commander Smith recommended such communications be delayed until *Swordfish* was south of the Malay Barrier.

On the evening of 27 February 1942, while the submarine steamed through the Celebes Sea, some 300 miles to the north, Dutch Admiral Karel Doorman led the remnants of the ABDA fleet into battle against a formidable Japanese task force. In the Battle of the Java Sea and at Sunda Strait the next evening, the Allies lost five cruisers—USS *Houston*, RNN *De Ruyter*, RNN *Java*, HMAS *Exeter*, and HMAS *Perth*. Japanese naval and air forces also sank five destroyers: USS *Pope*, HMAS *Electra*, HMS *Encounter*, and HMS *Jupiter*; and the RNN *Kortenaer*. Admiral Doorman went down with his ship.

A night or two later, the submarine encountered an enemy warship, apparently an outlying picket vessel protecting the Japanese invasion fleet. Engines, fans, the air-conditioning sys-

tem—all operating equipment—was shut down as *Swordfish* rigged for silent running and went deep. The chief engineer gave the women passengers cotton for their ears and warned they might receive a depth-charge attack. But *Swordfish* was in luck; the enemy ship held her course. After a long period of waiting, engines and fans were started and the undersea craft returned to the surface.

Early on the morning of 9 March 1942, the submarine *Swordfish*, 3000 miles and 13 days out of Corregidor, picked up a patrol boat a short distance out of Fremantle. At 0500 the two ships encountered a thick fog which delayed entrance to the harbor for more than four hours.

As the fog dissipated, Commissioner Sayre was thrilled by the sight of other ships in the roadstead, and of pine trees and green hills. The submarine anchored and Admiral Glassford came alongside in a launch to get the High Commissioner and his party. Thanks to *Swordfish*, 16 more people had escaped the tragedy of Corregidor. When Willoughby reached San Francisco several weeks later, he delivered his gold bar, worth $306, to the Federal Reserve Bank. The government bankers, obviously relieved, finally marked the Corregidor gold shipment "Complete."

While *Swordfish* made for Fremantle in early March, the USS *Permit*, on patrol in the Java Sea, under the command of Lieutenant Wreford G. Chapple was ordered north to Corregidor at best speed. Her job—remove General MacArthur from Corregidor. However, General MacArthur's decision to depart about 10 March—five days before *Permit* would arrive—forced a change in plans, and the evacuation party left Corregidor in four PT boats on the night of 11 March 1942. Accordingly, *Permit* was ordered to rendezvous with the PT boats at Tagauayan Island, west of Panay.

At 0450 on 13 March, *Permit* joined PT-32 as scheduled. The other three boats, and the entire evacuation party of 21 people, had gone south to Mindanao leaving Lieutenant (jg) V. S. Schumacker and his boat to meet the submarine. After informing Lieutenant Chapple that General MacArthur and his people had departed, Schumacker had orders to proceed to Iloilo, Panay, a distance of 120 miles. However, PT-32, with faulty engines and little remaining fuel, was in no shape for the run and her skipper decided to destroy the boat and go with *Permit*.

The two officers and 13 enlisted men stripped the PT craft of all useful gear and boarded the submarine. *Permit* sank the tor-

pedo boat with her deck gun, stood out to deep water and submerged for the day. When Chapple brought his submarine to the surface after dark, he received another change in orders. He was to continue to Corregidor.

At the Rock, two nights later, *Permit* moored alongside USMT *Ranger* and took aboard three torpedoes and 500 pounds of flour. The submarine unloaded most of her three-inch ammunition and the PT men. A short time later 8 officers and 32 enlisted men boarded the vessel for transportation to Australia. With a sardine-can total of 111 men on board, *Permit* cleared the minefield and stood out to sea early the next morning. When he reached Australia, Chapple was reprimanded for carrying so many evacuees.

On the night of 18-19 March, while running surfaced a few hours before midnight, three enemy destroyers were sighted coming up astern at a distance of about a mile and a half. The *Permit* made a high-speed crash dive and got off two torpedoes—no hits. The Japanese destroyers attacked with depth charges and *Permit* was jolted by a dozen close explosions. Though the vessel and all hands were shaken up, damage was minor.

Yet the enemy destroyers refused to give up, and prowled back and forth overhead, their sonar gear steadily pinging. At 0120 two more depth charges exploded near by; there was little damage, but conditions within the craft were becoming almost unbearable. If they did not die of the heat, there remained the prospect of suffocation.

Three more agonizing hours crept by before the pinging stopped. The Japanese had finally tired of the search, but Lieutenant Chapple was taking no chances; *Permit* remained submerged the rest of the day. Finally, at 1885, the submarine surfaced and cool, fresh air flooded through the craft. The 111 men on board had been submerged a grueling 22 hours and 33 minutes. Fortunately, the remainder of the long haul to Fremantle in Western Australia went off without a hitch.

Permit arrived at Fremantle on 7 April 1942 and unloaded. Though she had failed to carry the General, her passengers were all as happy as if they had suddenly been made generals.

On the last night of March 1942, the USS *Snapper* had surfaced and was prowling in the Davao Gulf. Five hundred miles to the west, *Seadragon*, en route to a patrol off the coast of French Indo-China, was passing through Balabac Strait. At 2200 Lieutenant Commander W. E. Ferrall, *Seadragon*'s skipper, received urgent orders from Captain John Wilkes, Commander

Submarines, Asiatic Fleet, to ferry food supplies from Cebu, Philippine Islands, to Corregidor. Fifteen minutes later, *Snapper* received similar instructions.

Ten days earlier, General Wainwright, commander of American forces in the Philippines following MacArthur's evacuation to Australia, had pleaded for submarines to bring vital supplies to Corregidor. With the Japanese ready to launch an all-out offensive, the USFIP Commander reported that his troops, "physically weak from hunger and units dangerously understrength from malaria . . . cannot withstand a determined attack . . ." In addition to severe shortages of food and medicines—especially quinine—the lack of high-altitude antiaircraft ammunition allowed enemy bombers to operate with little interference. The situation was desperate. The War Department appealed to the Navy for help, and *Seadragon* and *Snapper* were diverted to Cebu.

On Good Friday, 3 April 1942, as the two submarines sped toward Cebu, the Japanese 14th Army began the final offensive on the Bataan peninsula. Following an intensive aerial bombardment and a five-hour artillery barrage—the most devastating of the entire campaign—tank-supported enemy infantry slashed through the shattered 41st Division of the Philippine Army. The victorious Japanese renewed their assault the following day and by nightfall of the third day, they had smashed through the main line of resistance endangering the entire II Corps. For the American and Philippine troops, diseased, starving, and utterly exhausted, it was the beginning of the end.

On that same night 400 miles to the south, a PT boat led *Seadragon* into the harbor at Cebu City. The sub moored alongside a barge at Socony Pier, Mactan Island, opposite the city. PT-34, commanded by Lieutenant Robert G. Kelly, was one of the boats that had carried the MacArthur party from Corregidor to Mindanao. Colonel John D. Cook, Cebu Port Commander, and several of his officers boarded the submarine and conferred with Commander Ferrall.

For security reasons, Colonel Cook had ordered the submarine to load at Mactan rather than at the Cebu docks, but the lack of suitable facilities hindered the operation. The crane on the barge was not adequate for handling the 3000-pound torpedoes which had to be transferred to make room for the food cargo, but gave way on the first lift, and the crew had to do the job with their own loading boom and skids. Removal of the service ammunition

presented no problem, but when it came to taking on fuel, the pumps on the barge broke down, forcing *Seadragon* to leave without a full load of fuel.

Following transfer of 10 torpedoes and 250 pounds of three-inch ammunition, the men commenced loading 100-pound sacks of rice and flour. Weight was no problem; it was simply a matter of space that could be made available within the submarine. Ferrall was rather surprised when a large number of Christmas packages some ship had unloaded at Cebu following the outbreak of war came on board. With dawn approaching, Commander Ferrall took his submarine out into the Bohol Strait and submerged for the day. That night the vessel returned to Mactan for additional fuel and the remainder of the food.

While *Seadragon* was at Cebu the second night, *Snapper* arrived in the outer harbor and was met by PT-34. Reporting that the Army was busy loading *Seadragon*, Lieutenant Kelly directed *Snapper* to return in 24 hours. Commander Stone took his submarine back into the strait and, moving along the surface, steamed south off the east coast of the island of Cebu.

Seadragon stood out at 0300 the next morning with 34 tons of provisions—a heavy load for a fleet-type submarine. Commander Ferrall was aware that *Snapper* was in the area, and the two submarines exchanged recognition signals a short distance south of Cebu.

Snapper stayed submerged all day on 5 April, and surfaced and rendezvoused with PT-34 shortly after sundown to be guided into the harbor. Possibly because of the difficulties *Seadragon* had experienced at Mactan, Colonel Cook ordered *Snapper* brought alongside Pier No. 1 at Cebu City. That night crewmen and army dock workers commenced transferring four torpedoes, 185 rounds of three-inch ammunition, and a quantity of small-arms ammunition to a barge alongside. Since PT-34 had no means for charging torpedoes, *Snapper* performed this service. When the torpedoes and ammunition had been removed, *Snapper* received 46 tons of foodstuffs and 29,000 gallons of diesel fuel, all that remained at Cebu. At 0345, PT-34 escorted the sub out the lower channel, and she headed for Corregidor.

While *Snapper* was loading at Cebu, *Seadragon* continued north at best speed. For Commander Ferrall and his men, Manila Bay was like home plate. At the time the Japanese attacked Manila on 10 December 1941, *Seadragon* had been moored alongside *Sealion*, undergoing overhaul in the Cavite Navy Yard. When

Sealion received two direct hits and was virtually destroyed, flying fragments damaged *Seadragon*'s bridge and ripped through the conning tower killing her communications officer, Ensign Samuel H. Hunter, and wounding two other officers and three enlisted men. Despite a mass of flames that engulfed Machina Wharf and endangered *Seadragon*, the rescue vessel *Pigeon* towed the submarine out into the channel where she proceeded under her own power.

Six days later, on 16 December, *Seadragon* had evacuated part of Admiral Hart's staff to Surabaya, Java, where she received badly needed repairs before starting her first war patrol. Following the successful torpedoing of the 6400-ton *Tamagawa Maru* on 2 February 1942, *Seadragon* was ordered back to Corregidor. Upon arrival at the island fortress two days later, *Seadragon* loaded two tons of submarine spares, 3000 pounds of radio equipment, 23 torpedoes, and 22 passengers: 19 members of a naval radio intelligence unit, an army major, and two naval officers for transportation to Surabaya. She reached Fremantle on 13 February.

As *Snapper* and *Seadragon* headed north from Cebu on 6 April, the military situation on Bataan had become critical. In a desperate attempt to halt the enemy, General King, U.S. Commander on the peninsula, committed his carefully hoarded reserves. But undernourished, disease ridden, and only about 50 percent effective, they stood little chance against the Japanese. The only course open to General King, aside from surrender, was to pull back and try to regroup his shattered command. Despite orders to mount another counterattack—obviously impossible to execute—General King concluded that the situation was without hope, and he began negotiations to surrender the remnants of his two corps.

That night the *Seadragon* arrived off Corregidor and made contact with an escort boat. Following close in the vessel's wake, the submarine ran the minefield, and lay-to awaiting the arrival of USS *Pigeon*. As *Pigeon* came alongside *Seadragon*, the men hurriedly transferred foodstuffs. It wasn't until Commander Ferrall talked with Lieutenant Commander Frank R. Davis, skipper of *Pigeon*, that he realized how bad the situation was on Bataan. Davis and his men were very discouraged, and there was little that Ferrall could do to help them.

Twenty minutes after *Pigeon* had come alongside, Captain Kenneth M. Hoeffel, Commander of U.S. Naval units in the

Philippines, ordered Ferrall to halt unloading operations and clear the area. In that short period of time, seven tons of provisions had been removed and 23 passengers had boarded the submarine. With Bataan's defenses crumbling, Hoeffel felt the situation too dangerous for further unloading operations in the bay. As the submarine was being escorted back through the minefield at 2130, the vessel was shaken by an earthquake that jarred the Philippines from Luzon to the Visayas.

Even *Snapper*, off Mindoro Island more than a hundred miles south, running surfaced at 15 knots, felt the earth tremor: "The sea changed from dead calm to choppy instantaneously. A sudden wind came up from the north, and the ship shook violently." Fearing the submarine had gone aground, Commander Stone ordered all engines backed emergency, and *Snapper* stopped dead in the water. A hurried inspection indicated the boat was undamaged and a sounding showed 1200 fathoms of water, so they continued on course.

Meanwhile *Seadragon* released her escort vessel and stood out into the South China Sea. A short time later after the submarine had submerged, Ferrall and his men heard distant explosions: Navy installations at Mariveles, Bataan, and three vessels including USS *Canopus* were destroyed by demolitions. Additional blasts on the other side of the peninsula signalled the destruction of huge stocks of ammunition inland from Cabcaben. Though *Seadragon* was fairly deeply submerged, the submariners felt the shock at 0200 when several warehouses of TNT were exploded, jarring all of lower Bataan and much of the bay area.

In the hope that he might yet deliver the rest of the food shipment, Commander Ferrall kept the *Seadragon* off Corregidor 48 hours, but Captain Hoeffel warned that further unloading was not feasible. With a passenger list of one army colonel, three navy officers, and 19 navy enlisted men (including one stowaway) *Seadragon* returned to Australia, arriving in the Perth-Fremantle area 26 April 1942.

Snapper surfaced off Corregidor the night of 9 April—only hours after General King had surrendered his Bataan Command. With the entire peninsula in enemy hands, it was no longer safe to enter the minefield and *Pigeon* joined the submarine in the approaches to Manila Bay. A fast fire-bucket style transfer operation moved 20 tons of food in 90 minutes. Twenty-five passengers were taken aboard and *Pigeon* cast off. The vessel had to scurry back to Corregidor before the moon rose at 0145. Captain Hoef-

fel ordered *Snapper* back to Cebu. As she moved seaward at 0136, Commander Stone sighted three enemy destroyers and took her down. After dodging the patrol vessels, *Snapper* returned to the surface and ran south at fifteen knots. The following night Commander Submarines, Asiatic Fleet, radioed *Snapper* that Cebu City had been taken by the Japanese, and ordered her to Western Australia.

As *Snapper* was steaming down the western coast of Australia on the night of 23 April 1942, she intercepted a message indicating that the submarine *Searaven* was in trouble a short distance north. Anticipating orders received only minutes later, *Snapper* reversed course and raced toward the disabled submarine at 17 knots.

Originally slated to deliver 1500 rounds of antiaircraft ammunition at Corregidor, *Searaven*'s mission had been cancelled by the fall of Bataan. Following a brief offensive patrol north of the Malay Barrier, the submarine had been directed to attempt the rescue of thirty-one RAAF personnel hiding in the jungles of enemy-held Timor. Despite the hazards of inshore operations along a forbidding coast with a Japanese air base nearby, the problem of making contact with the Aussies, and the extreme difficulties of transporting unconscious men through a heavy surf, Commander Hiram Cassedy and his men completed a successful pick-up.

While en route to Fremantle a few days later, *Searaven* had a fire in the maneuvering room. Though the crew brought the fire under control, the vessel was without power and completely helpless when *Snapper* hurried back north to provide a tow. By 0900 on 24 April, a line had been rigged between the two submarines. As they moved south at six knots, a PBY soon appeared overhead, providing air cover during most the daylight hours.

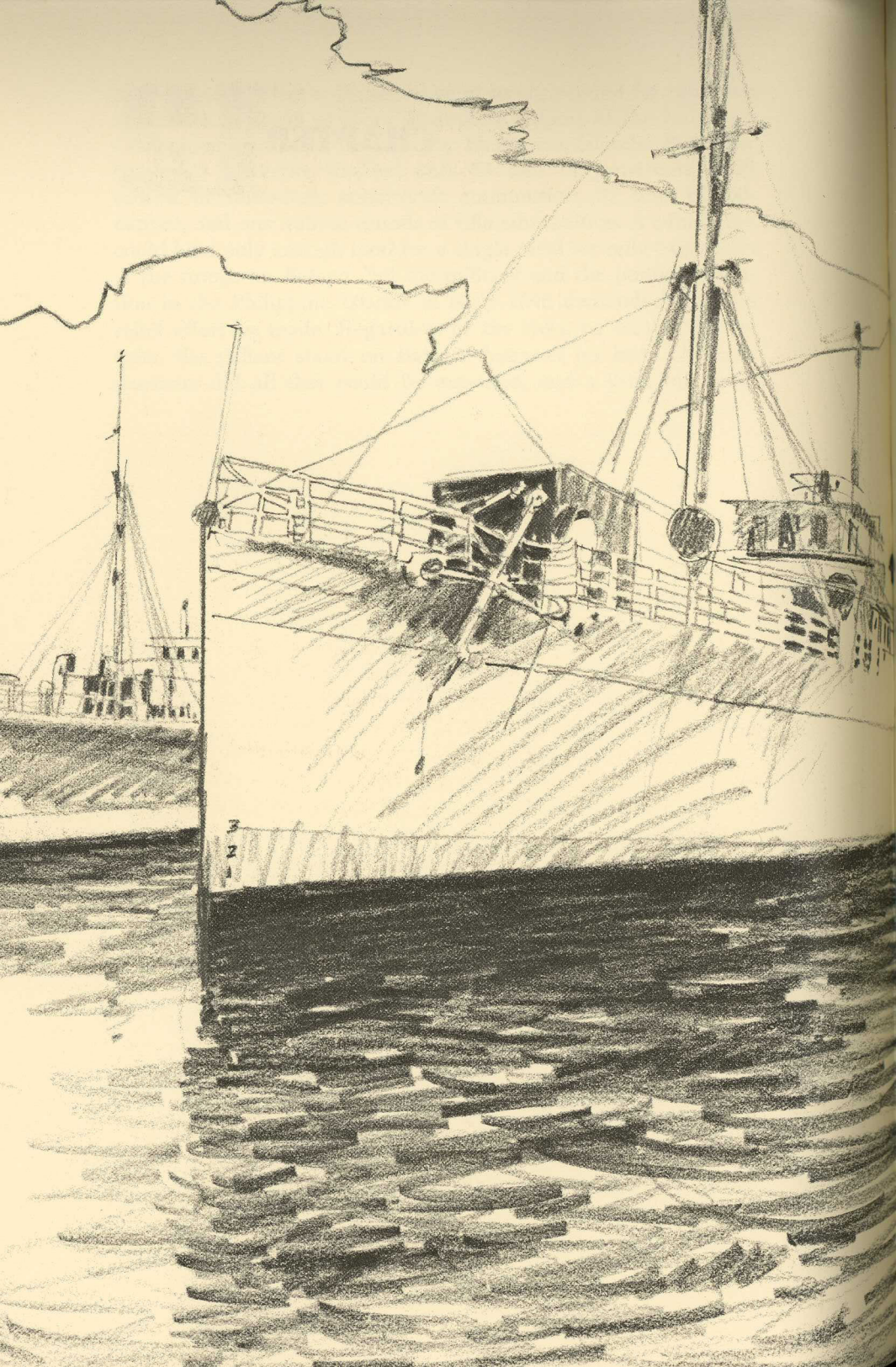
When an Australian sloop joined in the late afternoon, *Snapper*, ill-fitted for a difficult towing operation, gladly surrendered her charge and proceeded southward. She reached Fremantle on 25 April; *Searaven* was towed into port the following day.

Although *Sailfish* and *Swordfish* both started for Corregidor with cargo, they were diverted when Bataan fell. The last submarine to reach Corregidor was the *Spearfish*, which put in there briefly on 3 May, just a few hours before it was all over for the men on the Rock.

Though the United States faced a powerful and determined enemy in the Southwest Pacific in early 1942, and the hard-

driven Asiatic Fleet submarines were sorely needed for offensive operations, a dozen of them attempted support of the forces on Corregidor, and elsewhere in the Philippine Islands. But their combined deliveries totalled only 53 tons of provisions, 3500 rounds of three-inch antiaircraft ammunition, 37 tons of .50-caliber, and one million rounds of rifle ammunition. A submarine could haul only enough food for a single meal for only two thirds of the troops on Bataan. Yet the military and the political situation in the Philippine Islands in early 1942 demanded that the relief effort be made. Regardless of the risks, no matter the results, the gallant stand on Bataan deserved no less. The submariners did all that could be expected, and a little bit more.

CHAPTER 12



SHIPS THAT NEVER CAME

The efforts made early in 1942, to get food, ammunition, and medical supplies into the Philippines included the use of cargo vessels, aircraft, and submarines; there was also a plan to utilize half a dozen World War I destroyers. As early as 12 January 1942, when the Battle for Bataan had barely begun, the War Department informed General MacArthur that seven such ships, which had been converted into banana carriers by the United Fruit Company, were to be loaded with food and medical supplies for the Philippine command. The vessels would proceed from New Orleans to the Far East by way of the Panama Canal and Hawaii.

But the program made slow progress. Six weeks later, on 24 February, in a memorandum for President Roosevelt, General Marshall reported that three of the ships were at New Orleans where diesel engines were being installed. One of the ships would be ready in a few days, the others by the first of March. Marshall also indicated that the War Department planned to acquire three more ex-World War I destroyers being operated commercially in the Caribbean. He closed his memo with word that Admiral King considered the 14½-knot vessels suitable for running the blockade.

Though the ships were scheduled to depart at the rate of one a week, beginning on 28 February, numerous difficulties were encountered and the whole timetable was thrown out of kilter.

Cargoes failed to arrive on time or in proper quantities, the Navy was unable to furnish gun crews, and questions arose as to the routes the vessels should take. The ships were to be armed with a Navy 3″/50-caliber gun in the stern, a four-inch all-purpose gun or a 37mm gun in the bow, and four .50-caliber air-cooled machine guns, all weapons to be manned by U.S. Army gun crews.

Finally, on 2 March, the long-delayed supply venture got underway with the departure of the SS *Masaya* from New Orleans carrying 600 tons of subsistence items; 330 tons of ammunition; 40 tons of ordnance, small arms, and machine guns; and a quantity of medical supplies. Yet New Orleans was more than 9000 miles from the Philippines.

The plan to supply the Philippine outpost from the West Coast dovetailed with recommendations originating in Australia. On 4 March 1942, following a conference with Colonel Robenson who had just arrived from Java, Hurley and Brett radioed the War Department that it had become too hazardous to send ships north from Australia. They recommended that all future attempts to reinforce the MacArthur command be mounted from the United States via Hawaii through the central Pacific.

At the end of the first week in March, the War Department informed General MacArthur that a total of seven cargo-carrying vessels had been acquired for the attempt to supply the Philippines from Honolulu. The message indicated that one ship was enroute, three others were due to depart the Caribbean shortly, and that three more were scheduled to sail from the West Coast within ten days. Each ship would carry approximately 1000 tons of subsistence items, 50 tons of ordnance and medical supplies, and 30 tons of signal equipment.

On 27 March, General Marshall asked Wainwright if the cargo-carrying destroyers should be sent to Manila Bay or to other ports in the islands. The following day, General Wainwright suggested that the blockade runners be sent directly to Corregidor.

On 30 March, General Somervell, in Washington, provided Wainwright and MacArthur, who had just arrived in Australia, with a progress report. *Masaya*, undergoing repairs at Los Angeles, was to depart before 10 April. *Matagalpa*, en route to Hawaii, was scheduled to reach the Philippines around 3 May; *Teapa*, supposed to depart the Panama Canal 2 April, was due in the Philippine Islands about 12 May 1942. Somervell also re-

ported that *Alencon* and *Texada* were slated to depart San Francisco on 30 March, and SS *Vaunes* was supposed to depart the West Coast about mid-April.

Yet the destroyers offered General Wainwright little hope of relief. On 7 April—four days before *Texada* departed San Francisco—he informed MacArthur that the enemy naval blockade being maintained by half a dozen warships was "absolute." The harassed general warned that ". . . the landing of supplies at Cebu or Mindanao which are intended for Bataan would be without purpose as no friendly surface vessels have been able to operate between Cebu and Corregidor for the past month . . ."

On 12 April 1942, only three days after the American forces had surrendered on Bataan, General Marshall requested MacArthur's views on further blockade-running efforts. In his reply the following day, General MacArthur pointed out that with the enemy holding both the Cavite and the Bataan shores, it was virtually impossible for surface vessels to reach Corregidor. He believed further efforts useless.

Refusing to accept MacArthur's views, the War Department ordered *Masaya, Matagalpa,* and *Teapa,* undergoing repairs at Los Angeles, to continue to the Philippines by way of Hawaii. *Masaya,* with a cargo of three-inch antiaircraft ammunition, medical stores, and subsistence, was dispatched to Corregidor. *Matagalpa*'s cargo included .30- and .50-caliber machine guns, mortars, ammunition, anti-tank mines, medical goods, and aviation gasoline. Her destination was Gingoog Bay, Mindanao, where *Coast Farmer* had called in mid-February. *Teapa*'s destination would be determined when she arrived at Honolulu.

Though the two converted destroyers that finally left Hawaii were recalled before reaching Midway Island, on 21 April, MacArthur recommended that both vessels be again dispatched to Corregidor and thence to Australia.

In his reply the next day, General Marshall reported that the 10-knot *Alencon* had been determined too slow for running the blockade: however, *Masaya* was en route to Corregidor and *Matagalpa* was on its way to Mindanao.

On 24 April, General Wainwright provided routing instructions. He assumed that the Corregidor-bound *Masaya* would have escort protection some distance beyond Midway. Proceeding independently, the blockade runner was to steam westward between the Bonins and the Marianas, heading for the Balintang Channel above Luzon. Wainwright recommended that she tran-

sit this area at high speed at night and keep approximately 70 miles off the coast during daylight. She would enter South Channel at Corregidor by night using the swept channel through the minefield. The second blockade runner, en route to Gingoog Bay, was directed to run the Surigao Straits during darkness.

It was simply too late, and the surrender of Corregidor on 6 May 1942, ended all efforts to supply the Philippine command by converted World War I destroyers. In accordance with authorization from the War Department, General Delos C. Emmons, Hawaiian Department Commander, diverted *Masaya* and *Matagalpa* to Australia. The *Teapa* was sent to Alaska, as were the other remaining destroyers.

At the time the banana boats were being readied for the hazardous voyage to the Philippine Islands, the War Department made yet another attempt to supply the distant garrison. On 29 March 1942, General Marshall informed General Delos C. Emmons, Hawaiian Department Commander, that the food situation on Bataan was critical. The U.S. Chief of Staff ordered the immediate dispatch of a cargo ship with 3600 tons of concentrated food.

Within 48 hours, Emmons suggested use of the Navy-chartered *Thomas Jefferson*, a 12-knot, 7000-ton, new type "E" freighter. The Hawaiian Commander believed she could reach the Philippines in 18 days if a suitable crew could be obtained, and if the Navy approved her release. General Somervell, Assistant Chief of Staff G-4, and General Eisenhower, still actively interested in the relief effort, appealed to the Navy. Shortly thereafter, Admiral King authorized the use of *Thomas Jefferson* in an attempt to supply the Philippines. If necessary, the Navy Department agreed to man the ship.

On the first day of April 1942, while the ship was loading food supplies at Pier 28 in Honolulu, Lieutenant Commander J. W. Baldwin, USNR, took command. Other officers were: Lieutenant Commander Hunter R. Robinson (Executive), USNR; Lieutenants M. L. McCullough, Jr., and J. C. Hollingsworth, USN; Ensigns M. B. Davis and W. S. Pope, USNR; and Midshipmen H. M. Andersen and P. W. Heard, USNR. Sixty-one enlisted men were assigned as crew members.

Prior to reporting for duty, Lieutenant McCullough, navigator and communications officer, had been supplied with charts, radio frequencies, and codes and ciphers to be used on the voyage. The assignment did not strike McCullough as particularly prom-

ising since virtually everything west of Midway belonged to the Japanese. Though the run was supposed to be a top secret affair, he noted to his dismay that all the cargo bore large black stencils reading "QUARTERMASTER, MANILA, P.I."

Because Army officers feared that the ship might fall into enemy hands, demolition charges of TNT were placed in each hold and connected to a detonator switch in the captain's stateroom. If capture appeared imminent, Commander Baldwin would set off the charges. Since this meant that the TNT would be detonated before the freighter was abandoned, the officers worked out a better plan. The detonator box was removed from the captain's quarters and installed in a lifeboat with 1000 feet of covered cable. Should it become necessary to destroy *Thomas Jefferson*, the TNT could be exploded after the ship had been abandoned.

The Corregidor-bound cargo placed aboard included one million rations weighing 3000 tons, an additional 700 tons of rice, meat and milk, 20 tons of cigarettes, and 548 tons of ammunition. By late afternoon on 2 April 1942, the vessel was fully loaded.

At 1615, General Emmons came aboard and conferred briefly with the captain. Before he left ship, he gave Commander Baldwin his sealed orders; he also wished the naval officer good luck and safe voyage. It was obvious that Baldwin and his men were going to need plenty of luck.

A short time later, workmen from the Navy Yard delivered two 20mm antiaircraft guns. While the rapid-fire cannon were being installed in the bow, 12,000 rounds of 20mm ammunition was taken aboard; it was nearly midnight before the last of the workmen left the darkened ship.

By that time, Baldwin, Robinson, and the other officers had hashed over the mission. Though several wondered how they had been so unlucky as to have drawn what appeared to be an impossible assignment, it was most likely a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Lieutenant McCullough was certain that they did not have a ghost of a chance of reaching the Philippines.

Shortly before noon the following day, *Thomas Jefferson* stood out to sea and picked up her escort, the destroyer *Schley*. Commander Baldwin informed the *Schley* that a number of his men were without life jackets and the destroyer sent over 20 of them.

When dusk came on, the freighter and her escort darkened ship. At 2000 *Schley* signalled "Am returning to Pearl Harbor

good luck," and *Thomas Jefferson* was on her own. About half an hour later, Commander Baldwin opened his sealed orders, which directed *Thomas Jefferson* to refuel at Midway, proceed to the northern tip of Luzon, and then down the coast to Manila Bay and Corregidor. The submarine *Drum* would precede *Jefferson* by 24 hours, but would make no attempt to protect the freighter. However, she could intercept *Drum's* regular radio reports to Pearl Harbor indicating the presence of Japanese shipping—or warships. When Lieutenant McCullough laid out the course for the *Thomas Jefferson*, he made certain the vessel would cross the regular north-south sea lanes—the most likely area for enemy shipping—during the hours of darkness.

On 8 April 1942, five days out of Pearl Harbor, the ship was inspected by scout planes from Midway Island, and within the hour lookouts sighted the lonely atoll. Nightfall found the freighter anchored in the harbor at Midway.

Next morning the ship went alongside the pier to refuel. The date was 9 April—the day that General King surrendered his 76,000-man command on the Bataan peninsula. While the ship topped off, Commander Baldwin called upon the Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station, Midway Island. When he returned, he confided to his officers that there was a good chance their mission to Corregidor had been scratched, and they would receive new orders soon. As predicted, late that afternoon Baldwin received orders from Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, cancelling the voyage to the Philippine Islands. For a time it was planned to divert the ship to New Caledonia, but this too was changed. *Thomas Jefferson* pumped out the fuel oil, off-loaded much of her cargo, sailed back to Hawaii and had no further part in the Philippine relief effort.

With only a minimum of armament—a pair of 20mm and four .30-caliber machine guns—the ship would have made an ideal target for enemy aircraft. All the waters of the western Pacific through which the vessel would steam were under Japanese control. If, by great good fortune, the ship reached Luzon, her chances of reaching Corregidor were too small to calculate. In the final analysis, it is a blessing that *Thomas Jefferson* was recalled while at Midway. Lieutenant McCullough was right when he said they did not stand a ghost of a chance.

While the War Department tried to send supplies to the MacArthur command in converted destroyers, four-engine bombers mounted a sporadic air service between Darwin, Australia, and

Del Monte field on Mindanao. Limited quantities of cargo, generally critical medical items, were transported north while air corps personnel needed in Australia were evacuated south.

On 22 January 1942, General Sharp, U.S. Army Commander on the island of Mindanao, radioed an appeal to Java and to Australia for medical supplies. While the Surgeon at Base Number 3, Brisbane, dispatched the medicine to Darwin by air, a B-24 piloted by First Lieutenant Ben I. Funk, and an LB-30 flown by First Lieutenant Horace Wade, flew down from Java, loaded, then took off from Darwin on the evening of 26 January. This first shipment to the Philippines included 10,000 morphine tablets, 148 ampules of gas gangrene antitoxin, and a small quantity of ammunition.

The flyers made landfall near the brightly lighted seaport city of Davao on Mindanao, then headed inland. The Del Monte ground crew showed dim lights alongside the landing strip for their final approach. As soon as they stopped rolling, cargo was removed and the planes were readied for the return flight. Shortly after midnight, 29 enlisted men, mechanics of the 19th Bombardment Group, boarded the aircraft and they took off. The 1500-mile flight to Darwin was made without difficulty, both planes touching down at about mid-day.

When General MacArthur reported a desperate shortage of quinine, two more Liberators came up from Darwin on the night of 3-4 February, piloted by Lieutenants Murray W. Crowder and Horace Wade. They carried 717 ampules of gangrene antitoxin, 50,000 quinine tablets, small-arms ammunition, and Prestone. They evacuated additional air corps technicians to Australia.

Up until 19 February 1942, the airlift to Mindanao was based at Darwin. However, the disastrous bombing attack on that date —made by the same Japanese squadron that knocked off the blockade runners *Florence D.* and *Don Isidro*—destroyed a hangar containing cargo for the Philippines. Thereafter transport operations were transferred to Batchelor Field, located in the desert about 45 miles south of the city.

As part of the plan to evacuate General MacArthur from the Philippine Islands, General Brett ordered three B-17s from Australia to Mindanao. Carrying a full cargo of medical goods, signal equipment, and antiaircraft parts, they departed Batchelor on the evening of 11 March 1942. But the planes were old and tired, and trouble dogged the flight from the beginning. Engine trouble soon forced one to return to the field. A second plane, piloted

by Captain Henry C. Godman, crashed in the sea off Mindanao; two crew members were killed, and the entire cargo was lost.

Lieutenant Harl Pease, Jr., a veteran of the campaign in Java, flew the third B-17; the superchargers were not functioning and it had no brakes. Lieutenant Laurence E. Gardner, the navigator, anticipated an interesting landing at Del Monte. Pease, who seemed to possess a sixth sense, located the field and prepared to let down. The lights alongside the turf landing strip resembled two strings of candles.

Gardner's station in the nose of the plane gave him a heart-pounding close-up view of the landing. Touching down at the very beginning of the strip, Pease used the entire field to reduce speed, then skillfully ground-looped the plane to a halt. In Gardner's words, "It was a beautiful landing."

When General MacArthur reached Del Monte on 13 March 1942, following his departure from Corregidor by motor torpedo boat, he found the single B-17 waiting for him. Upon learning the condition of the plane—and the circumstances of the landing—he determined the Fortress unfit for passengers. Disgusted with this development, MacArthur complained to Brett in Australia and to Marshall in Washington, insisting that three completely serviceable aircraft be provided forthwith.

Relieved of his assignment to evacuate the MacArthur party, Lieutenant Pease loaded air corps men, and took off from Del Monte at 0300 on 14 March and headed back to Australia. Again without brakes, Pease used the entire strip when he landed the plane at Batchelor, still all in one piece.

In response to MacArthur's indignant communication, three new Flying Fortresses were dispatched to Mindanao, two landing before midnight on 16 March, the third the following night. The lead aircraft was piloted by Lieutenant Frank Bostrom, with Captain Edward C. Teats co-pilot; Captain Lewis and a Lieutenant Railing were pilot and co-pilot respectively of the second; and a Lieutenant Chaffin flew the third, with Captain Jack Adams co-pilot. Medical, signal, and ordnance supplies were transported to Mindanao. The first two planes flew General MacArthur and his staff to Batchelor Field on 17 March; the balance of the evacuation party was flown to Australia in the third aircraft the next day.

On that same day, the legendary Captain Paul I. "Pappy" Gunn departed Batchelor in an ancient twin-engine Beechcraft, a survivor of the pre-war Philippine Air Transport Company,

with a small cargo of medical items for Cebu. Though the intrepid flyer had made numerous over-water flights, his luck failed at last. Running out of fuel, he crashed at the head of the Moro Gulf along the western coast of Mindanao. Though Gunn survived and eventually hitched a ride back to Australia, his plane and cargo were lost.

On 27 March, three B-17s left for the Philippines. Two of the planes carried one million quinine tablets, a complete set of surgical instruments, two P-40 propellers, and 1200 pounds of radio and signal supplies. The third carried 5,000 pounds of critical signal supplies. The pilots were Lieutenants Faulkner, Spieth, and DuBose; co-pilots: Lieutenants Campbell, Fields, and Gibbs. The Fortresses returned to Australia with Philippine President Quezon and his personal party, and additional air corps personnel.

By March 1942, United States troops on Bataan faced starvation. Though food stocks and interisland vessels were available at Cebu, only 400 miles from Manila Bay, Japanese warships blocked all movement north. Yet General Wainwright believed that a squadron of bombers could disrupt the enemy blockade long enough for ships carrying food supplies to reach Corregidor, and he radioed an urgent appeal to Australia. Following receipt of Wainwright's proposal on 27 March 1942, General MacArthur called in Major General Ralph Royce, a crusty air corps general with a reputation for handling tough assignments. Royce considered the plan, determined it feasible, and volunteered to take the planes to Mindanao. After conducting offensive operations in the Philippines, Royce would remove pilots and air corps technicians to Australia.

The Royce flight, 10 twin-engine B-25s and 3 B-17s, represented the largest attack force mounted by the Army Air Corps in the southwest Pacific during the early months of the war. Though the 1500-mile hop from Australia to Mindanao presented no problem for the long-range Flying Fortresses, the B-25s had to be equipped with extra fuel tanks. While General Royce was in command, Colonel John H. Davies led the B-25s, Captain Frank Bostrom the B-17s.

Plans for the Mindanao mission were completed in Melbourne on 7 April; the squadron assembled in Northern Australia four days later. By that time Bataan had surrendered and Cebu had been captured by the Japanese. Interisland shipping, including eight motor-driven bancas loaded with food for Corregidor, had been destroyed at Cebu. With nothing to be gained by disrupt-

ing the enemy naval blockade, General Royce was directed to strike Japanese shipping, port facilities, and ground facilities throughout the Southern Islands. The 13 planes departed Batchelor early on 11 April, arriving at Del Monte in the evening. They delivered 3000 pounds of radio equipment, a ton of medical goods, 800 pounds of quinine, 200 gallons of aircraft machine-gun oil, and several pouches of mail.

Early the next morning, six worn P-40 fighter planes took off to raid the enemy air base at Davao, 100 miles southeast of Del Monte. One of the fighters was piloted by Captain Joseph H. Moore, a veteran of the Twentieth Pursuit who had downed two Zeros when the Japanese attacked Clark Field on the first day of war. While the P-40s were at work, the B-25s and two of the Flying Fortresses took off and headed for Cebu. Engine trouble kept the third B-17 on the ground. Taking the Japanese completely by surprise, the attack force hit ships and waterfront facilities, then headed back south.

By mid-day the bombers were carefully hidden at three different fields on Mindanao. Unfortunately, the B-17 with engine trouble was spotted by an enemy float plane shortly before sunset. Though a single bomb put the bomber out of action for good, its loss was somewhat offset when the P-40s shot down three Japanese aircraft.

The next day, the B-25s bombed and strafed Davao. One of the B-17s attacked three enemy supply ships off Batangas, Luzon; the other bombed Nichols Field. Before returning to Mindanao, the pilot, Frank Bostrom, flew over Corregidor to salute the valiant defenders.

That afternoon, the 12 bombers were serviced; the six P-40s and the disabled B-17 were set afire. Loaded with Army and Navy men, the aircraft took off after dusk and returned to Australia. Captain Joe Moore was one of the many pilots evacuated. Aside from the loss of one B-17, the mission had been a success. But Del Monte was too far for any follow-up raids, and Corregidor was about to fall.

Only two other planes, both B-17s, were successful in delivering shipments to Mindanao. On 20 April, a plane piloted by a Captain Bowman flew cargo to the Philippines and returned with a full load of passengers. The last aircraft, flown by Captain Alvin J. Mueller, carried to Del Monte 2400 pounds of medical and signal supplies, 380 pounds of spices, 20 boxes of candy, 6 cases of cigarettes, two 100-gallon belly tanks, and a wing tip

and an aileron for a P-40 fighter plane. It brought back Army and Navy personnel.

On 3 May 1942, Captain Mueller, flying a plane called "Old Bucket of Bolts," made one more attempt to deliver cargo at Del Monte but was unable to land. The attempted return flight ended with a crash landing in the N.E.I. and eventual transport to Darwin proved a nightmare. But the Navy came to the rescue, and Mueller and his crew made it back to Darwin in a somewhat humiliating fashion for airmen—they rode a submarine.

Because of the haste and secrecy involved in flying relief shipments to Mindanao, there were no accurate figures on the supplies sent. Though the flights were usually made with little preparation or notice, and whatever supplies available at the time were sent north, every Mindanao-bound aircraft was loaded to capacity. When the 13 bombers of the Royce flight are included, a total of 30 aircraft carried substantial quantities of critical cargo to Mindanao during the first four months of 1942. Aside from the obvious and imperative need for certain items, especially medical items, in the Philippines, the Mindanao airlift had an important result, i.e., the evacuation of many pilots and technicians, Army and Navy, who were needed for the enormous offensive base being constructed in Australia.

The pilots and crews manning the northbound aircraft provided invaluable assistance to forces in the Philippines by carrying cargo to Mindanao, yet the more arduous task of transporting it on to Luzon fell to an ephemeral unit called the Bamboo Fleet.

On the night of 21 April 1942, an airplane warmed up at Kindley Field on Corregidor. The pilot, Captain William R. Bradford, and his passengers, Colonel Stuart Wood and Lieutenant Colonel Wendell Fertig, wondered if the decrepit high-wing Bellanca cabin plane, nicknamed "Old Number Nine," would make the 300 miles south to Cebu.

Though there were searchlights in the hill overlooking Kindley that could illuminate the field, Bradford feared they would draw fire from enemy artillery batteries in lower Bataan. The 3000-foot landing strip, pock-marked with craters from bombs and shells, sloped eastward toward Manila Bay. When he gave the 250-horsepower engine full throttle, the aircraft lunged forward. But the strip was like a washboard and it was touch and go from the beginning.

With wings flapping, the heavily loaded Bellanca rattled and bucketed down the unlighted runway, but before it was airborne

it lurched off the strip and crashed in the rocks along the shore of the bay. The three officers received cuts and bruises, and Wood had a mild head concussion, but they survived the pile up.

For Old Number Nine, torn and shattered, it was the end of the line. The loss of the Bellanca also marked the end of the Bamboo Fleet, a scratch squadron of light aircraft which for a brief period in 1942 brought desperately needed food and medical supplies to Bataan and Corregidor. The pilots were little known, but should be remembered for their flying skill, endurance, and a special kind of courage.

Prior to the war, the Bellanca had been owned and operated by the Philippine Air Transport Company, with William R. Bradford general manager and senior pilot. Having logged nearly 5000 hours in the Philippines, Bradford was perhaps the most experienced flyer in the islands. At the outbreak of war, the eight-year-old Bellanca, an ancient Waco cabin plane, and a four-place Beech biplane were commandeered by the U.S. Army. Bradford was commissioned a captain in the Air Corps, and following the withdrawal to the peninsula in December 1941, he was made engineering officer at Bataan Field.

In mid-February, Bradford volunteered to fly the Bellanca to Cebu for food and medicines. He took off after dark, returning the next night with welcome cargo: five three-gallon cans of quinine, some blood plasma, and a quantity of gas gangrene serum. He also brought food, candy, and cigarettes stored throughout the cabin of the plane. Bradford's successful night flight to Cebu sparked the idea of an air shuttle service between Bataan and American-held bases in the south.

Operating out of Mindanao, the antiquated aircraft of the Bamboo Fleet were soon carrying foodstuffs and medical stores to Bataan Field, returning with key personnel. Captain Harvey Whitfield flew the Beechcraft, which with its 450-horsepower engine would do 170 mph if the wind was right: Dick Fellows, another captain, flew the Waco. Other pilots in the fleet were Captains Jack Caldwell, Jack Randolph, and Roland Barnick; and Sergeant Bill Strathern.

The vest-pocket airlift by the three ramshackle planes of the Bamboo Fleet was a strictly fly-by-night operation. And for good reason. With Japanese bombers and fighter aircraft freely prowling the skies by day, the light planes were forced to operate during the hours of darkness.

Few pilots at any time or in any war have had a more hazard-

ous assignment. Unarmed and dangerously overloaded, the little planes were highly vulnerable. Apart from the danger of enemy interception, the airplanes pressed into service were old and tired, barely airworthy under ideal conditions. The three-place Bellanca had previously been condemned for private flying. Repairs were on a make-do basis: truck tires were installed when airplane tires were not available, and one of the ships had a caster from a wheelbarrow for a tail wheel.

Though the three cabin planes based in Mindanao formed the backbone of the Bamboo Fleet, a fourth aircraft—a waterlogged relic from Manila Bay—performed similar independent transport service. In the opening days of the War with Japan, three J2F4 Grumman Ducks, single-engine biplane amphibians operated by the Navy, were strafed and sunk off Mariveles in Manila Bay. Two of them were completely submerged at high tide; the third lay high enough on the shore so that its engine remained above water when the tide was in.

Shortly after the retreat to Bataan in December 1942, the Twentieth Pursuit Squadron was based at the landing strip under construction outside Mariveles. In early March, after having lost all their planes in reconnaissance and offensive operations, Captain Joseph H. Moore, squadron commander, decided to try to salvage the Grummans. The sunken aircraft had become thoroughly corroded, but Moore and his men thought the other offered possibilities.

Using a block and tackle, the men pulled the biplane to higher ground. After bullet holes in the hull had been plugged with pieces cut from an inner tube, the aircraft was floated across the bay to a point nearest the landing strip, towed ashore, and moved to a fighter-plane revetment. Using parts and instruments salvaged from the sunken planes, Moore's men soon had the motor in operation. Though the revived Duck sounded like a coffee grinder, Captain Moore took off and made a short test hop. Upon returning to the field, he asked permission to fly the plane to Mindanao for food supplies.

With Captain Bill Cummings in the back seat, Moore took off at 0400 the following morning. The two flyers wanted to land at Cebu at first light—before enemy planes were about—but the ancient Grumman proved much slower than anticipated, and they reached their destination an hour after daybreak. The two men rested that day, then flew south to Del Monte early the next morning.

Leaving Cummings in Mindanao to pilot the next flight, Moore took off after dark for Cebu. Though the Duck carried a full load of medical goods and radio equipment, additional cargo was loaded at Cebu City. After remaining at the base all day, Captain Moore got airborne and continued the flight to Mariveles.

Moore, Cummings, and a third pilot soon set up a rough schedule. Operating mostly by night, one would fly to Mindanao and the second pilot would make the return run. Pilot number three would spell the others, flying north to Bataan or down to Mindanao as the occasion demanded. Since the Duck usually brought candy on the inbound flights, the ship came to be called the "Candy Clipper."

Despite the condition of the aircraft and the obvious hazards of night-time operations over enemy-held territory, the three cabin planes and the salvaged Duck completed about thirty-five round trips between Mindanao and the Bataan peninsula. By this means some 20 tons of medicines and foodstuffs, cigarettes and candy, were transported north and more than a hundred men evacuated to the Southern Philippines.

Though the flyers exhibited unusual skill and an old-fashioned kind of guts, by early April enemy aircraft had just about put the Bamboo Fleet out of business. Two Japanese navy planes shot the Waco out of the sky south of Cebu when it was en route to Del Monte with three men on board. A short time later, the stagger-wing Beechcraft—the speedster of the outfit—was shot down in Mindanao. The pilot made a crash landing, but an enemy fighter destroyed the ship with machine-gun fire.

The decrepit Duck amphibian was to make one more hair-raising flight before she, too, had to be discarded. On the way from Cebu to Mariveles on the night of 6 April 1942, the Grumman blew a cylinder about 75 miles south of Bataan. Unable to reach his regular base, Captain Moore carefully nursed the plane to Cabcaben Field on the opposite side of the peninsula from Mariveles. Under the circumstances, it was a miracle the engine carried the biplane that far.

Convinced that the Candy Clipper had made its last run, Moore returned to his squadron at Mariveles—but not for long. At noon on the 8th, the young fighter pilot was ordered to fly a P-40 just repaired at Cabcaben Field to Del Monte to provide air cover for the Royce bombers being sent up from Australia. While on his way across lower Bataan that evening, he noted considerable confusion, but he had no idea that the Japanese had broken through the front lines and that surrender was only hours

away. When he reached Cabcaben Field, he noticed that several mechanics were working on the Grumman. Moore climbed into the repaired P-40 and took off for Cebu. Remaining there the rest of the night, he went on to Mindanao the next day.

Meanwhile, at the Cabcaben strip the men rushed repairs on the old amphibian. Making use of a cylinder salvaged from a wrecked navy plane, the mechanics had worked 'round the clock, but it was nearly midnight by the time they got the engine running. The crack of small-arms fire and an occasional artillery shell signalled the approach of enemy infantry. Realizing there was no time for a test flight, Captain Barnick decided to take off at once.

Shortly after 0100, four lieutenants and Philippine Army Colonel Carlos Romulo piled into the worn biplane. The compartment in the fuselage below the pilot's seat was like the inside of a rubber boat. Though attached to Headquarters on Corregidor, Romulo had been ordered south by General Wainwright. The USFIP Commander feared for the colonel's safety if captured.

Amid the chaos and collapse of the military command on Bataan—and against a backdrop of exploding ammunition hurling fireworks skyward—the battered little amphibian bumped to the end of the cratered landing strip. Using a flashlight to see the few instruments still functioning, Barnick, who had never flown a J2F4, said a prayer and poured on the coal. With engine pounding, the overloaded biplane careened down the runway and staggered out over Manila Bay. Since the propeller was stuck in high pitch—like starting a car in high gear—Barnick found it impossible to gain altitude. As the amphibian clawed its way through the sky about 75 feet above the water, he yelled for the passengers to get rid of all loose gear. Parachutes, steel helmets, baggage, sidearms—even pieces of the floorboard—were tossed overboard. The weight reduction gave Barnick another 50 feet and the plane headed toward the open sea.

Since the fuel gauge was not working and Captain Barnick was not certain they had enough gas to reach Cebu, he decided to try for Iloilo, reducing their escape flight by about 75 miles. A little before dawn, the amphibian flew over Iloilo and landed at an army field outside the city. Colonel Romulo got off at Iloilo but was evacuated on south by Bradford in the Bellanca the following day.

In preparation for the hop to Del Monte after sundown, the Duck was refueled, its propeller was adjusted as much as possi-

ble, and additional sections of the floorboard were removed. When Captain Barnick and his companions set down in Mindanao that night, they breathed a long sigh of relief. The Duck's flying days were over. The Grumman was still at Del Monte when Barnick was evacuated to Australia two weeks later. As far as Barnick was concerned, the little Candy Clipper deserved a big fat medal for meritorious service above and beyond the call of duty.

On 18 April, about ten days after Captain Barnick arrived in Mindanao, General Wainwright radioed Sharp that Corregidor was desperate for medicines. He requested a delivery by one of the planes of the Bamboo Fleet. Bill Bradford's Old Number Nine was the only one left.

Since the Japanese had taken Cebu on the 10th and Iloilo on the 16th, General Sharp warned Corregidor that there appeared little chance the Bellanca could get through. Wainwright's reply next day left no room for doubt—the plane was to be sent north regardless of the risk.

The remaining pilots at Del Monte agreed to cut a deck of cards for the rugged assignment. Low card holder would try to reach the Rock. Bradford was, of course, in on the deal. Though he never owned up to the fact, unprejudiced observers were convinced that Bradford made certain he drew low card—and the hairy flight north.

With a large cargo of medical items on board, the small cabin plane departed after sundown for a small landing field near Bacolod, Negros, a distance of approximately 200 miles. If the engine ran true, the Bellanca should make the flight without difficulty, but Bradford was less certain about the landing. He hoped—and prayed—that the strip at Bacolod was still in American hands.

The Bellanca appeared over Bacolod shortly before midnight. When the landing lights flared alongside the strip, Bradford figured he was in luck. Even before the plane stopped, soldiers ran out to refuel it. Anticipating arrival at Corregidor at dawn, Bradford left Bacolod around 0300. Climbing to 4000 feet, Old Number Nine drummed through the darkness over the island of Panay and continued toward Mindoro. When Bradford realized he would reach Corregidor too early, he swung seaward and, losing altitude, moved west skimming the waves of the South China Sea.

As first light came with sudden abruptness, Bradford made a beeline for Corregidor. A faint mist close to the surface provided

cover as the aircraft, flying in bright sunlight, roared over Corregidor's battle-scarred south shore, made a climbing turn over the tail of the island, and landed on the shell-marked strip at Kindley Field. Ground crewmen hurriedly guided the Bellanca into a revetment where it would be safe from enemy air observers. With another arduous mission behind him, Captain Bill Bradford climbed out of Old Number Nine and made his way to Army Headquarters in Malinta Tunnel.

Enemy bombers and artillery on Bataan were lashing the Rock by the time Bradford reported to the Commanding General. "I thought you'd get through," Wainwright said as he shook hands with the weary pilot. "I'm glad you made it."

But that was the last time. The Bellanca crashed when Captain Bradford and Colonels Wood and Fertig attempted take off the next night. The three officers were evacuated to Mindanao when the Navy's two Cats flew in ten days later. But Bradford was the only one to reach Australia; Wood and Fertig remained in Mindanao.

The fly-by-night operations of the Bamboo Fleet in the Philippine Islands during the opening months of the Pacific War were small, informal affairs. Using light aircraft ready for the scrap heap, for a brief interval a small band of flyers maintained a miniature transport service between Bataan and Cebu and Mindanao. The airlift added little to nearly depleted supplies at Corregidor, but it was a magnificent gesture by pilots who displayed skill, endurance, and a special kind of courage.

The destroyers that never came, the modest deliveries made by long-range aircraft from Australia, and the hazardous operations of the Bamboo Fleet were all parts of an exercise in futility. Valiant efforts all, yet aside from precious packets of critical medical goods, they meant little to U.S. forces on Bataan and Corregidor.

Long before any of the destroyer-blockade runners departed Hawaii, Bataan and its ragged defenders slipped into the limbo of history. For the 76,000 American and Filipino soldiers—sick and starving, exhausted both in body and spirit, and still facing terror and death—United States aid in any form was without meaning. Ahead of them there was only imprisonment, torture, and starvation.

With the victorious Japanese gathering their strength for a final assault, the defenders of Corregidor now stood alone. Time would allow only one more chance to send them aid.

CHAPTER 13

TWO CATS TO CORREGIDOR

Following the surrender of U.S. and Philippine forces on the Bataan peninsula on 9 April, Lieutenant General Jonathan M. Wainwright became increasingly concerned with the fate of the nurses and other women on Corregidor. Many of the nurses, veterans of the campaign on Bataan, had made a last-minute escape to the island fortress; but Wainwright feared for their safety when Corregidor would be forced to surrender, which he knew was merely a matter of time. The Japanese had heavy guns on both the Bataan peninsula and along the Cavite shore, their bombers were operating at will, and Corregidor was being torn to pieces by frequent bombing attacks and almost incessant shelling. On 17 April, General Wainwright requested General MacArthur, Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area, in Melbourne, Australia, to send a Navy seaplane to Corregidor for the evacuation of nurses and other key personnel and for the removal of important military records. The aircraft could refuel at Lake Lanao on Mindanao, still in American hands.

Upon receipt of General Wainwright's appeal, MacArthur asked the Navy to explore the possibility of sending flying boats into the Philippines. Lieutenant Commander Edgar T. Neale, an experienced patrol plane pilot, studied the distances involved and determined the amount of cargo or passengers that could be carried by the PBY Catalina, which had a range of 2400 miles. Neale believed that his old outfit, Patrol Wing Ten, based at

Perth in Western Australia, could supply "Cats" with flight crews who were familiar with the Indies and the Philippines, having been badly shot up and driven out of both areas by the Japanese. The planes would fly from Perth to Darwin, where they would refuel for the 1500-mile flight to Mindanao. The Army reported they could service the aircraft at Lake Lanao for the 600-mile night hop to Corregidor. Neale concluded that the flight, though admittedly hazardous, appeared feasible.

A few hours after Commander Neale submitted his views on the possibility of using PBYs to reach Corregidor, he learned that the flight had General MacArthur's blessing—and he had the job. Though surprised by this development, he welcomed the assignment. The operation was assigned the code name "Flight Gridiron," and was set up for around the end of April.

Once it had been decided that the flight was logistically and operationally feasible, Commander Neale briefed Lieutenant Commander John V. Peterson, skipper of Patrol Wing Ten, on the flight. Peterson assured him that aircraft were available and agreed to start preparations for the mission.

Supreme Headquarters set the stage for "Flight Gridiron" with a series of directives to various offices and unit commanders in Australia and in the Philippines. General Sharp, U.S. Army commander in Mindanao was ordered to provide safe hideaways for the planes on Lake Lanao, while the Army Air Corps at nearby Del Monte field would furnish aviation gasoline and lubricating oil. The designation of codes to be used and the provision of communications between Corregidor, Lake Lanao, and Darwin, Australia, would be the responsibility of the Signal Corps.

U.S. Army Intelligence was to supply information on the strength of the enemy—especially fighter aircraft—in the Philippines, areas of Mindanao occupied by the Japanese, and enemy naval forces operating in the vicinity of Corregidor. The Army commander at Darwin would furnish up-to-date weather information. General Wainwright was to designate the rendezvous area, and he would also report weather and sea conditions there. In accordance with Wainwright's original appeal, critical medical supplies were airlifted to Darwin.

At Perth, Commander Neale found that only two of Patrol Wing Ten's 28 original planes were left by the time they had been driven out of Java a month earlier, and neither were in any condition to fly to the Philippines. Luckily, a replacement squad-

ron had arrived from Pearl Harbor, and aircraft were made available for "Flight Gridiron."

Neale and Peterson agreed that Lieutenants (jg) Tom Pollock and LeRoy Deede, should pilot the two aircraft; and that Lieutenant (jg) William V. Gough and Chief Aviation Pilot D. W. Bounds would serve as first officers. Another enlisted pilot, W. D. Eddy, was to go along in Deede's aircraft. They were all old Philippine hands and knew the islands from flight experience. Neale had the feeling that these men could handle the flight and make it back to Australia if anyone could.

The three officers and the two enlisted pilots knew Commander Neale, as he had, until recently, been in command of VP102, one of Patrol Wing Ten's two flight squadrons. Neale outlined the proposed flight to the Philippines and said, "We need you men to go north on this flight. You all volunteer, don't you." This was how Tom Pollock and his comrades "volunteered." Lieutenant Gough, absent during the conference, received a separate briefing.

A short time later, Neale, Pollock, and Deede selected the rest of their flight crews and brought them in for a limited briefing. In this instance, the men were not informed of their destination. They were simply invited to go along on what would probably prove a dangerous mission, but the officers made it clear that they thought the chances very good the Catalinas would return. Without any fuss the eight bluejackets agreed to go.

Ever mindful of coral reefs in the Philippines, Lieutenant Pollock insisted that his list of supplies include a quart of marine glue and several yards of muslin cloth for patching the fragile flying boat hull. A thorough search of Perth and Fremantle yielded less than a pint of marine glue, which, with the muslin, was carefully packed with their rations and emergency gear when they loaded their PBY.

Neale, Pollock, and Bounds were scheduled to fly PBY 1, the "flag plane," while Deede, Gough, and Eddy would fly PBY 7 in the wing position. Additional crewmen in the lead plane included: M. Ferrara, plane captain (flight engineer); L. Gassett, radioman; W. F. Drexel, second mechanic; and H. F. Donahue, second radioman. Additional members of the wing plane were: Wallace D. Eddy, chief aviation pilot; M. H. Crain, plane captain; M. C. Lohr, second mechanic, E. W. Bedford, radioman; and W. F. Kelley, second radioman. The men were not told their destination until after they were airborne, but several of them

learned that the pilots had been issued navigation charts of the Philippine Islands and no doubt figured they were going to Corregidor.

On 22 April 1942, while Commander Neale and his men prepared for the long flight to the Philippine Islands, General Wainwright radioed General MacArthur that all preparations had been made at Lake Lanao and Corregidor.

The Chief Signal Officer, Headquarters Southwest Pacific Area, issued instructions relative to radio frequencies, call letters, and codes to be used for the flight operation. For air-to-ground recognition, the planes were to use Aldis lamps transmitting any two-letter combination taken from the word "PBY." The reply, ground-to-air recognition signal, was to be the single letter "N." Should Aldis lamps be out of order, air crews were directed to fire red and green Very signal flares.

Army meteorologists provided a long-range weather forecast for an area extending northward from Darwin, Australia, to the island of Formosa, and warned that the flying boats would encounter heavy rain showers and squally weather from New Guinea into the South China Sea. Between the Celebes and Mindanao, skies would be generally overcast with variable cloud layers to a height of 35,000 feet, possibly producing thunderstorms. Weather within the Philippines would include broken to scattered clouds around 2000 feet with tops generally at 8000 feet, and frequent showers in the afternoon locally.

At 1000 Monday, 27 April 1942, the two flying boats departed Perth for the 400-mile flight north to Shark Bay, a large inlet on the western coast of Australia.

Shortly after 1300, the PBYs reached Shark Bay where the seaplane tender USS *Preston* began refueling operations. The flight crews rested on board, ate an early dinner—their last good meal for almost a week—and at 1800 returned to the planes and prepared for take-off.

By the time the planes leveled off at 1000 feet on their 1400-mile leg to Darwin, they had entered a cloud bank and the coastline was lost from view. With visibility drastically reduced, Pollock, in the flag plane, switched on the running lights so Deede, in the second plane, could follow. By then Pollock was on instruments, and since he was in the lead plane, he was responsible for the navigation of the flight, which was made by dead reckoning. About 0500, the planes broke out of the clouds and Darwin was faintly visible dead ahead. Before leaving Perth, the

flyers had been briefed on the landing approach they should make at Darwin, for the area had received a number of bombing attacks, and her antiaircraft gunners were likely to shoot first and ask questions later. With this in mind, the pilots carefully followed the procedure for incoming friendly planes. Later they learned it was out of date, and they had unwittingly caused an air raid alarm. Fortunately, someone identified them as being friendly, and the antiaircraft batteries remained silent.

Commander Neale made arrangements with the RAAF to refuel from a gasoline barge owned by Qantas Airlines. Instructing his men to take the PBYs upriver when they had been refueled, Neale set out to locate the local U.S. Army commander, which involved a 28-mile jeep ride to the 147th Field Artillery Regiment outside Darwin.

The C.O. of the 147th forwarded Neale's dispatches to Adelaide River, the nearest U.S. Army Communications Center, by officer-courier. In this way, Neale was able to let U.S. Naval Headquarters at Melbourne know they had reached Darwin, and to inform Corregidor and Lake Lanao that the PBYs would fly north to Mindanao that night.

When the Catalinas had been refueled, they took off, flew upriver about ten miles, landed and dropped anchor, where the receding tide—20 feet in the Darwin area—soon left PBY 7 high and dry on the mud. This was a dangerous situation, but the men had tide information which indicated that high tide would occur in the afternoon. The water rose as scheduled and the big plane was afloat when time came to return to Darwin.

The flyers had hoped to get some rest, but the temperature rose to 105 degrees and vicious black flies appeared in droves. The metal aircraft, absorbing the direct rays of the sun, became almost unbearable inside. One of the sailors suggested a swim, but someone remembered that the water was inhabited by sharks—and that ended that. Shifting winds forced the men in PBY 1 to start engines and change anchorages several times during the afternoon. They had coffee and rations, and attempted to relax, but the heat, flies, and shifting wind made it a most unpleasant layover.

When the planes returned to Darwin at about 1500, Commander Neale was waiting at the waterfront. The sailors commenced loading almost a ton of ordnance supplies, 1400 pounds of medical supplies (atabrine, thiamenchloride, and sulphanilimide) and 140 pounds of radio parts, nearly three times the nor-

mal cargo load. Boxes of nose fuzes for antiaircraft shells covered the deck and forced the crewmen to crawl about the plane on hands and knees. With a ton and a half of cargo and five tons of fuel on board, they took off shortly before sunset, climbed to an altitude of 6000 feet, and at 120 knots began the longest leg of the flight through enemy territory.

Departure from Darwin was timed to place them at Lake Lanao approximately one hour before daybreak the next morning. Although Japanese planes were reported operating from Dilli and Koepang, on the island of Timor, Neale and Pollock had decided upon the most direct course to conserve fuel. At around 2100, six hours out of Darwin, the planes passed over the eastern tip of Timor.

Over the Banda Sea, they again encountered dirty weather and climbed to 8000 feet where they cleared the tops of the clouds and entered smoother air. However, a second layer of higher clouds blocked out the stars. The layer of clouds above and below the planes provided superb cover, but made navigation difficult.

For a time they were within easy range of enemy aircraft at Kendari, 100 miles west, and those at Ambon, a little further east. But bad weather and good luck favored them; there was no sign of the enemy.

Over the island of Sula, the sky was clear. Soon they saw Menado, lit up "like a Christmas tree." This was an encouraging sign. The enemy was apparently unaware the Navy planes were in the area.

At about 0200, they made landfall near Kalaong, on the west coast of Mindanao, and shortly after 0400, they crossed the coast of Mindanao and continued inland. About twenty minutes later they identified Lake Lanao.

U.S. Army personnel waiting in boats on the lake flashed the letter "N," and the lead plane gave the proper response. In the limited visibility they made power landings. An outrigger canoe powered by an outboard motor appeared out of the darkness, and Ensign R. E. Hoffman used a flashlight to lead PBY 1 to an island called West Balut, where soldiers lit fires along the beach and turned on additional lights. Pollock did not like the overhanging trees, and despite the illumination it was a difficult approach. Gingerly he eased the large seaplane in, and the soldiers made it fast to the trees. Old tires were lashed to the hull to protect it from the rocks.

Then the men, using machettes and bayonets, cut palm leaves and tree limbs to camouflage the aircraft. Lieutenant Pollock, who had had a well-camouflaged PBY destroyed by Japanese Zeros on a lake below Manila on Christmas Day, 1941, wanted the plane completely invisible from the air. Fortunately, the island was heavily wooded, had thick underbrush, and the leaves from the trees provided the mooring with considerable natural cover. It took nearly an hour to gather enough material to cover the Catalina, with its 104-foot wing and 64-foot hull. The white stars on the wing and the slightly smaller bow insignia were covered with army blankets.

Meanwhile, PBY 7 hid in a cove on the west side of the lake. Fortunately, it was towed into the anchorage by the tail. Thus it could taxi out, while the flag plane had to be towed out into the lake before it could turn around. This situation later caused a near disaster.

As soon as the planes were received, Commander Neale went to U.S. Army Headquarters at Marawi City and sent a radio message to Australia reporting their safe arrival. Later, in the Dan Salan Hotel, he ran into an old friend, Captain J. L. "Joe" McGuigan, who had been Industrial Manager of the Cavite Navy Yard before the war. In late February, McGuigan had been sent to Iloilo to assist with the operation of interisland blockade runners. When the operation was abandoned, Captain McGuigan hitched a ride to Mindanao in a B-25 bomber piloted by "Pappy" Gunn.

Meanwhile on Lake Lanao, Pollock and his men ate and tried to rest, but the airplane had attracted what appeared to be the entire population of a local Moro village—old men and women, young warriors with broad-bladed bolo knives, and dozens of children, usually wearing little more than their imagination. The visitors sat or squatted on the beach chattering like magpies, gazing in awe at the great bird from the sky.

Shortly before noon, some of Ensign Hoffman's men began refueling from 55-gallon drums, using hand pumps. One-hundred pounds of quinine was loaded for delivery at Corregidor, and the plane was stripped of all nonessential gear. Blankets, oxygen equipment, part of the rations, and excess tools were neatly stacked on the beach under Army guard. To further lighten the Catalinas for the flight north, a mechanic and radioman from each plane remained at Lake Lanao. Reluctantly, Pollock ordered all guns and ammo removed. It was like parting with old

friends, yet interception was considered a calculated risk, and with a heavy load of evacuees, they needed every bit of lift they could get.

Shortly before 1900 on the evening of 29 April, the planes prepared for take-off. In PBY 7, Deede and Gough started engines and taxied out into the lake; it was not so simple for Neale and Pollock in PBY 1, which had to be towed out by an outrigger canoe powered by a one-cylinder motor. The plane was in dangerously close quarters, and wholly dependent upon the canoe until sufficiently clear of the island to start engines. Fortunately, there was little wind. The two aircraft became airborne before the last light of day, and flew west over the mountains of Zamboanga to the Sulu Sea.

Several times on the way north, the flag plane attempted to obtain a radio bearing on Manila, but the station was apparently off the air.

While the PBYs had been hidden on Lake Lanao, Corregidor had the heaviest bombardment it had ever received. It was Emperor Hirohito's birthday, and to celebate this auspicious occasion more than a hundred guns pounded the island fortress, accompanied by a long series of devastating bombing attacks. At the height of one of the bombardments, Lieutenant General Wainwright received a message from Brigadier General William F. Sharp on Mindanao, reporting that the flying boats would arrive after dark. The minesweepers *Quail* and *Tanager* were alerted to commence sweeping the water between Caballo and Corregidor clear of mines after nightfall.

Several days earlier, MacArthur had named key personnel to be evacuated. Wainwright was to select the remainder of the 50 passengers—a most difficult task. As the General later expressed his dilemma, "It is not an easy thing to be a judge of whether a man or woman will go free or stay in hell." The evacuees numbered nineteen nurses and thirty-two assorted Army, Navy, and civilian personnel. One of the few specifically named by General MacArthur was Colonel Stuart Wood, Wainwright's Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, who had served in Tokyo before the war and knew Japanese. There was also a naval officer who had worked on the battleship *North Carolina*, then under construction in the states, and a navy chief petty officer who was an expert on the top secret Norden bombsight.

Before Colonel Wood left, Captain Hoeffel asked a personal favor of him. Upon graduation from the Naval Academy in 1917,

Ensign Hoeffel purchased a $12.00 21-jewel Elgin wristwatch, and he had worn it ever since. He wanted Colonel Wood to try to get the watch to Mrs. Hoeffel in the States.

Captain Hoeffel wasn't the only one to ask Colonel Wood for a favor. General Wainwright entrusted Wood with perhaps a dozen bags of mail and top secret papers; Colonel Wood promised to destroy the papers if there appeared any danger they might fall into enemy hands.

General Wainwright was at the dock a little before 2000 when the evacuation party began loading into the boats. It was difficult for those staying behind. One of the party was a beautiful army nurse, Lieutenant Juanita Redmond. Like the other nurses, she was wearing loose-fitting khaki colored pants and an army shirt. Just before leaving the dock, she put her arms around General Wainwright, stood on tip-toes and gave him a big kiss, then said, "Oh, thank you, General." The General never forgot it.

The PBYs spotted Corregidor about 2300. Grassfires and burning ammunition dumps provided an ideal checkpoint.

Because of haze near the surface of the water, both planes made instrument landings off Monkey Point, where the boats waited. They kept their engines turning over, to head into the wind. After what seemed like five hours, but was probably five minutes, a boat came alongside PBY 1. Sailors unloaded the cargo in less than 20 minutes, then the boat headed for Corregidor.

The passenger launch came alongside, and the bags of mail and paper were loaded. Twenty-three passengers—ten Army and Navy officers, ten nurses, and three women civilians—hurriedly boarded. The boats alongside were pulling the plane toward the rocks off Monkey Point, and Lieutenant Pollock grabbed the mike and exclaimed, "Get those 'old women' aboard and let's get out of here. There's Jap artillery on both sides that can make us very unhappy."

Dave Bounds climbed into his seat and replied, "Well, you were right about the women. We've got thirteen aboard."

"All women? Where's Commander Bridget?," asked Pollock. Commander Frank Bridget, formerly Chief of Staff of Patrol Wing Ten, was on the passenger list. He had been C.O. of the Naval Defense Battalion on Bataan, shortly before Pollock was evacuated in *Seawolf*.

Bounds answered, "Don't worry, he's on board."

The loading completed, the boat cast off and Pollock began

slowly taxiing toward PBY 7. He glanced at Bounds and asked, "How many people back there?"

Bounds replied, "I can't be certain, but there must be thirty—you can't walk from one end to the other."

As soon as PBY 7 was on the water, and her men began transferring cargo to the whaleboat alongside, they discovered some old friends, who had been left behind when Patrol Wing Ten pulled out of the Philippines. Lieutenant Gough leaned out of the open gun turret, grabbed an enlisted man by the hand, and refused to let go. It was Donnell, his radio chief before the war. Gough got his chief back to Australia, but as usual in the Navy, had to write some letters to explain why he did it. Eddy did the same thing. He informed Deede, at the controls, that he had spotted Abe Kall, a chief ordnanceman, in the passenger boat. The pilot told Eddy to grab him, and he did.

PBY 7 took on 24 passengers: 10 Army and Navy officers, 9 nurses, 3 women civilians, one soldier, and one priest. When Major Jose Razon, Philippine Army, a paymaster on his way to Mindanao, handed Eddy a canvas bag, he shook his head and started to toss it into the sea. "But it's full of money," Razon exclaimed. Eddy reconsidered and threw the bag into the bilges. Although there were supposed to be 25 passengers in each plane, the reconstructed list of evacuees indicated that PBY 1 had 23, while PBY 7 had 26, including Donnell and Kall.

The flight of the Cats to Corregidor was naturally a top secret affair, but the island fortress had a lively grapevine, and a great many people watched them that night with mixed emotions. General Wainwright watched anxiously through field glasses while the hazardous transfer was made, heard the engines roar at take-off, and offered a silent prayer for their safe return to Australia.

Since the wind was from the northeast, the PBYs had to take off in the direction of Manila. At 80 knots they were on the step; airborne and with floats retracted, they made a climbing turn to avoid flying over Manila, and headed to sea. The passengers in PBY 1 began shifting about, trying to get comfortable on bunks and mail bags. A sailor passed out oranges, apples, and chocolate bars, another started serving the passengers honest-to-God coffee.

There was little talk among the passengers; most were lost in their thoughts. It seemed impossible that they were on their way to freedom. For them, the grueling bombardments, which they had experienced with maddening regularity for so long, were over. Though overjoyed at the thought of getting out of the

islands, they were also horribly depressed as they remembered comrades and dear friends left behind. Although they had been ordered out of Corregidor, they felt like deserters.

The crew in PBY 7 also served hot coffee, and Lieutenant Gough produced three bottles of Vat 69 whiskey, which were soon empty. Gough had never before so enjoyed watching others have a drink, without joining them.

Well out over the China Sea, they slowed to a cruising speed of 110 knots at 4000 feet. About 0330, PBY 1 entered thin clouds, and PBY 7 lost visual contact. When Neale and Pollock discovered the Seven Boat was no longer following, they decided to continue on course. Deede, Gough, and Eddy were good navigators, and should have no difficulty finding their way.

PBY 1 reached Lake Lanao shortly before dawn, and a small boat guided the seaplane to the island hideout. This time the soldiers knew how to handle the lines and the aircraft was soon made secure. The passengers disembarked while the landing party began camouflaging the flying boat.

Pollock, who was to remain at the anchorage, assured Colonel Wood that the canvas bags on the floor of the aircraft would not be disturbed. Commanders Neale and Bridget, Colonel Wood, and the rest of the passengers then took a boat to the mainland, where they were transported to the hotel in Marawi City, arriving there after daylight. The evacuees, tired and hungry, were given food and lodging and welcome hot baths, a pleasure they had almost forgotten.

When PBY 7 lost contact, Deede and Gough continued southward independently. Thick, low-hanging clouds prevented them from landing on Lake Lanao, so they reversed course and flew well out over the Mindanao Sea, where Deede made a rough instrument landing which popped a number of rivets in the hull. Lead pencils, from the supply always carried in the aircraft, were sharpened and jammed into the openings. At dawn they took off for Lake Lanao. The evacuees left for Marawi City to join those from the other plane, while the plane was camouflaged and refueled, and the crewmen rested.

Again, Neale radioed Naval Headquarters in Australia, reporting that the rescue at Corregidor had been successful and that they would continue south after dark. He met Captain McGuigan, who reported that he had been ordered to Australia with them.

At mid-afternoon one of the PBY crew told Lieutenant Pollock that the local Moro chief had appeared, and the natives were

strangely quiet. The two pilots went ashore where the chief, wearing a bright-colored fez and carrying a .45-caliber pistol to signify his importance, stood waiting.

Through an interpreter, Pollock and Bounds exchanged greetings with the Moro who complained that his people were unhappy because they would now be forced to move. Pollock finally found it had been rumored that the flyers were going to destroy most of the trees on the island; and since the Moros obtained much of their food from the area, they were vigorously opposed to the idea.

The young officer explained that now the airplane was hidden from Japanese patrol planes, they would cut no more trees. Pollock said his men would not cut the beetlenut bushes, which the natives valued highly, and he soothed the Moros with American cigarettes. At that moment one of the sailors appeared carrying an armload of bettlenut bushes cut for camouflaging, and the natives raised a loud protest. Pollock finally convinced the Moros that the sailor meant no harm, and cordial relations were eventually reestablished.

Shortly before 1800, Commanders Neale and Bridget, Captain McGuigan, Colonel Wood, and the rest of the passengers showed up, the camouflage was removed and they boarded the flying boat. As Pollock and Bounds settled in the cockpit of PBY 1, they heard Deede start the engines in PBY 7. But PBY 1 had to be pulled clear of the sheltered anchorage, tail first, by an outrigger canoe powered by an outboard motor and natives who spoke no English. The wind was off the lake. A Catalina tended to head into the wind, even without engines, and strong gusts increased the hazards of this difficult operation.

The plane had moved only a short distance when an unusually strong gust of wind stopped plane and boat, and began drifting them back to the island. The outrigger was useless, and Neale ordered the line cut.

The PBY finally drifted clear of the island and the flyers thought they were safe, but suddenly the plane shuddered as the hull struck some submerged rocks, and water poured in. Pollock hit the ignition switches, the engines roared to life, and he pivoted the plane and prepared for take-off.

But water was pouring into the flying boat. Several of the nurses put army blankets over the openings and stood on top of the makeshift patches, but it did little good. The water was nearly a foot deep. Colonel Wood wondered about the papers in the canvas bags and Captain Hoeffel's wristwatch.

Pollock and Bounds hurriedly checked the instruments and were starting the take-off when the passengers aft began yelling that the ship was taking water. When they realized how badly the plane had been damaged, they concluded their only hope was to return to the island at once. All hands piled out as soon as the bow touched the shore, and the ship was emptied in record time. But the center compartment had two feet of water, with more coming in.

Meanwhile Deede had gotten airborne and, for a short time, circled over the island waiting for the second PBY. Pollock grabbed an Aldis lamp—it was dark by then—and signalled that they should go on alone. PBY 7 blinked an acknowledgement and disappeared.

Aside from the fact that a soldier stowaway was discovered in the tail section of the plane, PBY 7 made an uneventful flight to Australia. The Catalina landed at Darwin soon after daybreak, disembarked most of the passengers, was refueled, and departed for Perth. When the flight crew rejoined the squadron at 0615, Saturday, 2 May 1942, some of their shipmates refused to believe they had been to Corregidor, until Abe Kall appeared. Then the skeptics knew that the crewmen were telling the truth.

In the darkness at Lake Lanao, crew and passengers decided that the PBY would never fly again. The bow rested on the beach and the port wing hung over the shore, but the plane was settling by the tail, which lay in deep water. The weight of the incoming water slowly pulled the starboard wing down until the wingtip float was almost completely submerged. Even as they labored to lighten the seaplane, the tail section slid lower into the water.

With the canvas bags of mail and papers, Wood, the nurses, and other passengers moved to a nearby Army base for the night. There they learned that Japanese troops had landed at Cotabato, about 50 kilometers away. This news, plus the fact that the plane appeared beyond salvage, further discouraged the people who only hours earlier had escaped from certain death or imprisonment at Corregidor. The outlook, for everyone, was pretty bleak.

Back at the beached PBY, Neale, Bridget, McGuigan, and the crewmen examined the nearly sunken boat further. McGuigan had considerable salvage experience and thought that if they could keep the plane afloat through the night, he would go to Marawi City for pumps, cloth, lumber, and several Filipino mechanics, and "try to patch her up in the morning."

Commander Neale told Pollock and Bounds to do their best, then left with McGuigan and Bridget. At the Army Communica-

tions Center, he radioed Australia of their plight and requested that a four-engine bomber be immediately sent to the Army airfield at Del Monte. This request finally resulted in a work-worn B-24, "Old Bucket of Bolts," being ordered to their rescue from Melbourne.

At the island anchorage, with most of the removable weight out of the flying boat, the crewmen began buoying it with 55-gallon gasoline drums. When Pollock and his men were completely exhausted, four or five soldiers stripped and went to work, diving to locate holes and patching them. When they grew tired, other soldiers took their place.

They could patch the smaller openings, but the bulk of the water was entering in a jagged two-foot opening in the center compartment. Through the night, under makeshift lights, they labored to keep the plane afloat. Bailing crews removed tons of water while others patched the holes. A gasoline-driven pump was secured from Iligan, on the north coast, and put to work. They made numerous attempts to cover the hole in the hull, but it was too large; a watertight patch required better equipment and more substantial materials than were at hand.

Once the fuselage sank so low that the lower edge of the blister opening was only about an inch above water. Any lower, the waist compartment would flood and salvage would be out of the question. But the pumps and their bailing efforts paid off, and the aircraft gradually rose higher out of the water.

By dawn, except for one large opening, the majority of the holes had been temporarily patched. The pumps were gaining and the aircraft appeared safe from sinking. One man remained on watch by the waist blister while the others stumbled ashore in their wet clothes and collapsed on the ground.

During the long night, Captain McGuigan was also busy. He had assisted in the army motor pool at Marawi City and knew where to find salvage equipment and materials. With flashlight in hand, he prowled the motor park, scrounging tools, lumber, and inner tubes for making a patch. McGuigan also raided a quartermaster warehouse and obtained cloth, cotton bunting, and waste from a missionary house. At daybreak he loaded his loot into a truck, picked up Neale and Bridget and four Filipino carpenters and mechanics, and they left for Lake Lanao. An American lumberman named Hedges provided McGuigan with the truck and the workmen. They were a welcome sight to the plane crew.

Neale told them a four-engine bomber was being sent up from Australia. Commander Bridget may have felt he could not help with the salvage job; in any event, he had decided to join Colonel Wood at the army field at Del Monte. He assured Neale and McGuigan that he would send word when the bomber arrived. If the flying boat was not repaired by then, he said, sink it and they would all ride the bomber. Neale and Pollock never saw Bridget again; he was imprisoned by the Japanese and died on a POW ship enroute to Japan in 1944.

With Captain McGuigan directing, all hands set to work on the seaplane. A bucket line began removing water from the middle compartment. Two army blankets were finally placed over the opening in the hull, and as water was removed from inside the plane, outside water pressure forced the blankets tightly against the fuselage, greatly reducing the incoming flow. McGuigan then placed the sponge rubber back pad from a parachute over the inside of the large gash in the hull. This was followed by a rubber gasket made from inner tubes. The opening in the hull of the flying boat now had three coverings: blankets on the outside, and a parachute and rubber patch on the inside.

To strengthen the repair patch for a take-off, they next installed wooden slats directly over and flush against the rubber gasket, and braced it with timber against the overhead. They strengthened the whole thing with nearly 50 wooden wedges.

The men worked steadily throughout the day, for Japanese troops were reported only 15 miles away. McGuigan, often in water above his waist, performed almost impossible repairs with a minimum of tools and the crudest of materials. Neale and Pollock thanked their lucky stars that McGuigan had been in their plane.

By 1600 the repairs were completed. No one knew if the makeshift patch would stand the stress to take off, but it was their only hope.

The Japanese were moving toward Lake Lanao and there was little time. Since there was no word from Commander Bridget at Del Monte, they would try for take-off immediately. If the plane got into the air, they would head for Australia. The only passengers were Captain McGuigan and Ensign Hoffman, three soldiers, and five Navy enlisted men from Lieutenant John D. Bulkeley's PT-41. There was no time to hunt for Bridget, Colonel Wood, or any of the other passengers. In any event, the patched-

up plane could no longer carry a full load. The rest of them would be picked up by the bomber from Australia.

The thing to do now was to get going. The outrigger towed the seaplane out of the anchorage. Offshore, Pollock started the take-off at once, with cold engines. But the patch leaked. Despite the pumps and bailing, the water was gaining.

The two pilots thought it was the longest take-off run they had ever made. But the patch held, and finally Pollock pulled the sluggish aircraft up on the step. After what seemed like an eternity, it dragged clear of the water and began picking up air speed.

But they were not yet safe. Water on board made the plane unstable and hard to control: it drained out in long trails as they climbed. Several hours later, they cleared the southeastern tip of Mindanao and headed due south. Japanese-held Menado was soon left behind, and in the early dawn, they neared Darwin, a long way from Corregidor and Lake Lanao. They couldn't help wondering what would become of those they left behind.

At Del Monte, Woods, Bridget, and the other passengers waited for a rescue flight as long as they dared before the Japanese arrived. A B-24, sent from Melbourne via Darwin, flew to Mindanao several nights later, but by then the evacuees were no longer at Del Monte, having left for fear the Japanese would capture it, although the field remained in U.S. control for several more days. The pilot, Captain Mueller, did not know it at the time, but they were anxiously waiting at Valencia Field, a small airfield 70 kilometers south of Del Monte. The entire group was taken prisoner a short time later. The B-24 ditched on the return flight. The rescue of her crew, by the USS *Porpoise*, marked the next to the last time that Americans got out of the islands before the surrender of Corregidor.

Prior to his capture, Colonel Wood destroyed the mail and military papers he had been trying to transport to Australia. With the help of the nurses, he dried the papers, dipped them in gasoline, and burned them. The gold wrist watch he kept until, months later, in prison camp, he met Captain Hoeffel again. Hoeffel had already worn the watch for nearly 25 years, so he took it back and wore it for another 25.

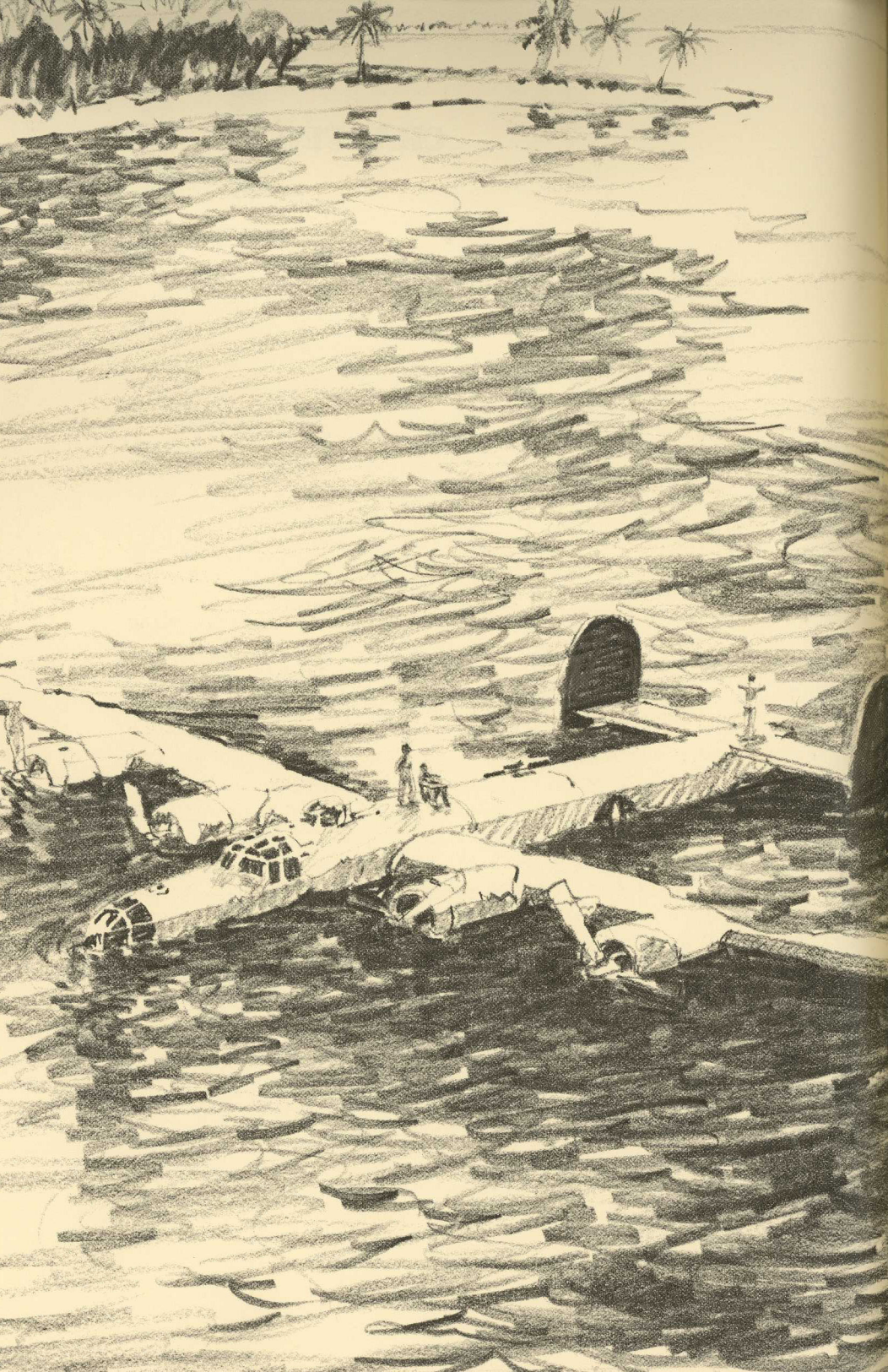
PBY 1 had got off Lake Lanao with a patched hull, but landing at Darwin was something else again. Pollock flew parallel to the beach, as close as possible in case the patch gave way and the plane began to sink. When the plane hit the water it bounced

three times—the worst landing Pollock had ever made—but the patch remained in place.

The passengers found it hard to believe they were actually in Australia, far from the horrors of Corregidor. The crew went ashore for a hot meal, but McGuigan remained on board the aircraft, pumping out water. By midmorning, they had refueled and were headed straight for Perth, 1600 miles across the Great Sandy Desert, some of the most desolate country on the face of the globe. Commander Neale had asked the Army authorities at Darwin to notify Naval Headquarters at Perth that the PBY should arrive at around 2400, but the message was apparently delayed, and the approach caused an air-raid alarm. Pollock set down on the water, then took the plane right up on the beach. This might damage the hull, but Neale and Pollock weren't concerned with such details. They had completed one of the longest rescue missions ever recorded: a 7300-mile flight from Perth to Corregidor and return under wartime conditions. All things considered, it was a wonder PBY 1 came back at all.

In appreciation for their deed, the United States Army awarded Silver Star medals to Commander Edgar T. Neale and the members of the flight crews "For gallantry in action during an aerial flight from Australia to the Philippine Islands and return, from April 27, 1942 to May 3, 1942. These officers and men executed, with marked skill and coolness, an important mission in the face of greatly superior enemy forces. With reduced crews, and with guns removed from the planes to lighten the load, they delivered to the besieged garrison of Corregidor essential medicines and other military supplies and on the return trip brought out members of the garrison. Their action in flying unarmed planes through skies controlled by the Japanese to a place repeatedly subjected to heavy enemy attack, showed high courage."

CHAPTER 14



OLD BUCKET OF BOLTS

As Lieutenant Neale and his crew nursed their patched-up Catalina south to Australia, the people who had missed the flight at Lake Lanao hastened to Del Monte air field, some forty miles away, in the hope that the Army could still send a rescue plane up from Darwin for them. But the hour was late. With Japanese forces rapidly moving inland on Mindanao, they doubted that a bomber could reach Del Monte before the field was overrun.

Hopeless as the prospect of rescue seemed, at least the chance was taken. There was an Army Air Corps pool of personnel and aircraft at Melbourne, the remnants of the shattered 7th and 19th Bombardment Groups, withdrawn from the Netherlands East Indies, which could furnish two B-24 bombers for the rescue flight. One plane would be sent north, under the command of Captain Alvin J. H. Mueller, who had made a cargo run to the Philippines the previous week. His copilot was Lt. Paul E. Cool; his navigator was Lt. Laurence E. Gardner. The second plane would remain on alert at Darwin to follow if the airfield at Del Monte remained in American hands.

Mueller's B-24, a 150,000-mile veteran of the prewar ferry command, nicknamed "Old Bucket of Bolts," landed at Batchelor Field outside Darwin on the morning of 5 May 1942 to refuel. The plane also took on cargo: eight 81mm mortars, a quantity of mortar shells, 6000 rounds of .45-caliber ammunition, and six bags of U.S. Mail. Departure was delayed pending clarification of the situation at Del Monte.

The outlook for Captain Mueller and his crew was anything but promising. If for any reason they were unable to land at Mindanao, they would not have enough fuel to get them back to Australia.

By the time "Old Bucket of Bolts" reached Darwin, it was a good bet the Japanese were moving on Del Monte. If Mueller found Del Monte closed, he would try to land at an alternate field at Maramag, 45 miles south. A landing strip near Valencia was a third possibility.

Before departing Batchelor, Captain Mueller made arrangements for a pick-up by an Australian flying boat in the event they were forced down in the Dutch East Indies. He had seen just the right place on his previous flight, a bean-shaped island about two by five miles, with a lagoon ideal for ditching. Roughly halfway between Australia and Mindanao, Ju Island provided a perfect navigational checkpoint, and it was doubtful the Japanese had occupied the tiny island. Most important, Mueller calculated his fuel load would allow them to return to Ju should it prove impossible to refuel on Mindanao.

After leaving Batchelor, the B-24 cruised at 170 knots and made landfall in the vicinity of Mount Mandaran, on eastern Mindanao, about 2100, then swung inland toward Maramag, twenty-three minutes away. With Del Monte probably in enemy hands, Mueller elected to try for the alternate landing point.

The weather, superb in the Indies, deteriorated as the Liberator droned inland, and in an area beyond the mountains east of Maramag and Valencia, the B-24 encountered a violent tropical storm. With the aircraft tunnelling through thick clouds and heavy rain, blinding flashes of light and severe turbulence, precision navigation became impossible. Gardner asked the pilots for a 180-degree turn, but Mueller and Cool had their hands full trying to dodge the worst areas of turbulence.

The weather worsened as they neared their destination. Maramag, a primitive field barely long enough for a four-engine plane, lay between two high mountains—where the storm was a fury of thunder and lightning, howling winds, and blinding rain. Sergeant W. R. Morley, the radio operator, tried to contact the field, but, aside from heavy static, there was no response. The bomber finally drew clear of the storm and continued northwestward through scattered clouds. When Captain Mueller spotted a small seaport on the north coast—probably Cagayan—he reversed course and headed for central Mindanao. The aircraft was then within radio range of Del Monte, and the field still re-

mained in American hands; however, destruction of the radio facilities there a short time earlier made it impossible for the base to communicate with the Liberator.

Unknown to Mueller and his crew, the people he had come to rescue were waiting at Valencia, the number three choice. They had fled south from Del Monte, led by Colonel Wood. The field at Valencia, a grassy meadow 2000 yards long and open at both ends, was ideal for landing a B-24. Unfortunately, they had no radio with which to contact the plane; only flare pots to light if a plane was heard. That night at Valencia was clear, with stars visible, but the rescue plane failed to appear. The survivors from the disabled PBY surrendered to the Japanese a few days later.

Across the mountains east of Valencia, the B-24 again tangled with the severe storm system. By the time the aircraft cleared the disturbance, gas gauges indicated barely enough fuel to carry the plane to Ju Island in the Indies. Mueller and Cool reluctantly turned the aircraft south and made for Davao with the engineer, Master Sergeant W. E. Brown, nursing the engines every mile of the way.

The weather improved as the bomber flew southward from Mindanao. At Davao Japanese antiaircraft gunners opened up on them, and with either unusual skill or unbelievable luck, put several rounds into the tail section. Sergeant Morley complained about the flak, but they were very lucky. A hit in a fuel tank or one of the engines would have been a different story.

To offset a strong southwest wind, Lieutenant L. E. Gardner, the navigator, laid out a course to Halmahera, the large island west of Ju. Upon making landfall at Halmahera at about 0200, Mueller took a southeasterly course which should lead the bomber straight to Ju Island. Breaking radio silence, Morley informed Darwin in plain language, "Landing at alternate." If the Japanese intercepted the message, they had no way of knowing that Ju was the destination.

Ground speed on the flight south proved less than anticipated, and it appeared doubtful the remaining fuel would see them to Ju. Adding to their difficulties, scattered clouds in the moonlight cast shadows upon the sea. With fuel indicators nudging empty, Mueller and Cool spent long agonizing minutes chasing cloud shadows before they finally sighted the island—a welcome sight for the crewmen in "Old Bucket of Bolts." Mueller flicked on the landing lights, made one pass over the lagoon, did a one-eighty, and came in on a final approach.

Two landing lights pierced the night as the aircraft neared the water, her engines on reduced power. Then Captain Mueller cut the ignition switches, and "Old Bucket of Bolts" plunged into the lagoon. The heavy impact ripped open the bottom of the fuselage. Water poured into the plane; yet as ditchings go, it was a good crash landing.

Faced with being drowned in the airplane, the four crewmen in the cockpit struggled to survive in a murky nightmare of gushing water, floating maps, and flight gear torn loose in the crash. They all had minor cuts and bruises, Mueller had a head concussion, and Gardner had slashed his right hand on the armor plate behind the copilot's seat. Water rose at an alarming rate as the broken fuselage settled into the lagoon.

First Lieutenant Paul E. Cool, standing in the copilot's seat, strained to open the top hatch. It jammed. By that time the water had risen to within a foot of the overhead and gasoline fumes made breathing difficult. They had to get clear somehow, and fast. Cool suddenly remembered that while thrashing about freeing himself from the seat belt he had felt no right rudder pedal. Giving up on the hatch, he dived into the inky water—and near the bottom of the plane discovered a large jagged opening on the right side of the fuselage. He slid through and bobbed to the surface of the lagoon. Aside from the cockpit and upper fuselage section, the plane was completely submerged. Cool scrambled on top of the aircraft and wrenched open the hatch. By that time the men inside were nearly overcome by the gas fumes. One by one, Cool hoisted them through the opening. Dripping wet and in a state of shock, they collapsed exhausted, on top the partly sunken aircraft.

The men roused when the radioman, Sergeant Morley, hailed them from the tail section as he slowly made his way forward. He had climbed on top of the plane after the crash and, having heard nothing from the others, feared he was the only survivor.

Early in the tropical dawn, the weary, bruised, and sodden men surveyed their situation. The half-submerged bomber lay at one end of the long narrow lagoon. They could see torches, fires, and figures on the shore, but they were not eager to investigate at close range. Having been driven out of the Indies only weeks earlier, the flyers were well aware that the Japanese had captured virtually all of the Malay Barrier. It was doubtful the enemy had occupied Ju, but the bomber crew had reason to proceed with caution. Uneasy as to the reception they might receive ashore—the island was in head-hunting territory—the men de-

cided to remain with the plane until daylight. The night was warm, but the flyers chilled in their wet clothing, and mosquitoes added to their misery. Shooting pains in Lieutenant Gardner's injured hand made him uncomfortable. Yet there was little he could do to relieve the pain until daybreak. Amid the faint babble of strange tongues from the shore of the lagoon, the men lay dozing atop the B-24.

When the sun came up, the five men found that the bomber, partly sunk, lay at a 45-degree angle in the upper end of the lagoon. Though the men were tired, hungry, and battered from the crash landing a few hours earlier, the bright blue lagoon and the lush green jungle on the island looked like a movie set.

Thoughts of breakfast and the beauties of the island vanished, however, when three long narrow boats loaded with natives came skimming across the lagoon toward the crashed plane. The flyers had side arms, yet stood little chance if the natives were hostile.

A husky, dark-skinned man standing in the front of the lead canoe was obviously the local chief. When the boat came alongside the B24, Mueller and Cool tried conversing with the headman. Though the Americans had picked up a bit of Dutch and some Malay while stationed in Java a few months earlier, they had difficulty communicating with the islanders.

They finally concluded that the natives wanted them to go ashore. But for what? Captain Mueller, Lieutenant Gardner, and Sergeant Brown decided to go with the natives, while Lieutenant Cool and Sergeant Morley stayed with the plane. Should trouble develop, the two men would provide covering fire while the other three tried to return to the aircraft. Brown inflated one of the lifeboats, and the natives and the three Americans went ashore.

The chief led them to a small thatched hut near the edge of the lagoon. The flyers became suspicious when they spotted a Japanese fisherman inside, but the man was unarmed and did not appear dangerous. When the fisherman vacated the hut, the Americans realized the shelter was for their use; Cool and Morley were brought ashore a short time later.

The flyers were treated as welcome guests. After being supplied with hot water for washing, they were given melons, coconuts, and dried fish, which at that point tasted better than homemade apple pie.

Feeling certain the Australians would send a flying boat, the aviators spent most of the day resting. After breakfast the next

day, accompanied by some of the islanders, they explored a deserted coconut plantation, a number of small log and thatch buildings filled with mildewed copra. The former Dutch owners, who had moved to another island, had left only a few pots and pans.

By the second day, Lieutenant Gardner's cut hand had become very painful. Unfortunately, they had no medical supplies and the only treatment available was frequent use of hot water. The young navigator kept hoping the flying boat would come—and soon.

As the flyers wandered about the island, they noticed green lizards in the dense jungle, and Lieutenant Cool killed a three-footer with his .45 automatic. It was the biggest lizard he had seen. When he appeared in the village with it, the natives kept saying "kacheel" and appeared properly impressed. Cool assumed kacheel meant green in color but came in for a shock later when he learned it meant only small in size.

On the second or third day the Americans were on Ju, several of them paddled out to the sunken bomber and salvaged some equipment. When they spotted sharks in the lagoon, they were glad they hadn't tried to swim ashore on the night of the crash. They recovered a mortar and some shells from the wreck, and someone suggested they kill some fish by dropping a few rounds into the lagoon.

They built a fire, to melt the heavy grease from the barrel, but failed to remove all of it. When they tossed a round into the barrel, the remaining grease slowed the fired projectile so much that it landed about 12 feet away. Luckily, it failed to explode.

They carefully cleaned the barrel a second time, but then the mortar rounds rose high in the air and exploded upon contact with the water in the lagoon. If they were going to kill any fish, they decided they would have to catch them first.

By the end of the first week in May, they wondered if the flying boat would ever come, and began making plans to sail a native boat to New Guinea. The occasional sight of Japanese ships made them uneasy. They estimated the distance at about 400 miles with many islands along the way. With a bit of luck, they thought their chances of reaching Allied-held territory fairly good.

But Lieutenant Gardner's condition was growing serious. Blood poisoning had set in, and both Mueller and Cool realized that his chance of survival lessened day by day. The men de-

cided to wait a few more days. Then if help had not appeared, they would make a desperate try for New Guinea. At best it would be a long gamble—with Gardner playing a losing hand.

Fortunately, friends in Melbourne had been pressing for the rescue of the B-24 crew. First Lieutenant A. A. Fletcher, pilot of the plane scheduled to follow Mueller to Mindanao, persistently reminded both the Air Corps and the U.S. Navy that the bomber crew stranded on Ju Island deserved rescue. The Navy, aware that Captain Mueller and his men had gone down while trying to save the survivors from the Catalina disabled on Lake Lanao, proved receptive to Fletcher's pleas. On the night of 8 May 1942, the USS *Porpoise* on patrol off Ambon, N.E.I., received orders to rescue the bomber crew. The submarine arrived off Ju Island early on Sunday, 10 May. *Porpoise* remained submerged about 1000 yards offshore throughout the day while her skipper, Lieutenant Commander John R. McKnight, Jr., and his officers observed the natives along the shore. There was no sign of the flyers, nor of the enemy.

When darkness came, McKnight brought his submarine to the surface and moved inshore. Though he surmised that a large fire on the beach was a signal beacon, there was still no sign of the Americans. When an unidentified craft was sighted approaching, sailors manned the sub's machine guns. If it was an enemy vessel, McKnight planned a warm reception; yet he did not wish to fire upon friendly natives. When the sailing craft had gone on its way, Lieutenant Albert Raborn, the executive officer, and three enlisted men attempted to row ashore. Despite the smooth sea, they found it hard going with only two oars. Fearing that the landing party would be unable to maneuver quickly if they encountered trouble, Commander McKnight recalled them.

The natives, especially those offshore in a small boat, were frightened when they heard *Porpoise* noisily heaving to the surface—like a whale blowing from the depths. Greatly excited, they raced to inform Mueller and the others that a ship had appeared, and made signs indicating aircraft. The Americans thought it must be an aircraft carrier. If it proved Japanese . . .

Grabbing only their side arms and some signal equipment, Mueller and his four crewmen, and the party of natives, hurried to the shore. By that time, Lieutenant Raborn and his men had returned to the submarine. As the boat was being secured, a red rocket flared upward into the night revealing a number of natives and several white men on the beach. McKnight eased the submarine closer inshore and recognition hails were exchanged.

The flyers wanted to return to camp for their belongings, but the skipper, anxious to get underway, ordered them aboard at once. When the natives, still frightened by the submarine, were reluctant to take the flyers out in their boats, the Americans promised the islanders all their possessions—wallets, money, identification papers, and the mortar. Within minutes the five airmen were in the submarine and the islanders were making for the beach. Without further delay, *Porpoise* stood out to sea and headed for Darwin.

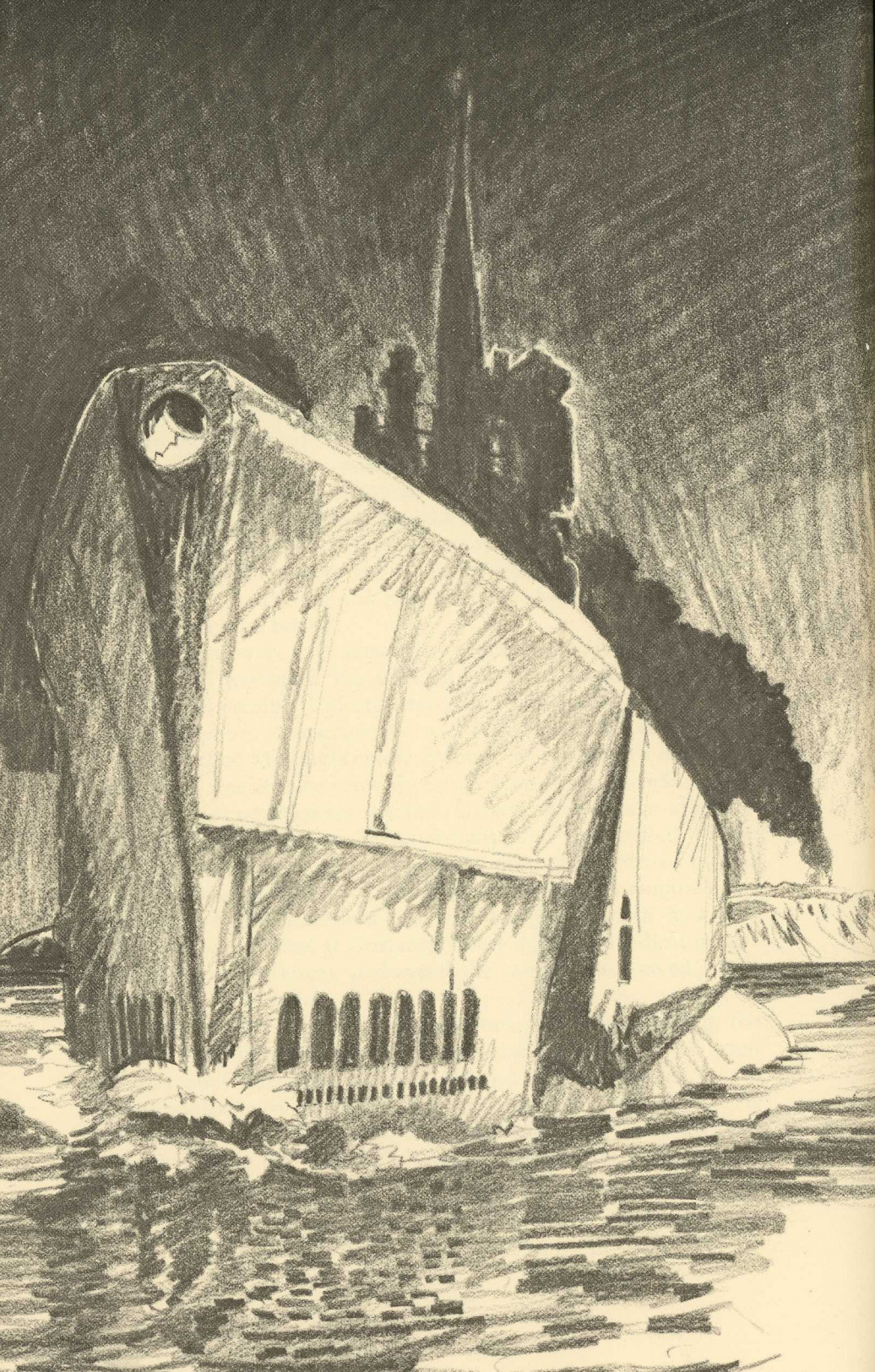
After having almost given up hope of rescue, Captain Mueller and his crew felt the *Porpoise* was like the Hilton. However, despite the best hospitality in the world, conditions aboard *Porpoise* were bad. The submarine had recently undergone a severe depth charge attack which knocked out both the refrigeration and air-conditioning systems. When running submerged, the moist heat was nearly unbearable, and almost everyone was suffering from prickly heat. Since the movement of clothing on the skin caused a painful irritation, many of the submariners used towels as sarongs. Because the irritating skin rash was particularly painful under the arm pits, the men tried to keep their arms away from their bodies.

The flyers were safe aboard the submarine, but Gardner's condition had worsened. His infected hand was badly swollen and extremely painful. Unfortunately, the only medicine on board was potassium promanganate, and it was not sufficient to halt the infection. McKnight worried about the navigator's condition, but there was little he could do except keep on for Darwin.

By the time *Porpoise* reached Darwin eleven days after the crash landing, Gardner's infected right hand was "puffed up like a dead toad on a hot day." Australian doctors feared that further delay would cost Gardner his life, and wanted to amputate his arm, but Gardner refused. He was then flown south to a U.S. Army Base Hospital at Brisbane, where a skillful medical officer, Dr. Robert Sparkman, performed the miracle that saved Gardner's hand and arm.

Soon after shoving off from Ju Island, *Porpoise* picked up the radio news that General Wainwright had surrendered his command on Corregidor and had ordered all U.S. Forces in the Philippines to surrender to the local Japanese commander. As *Porpoise* made for Darwin, a second submarine, *Spearfish*, was coming down out of the Philippines with the last Americans to leave the Rock. It would be a long time before anyone went back.

CHAPTER 15



LAST RENDEZVOUS

On the night of 3 May 1942, the submarine *Spearfish*, surfaced in the South China Sea, four miles off Corregidor and lay to, awaiting a small boat expected out from Corregidor with nurses and other Army and Navy personnel.

The submarine had been on a successful war patrol off western Luzon. She had made her first wartime kill—a 4000-ton Japanese merchant ship—on 17 April, and a week later had sunk another 7000-ton ship.

On the night of 28 April 1942, about the time two PBYs were being readied for the long flight from Australia to the Philippines, *Spearfish* received orders to operate in the vicinity of Corregidor Island on the night of 3 May, to pick up passengers for Fremantle.

The submarine approached the rendezvous area about noontime five days later, running silent at 180 feet, and dodged a Japanese minesweeper and destroyer. The fact that enemy vessels were on station only seven or eight miles off Corregidor during the day and the absence of gunfire made the men uneasy. Having been submerged since dawn, there was no way for *Spearfish* to have been warned in the event that Corregidor had surrendered. When she surfaced after nightfall, however, the thunder and flash of shells exploding on the Rock gave clear evidence the Americans still held the island. But it would be only three more days before American resistance officially ended in the Philippines.

After the capitulation of American forces on Bataan three weeks earlier, Corregidor had been pounded by enemy bombers and more than one-hundred artillery pieces. Though the aircraft were restricted to daylight attacks, the shelling continued almost 'round the clock. The day before *Spearfish* arrived, the Japanese hurled 3600 highly destructive 240mm shells into the fortress during a five-hour period. Both attackers and defenders knew this could not go on much longer.

As *Spearfish*'s skipper, Lieutenant James Dempsey, watched, Japanese artillery in lower Bataan opened up on the north side and the eastern tail section of Corregidor. Fortunately, the bombardment left the dock facing Cavite relatively safe. There, amid the crash of shells bursting over the hill, Commander John Morrill and his men quickly herded a small group of people aboard the ex-*Perry* and got underway. The compass was broken and it was up to Morrill to keep the craft in the clear channel through the minefield. When clear of the minefield, *Perry* sped seaward in the darkness.

Morrill's job was to put aboard the submarine 13 nurses, 12 male officers, and, most important of all, a complete roster of all Army, Navy, and Marine personnel. There was also 17 trunk lockers full of irreplaceable records and three mail pouches of finance papers—officers' pay cards, soldiers' deposit slips, insurance applications, and requests for allotments.

The ex-*Perry* reached the rendezvous area at 2025. When a long black shape loomed up ahead, Commander Morrill challenged by blinker tube. There was no reply, and Commander T. C. Parker, one of the evacuees, figured they were in trouble. It could be a Japanese destroyer.

But the second challenge brought the proper reply and a welcome "Come alongside." The 311-foot *Spearfish* looked as big as a cruiser. While the evacuees, mail, and locker trunks were being transferred, Morrill climbed on top of the deck house opposite the conning tower of the submarine to greet her skipper.

"Who's that?" called Lieutenant Dempsey.

"Morrill."

Dempsey, who apparently knew that Commander Morrill had been a sub skipper, then asked, "What are you doing out here?"

"Just working," was Morrill's answer. "Did you bring us any shells?"

Dempsey hated to answer. "We didn't bring much. The crew took up a collection." The men on the submarine passed over

several cases of cigarettes and 18 or 20 boxes of candy bars. Having been on patrol 38 days, *Spearfish* had few provisions to spare; but Commander Morrill was grateful for the offerings. Dempsey told Morrill about their patrol and the two kills, and said they were homeward bound.

Commander Morrill suddenly recalled something his father-in-law, a man of pacifist sympathies, had said early in the 1930s, when Morrill assumed command of an "S"-type submarine—much like *Spearfish*—and proudly showed the old man around the boat. Obviously unimpressed he said, "What a waste of money. We could build a fine park for the money spent on this useless thing." As he looked upon *Spearfish* that dark night off Corregidor, Morrill decided that Dempsey was making good use of the submarine.

The sailors in *Spearfish* were surprised and pleased when they discovered that 13 of the passengers were unique cargo for a submarine—women! The cook had prepared a special welcome for the evacuees: plenty of hot coffee and a large chocolate cake. For the people just off Corregidor, it was a rare treat.

It took only about 20 minutes to complete the transfer. Lieutenant Dempsey yelled, "Good Luck," as the ex-*Perry* pulled clear of *Spearfish* and headed back toward Corregidor.

The heavy bombardment of the island continued unabated as the submarine lay to, building a charge in the batteries. Visibility gradually improved as the moon rose in the east. At 2152 Dempsey took the submarine seaward at five knots to escape the illumination caused by an exploding ammunition dump. A brilliant display of fireworks blossomed across the sky. Lookouts spotted a darkened destroyer half an hour later. The *Spearfish* made a fast dive, and running silent, successfully evaded the enemy warship.

The presence of enemy patrol vessels forced *Spearfish* to remain submerged 22 long, grueling hours. At last everyone knew what a canned sardine felt like. Every bunk in the boat was occupied every hour, day, and night.

The 13 women lived in a screened section of the crews' quarters aft; the 14 male evacuees (besides the 12 Army and Navy officers, two stowaways showed up) bunked in the forward torpedo room. The wardroom head was reserved for the women. Ship's officers and the male passengers used the one in the forward torpedo room; the head in the after area was assigned the crew. The helpful Filipino mess boy who assisted the women

with the complicated toilet mechanism was immediately titled "Captain of the Head."

While *Spearfish* lay on the bottom during the daylight hours of Monday, 4 May, the muffled fire of exploding shells gave sombre warning of Corregidor's plight, as the Japanese hit the Rock with an estimated 16,000 shells of all calibers. It was all part of a devastating pre-invasion bombardment which destroyed coastal guns and searchlights, machine-gun emplacements and barbed wire entanglements—virtually every shore defense along the northeastern coast of the island. Within 24 hours Japanese troops would make their landing on Corregidor, with others soon to follow.

When the submarine surfaced that night, the island fortress was still visible but partially obscured by a cloud of smoke. Unable to aid those still fighting on the Rock, *Spearfish* stood out to sea. The smoking and burning fortress, a faltering symbol of United States power in the Far East, was soon left behind. But not out of mind. Several hours later, they heard the last short, sad Navy transmission from Corregidor: "One hundred and seventy-three officers and twenty-three hundred and seventeen men of the Navy reaffirm their loyalty and devotion to country, families, and friends."

There would be another 24 hours of intense shelling before the dazed defenders on the Rock reached the end of their endurance. Shortly before midnight on 5 May 1942, enemy infantry fought ashore at North Point, and by early morning General Wainwright decided to surrender.

During those last hours, *Spearfish* ran south out of the Philippines. It would be a long time before an American submarine returned to Manila Bay. The submarine radioed her passenger list to Fremantle on the morning of 10 May, and slid through Makassar Strait the following night—about the time *Porpoise* was attempting to rescue Captain Mueller and his flight crew at Ju Island 700 miles to the east. By mid-May the two submarines, *Spearfish* with the last evacuees from Corregidor and *Porpoise* with the crewmen from the B-24 bomber unable to land at Del Monte, were steaming south toward Australia.

Like the Battle of Bataan and the defense of Corregidor, the Philippine relief effort faded into history. Though doomed at the outset by geography, short-sighted pre-war planning, and the overwhelming might of the Japanese offensive, the U.S. command trapped in the Philippines deserved the strongest support

possible under the circumstances. Secretary of War Stimson recorded in his diary, "... we must make every effort at what ever risk to keep MacArthur's lines open ..." The Secretary soon found that both President Roosevelt and General Marshall shared his views. On the basis of the Eisenhower plan of December 1941, the United States over a period of four months utilized every possible means to transport food, ammunition, aircraft, and medical supplies to Corregidor. Submarines, aircraft, slow-moving surface ships, and even obsolete destroyers were pressed into the desperate attempt to save Corregidor. But day by day the Japanese tightened their grip on the islands, and pitifully few of the urgently needed supplies ever reached Bataan and Corregidor.

"The story of the attempt to break through the Japanese blockade," Louis Morton wrote later, was, like the story of the entire U.S. defense in the Philippines, "one of heroic efforts and final failure." In terms of actual assistance to Bataan and Corregidor, the efforts of the blockade runners were of no avail. Yet, national honor demanded that the effort be made, and the men and the ships and the aircraft involved in this desperate venture deserved far more recognition than was paid them.

SOURCES

To piece together the fragmented story of the 1942 Philippine relief project, the author drew upon three main sources: official documents, published works (articles and monographs), and information obtained from actual participants, either by correspondence or through personal interviews. The research and writing over a period of seven years included visits to both east and west coasts of the United States, plus a trip to Australia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Japan in the summer of 1965.

An intensive search at the World War II Records Center in Alexandria, Virginia, yielded a wealth of official documents pertaining to the supply effort. Deserving special mention is Brig. Gen. Charles C. Drake's "Report of Operations of Quartermaster Corps, USAFFE and USFIP, 27 July 1941-6 May 1942." The Drake papers form an important part of General Wainwright's *Report of Operations of USAFFE and USFIP in the Philippine Islands, 1941-1942.* Supplementary data was derived from an unpublished typescript monograph by Brig. Gen. Charles C. Drake: "No Uncle Sam, the Story of a Hopeless Effort to Supply the Starving Army of Bataan and Corregidor."

Louis Morton's *Fall of the Philippines*, Samuel E. Morison's *Rising Sun in the Pacific*, Walter D. Edmonds's *They Fought With What They Had*, and Alvin P. Stauffer's *The Quartermaster Corps: Operations in the War Against Japan* provided invaluable material both on the background of the conflict, and on events

that took place during the period covering the capture of Bataan-Corregidor by the Japanese. All are impeccably researched and superbly presented.

Additional data was drawn from Lewis H. Brereton's *The Brereton Diaries*; Louis Morton's *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years*; Theodore Roscoe's *United States Submarine Operations in World War II*; Jonathan M. Wainwright's *General Wainwright's Story*; and *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1941-1943*, by Richard M. Leighton and Robert W. Coakley.

Chapter 1 War Comes to the Philippines

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