

AN ACCOUNT OF
THE LAST VOYAGES OF THE U.S.S. CANOPUS

by

Captain Earl L. Sackett, Commanding Officer of *Canopus*

during the Bataan Campaign.

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Captain E.L. Sackett, U.S. Navy, commanding officer of the U.S.S. CANOPUS as the time of the capitulation of Manila, Philippine Islands, has written an account of the exploits of that ship. Believing that the relatives of officers and men of the CANOPUS would like to have this account, Captain Sackett has requested that it be reproduced and sent to the families of his shipmates. Accordingly, I am enclosing a copy of this account for you.

I know you will find strength and pride in the knowledge that the gallant fight waged by the officers and men of the CANOPUS against great odds was in keeping with the finest traditions of the Navy.

I regret that I have no further information about individual members of the crew. Please be assured, however, that any news received by the Department relative to them will be promptly sent to you.

Very truly yours,

*C.C. Baughman,
Captain, U.S. Navy*

CHAPTER I

A less likely candidate than the Canopus for the roll of heroine in a tale of adventure could hardly be imagined. She was no longer young, and had never been particularly dashing, but her partisans were always ready to ascribe a certain majesty of her appearance. Undeniable, she waddled like a duck, as was pointed out in many a good-natured jibe, but that was only natural in a middle-aged motherly type, and she was truly "mama-san" to her brood of submarines, which used to forage with her from the Philippines to the China coast and back again each year.

Built in 1921 to be a combination freight and passenger carrier for the Grace Line, she was shortly taken over by the Navy, and converted to a submarine tender. She was given extensive machine shops, foundries and storerooms to provide for the material needs of the "pig-boats," cabins and living spaces for the comfort of their crews when off duty, and a few guns as a concession to the fact that she was now a man-of-war.

In 1925 the Canopus escorted a division of six "S" type submarines of the vintage of World War I to the China Station. This imposing force, before the clouds of World War II gathered on the horizon, carried a large share of the burden of showing the Stars and Stripes in Asiatic ports, much of the time in the midst of "incidents" brought on by the spread of the New Order.

Looking back, it is hard to decide just when war with Japan became inevitable. Perhaps the background was laid when Japan was given control of the Mandated Islands after World War I. To be sure, these islands, which lay across American life lines to the Philippines, were not supposed to be fortified, but the Navy, at least, never had any illusions on that score. Throughout the service, there was a general feeling that eventually the Japanese would become open enemies, and that a treacherous blow would be the signal for opening hostilities. We in the Orient were only surprised that this blow landed first at Pearl Harbor, instead of on the Asiatic ships, which comparatively "had their necks out" whenever they visited China Ports.

We now know that the Japs wanted bigger game while the advantage of surprise was still in their hands, and probably felt that they could pick off the Asiatic Fleet anyhow, at their leisure. But China sailors had been treated to a war of nerves for many years, and had been made to feel that they were living on borrowed time. In 1940 things looked so bad that their families had been sent back to the States, in spite of their vehement protests, be it said. Those Navy wives were an intrepid lot, and were accustomed to putting up with such hardships and dangers in following their men from port to port, that it took something more than a little Japanese menace to make them leave the strange fascination of the Orient voluntarily.

It had always been expected that the Canopus, along with other slow auxiliary ships; the destroyer tender Black Hawk; the seaplane tender Langley; and the tanker Pecos, would, if possible, be hurried out to safer spots further south when war became imminent, on the basic assumption that the Philippines could not be held for long. In fact, during 1941 war seemed so likely that the Fleet was held in the southern Philippines most of the time.

However, in the fall of 1941, the situation appeared to be growing a little more favorable. Freed of the restrictions previously imposed by national policy, at last reinforcements were arriving in the Philippines, and it seemed that after all there might be a chance of holding the Islands. Army planes and tanks were coming in rapidly, and more submarines with their tenders arrived. Within a few months, when those new forces had been organized and shaken down into their new environment, the Philippines would obviously be a much harder nut to crack. The war plan was in the process of change, based on the promise that now there was a chance of holding the Islands until the Fleet should arrive. Perhaps the Japanese realized this, and decided that it must be "now or never." Their answer was -- Pearl Harbor.

CHAPTER II

In the fateful first week in December, the Canopus had just finished an extensive overhaul at Cavite Navy Yard, and emerged looking more like a war vessel than ever before. Many anti-aircraft machine guns had been added to her armament, and light armor had been fitted around exposed positions, which later proved of immense value in warding off bomb fragments.

The submarines were considered in the first line of defense for the Philippines, and were expected to operate from bases as far advanced in the field as possible in order to utilize their maximum effectiveness. But submarines cannot operate long without supplies and repairs, and a surface tender had to be available for these services, even though her eventual loss by air attack would be almost a foregone conclusion if she stayed within aircraft range. The Canopus was chosen for this sacrifice, probably because the other tenders were newer and faster, and thus better able to avoid damage or loss in the open sea. But also involved in the decision was no doubt the fact that the Canopus had already demonstrated her ability to care for many submarines of various types and could handle the job alone, as long as she lasted.

When the news of the treacherous blow at Pearl Harbor was flashed at 3:30 a.m. (Manila Time) on December eighth, we knew we had a job to do. There was no further sleep that night. Little knots of men were gathered all over the ship discussing the new situation. The comments heard most frequently were -- "Well, this is why the Navy hired us", "Now at last we know it was best that our families were sent back to the States", but most urgent of all, "How long will it take the Big Fleet to get here?"

That the Fleet would get there in time we did not doubt then: it was only later when the full story of the loss of planes and ships at Pearl Harbor became known, that officers of the Navy familiar with strategic problems involved began to have grave misgivings.

The first day was one of intense activity. "Strip ship" was no longer a practice evolution -- it was the real thing now. The guns had been manned constantly for days, for the Asiatic Fleet was aware of something in the air, and was prepared. But now the gun crews felt something of the tenseness of the hunter, with his finger on the trigger when he hears a rustle in the bushes. Evidently this excitement was general because our own planes were fired upon by some of the other ships in the harbor, fortunately without damage.

No enemy planes appeared over Manila the first day, but they did strike with deadly effect at Clark airfield, about sixty miles further north. There they caught on the ground nearly all the Army's heavy bomber strength in the Philippines, already loaded with bombs which only awaited the order for the high command to deliver on Japanese air fields in Formosa. Who can say what the war might have been if that order had not been fatally delayed? We know what telling blows even a few Flying Fortresses can deliver, and here were squadrons of them, their wings clipped before they were allowed to strike one blow for freedom! Even the protecting fighter planes, which had been circling the airfield all morning in anticipation of just such an attack, had been called in at the same time for fuel and lunch -- just in time to suffer the same fate as their big sisters lined up on the field. The crowning irony of that disastrous day was the fact that the field's radio station was hit by the first salvo of bombs, preventing them from summoning help from the fighters circling over Nichols Field, barely thirty miles away.

It was a perfect example of the advantage an aggressor gains by his treachery -- he knows what he is going to do, and how to do it -- whereas a paralysis seems to grip his victim with the first numbing blows. He must improvise his plans to meet the surprise onslaught, and lose vital time and material before his plans will fit the situation, which is seldom quite what he had visualized.

At midnight of the first day another air attack on Nichols Field brought the war to a spot where we on the Canopus had a grand stand seat for the spectacle, which looked for all the world like a good old Fourth of July display. From our anchorage off Cavite, just far enough away to muffle the noise, the shower of red and yellow tracer bullets, the sparklers of anti-aircraft bursts followed by the bonfire glare of burning hangers and planes had an unreal quality which made it hard to realize that this was war, and our own countrymen were fighting and dying amidst the conflagration. We learned later that fifth columnists had led the bombers unerringly to the target by bracketing the field with flares, and with the help of a brilliant moon, the raiders could hardly miss.

However unreal it seemed, we had no desire to become a pretty bonfire ourselves, so we got underway and steamed around the harbor all night, so as not to be caught napping in the event of an attack. It is wonderful solace to the nerves to be doing something, no matter how ineffectual, rather than to be a sitting duck, waiting for the hunter to let fly. Unfortunately, even the poor comfort of mobility was to be denied us from that time on.

At dawn the Canopus was ordered alongside the docks in the Port Area of Manila. This was chosen for the base of operations because when and if the expected sinking occurred, the depth under our keel would be shallow enough so that the ship would rest mostly above water, and valuable stores, torpedoes, and equipment would be salvaged. Headquarters for the submarine "Commodore" (Captain John Wikes, U.S.N.), and his staff were set up nearby in the newly built Navy Enlisted Men's Club. Several Canopus officers were incorporated into this staff to build it up to wartime proportions. After all, if the ship was not expected to leave port, why waste their services?

Torpedoes and spare parts were hurriedly unloaded, and lightered out to Corregidor, where less vulnerable shops were put into operation. Other stores and provisions were divided up, and one part stowed in a small inter-island ship in the hope that all would not be lost in one attack.

The superstructure of the Canopus was painted to match the color of the docks alongside, and camouflage nets spread overhead in an effort to deceive the Japs as long as possible as to our identity. The more exposed fuel tanks were emptied and filled with water to reduce the danger of a disastrous fire which might make it impossible to save the ship if the oil were touched off by a bomb. With the ship as ready as the men could make her, the grim question as to whether the value of her services in the time left to her would be worth the expected sacrifice was all that remained to be decided.

However, the Japanese had their own schedule, and the Canopus apparently was well down on the list of objectives. The main air fields had been first, then came Cavite, with again that weird, unreal feeling, because the splashes, fire, and smoke were only too evident a few miles away, while the detonations could not be heard. It hardly seemed possible that those swarms of silver winged insects so high in the sky could be responsible for that holocaust across the bay. Now at last our gunners had a chance to express their defiance by firing at the groups which passed overhead. Unfortunately, it was little more than a gesture of defiance -- for their guns were too small and ancient to have a chance of reaching the bombers at the extreme altitudes they habitually used.

There is a certain empty feeling which attacks the pit of the stomach with the realization that the order "Commence Firing" will not be the usual directive to see how much canvas and wood can be demolished in the shortest space of time, but instead, an order to blast as many human beings as possible into eternity. When guns start barking, however, the feeling passes, and a fierce exhilaration takes its place, entirely apart from whatever results may be achieved. A man who has been wondering during the approach of the enemy whether after all he may be a coward, and secretly speculating on a hiding place, forgets all about his fears with the first kick of his gun, and becomes for a moment a killer.

Bomb damaged ships straggled out of Cavite Navy Yard following the attack, and the Canopus repair force slaved night and day getting them ready for sea, as well as equipping their regular brood of submarines for offensive patrols. Daily alarms sent the "pig-boats" to safety on the bottom of Manila Bay, but as soon as the marauding planes had left, the "Business as Usual" sign would be hung out again.

This sort of life did not lack for excitement, but was far from being the peace and rest which submarine crews must have to prepare them physically and mentally for the strain of their war patrols. There was every indication that conditions would get no better, and with the Army falling back on Manila, word came that the city would soon be abandoned to avoid complete destruction. Although the Canopus was still intact, the harbor could no longer be used for a submarine base. The circle of bombing attacks was drawing tighter each day, and on Christmas Eve our headquarters was hit, and the spent bomb fragments landed on our decks.

During the night we got underway for what proved to be our last journey, and steamed out of the Bay toward Corregidor, with great fires and towering columns of smoke astern of us as evidence that the Army was scorching the earth as they prepared to withdraw into Bataan.

We were to set up shop again in Mariveles Bay, on the southern tip of Bataan peninsula. Some of the submarines were still with us, but now we had no source from which our supplies could be replenished, and it was obvious that the best we could hope to do would be to equip this last group for war patrol, and then "turn in our suits" as far as submarines were concerned.

CHAPTER III

It was hoped that Mariveles Bay, being close to the guns of Corregidor, would be immune to air attacks, although some misgivings were felt on score, we found a bombed and burning merchant ship in the harbor, and learned that this was the result of a light hearted Japanese Christmas Eve celebration. However, with high hopes, we moored the ship to the shoreline in a protective cove, and again spread our camouflage nets overhead. This time, the object was to make the ship look like part of the jungle foliage ashore, and we succeeded very well by using mottled green paint, with plenty of tree branches tied to the masts and upper works. Unfortunately, a rock quarry nearby had made a white gash which it was impossible to match. We could only hope that the Jap scouting planes would not happen to snap any candid camera shots from that particular direction.

Disillusionment of both these hopes was not slow in coming. On December 29th our daily visitors, evidently deciding that Manila had been adequately taken care of, turned their attention toward us. Squadron after endless squadron showed their contempt for the guns of Corregidor by blasting that island from end to end, and the last group of the day, as if by an after-thought, wheeled in from that fatally exposed direction and blanketed the Canopus with a perfectly placed patter of bombs. Tied up as she was, and unable to dodge, it seemed a miracle that only one of the closely bunched rain of missiles actually struck the ship, but that one bomb nearly ended our career then and there. It was an armor-piercing type which went through all the ship's decks, and exploded on top of the propeller shaft under the magazines, blowing them open, and starting fires which threatened to explode the ammunition.

Disaster and danger are the great touchstones which bring out the true quality in men, and those sailors never faltered. Hardly had the rain of rocks thrown from craters in the nearby hillside subsided when fire-fighting crews had jumped to their work. The Executive officer, Lt. Comdr. "Hap" Goodall, organized one party on deck, which attacked the blaze from above. They found smoke pouring from ammunition shuttles leading to the magazines below, and directed their hose streams down the hatches, unmindful of ominous detonations below which told them magazines might blow them up at any moment. Gunner's mate Budzaj even climbed down a smoke-filled ammunition trunk with a hose in an effort to get at the bottom of the blaze. When the fire pumps failed for a few minutes, bucket brigades carried on the battle.

In the meantime, below decks, Lt. Cmdr. "Al" Hede had organized another fire party which tackled the problem by carrying their hoses through choking smoke in the compartments near the magazines, pulling wounded and dying men away from the blasted areas where they had fallen. Most of the oxygen type breathing apparatus had been cut off by the explosion, but Shipfitter Cambron donned the one remaining outfit, and carried the hose right down to the magazines, backed by his shipmates working in relays, each of which stayed as long as men could stand the fumes.

Our fighting Chaplain McManus led a rescue group into the engine room, where fragments and escaping steam had caused the most casualties, administering the last rites to dying men and helping to evacuate the injured to makeshift dressing stations.

The officers in charge of the engine room, Machinist Hutchinson and Electrician Hall, had both been badly wounded by the first blast, but the Chief Machinist Mate left in charge shut off the steam at the boilers until severed steam pipes could be isolated, thus saving more of his men from being scalded to death. He then helped the wounded to safety, and was later found wandering around dazed, having no recollection of what happened after the blast!

Four hours the devoted crew fought before all fires were finally out. When the magazines were examined, several crushed and exploded powder charges were found, mute evidence showing how close to complete destruction the ship and all on board had been. Nothing less than a miracle could have prevented a general magazine explosion at the time the bomb set off those powder charges, but miracles do happen. The engine of destruction had carried its own antidote, and its fragments which severed pipes near the magazines had released floods of steam and water at the danger point, automatically keeping fire away from the rest of the powder. Our numbers just weren't quite up that day.

In months to follow, our crew never could quite believe, until the battered hull finally slipped into its last rest beneath the waves, that somehow the old girl would not manage to pull through, as she had that day, and take them all out to rejoin the Fleet. That same night, up went the "Business as Usual" sign, and repair men went to work binding up the old lady's wounds, at the same time others were busy servicing submarines.

CHAPTER IV

The Canopus was seaworthy again in a few days, although much ammunition had been lost by flooding the magazines, and several store rooms were badly messed up by the explosion. This cloud, however, had a silver lining for our Supply Officer, Lieutenant "Gus" Johnson, who found his office wrecked and his accounts burned, giving him a heaven-sent chance to put an end to all his laborious accounting system for the duration. From that time on, our supply system was beautifully simple. What we had, we could use without the usual red tape, and if something was lacking, nothing could be done about it except to improvise a substitute or do without. There was nothing for the men to spend their money on, so there were no more pay days. Ice cream and canteen supplies were free as long as they lasted. All clothing became community property, to be doled out to whatever unfortunate should appear in the most nearly

naked condition. This Utopian state inevitably led to much closer relations among the crew and officers, and welded us all into a great family, working and fighting a common cause, with only one aim -- do our damndest to lick the Japs.

Curiously enough, the boys who had been the worst troublemakers in time of peace became our most shining lights in wartime. Perhaps they had just too much restless energy for their own good when things were more normal, but this same quality enabled them to perform prodigies when the chips were down.

Ordinary methods of discipline of course failed, since the men got no liberty or pay anyhow, and what normally would be extra duty was now only the usual stint for everyone. But punishments were fortunately unnecessary, as the spirit of the community would tolerate no shirkers, and the men themselves saw to it that no one was derelict in his duty.

When the last of the submarines, carrying the Commodore and his staff to a new southern base, had pulled out just before the New Year opened, we were left with something of the feeling of a mother when the last of her children has grown up and left the home fires, to battle the world alone. Nothing would seem more useless than a submarine tender with no submarines to look out for, but we were soon to find that there were orphans aplenty to be adopted. There were many small Navy ships which were also stranded by the tide of war ebbing toward the south. These needed constant repairs as well as additional equipment for the task ahead of them. The world also got around to all Army and Air Force Units, of the well-equipped shops which could and did accomplish miracles of improvisation, and these groups were not slow in making full use of these facilities. Again the men of the Canopus could feel that they had a major share in the new mission -- to hold Bataan.

Tojo's war birds, however, still wanted to have something to say as to whether the Canopus would stay in service. Our first bombing had made it apparent that the ship was not exactly a safe spot to while away the daylight hours, so the policy was adopted of scattering as many of the crew as possible ashore, to sleep as best they could during the day, and return on board for work all night. Volunteers were called for to man the anti-aircraft guns during the danger period, with such response that practically no changes resulted in the regular gun crews. With the Gunnery Officer, Lieutenant "Red" Otter in control, these enthusiastic boys felt that they were the lucky ones -- there was always the chance that some Jap planes might venture low enough to justify any risks.

Just a week after the first bombing, the Japs showed their annoyance at such temerity by sending another squadron of planes over the Canopus to try to settle the affair once and for all.

Again the closely bunched bomb pattern blanketed the ship, but again only one missile made a direct hit. This time it was a quick-acting fragmentation bomb which struck the side of the towering smokestack, and literally sprayed the upper decks with small fragments. The gun crews, which had ducked behind their shields at the last instant before the bombs landed, had little protection from splinters coming down from above, and three-quarters of them were wounded -- fortunately with no fatalities. No

serious fires were started, but the upper decks looked like a sieve as hundreds had pierced the light plating.

Stretcher parties from ashore boarded the ship almost before the dust had settled, and carried the fifteen wounded men to dressing stations ashore, but the hardest part of the task was to convince each victim that someone else should not get attention first. One of the highlights of the scene was the sight of "Red" Otter dashing to the bridge, bleeding from half a dozen gashes, to make certain his skipper was all right, then dashing back to direct evacuation of the other wounded men before he would allow his wounds to be dressed. What "softies" our decadent democracy produces!

The damage due to the one direct hit had been only superficial, but inspection below disclosed that several near misses had also taken their toll. Each side had been pierced a few feet above the water line by forty or fifty fragments of bombs by contact with the water alongside. Another bomb had exploded deeper under water and dished in the hull two or three inches, cracking the plating and loosening rivets which were leaking steadily. These were wounds which had to be bound up to make the vessel again seaworthy, and the welders were soon on the job plugging the openings.

The tough old girl was not ready for her grave yet, but if she were to continue a career of usefulness, it seemed best to make the Japs think the last salvo of bombs had done the trick. It was useless to pretend any longer that we weren't there, but at least we could make them think that what was left was useless. The next morning, when "Photo Joe" in his scouting plane came over, his pictures showed what looked like an abandoned hulk, listed over on her side, with cargo booms askew, and large blackened areas around the bomb holes, from which wisps of smoke floated up for two or three days. What he did not know was that the smoke came from oily rags in strategically placed smudge pots, and that every night the "abandoned hulk" hummed with activity, forging new weapons for the beleaguered forces of Bataan. Evidently the Japs were completely deceived because only one half-hearted attempt was made a week later by dive bombers to finish off the faithful ship, and that was driven away without damage, by our anti-aircraft guns. These had been taken off the ship and mounted on the hills nearby, so as not to draw further retaliation to the vessel.

Two of the larger anti-aircraft guns had been damaged by the second bombing, and ammunition for those remaining was almost gone. This battery was therefore dismantled to provide needed parts for similar guns which a company of Marines had mounted ashore at the head of Mariveles Bay, and which could be better protected.

CHAPTER V

Japanese warships were reported to be infesting the waters around the Philippines, and the Naval Command had decided that no slow auxiliary vessel would have a chance for success in a dash to safer waters. Perhaps there was still a hope for relief to reach the Philippines, in which case the probable heavy loss of life in an attempt to break through would not be justified. The men, in no uncertain terms, expressed their preference for taking any chances at sea, rather than being bottled up, with a land siege in prospect. But orders were orders, and since those in authority did not see fit to assign any great weight to our feelings in the matter, there remained nothing but to

make the best of a bad situation and settle down to help make it a good siege while it lasted.

Some sort of protected living quarters ashore were a necessity if the night workers were to get any rest. This problem was partly solved by taking over a large storage tunnel just completed, and building in bunks, office space, hospital accommodations, a radio and telephone communication center, and makeshift field kitchens for cooking our two meals a day. More than a hundred of the men not having repair duties lived underground there with reasonable comfort, at least after the water dripping from bare rocks overhead had been trapped and piped to a shower spray, so that baths might at least be voluntary.

Many of the repair force slept during the day in this shelter, but most of them scorned the dank air, and preferred to take their chances in the wide open spaces in the nearby hills, where they learned to sleep under the shade of tropical trees, leaving a lookout to warn them in time to roll into a fox hole whenever a bomber looked threatening.

By no means were all of our men in the night-owl group. Machine guns on every hilltop were manned by alert sailors with itchy trigger fingers, just living for the day when one of the dirty yellow so-and-sos would venture low enough to give them one good crack at him. This didn't happen often, but those that did forget themselves must have thought they had stirred up a hornet's nest, and not all of them lived to tell the tale.

Another watchful group took station under the shelter of the quarry's crushed rock storage tanks, were they were near enough to make a dash to their beloved ship in case she were hit again, to do what they could to save her.

Finally, there were the lookouts and signal stations on the hilltops with telephone wires reaching throughout the whole system, to spot marauding planes while still far away, and warn their shipmates of impending danger. These men, with little protection for themselves, kept their binoculars coolly trained on the bombers, describing the picture to more sheltered friends. Few will ever forget those quiet voices over the earphones, "They are heading directly over us -- their bomb-bay doors are open -- don't believe they dropped bombs this time -- no, here they come -- looks like they will hit beyond us" -- (more drowned out by a shattering roar) -- then, "lousy shooting, missed us a quarter-mile -- must have had their third team in there."

Anyone who had stood in the open when those deadly missiles are rushing down toward him, and has heard the ominous hiss which announces their near approach, will appreciate the iron control of a man who can keep up a blow-by-blow account when his next breath may be his last.

CHAPTER VI

Mariveles harbor seemed to be well defended against surprise attack by the Naval forces clustered around it and the Army had stabilized a front about twenty miles further north, on the other side of Mariveles mountain -- but what about the seacoast between? Most of it was very rugged, and backed up by thick jungle, but the one road

which provided the only line of communication to the front lines passed quite close to the sea at many points. Commander Francis Bridget, who had been left in charge of the remnants of Naval aviation in the Philippines, did not think that this tenuous life line was adequately defended by the Army against a sudden landing on the coast.

Frank was never one to sit back and criticize when action was needed. He had under his own command about a hundred and fifty aviation men, mostly ground crews, who had been left without work when their planes were destroyed. He sold the proposition to other Naval organizations in Bataan, and collected a hundred and thirty men from the Canopus, about eighty from the Ammunition Depot detail, a hundred or so Marines, and a few refugees from the ill-fated Cavite Navy Yard. These heterogeneous groups Bridget formed into the "Naval Battalion", with "Hap" Goodall, of the Canopus, as second in command. Tom Bowers of the Ammunition detail and a few Marine and aviation officers were the company commanders.

Equipment was a serious problem. The Marines were, of course, ready for field duty, but the others were sailors, and the Navy doesn't provide much equipment for land operations at the best, to say nothing of the fact that several of these groups had been separated from their normal supplies by unforeseen circumstances. However rifles and ammunition of some sort were finally begged, borrowed or stolen for most of the men. Their white uniforms were dyed to what was supposed to be khaki color, but which turned out to be a sickly mustard yellow. Only about one canteen could be found for every three men, but the great American tin can was pressed into service to make up the deficiency. This had the advantage that the contents could be heated over a fire in case of need, provided care was exercised not to melt out the solder.

Training was next essential. Perhaps two-thirds of the sailors knew which end of the rifle should be presented to the enemy, and had even practiced on a target range, but field training was practically a closed book to them. The experience Marines were spread thinly throughout each company, in the hope that through perception and example, their qualities would be assimilated by the rest.

Thus equipped, mostly with boundless enthusiasm and determination, the motley array sallied forth one day late in January for a preliminary hike to the coast to harden them up. At the base of Mt. Pucot near the sea they met an agitated group of soldiers who had just been chased by the Japs from their signal station on the mountain top. Apparently a landing had been made on nearby Longoskawan Point the night before, just as Bridget feared, and the invaders were working their way inland toward the vital communication road.

Here was "field training" with a vengeance for our budding infantrymen. Figuratively thumbing their manuals, they hastily deployed in accordance with the best traditions of the book, and advanced in line of skirmishers. Contact was established as might be expected, and the maneuver described as "The Assault" in the next chapter, drove in the advance patrols of the surprised Nipponese.

The strength of the main forces next encountered convinced our boys that they had a "bear by the tail", and since the book failed to provide the proper procedure in such a contingency, they threw it away. Five days of what was probably the weirdest jungle

fighting in the annals of warfare ensued, with all accepted principles violated, and no holds barred. Adjacent units were unable to maintain a contact with each other during the night, so, of course, the Japs took advantage of their famous infiltration tactics. However, this did not have the expected results, because our boys, not having been indoctrinated into the ancient Army principle that it is fatal to be outflanked, simply held their ground and sent back detachments to clear out the annoying intruders behind their lines.

Another essential item which had somehow been overlooked in the plans was the service of supply. In the excitement, nobody thought much about that until nature began to assert itself as night came on, and the boys began to get hungry and tired. A hurry call was sent back to the Canopus to "send up plenty of everything", and trucks were rushed to the new front with food, ammunition, blankets, and stretchers for the wounded. For days, all other work was dropped, and all hands were pressed into service to make sure the fighting men lacked nothing that would help.

The Jap landing party was made up of picked men, larger and stronger than the average, and well equipped for jungle fighting. Had they made a determined assault, they could undoubtedly have wiped out completely our whole ragged battalion. But they knew the business of war, and were sure our front lines must be backed up by powerful reserves somewhere. If they could only find out where these reserves were located, they would know where to make their drive. The big push was held up while their scouts frantically searched for the elusive reserve forces. How could they guess that the crazy Americans were so ignorant of the art of war as to blithely ignore the necessity for reserves? Sixty more Marines with trench mortars were brought over from Corregidor to counteract the advantage the Japs had enjoyed with similar weapons, but they were also used in the front lines, and could hardly be called reserves.

A diary later found on the body of a Japanese officer testified to the complete bewilderment describing the strange conduct of the "new type of suicide squads, which thrashed about in the jungle, wearing bright colored uniforms, and making plenty of noise. Whenever these apparitions reached an open space, they would attempt to draw the Japanese fire by sitting down, talking loudly, and lighting cigarettes."

Bataan may well have been saved from a premature fall by the reckless bravado of those sailors, because if the Japs had succeeded in cutting off supplies to the western Army front, a general retreat from those prepared positions might have been necessary. The lives lost in that timely effort could hardly have been sacrificed in a better cause.

On the fifth day, the 57th regiment of Filipino Scouts arrived to relieve the Naval Battalion. These Scouts were the cream of the crop, having served under American officers as part of the regular Army ever since the Philippines were taken over. The Scouts were intensely proud of their service, and high indeed were the qualifications of any Filipino who could pass their entrance requirements. The Scouts could, and did, outdo the best of the Japs in jungle fighting. The officers swore that their men could smell a Jap sniper in the trees, and cited numerous cases where Scouts stalking through the pitch-dark jungles at night would suddenly fire a shot upward into the

trees, bringing down a sniper. Any Scout who used more than a single shot to bring down his enemy had to face caustic comments from his mates.

You may be sure that each tired sailor, when he felt a tap on his shoulder and the welcome words "I'll take over now, Joe" before his Scout relief melted silently into the jungle, knew that his job was in competent hands, and the battle was as good as won. After three days of the deadly marksmanship of the Scouts, and shattering blasts of huge mortar shells thrown into their main positions by Corregidor's guns, the battered and disorganized remnants of the powerful landing force had all been pushed over the cliffs which lined the seacoast, leaving hundreds of dead behind.

CHAPTER VII

The Jap landing force was down, but not yet out. The rugged cliffs under which the remnants had taken refuge, were honeycombed with crevices and caves washed into the rock by wave action in ages past. Practically inaccessible from the land side, it was suicide to try to ferret out the desperate yellow men, who still had plenty of ammunition and food to stand a long siege.

Bridget's men had been relieved of the land fighting, but they had not lost interest in the course of events. Attacking the problem from a sailor's viewpoint, they conceived a plan for clearing out the hornet's nests by shooting into them from the sea. Here again the Canopus repair men rose to the occasion. conversion work was started on three of her forty-foot motor launches, to make them into "Mickey-Mouse Battleships," armed with heavy machine guns and a light field piece, and protected by boiler plate around the engine and gun positions. No sooner had the first experimental model been finished, than the enthusiastic crew led by "Hap" Goodall, which had been waiting impatiently for another crack at the "Nips," put their brain child into commission and started out. It was a seven or eight mile cruise by water to Longoskawan Point, but they made two round trips the first day, blasting scores of Japs out of their caves with gunfire. As evidence of their success, they brought in two prisoners alive but dazed, and three others which had not survived the return voyage.

The second midget man-of-war was completed on the next day, and both craft steamed out for further glory. However, this time the hunting was not so good, and only four more Japs could be found to be sent after their ancestors, although all the area was thoroughly combed.

Our Canopus crew at last felt amply revenged for the loss of seven shipmates who fell during the land fighting, as well as for the six who died in the first bombing of the ship. They were now veterans, and could look any man in the eye.

There was soon more work for our miniature war craft, however. Just after Longoskawan Point had been cleared, another landing had been made on Quinauen Point, several miles further north. This landing had not been made without opposition, since Bulkeley's mosquito craft had attacked the landing barges and the war vessels guarding them, while the Army's few remaining P-40 fighters bombed and strafed everything in sight. Thirteen loaded barges were reported sunk, and a large destroyer hit by one of Bulkeley's torpedoes, but many of the Jap troops got ashore, and there

was more work for the Scouts. This time a whole week was required to push the Japs over the cliffs, as persistent efforts were made to reinforce their beach-head, supplies even being dropped by parachute during the battle. However, the Scouts, reinforced by light artillery, were not to be denied, and at the last, our sea-borne cleanup squad was again called in to disinfect the caves of Quinauen Point.

"Hap" Goodall and his raiders did a thorough job, with thirty three victims counted when the last Japs were laid out for inspection. But this time, the little expedition was not so lucky as to get off unscathed. Four Japanese dive bombers, probably in belated response to a frantic radio call for help, dived out of the sun on the boats returning from their deadly work. One was shot down by Gunner's Mate Krumb, who died at his machine gun while pouring bullets into the attacking plane, but a salvo of bombs crashed all around the leading boat, blowing holes in its bottom. Goodall was badly wounded in both feet, but ordered the beaching of the little boats to save the lives of the men still unhurt.

Three men had been killed, and four others wounded by the attack, but the survivors improvised crude stretchers for the wounded men, and laboriously cut their way through the jungle to the road. There a friendly truck driver gave them a lift back to the Canopus and medical care.

The Naval Battalion had served its purpose, and their work in Bataan was done. Light naval guns were now being mounted along the coast, and machine gun nests established by the Army in order to make further landing attempts by the Japs extremely difficult. However, the beaches of Corregidor and other fortified islands were long, vulnerable, and only lightly guarded. There were indications that the Jap forces near Manila were preparing for landing operations, so the Naval Battalion soon left us to join the 4th Marines Regiment defending those beaches. Goodall being out of action for the duration, our Engineer Officer, Lieutenant Welch, stepped into his place.

The Canopus contingent was officially detached and incorporated into the Fourth Marines Regiment, but left behind them horrible threats describing what they would do if the Canopus should try to leave without them. They swore that the big guns they were about to man would be trained constantly on the channel leading out of the harbor, ready to blow the Canopus out of the water at the first sign of treacherous attempt to abandon them.

Of course they knew that situation was just about out of the question, and that any man in either group would gladly give up his own place if fate should give his shipmates a chance to "make a dash for it."

CHAPTER VIII

Tojo's troops seemed a little discouraged by their setbacks early in February, and for several weeks left us in doubt as to whether their policy might not have been changed in favor of a starving-out process. Scouting planes and occasional light bombers were still seen almost every day, mostly over our front lines or air fields, but nothing was attempted that could compare with earlier attacks. Perhaps the answer was that the

Japs were busy on other projects -- it was during this period that drives on Singapore and Java were in full fury.

Whatever the reason, Navy men in the Mariveles area frequently found themselves on the verge of boredom, and even though the Canopus repair men had plenty of work, other ratings sometimes found time for idle speculation and conjecture. The radio brought us daily news of fighting on other fronts, and broadcasts were always followed by meetings of amateur boards of strategy, intent on devising ways and means by which relief could be sent to the Islands, or routs by which the marooned ships could escape from the trap, to rejoin the Fleet fighting far south of us.

After all, if little merchant ships could slip through to southern Philippine ports and return, as they did several times during this lull, why wouldn't the Canopus or any of the smaller ships have a chance of getting through to Australia? Nevertheless, the answer from the high command was always an emphatic "no", and that was that. Undoubtedly, the Army needed us, and perhaps the soldier's morale might have suffered if they felt the Navy was deserting them. McArthur had said "We still all stand and fall together." If that was to be the order of the day, so be it -- there must be no question of the Navy's willingness to do its full share.

In spite of rebuffs, our men never quite gave up hope that the situation would someday change so that they could sail the seas again, and they were determined to be ready for that day -- if it came. The fuel in the Canopus tanks was hoarded like gold, representing as it did even more value in terms of possible salvation. The ship's boats were kept tuned up, and many plans laid for just such a dash as Lt. Cmdr. Morrill and his men later made when capture was imminent. Almost anything that would float was an object of speculation as to its possible value in escaping capture if worst came to the worst.

Our prize entry in the "Dunkirk Sweepstakes" was a forty five foot sloop, one of several yachts which had escaped from Manila. This one had come to grief on the rocks of Bataan, to be salvaged later, in spite of many difficulties, by a few officers of the Canopus and Army Engineers. Her bottom was badly pounded, and she had been completely stripped of her fittings. However, our amateur yachtsmen were not to be stopped by such minor obstacles. There was an overturned cargo lighter nearby, which had resisted all efforts to right it. A miniature dry dock was built on the exposed bottom of this lighter, and the sloop was hoisted aboard it for extensive overhaul. An auxiliary engine was gotten from a wrecked automobile, and a new suit of sails and rigging were fitted by loving hands. Rechristened the "Novia," and back in her native element, the dainty little craft was the central figure in many a dream of adventurous passage through the southern seas. On moonlight nights, visiting Army officers and nurses were treated to romantic little cruises in the channels near Corregidor, perhaps helping them forget for a moment the grim realities of war.

The "Novia" was still afloat until the last desperate hours of Corregidor, but no word has come through as to her eventual fate. Perhaps when the War is over, we will learn whether she carried a desperate crew to their deaths in a final effort to win freedom.

Nearly every evening, Army officers and nurses who were able to snatch a few hours leave from their duties, gathered on board the Canopus. We had refrigeration, excellent cooking facilities, and decent living quarters, which seemed heaven to them compared to their hardships in the field. To enjoy a real shower bath, cold drinking water, well-cooked meals served on white linen with civilized table ware, and greatest luxury of all, real butter, seemed almost too much for them to believe. When these favored ones returned to their primitive surroundings and described these "feasts topped off with ice cream and chocolate sauce, they were often put in the same "dog house" as the optimists who claimed to have seen a fleet of transports steaming in.

Our visitors repaid us in full for any hospitality with tales of their own adventures. Captain Wermuth, the famous "one man army" often regaled us with graphic, even gruesome accounts of his many encounters. General Casey, Major Wade Cochrane, Major Kircher, Major Lauman and many others kept up in touch with affairs at USAFFE headquarters and the front lines. Occasionally Marine officers from Corregidor would manufacture reasons for visiting Bataan so that they could visit the Canopus and refresh their memories of better days. Bulkeley and other torpedo boat officers in particular enjoyed our ice cream desserts. We were only sorry when our supplies began to fail toward the end, and we could no longer maintain quite as good hotel service for our friends.

During February the Japs started feeling out the defenses of Corregidor and the other fortified islands. They mounted gun batteries on the south shore of Manila Bay, which made a practice of banging out a few quick shots, then shifting their positions before the ponderous guns of our forts could be brought to bear effectively on them. They would also try to confuse the issue by setting off several false flashes in other locations at the same time their guns were fired. The batteries were usually cunningly concealed behind foliage, or in valleys where they could not be seen from the Army's spotting stations.

Little actual damage was done by these sporadic shellings, but they served to remind the garrisons that they were still in a war, and that the trap was still sprung.

Early in March Bulkeley's torpedo craft slipped out of the harbor on their famous dash to the southern Philippines, carrying as passengers General McArthur and Rear Admiral Rockwell, with their staffs. A few days later, the Japanese learned of their departure, and started a leaflet propaganda campaign among the Filipinos, claiming that our troops had been deserted by their leaders, that further resistance was foolish, and similar arguments. Fortunately, most of the poison had been extracted from their propaganda by the fact that General McArthur's departure had already been announced to the troops, as well as the reason for it.

Occasionally, our submarines, which were prowling the sea lanes looking for Jap ships to sink, would pay us a visit while en route from patrol stations back to their new southern bases. Other submarines also made special visits when required, bringing in vital medical supplies or ammunition of any kind which happened to be urgently needed. Nearly all of these submarines took out passengers when they left - high political personages, Army and Navy officers, and specially trained enlisted men who were badly needed to carry on the war elsewhere. Greatest comfort of all to those left

behind were the letters these submarines carried to their loved ones at home. Unfortunately, this service was never organized to bring in mail for the beleaguered forces from distribution centers in the south. Those long months with never a word from home were not the least of our trials, even though we felt that our families were making every effort to get messages to us.

CHAPTER IX

The last week in March brought to an end our suspicions that the Japs were committed to a starving-out policy. No doubt they would have "lost face" if they had to concede that they could only win by such waiting tactics. At any rate, a heavy and sustained offensive suddenly broke against our weary undernourished troops.

Supplies and equipment had evidently been stocked at captured air fields so that they could now be used as bases for sustained offensive operations. It was only about a fifteen minute trip by bomber from these fields to Bataan or Corregidor, which made it possible for the Japs to keep the air filled with planes throughout the day and night. For the first time during the siege, they experimented with night "nuisance raids." The planes came either singly or in pairs. Their pilots were usually blinded by our Army searchlights so that their bombing was inaccurate, and effective only in breaking up the rest of our weary defenders.

Constant day attacks, however, took a more substantial toll. Much of the Navy's oil supplies, scattered in small caches in the underbrush around Mariveles harbor, was touched off by searching bombs. Exposed water pipes, telephone, and power lines had to be repaired daily to maintain services. Few of the temporary buildings, set up to provide shelter during the approaching rainy season, were untouched. Word must have gotten to the Japs that the Canopus was still an effective unit, resulting in four more attempts to destroy her, but without success.

Corregidor, the air fields, the front lines, and supply dumps in the hills -- all came in for constant harassing attacks. Even the plainly marked and defenseless hospitals were viciously bombed. The difficulties confronting any attempt to maintain supplies to the front lines can well be imagined.

With enemy planes hovering constantly overhead, the artillery, which had been a major factor in stopping previous attacks, was unable to keep up effective fire. Showers of bombs would crash around any emplacement when its position was disclosed by the smoke and blast of discharge.

It was scarcely a surprise when we hear reports on April sixth that the front lines were in serious trouble. Under a terrific artillery barrage, the Philippine Army troops in the center of the line had given way, and exposed the crest of Mariveles mountain to capture. Now indeed our artillery was blind, having lost the elevated observation posts which were their only means of directing fire of their guns. Unless the lost positions could be recaptured, the whole peninsula would be exposed to Jap artillery fire.

All reserves were drawn in for the supreme effort. Every remaining tank was thrown into the breach. Even the beaches were left unguarded in order to provide all possible

reinforcements, but the task proved too great for the weakened troops. On April eighth came the news that Army forces of the eastern flank were retreating toward Mariveles harbor, destroying stores and ammunition dumps in the path of the victorious Japanese.

All hope of holding Bataan was gone, leaving us with the grim duty of destroying everything that might be of value to the Nipponese. Early in the day, the Commandant had told us that no Navy or Army forces would be evacuated to Corregidor, since that island was already overcrowded. However, at ten thirty that night, he telephoned that General Wainwright had decided to accept on the island one Scout regiment and the Naval forces at Mariveles. These favored units were to augment the beach defenses of Corregidor, thus continuing their fight from a new set of foxholes. Unfortunately, it later developed that very few of the Scouts were able to reach an embarkation point for Corregidor before the Japs cut them off.

Evacuation of the Navy forces had to be completed before dawn brought over more swarms of bombers or an advance guard of Jap tanks. Without defense shelters which were being destroyed, the sailors would be helpless. That wild and horrible, yet weirdly beautiful night must be imprinted forever in the memories of all who lived through its spectacular fury. For miles back on the slopes of the mountain, burning Army ammunition dumps lighted the sky with showers of rocket-like streamers, while the ground shook with heavy detonations of exploding ammunition. A severe earthquake shock felt on Corregidor was not even noticed on Bataan, which was continually vibrating with man-made earthquakes.

Roads were choked with retreating troops, often stopped for hours waiting for a dangerously near ammunition dump to burn itself out. Around the shores of Mariveles Bay, Navy men blew up the Dewey floating dry-dock, which had served the Asiatic Fleet for so many years, and scuttled the ships which had no part to play in defending Corregidor. The Canopus seemed reluctant to go, but her crew could still take pride in the fact that the Japs had been unable to knock her out -- she was still able to back out under her own power to deep water. There she was laid to her final rest by the hands of the sailors she had served so faithfully.

Each man was to be limited almost to the clothes on his back while on the "Rock", but we took large supplies of equipment which would be useful in defense. Machine guns, rifles, ammunition, food, and fuel were all on the "Urgent" list. All through the night, long lines of men scurried from storage tunnels to the docks, carrying the precious supplies to evacuation boats, heedless of exploding dynamite all around them, and paying no attention to frequent reports that Jap troops were rapidly approaching. There was no way of knowing that these reports were premature, because the burning ammunition dumps gave a fine imitation of heavy firing.

As soon as the tunnels were cleared of useful supplies, their entrances were blown in by dynamite charges to prevent the Japs from using them or the equipment left behind. Just before dawn, all boats had finally been loaded, and the little fleet started off for Corregidor.

The last three boats, loaded with weary Canopus men, had just left the tortured earth struck back at them. The whole hillside seemed to erupt in a tremendous burst of orange flame, hurling huge boulders half a mile out into the bay, lashing the calm waters into stormy, frothing waves. Evidently, gasoline drums stored in one of the tunnels had been broken open when the entrance was dynamited, and fumes in the corked-up passage had built up a gigantic explosive charge. Our three boats were squarely in the path of that deluge of destruction. Two of them were struck by massive boulders, one of them sinking instantly under an impact which had sheared off the whole stern, leaving its three occupants struggling in the seething water. Fortunately, they were not hurt, and were soon rescued by shipmates in the undamaged boat. The other injured boat did not sink, but boulders crashing down through its canopy had killed an officer and three men. Nine other men had been wounded by the rain of heavy rocks. However, the battered boat was still able to run, so the interrupted voyage to Corregidor was resumed. Solicitous shipmates eased the suffering of the wounded as best they could, but medical aid had to wait until arrival at the "Rock" more than an hour later

CHAPTER X

Our ship was gone, and our "Dunkirk" was over, but no welcoming homeland was waiting to solace our battered warriors, nor would any but the most incurable optimist see rosy prospects for the future. The channel through Corregidor's northern mine fields, through which boats must pass to meet rescue submarines, could no longer be used because of the Jap gun batteries now lining the shores of Bataan. There had never been a channel through the southern mine fields, which made it look as if we were bottled up by our own deadly obstructions.

There were mine sweepers among the Navy ships huddled in Corregidor's South Harbor, but no one had ever devised a sweep wire that could be pushed ahead of the ship, and if it were towed astern in the usual manner, the sweeping vessel would inevitably be blown up by the thickly planted mines. There was only one glimmer of hope. If small boats, starting close inshore, could sweep a narrow channel without chancing on mines near the surface, the big sweepers could follow behind and widen the breach -- provided they were lucky enough not to stray a few feet off the straight and narrow path. All this work would have to be done at night, making accurate navigation almost impossible.

No matter how dangerous the job, there were always enthusiastic navy men to undertake it. The versatile motor launches of the Canopus were turned over to experienced Mine Force sailors, and became miniature sweepers. Navigational lights were rigged on shore, hooded to screen their purpose from watchful Japanese eyes. Night after night, for two weeks, the daring crews gambled their lives against their skill -- and luck -- until success finally crowned their efforts. Many mines had exploded near venturesome boats, but never quite close enough to destroy them. Again a path to the sea was open, making it possible for submarines to come in and rescue a few chosen passengers.

In the meantime, the defenses of Corregidor and nearby fortified islands were gradually being blasted to bits. There were now not nearly so many objectives to

distribute the enemy's bombing raids, which made destruction that much more concentrated on the ones still unconquered. The shores of Bataan were within easy artillery range, and batteries lining the beaches pounded day and night against every exposed position on the islands. Observation balloons were even sent up in Bataan to make it easier for artillery shells to be spotted into every nook and cranny.

Huge two hundred and forty millimeter shells soon began to search out the deeply buried powder magazines under Corregidor's mortar batteries, causing terrific explosions which wiped out several of the guns and their unfortunate crews.

All the Canopus crew and officers who were fit for such arduous duty had been sent into beach defenses with the Marines immediately on arrival at Corregidor. This duty involved a precarious existence in fox holes and caves which they dug for themselves in the cliffs. They slept under the stars at night, and dodged shells and bombs by day. Casualties were surprisingly low, probably because these men had learned by bitter experience how best to take care of themselves.

Artillery shells were conceded to be worse than bombs, because the latter, at least, "rattled before they struck." Planes were always seen overhead before bombs could possibly arrive, and the swish could be heard in time to duck into whatever shelter was handy. But high velocity artillery shells strike before the sound is heard, and no one could tell where or when the next blast would erupt. The guns also could, and frequently did, concentrate their pounding on a small area until everything in it was demolished.

In the face of everything that kept their tenure of life uncertain most of the open-air dwellers had the spirit to be sorry for the less active men, who were condemned to breathe the foul air of the comparatively sheltered tunnels! Obviously, the outdoor contingent wore the free, upstanding air of men who have met the acid test of danger, and are masters of their own souls.

Flesh and blood, however, could not endure the merciless pounding indefinitely, or could the concrete and steel of the forts stand forever. One by one the pill boxes and gun emplacements were knocked out, leaving little to resist when the yellow horde should finally pour from boats in the final assault. The war will probably be over before we know the full details of those last desperate hours, when valiant men, equipped with little more than courage, were pitted against well-armed invaders.

Two nights before the landing, a submarine slipped through the screen of Jap destroyers clustered around the entrance to Manila Bay, and the last group of passengers race out the new channel to meet their rescue ship. Six Naval officers, six Army officers, eleven Army nurses, one Navy nurse and the wife of a Naval officer had found their names on the list which represented a last chance for freedom. As their little boat bobbed its way through the darkness, they found it almost impossible to convince themselves that the long months of trial were actually nearing an end. Suppose something had happened to keep the submarine from reaching the appointed spot? Could she get through the cordon of enemy destroyers searching only a few miles outside? What a wonderful relief was the sight of that low black hull looming through the darkness, waiting exactly on her station!

In final testimony of the hell left behind, the dark bulk of Corregidor suddenly blazed with fires and bursting shells, just as the favored group climbed on board the submarine. The Japs were starting to lay down a terrific, continuous barrage that was to mean the end of Corregidor before many more hours had passed.

Within the throbbing steel hull of the submarine, sympathetic crew members served up such food as the hungry refugees had not seen for months. Bunks were already at a premium, but the choicest ones were unselfishly given up to the passengers, with all hands put on a strict schedule for sleeping at different times during the day and night.

Danger was by no means past. The gauntlet of Japanese patrolled sea lanes still had to be run, and for weeks the only sight of the sun would be through a periscope. But the passengers had placed their destinies in competent hands, and they had no need to worry over such trifles.

When news of the fall of Corregidor came through the radio two days later, faces were grim and grief stricken. We had hoped that there might be time for more submarines to be sent in, and more of our shipmates rescued. Now that last hope for our friends were gone. They had joined the "Missing in Action" roll call.

For them it would always be a roll of honor. Far from being an implication that they might have shirked their duty or fled from the battle, in their case it could only mean death or imprisonment after the most devoted service any nation could ask of its loyal subjects.

Just before the Navy radio station on Corregidor was destroyed to keep it out of alien hands, the Commandant had flashed a final message which well expresses the code by which those sailors lived and fought. Not for themselves were the thoughts of twenty five hundred men and officers of the Navy in that last desperate hour -- instead they "reaffirmed their loyalty and devotion to country, families and friends."