

Chapter 4. 1941-1942

OMINOUS BEGINNING

On the evening of December 7, 1941 a loud party was underway at the Manila Hotel's Fiesta Pavilion. Major General Lewis Brereton, commander of Army Air Forces in the Far East was attending a party thrown by the 27th Bomb Group, recently arrived from the States ahead of their planes. The party, marked by raucous laughter, off-key singing, tinkling glass, and squealing girls would continue into the wee hours of the morning. Observing from the Hotel's Bamboo Bar under a cascade of scarlet bougainvillea, First Lieutenant Dwight Hunkins of H Company remarked to his friends, "I hope they can fly B-17s better than they can sing."¹ His friends were Lieutenants George Williams, an infantry officer recently reassigned to the Philippine Army, George B. "Joe" McClellan III, an Army aviator and descendant of General George McClellan of Civil War fame, Bill Tooley, a Signal Corps officer with the 31st Infantry's Headquarters Company, and Ralph Emerson Hibbs, the 31st Infantry Regiment's 2d Battalion Surgeon. None of them knew it yet but they would be at war the next morning and when it was over only one of them would still be alive.²

Ralph Hibbs awoke in the early hours of December 8 to the steady ringing of a telephone in General Brereton's suite across the garden.³ Through open windows, Hibbs heard Brereton's gruff, irritated voice answer, "Hello? Those sons of bitches! You've got to be kidding!" After another flurry of curses, Brereton slammed down the receiver. Soon other phones rang, subdued voices filled the courtyard, followed by hurried footsteps, doors slamming, and cars zooming off through the otherwise quiet city. Unconcerned, Hibbs went back to sleep. He still didn't know this would be the last night he would spend in a bed for more than 3 years. At 6:30, as Hibbs drove his old Chevy through the suburb of Pasay to his battalion's bivouac site near Nichols Field, a vendor flashed the Manila morning paper at him: "HAWAII BOMBED—WAR!" As he entered the bivouac area, men were already digging foxholes. Major Lloyd Moffitt, the 2d Battalion's commander, informed Hibbs that he was now a captain. "As of this morning, all company grade officers are promoted one grade." First Sergeant Joe Wilson suggested that despite his advanced grade, Hibbs should start digging a foxhole "because the Nips are scheduled to arrive soon."

At about the same time, Sergeant Mike Gilewitch, D Company's Supply Sergeant, opened his supply room and by habit turned on the radio he inherited with the job. Expecting to hear music, he was surprised to hear "*The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor and other American military bases in Hawaii.*" Gilewitch rushed through the orderly room to Captain Chris Heffernan's office, brushing off First Sergeant Evelyn Dempsey's "What the hell do you think you're doing."⁴ "Captain, we're at war with Japan! Come to the supply room, they're on the

¹ The 27th Bomb Group's planes never arrived. Some of the pilots were evacuated to Australia but most of the unit fought on Bataan as Infantry.

² Only Ralph Hibbs survived.

³ The date was Sunday, December 7 in Washington and Pearl Harbor because the International Date Line bisects the Pacific west of Hawaii.

⁴ 1SG Dempsey (Houston, TX) and SGT Gilewitch (Philadelphia, PA) survived the war, but CPT Christopher J. Heffernan, Jr. (Amsterdam, NY) died at Hospital #1 on April 9, 1942, the day Bataan surrendered.

radio telling about it now." In a flash, everyone dashed to the supply room to hear about the attack. Heffernan turned down the volume and called regimental headquarters. The group watched the captain's expression change to bewilderment as he received his orders. "Headquarters says to proceed as usual."

When the captain and first sergeant departed, Gilewitch called headquarters again, explaining that the company had sixteen .30 caliber machineguns whose ammunition had to be loaded into 250-round fabric belts with one slow, hand cranked machine. The duty officer replied, "Your commanding officer has his orders. No ammo will be opened! An inspection team will be by to ensure these orders are not violated. If any boxes are opened, the commanding officer and supply sergeant will be court martialed." Gilewitch was stunned by such blind stupidity, but he persisted. Headquarters finally relented and authorized the issue of pistols and 7 rounds of .45 caliber ammunition, but machinegun ammunition was to remain locked up. A few minutes later, the supply room phone rang. It was the lieutenant from regimental headquarters again, directing the issue of gas masks. To make sure it was done, the signature list was to be delivered to headquarters. Gilewitch grumbled to himself "We're gonna have more trouble with our own headquarters than with the Japanese." His thoughts were prophetic.

Around 10:00 AM, First Sergeant Houghtby dispatched PFC Nickerson⁵ with C Company's 1934 Dodge truck to pick up the company's supply sergeant, Abie Abraham, at his quarters in Manila. Screeching to a halt in front of Abraham's house, Nickerson shouted "Mrs. Abraham, is your husband home?" "He's behind the house fixing the fence to keep the dogs out. What's up Andy?" "The Japs bombed Pearl Harbor, all hell broke loose, and the captain wants everyone back at the barracks." As Nickerson and Abraham drove toward the Cuartel de España, Dewey Boulevard was already crowded with people fleeing Manila in busses, trucks, *carromatas* (two wheeled carriages), and *calesas* (pony carts).

The 2d and 3d Battalions from nearby Estado Mayor, flush with hundreds of green replacements, were on their annual range firing exercise at Fort McKinley's B Range when three waves of Japanese planes attacked adjacent Nichols Field at 9 AM on December 9.⁶ A stray bomb landed in the 2d Battalion's bivouac area but no

What the men at B Range did not know is that the 31st Infantry had already suffered its first casualty. Sergeant Cecil Brand and Private James Morgan of E Company were on detail at Camp John Hay, 120 miles north of Manila, when the first wave of bombers hit. Sergeant Brand was killed instantly when a bomb hit the officer's club where he was taking inventory. He was the first American soldier killed in action in the Philippines.

one was hurt. On the airfield, however, the devastation was total. Buildings and wrecked planes billowed thick black smoke and flames into the air. One bomb struck next to the Pan Am Communications Center, killing its civilian operator. Around 11:00 AM, units in bivouac were directed to move into dispersed company assembly areas under the cover of trees. Company commanders were ordered to reconnoiter positions for defense against possible Japanese airborne landings.

⁵ 1SG Arthur C. Houghtby (home town unknown) died in captivity at Camp O'Donnell on May 20, 1942.

⁶ Now Manila International Airport.

The 2d Battalion's field headquarters was situated on a knoll only a kilometer from the end of the Nichols Field runway. Preparing for a second wave of Japanese bombers, Private Bill Garleb worked feverishly to set up his Browning .30 caliber machinegun on an anti-aircraft tripod. He remarked to his squad leader, Sergeant George Eckhardt, "How crazy is it for Japan to attack America?" Japanese planes returned around 11:30 AM. The 2d and 3d Battalions watched them twist and dive in a swirling aerial dogfight against American P-40s. Stray rounds and spent shells from the dogfight landed among the bewildered troops, precipitating panic in the ranks. Men scattered to find whatever cover they could, leaving machineguns sitting harmlessly atop their anti-aircraft mounts. Private Bill Garleb jumped into a ravine and burrowed into what seemed to be an animal's lair, covering his head with his hands and trying to shut out the sounds of war erupting around him.

When the raid ended, sheepish men emerged to the angry barking of NCOs. During their baptism of fire, few had demonstrated the coolness and discipline they would need in combat. Near sunset, an American spotter plane came in low over Nichols Field. Nearly every weapon in the 2d and 3d Battalions blazed away at the hapless plane. Aircraft recognition had not been part of the new recruits' training. The pilot bailed out, but still they fired as he waved his arms frantically. Slugs ripped through his body and parachute. A "cease firing" order was ignored and in one case, an officer had to drag a wild-eyed machinegunner away from his gun. The pilot was shot through his left lung and landed limply, but he was alive and angry, screaming, "You shot me in the air, you shot me on the way down, you sons-of-bitches!" He was still screaming obscenities as an ambulance took him off to the aid station.

The series of raids caught most US planes on the ground, destroying the 19th Bomb Group's B-17s at Clark Field and practically wiping out P-35 and P-40 squadrons based at Clark, Nichols, Del Carmen, and Iba Fields. From then on, there would be almost no air support for Luzon's defenders. Around 20 airmen had been killed and over a hundred wounded on Nichols Field, but when quiet returned, men resumed the work they had been engaged in before the raids. A group of carpenters returned from their places of shelter to resume building a new barracks block on the wrecked airfield. Soon they were hammering away as if nothing had happened.

As Japanese planes passed over Manila on their way back from bombing Nichols Field, nearly every man in the 1st Battalion fired at them with his .45 caliber pistol, still the only weapon with ammunition. It was a futile gesture of defiance and a sad omen of things to come. With planes still passing overhead, every bugler in the 1st Battalion sounded the call to arms, a call few had ever heard. In company supply rooms, phones rang and instructions were finally given by regimental headquarters to issue all ammunition. Accountability and responsibility suddenly ceased. First sergeants at the Cuartel called formations, ordering the men to be back on the parade ground in full khaki field uniform with weapon, gas mask, and weapons cleaning equipment in 10 minutes. The companies were ready, but it would take the rest of the day and all night to get machinegun ammunition belted. There was no ammunition for the new 60mm mortars, a situation that would not change during the campaign to come. Although they still had no ammunition, the 1st Battalion's machinegunner hoisted heavy wooden anti-aircraft tripods atop the walls of Intramuros to gain better firing positions against low-flying aircraft.

Near noon, the 1st Battalion marched out of the Cuartel de España to the "sunken gardens", a dry moat surrounding the walled citadel. Riflemen dug in along the moat's rim while machine gunners mounted their guns atop the city's walls. By nightfall on December 9, two 250-round belts of ammunition per machinegun were issued but only eight extra belts were available to replenish them if they had to be fired. There were no more cloth belts and without them the guns would quickly become useless. As the regiment waited for further instructions, First Sergeant Houghtby began laughing. "What's so damned funny?" asked his puzzled commander, Captain Richard Carnahan. "Oh, I was just thinking how we heard all Japs had bad eyes from eating rice and many of 'em are cross-eyed and can't shoot straight." Carnahan grumbled, "It'd be a helluva note if one of 'em aims at you and hits me!"⁷

The 31st Infantry remained in the Manila area as a security force while things deteriorated rapidly in other parts of Luzon. On December 10, Nichols Field was bombed and strafed again and Cavite Naval Base was also bombed, but most of the US Asiatic Fleet had already departed for Australia. Two submarines still at the dock were sunk and over 200 torpedoes stacked on adjacent docks went up like Fourth of July fireworks. That day, 4000 Japanese troops landed on Northern Luzon and began moving inland against light resistance from ill-equipped Philippine Army units that had only recently been formed. The US Army's Philippine Division, with the 31st (US), 45th (PS)⁸, and 57th (PS) Infantry Regiments, was kept in reserve around Manila while the weaker Philippine Army was being thrashed. The 4th Marine Regiment, only recently arrived from Shanghai, was also kept in reserve, guarding naval installations that were being systematically destroyed by Japanese bombers. The 26th Cavalry (PS) from Ft Stotsenberg fanned out across central Luzon to cover the Philippine Army's steady retreat.

⁷ CPT Richard K. Carnahan (Lincoln, NE) won the Distinguished Service Cross at Abucay Hacienda, but died in captivity at Cp O'Donnell on May 10, 1942.

⁸ Philippine Scouts (PS) were recruited from among the Philippine population as members of the US Army. Filipinos competed for positions in PS units because they offered good pay and elite status in Philippine society. They were led by American officers and were well disciplined, trained, and equipped. In 1941, PS units included the 43d Infantry on Mindanao, 45th and 57th Infantry, 26th Cavalry, 23d, 24th, 86th, and 88th Field Artillery and 14th Engineers on Luzon, and the 91st and 92d Coast Artillery on Corregidor. The 43d Infantry and the engineer, field artillery, and coast artillery regiments were only at battalion strength. General MacArthur ordered PS recruiting to cease in 1941 to avoid drawing the best recruits away from the Philippine Army (PA) which was being expanded to 11 divisions.

31st Infantry Chain of Command
Bataan - December 14, 1941

Regimental Commander	COL Charles L. Steel (reassigned Mar 1, 1942)
Executive Officer	LTC Irvin E. Doane (promoted, reassigned Jan 27, 1942)
HQ Company CO	CPT Earl C. Packer (died in captivity)
Service Company CO	CPT Clarence Bess
Antitank Company CO	CPT Robert A. Barker (died in captivity)
Medical Det CO	MAJ Clarence H. White (died in captivity)
1st Battalion CO	LTC Edward H. Bowes (Silver Star, died in captivity)
A Company CO	CPT Cecil R. Welchko (died in captivity)
B Company CO	CPT Lloyd G. Murphy (relieved for cause, died in captivity)
C Company CO	CPT Richard K. Carnahan (DSC, died in captivity)
D Company CO	CPT Christopher J. Heffernan, Jr. (died at Hospital # 1 on Bataan)
2d Battalion CO	MAJ Lloyd C. Moffitt (Silver Star, KIA April 8, 1942)
E Company CO	CPT Robert S. Sauer (Silver Star, died in captivity)
F Company CO	CPT Eugene B. Conrad (Silver Star)
G Company CO	CPT John I. Pray
H Company CO	CPT Dwight T. Hunkins (Silver Star, died in captivity)
3d Battalion CO	LTC Jasper E. Brady, Jr. (Regt Cdr Mar 1, 1942, died in captivity)
I Company CO	CPT Ray B. Stroud (relieved for cause, died in captivity)
K Company CO	CPT Coral M. Talbott (died in captivity)
L Company CO	CPT Donald G. Thompson
M Company CO	CPT Thomas P. Bell (Silver Star)

OPENING MOVES

At 2 AM on December 12, the 31st Infantry, less the 1st Battalion, boarded trucks, civilian buses, and taxicabs and headed north from Fort McKinley to a destination still unknown to the troops. The column reached San Fernando, Pampanga Province, at dawn and continued moving. Three flights of Japanese fighters passed overhead, but showed no interest in the convoys below. Even when traffic jammed at the Calumpit Bridge, Japanese planes seemed disinterested. The column's only anti-aircraft protection was BARs and air-cooled .30 caliber machineguns poked through holes cut in the roofs of buses and cabs. Around 1 PM on December 13, the regiment's lead element was dropped off near kilometer post 137.3 on the Pilar-Bagac Road. The next morning, the 3d Battalion marched westward, taking up positions about 3 miles east of the barrio (village) of Bagac to guard against possible Japanese landings on Bagac Bay. Colonel Charles L. Steel, the 31st Infantry's commander, became ill and was taken to the field hospital at Limay, leaving his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Irvin E. Doane, in command. The regiment's chain of command at the time is shown in the insert above. The 2d and 3d Battalions began intensive training and conditioning. One patrol went all the way to the Bamban River, about 20 miles north of Ft Stotsenberg in central Luzon to select a delay line. Their effort was in vain. The only delay would be whatever resistance the 26th Cavalry, the artillery, and a few Philippine Army divisions could render as they drew back toward Bataan.

Emboldened by the success of their initial landings, the Japanese landed 43,000 additional troops at Lingayen Gulf on December 22. In 5 days, the Japanese reached Fort Stotsenberg in Central Luzon, pushing steadily closer to Manila. Cavite Naval Base and Sangley Point Naval Air Station were bombed repeatedly, sending columns of smoke high over Manila Bay while frustrated Marines and sailors watched helplessly, unable to strike back. On Christmas Eve, at Philippine President Manuel Quezon's urging, General Douglas MacArthur declared Manila an open city. Quezon sought to spare the civilian population from Japanese bombing by vacating bases in the city so that there would no longer be military targets there. Under the Laws of War, an open city is not to be attacked. An emergency police force that included the 31st Infantry's B Company remained in Manila, augmenting the 12th and 808th MP Companies, Philippine Constabulary units, and the city's police force to keep order. After spending nearly 3 weeks in the Luneta area along Manila Bay fruitlessly guarding against Japanese paratroop landings that never came, the rest of the 1st Battalion boarded barges before daylight on Christmas morning. They were taken to Corregidor, an island dominating Manila Bay's entrance. Once ashore, the 1st Battalion marched up a long hill to the parade ground in front of "Topside", the world's longest barracks. In peacetime, Topside housed three coast artillery regiments and an antiaircraft regiment, but now it was nearly empty since most gunners were at their battle stations, which included Forts Drum and Hughes on smaller islands near the mouth of Manila Bay. Only a few coast artillery personnel and Marines, recently arrived from Subic Bay, occupied the huge building.

At dusk on Christmas Eve, the 31st Infantry, less the 1st Battalion, reached a position just north of Abucay Hacienda. There they began developing what became the Main Line of Resistance (MLR). For the next 4 days, the 31st labored around the clock, stringing barbed wire, digging positions, stringing communications wire, setting night aiming stakes for automatic weapons, pacing distances to likely points of enemy attack, and registering artillery and mortar concentrations. To the regiment's front was a series of fish ponds separated by narrow dikes. On the right was Manila Bay, affording excellent fields of fire against any attempt to flank the position by sea. The line extended inland about 2 kilometers past the barrio of Matabang where excellent cover and good fields of fire existed on flat ground.

Manila was bombed twice on Christmas Day. The bombings continued for several days, signaling Japanese contempt for the Laws of War. On December 28, Colonel Steel returned to the regiment, looking much older than his 50 years, according to one of his former officers. After completing the position at Matabang, the 31st moved north to establish a delay line near Layac where the main road from Central Luzon enters the Bataan Peninsula. After digging and laying wire for 2 days, the 2d and 3d Battalions marched westward toward the town of Olongapo on Subic Bay. Their mission was to hold the nearby Zig Zag Pass against a possible Japanese landing. The 3d Battalion was located about 600 yards east of the pass in reserve. The 2d Battalion occupied positions abandoned by the 4th Marines at the point where Route 7 reaches its highest point at Zig Zag Pass and begins descending to Subic Bay. Below, G Company outposted the beaches around Subic Bay. With only 128 men and no artillery support, trying to outpost nearly 40 miles of beach was unimaginable. Subic Bay Naval Base had been abandoned and was partially destroyed by the Navy and Japanese bombers, but some of its facilities remained usable.

As many as possible of the latter were blown up by the 2d Battalion. On New Year's Eve, the 2d and 3d Battalions were ordered to withdraw to the Bataan Peninsula.

The withdrawal along Route 7 was uneventful until the 3d Battalion reached the village of Dinalupihan where the road takes a sharp southward turn toward Layac. Diving out of the clouds, Japanese planes suddenly struck the column. The attack was particularly surprising because the Japanese had ignored the more congested route entering Bataan from San Fernando. Corporals Jack Cape of K Company and Jack Wood of M Company were wounded as bombs fell randomly among troops scattering to find shelter. Miraculously, they were the day's only casualties. During the raid, Lieutenant Roy Zoberbier seemed to be everywhere at once, getting M Company's machineguns into action against the planes as the 3d Battalion headed for the Culo River, marking Bataan's northern edge.⁹ For his coolness under fire, Zoberbier earned the Silver Star.

By the time G Company, the rear guard, was finally ordered to withdraw to Bataan, the main withdrawal route had become too dangerous, so the men made their way into Bataan along jungle trails south of Highway 7. Because dense underbrush and steep ravines would make the trip difficult, they were ordered to keep only their weapons, ammunition, canteens, and a small back pack. Private Ward Redshaw wanted to keep his extra pair of size 15 boots because his size was impossible to find in the Philippines. His platoon sergeant, Staff Sergeant Thomas Fortune, told him to throw them away. Reluctantly he did. That later got him out of combat. After a month of fighting in the jungle, Redshaw's boots became worn out. When Colonel Steel saw that he had only shreds on his feet and found that he could not get new boots, he ordered Redshaw transferred to a Signal unit in southern Bataan. Fate sometimes works in mysterious ways.

AIR ATTACK ON CORREGIDOR

A few days before the 3d Battalion was bombed at Dinalupihan, the 1st Battalion experienced its baptism of fire on Corregidor. While bombing Cavite and Sangley Point Naval Stations across the Bay, Japanese planes had always gone out of their way to avoid flying over Corregidor, perhaps believing that American anti-aircraft units were better equipped than they really were. Suddenly on December 29, wave after wave of Japanese planes struck the island. The 1st Battalion had not prepared foxholes because they were told by men stationed on the island that Topside Barracks was bombproof. They soon learned otherwise. Sergeant Mike Gilewitch did not trust the bombproof story and headed for a wooded area as sirens wailed all over the island. He ran from place to place in the woods, seeking shelter from bombs and machinegun bullets spattering all around him. As he dove for a shallow depression, a bomb blast tossed him into the air like a limp rag doll and deposited him on his back about ten feet away. Although conscious, he could not move. Eventually he was able to move his jaw and eyes, then his fingers and toes, and finally his arms and legs, but his head felt like it was stuffed with cotton. He couldn't hear and thought the raid was over until he noticed dust being kicked up by bullets spattering near him. As he rolled toward a concrete culvert, a bomb landed in his intended refuge, sending shards of metal and chunks of concrete flying past him and causing him to shake uncontrollably.

⁹ LT Zoberbier (Manila, PI) died in captivity at Cabanatuan on October 23, 1942. SSG Thomas W. Fortune (Douglas, GA) died at the hands of his Japanese guards while on a work detail at Nichols Field on June 11, 1942.

The first sound Gilewitch heard when his hearing returned was the groaning of Private John Lajewski whose right leg was severely mangled by a bomb blast. Gilewitch put a tourniquet above the wound and used his first aid kit to cover as much of the wound as possible, but it was too extensive. Gilewitch ran through the bombing and strafing to the barracks where there were medical supplies. After grabbing a case of bandages and first aid packets, he grabbed a folded cot on his way out. After thoroughly bandaging Lajewski's leg, Gilewitch and his armorer carried him through the woods on the cot, twisting and turning through underbrush and between trees for what seemed an eternity while bombs and bullets continued to strike the island. On reaching the barracks, Gilewitch turned Lajewski over to a medic and ran back outside. Something strange had happened. Before he heard Lajewski groaning, Gilewitch was shaking so bad with fright that he could barely function and his eyes watered constantly. Once he realized he had to help someone else, fear left him and did not return throughout the raid.

Corporal Wayne Lewis of D Company was on Corregidor's landing dock when the raid began. He quickly leaned not to lay flat on the concrete. When a bomb struck, the concussion caused his head to bounce like a ball, almost knocking him unconscious. As the first wave of bombers passed, Lewis rose groggily and staggered toward shore to find a more protected spot. Before he could get off the long pier, the second wave of bombers struck. Again, Lewis dropped to the dock to avoid being strafed. This time, he raised his body slightly off the dock with his arms to cushion the shock. That didn't work either, because the dock bucked upward when a bomb struck, beating Lewis in the face and bleeding his nose. Bomb fragments, pieces of spent anti-aircraft shells, and chunks of concrete splattered against nearby rocks. From the shore, chunks of rock and parts of trees were sent flying onto the docks and into the adjacent water. To Lewis, it seemed that sooner or later something lethal was bound to strike the place where he lay.

On the heights and surrounding smaller islands, the 60th Anti-aircraft Regiment blazed away at the Japanese in a losing battle. Their fire was reinforced by Army and Marine machinegunners sending up as much lead as possible. Seeing an unmanned .50 caliber machinegun sandbagged for aerial firing, Mike Gilewitch jumped into the revetment and started to aim the weapon when a big Marine jumped in beside him. He ordered Gilewitch out, yelling, "this is a Marine gun and no one fires it but a Marine." Gilewitch argued that no one was firing it and together, they might be able to bring down a Japanese plane. The glowering Marine stuck his .45 caliber pistol in Gilewitch's face and said "Out!" Gilewitch left in disgust. The Marine remained with the gun, guarding it jealously, but he never attempted to fire it. "More stupidity," grumbled Gilewitch "At this rate, we'll defeat ourselves without any help from the Japanese." After nearly 3 thundering hours, the Japanese made their last strafing run and headed north.

Curiosity brought Gilewitch back to Topside Barracks after the raid ended. Some bombs had gone through the roof and detonated on the third floor, ripping out walls and exposing steel beams in the floor, but none reached any farther down. On the ground floor at one end of the barracks, Marines were lying all over the place. All appeared to be asleep and unharmed. Gilewitch didn't realize what he was seeing until he heard a medic murmuring "done for" as he checked one of the men for signs of life. They had all been killed by concussion. Returning to the wooded area where he and others from his company had sought refuge, Gilewitch saw a few

men lying on the ground in varying states of agony. Private Vernon Sutton¹⁰, with a bloody, mangled arm, was crying frantically for a medic. Corporal Earl Petrimieux, whose legs were both shattered at the thighs, yelled at Sutton to shut up "Look at me, wish I only had your troubles." Petrimieux lost both legs and died the next day. The only other 31st Infantry member killed in the raid was Private George S. Gensel of D Company, who was hit in the stomach by a large bomb fragment. Mike Gilewitch was also among the wounded, but didn't know it until his armorer noticed his right elbow was bleeding and badly bruised. A bomb fragment had struck him.

D Company suffered the most casualties. In addition to the 2 dead and 3 wounded already mentioned, Sergeant Cyril M. Provaznik was hit in the forehead by a spent machinegun bullet but survived. Bomb fragments wounded privates Leo Boles and Elijah Millsap.¹¹ Others wounded in the raid included Privates Charles W. Gardner of 1st Battalion Headquarters, Sherman E. Crookshank and Russell L. Villars of A Company, and Sergeant James B. Cabral of C Company. Private Villars was awarded the Silver Star for engaging Japanese planes from an exposed position with his BAR until a bomb blast disabled him. His right leg was amputated. Others were temporarily dazed by concussion, but remained on duty. That afternoon, the 1st Battalion filed back down the steep hill to the dock where they boarded barges for Bataan.

DISASTER AT LAYAC

By January 5, the regiment was reunited. The Band, B Company, and the Medical Detachment reached Bataan on December 28.¹² They left Manila as Japanese troops entered from the south. Japanese planes struck repeatedly along the route, but no one was hit. As the convoy reached the railhead at San Fernando, much of the surrounding area was in flames but they made it safely to Bataan. With them they brought a bus packed solid with food from abandoned government warehouses they raided as they left Manila. On the night of January 30, the rest of the 1st Battalion reached Bataan by barge from Corregidor. On January 4, the 2d and 3d Battalions withdrew along Route 7, crossing the Culo River at Layac and taking up positions just west of the barrio of Culis.

Commanders made a night reconnaissance while the reunited regiment bivouacked for the night. At dawn on January 5, work began on the new position, a westward extension of the forward security line the regiment had begun a week earlier near Layac. With the 1st Battalion on the right and 2d on the left, the regiment occupied a front of about 1500 yards. Sergeant Earl Walk of H Company positioned his platoon's .50 caliber machinegun beside a trail entering the regiment's left flank. His 81mm mortar was placed about 150 yards farther back. He remembered the red clay earth being so hard that picks barely chipped the surface. Several men poured out their canteens or urinated to soften the clay—to no avail. The 3d Battalion was in reserve, digging in behind a ridge 1000 yards to the southwest. Behind the 31st Infantry, dug in on higher ridges, were the 23d and 88th Field Artillery, Philippine Scout units equipped with

¹⁰ PVT Sutton (Elgin, OR) died in captivity at Cabanatuan on July 19, 1942.

¹¹ PVT Boles (Cincinnati, OH) died in captivity at Cabanatuan on June 17, 1942. SGT Cabral (home town unknown) died in captivity at Cp O'Donnell on May 6, 1942.

¹² Much of the Medical Detachment was already at Bataan with the infantry battalions.

twelve 75mm field guns each. On the regiment's right, occupying positions the 31st had prepared earlier, was the Philippine Army's 71st Division, a poorly equipped unit that had received little training. The boundary between the 31st Infantry and the Filipinos was the main road leading south into the Bataan Peninsula. Although roads make an easily identifiable boundary, they should be assigned to and defended by only one unit since the enemy is certain to use the approach and should not be given a seam to exploit. The blunder would prove costly.

The evening meal on January 5 was only half the normal ration, a harbinger of worse to come. Pursuant to another bad decision by senior officers, 65,000 rounds of .30 caliber ammunition were dumped on the ground behind the forward rifle companies' positions. Several company commanders objected vehemently, arguing that they had no vehicles and could not carry that much ammunition if a withdrawal became necessary. They were overruled. At least one position was almost guaranteed to fold. B Company, the last to arrive from Manila, held the critical right of the line adjacent to the main road leading into Bataan. The company occupied a flat, open area with few trees or shrubs. A shallow, swampy stream bisected the area, causing the unit to bend in an arc that could cause troops to fire on each other if attacked in the center. There was no barbed wire available to canalize or slow an attack. Soldiers are no fools and no one believed this was a serious defensive position. Consequently, foxholes were dug haphazardly and machineguns were positioned in the open as if on the range. The atmosphere was one of just waiting for the order to move to a more defensible site.

Bataan was chosen as a defensive position because of its dominance, along with the nearby island of Corregidor, over the entrance to Manila Bay. As long as American troops controlled Bataan and Corregidor, the Japanese would be unable to use Manila's harbor, or so it was thought. The peninsula is 30 miles long and about 25 miles across at its widest point, tapering to about 15 miles across in the south. A spine of mountains bisects it, with an east-west valley cutting across the peninsula's middle between clusters of mountains. On the north are Mt. Santa Rosa (3052 feet) and Mt. Natib (4222 feet), connected by saddle ridges to each other and to Mt. Silanganan (3620 feet). Across a broad valley to the south are the twin peaks of Mt. Bataan and Mt. Samat (each over 4500 feet). Numerous steep ravines and fast-running streams form spines running down from the mountains, segmenting the peninsula into cross-compartments covered with dense tropical forest.

In 1942, a single paved road ran down the peninsula's east side from the village of Layac in the north to the small customs port of Mariveles in the south. Another road running along the South China Sea on the west was just a fair-weather gravel track. An east-west connector runs between the two north-south roads, traversing the mid-peninsula valley between the villages of Pilar and Bagac. Most trails follow spines running off the mountains.

General MacArthur divided Bataan into two corps sectors. On the east where the terrain was most favorable to the attacker, was II Corps under Major General George Parker. On the more easily defended west, was I Corps under Major General Johnathan M. Wainwright. The Philippine Division was split up with its regiments serving as reserves for the two corps, composed mainly of Philippine Army divisions. An Army air corps regiment, formed from personnel whose airfields and planes were lost, guarded against amphibious attacks in the south. The 4th Marine Regiment and a collection of coast artillery regiments guarded Corregidor. (Note: I and II Corps were improvised organizations not authorized by the War Department. Their numerals duplicated those of corps already existing in the US.)

The transfer of most of B Company's best officers and NCOs to the Philippine Army in December had sapped its leadership, making a bad situation worse. Even less excusable, no senior officer of the regiment had inspected the company's position. All day long, farm carts passed in front of the position unchallenged on their way to Layac. That evening, two Filipinos came into the company area carrying a washtub of ice and San Miguel beer that they sold for a Peso a bottle. Those who had the money guzzled the cool brew to fend off the oppressive heat. The 31st Infantry spent its last day of relative peace in a fairly relaxed mood. The Japanese were certainly near and had mauled the Philippine Army all across Luzon, but they would be no match for real American troops—or would they?

Around midnight, the 26th Cavalry's lead unit came through the line and began filing into positions on the 31st Infantry's left. The hardy Philippine Scout cavalymen fought a constant delaying action for two weeks and were thoroughly exhausted, but they came through in good order and began digging in as soon as they reached their positions. Most would get no sleep that night or the next. At around 1:00 AM on January 6, as the last Scout unit crossed the bridge at Layac, the 14th (PS) Engineers blew up the Culo River Bridge with a thundering blast, closing the main route into Bataan. The battle for Bataan would soon begin.

Around 10:00 AM on January 6, Japanese troops were seen moving along Route 7 toward the Culo River and were quickly taken under fire by Philippine Army and Scout artillery. The barrage went unanswered for about 30 minutes, leaving pack animals, Japanese soldiers, and artillery caissons strewn along the road and scattered across an adjacent field. Japanese guns went into hasty firing positions but were quickly suppressed by accurate counterbattery fire. Around 11:00 AM, Japanese artillery withdrew beyond the range of the 75mm guns and unleashed a counterfire barrage, smashing one battery after another of Philippine Army and Scout artillery, plainly visible on the heights. Japanese 105mm and 150mm guns outranged the defenders and were supported by aerial observers who flew unchallenged over the battlefield all day. Artillery prime movers were in assembly areas near Abucay and could not be called forward to move the guns out of harm's way because communication wire was cut by Japanese artillery and few units had working radios. Still, most gunners stayed at their posts under fire for nearly 3 hours, losing heavily. Private John Lally, an 18-year-old medic with G Company, characterized the 23d Field Artillery's stand as "the bravest thing I ever saw." By 2 PM, all Scout and Philippine Army artillery had been smashed or driven out of position.

With opposing artillery suppressed, Japanese artillery shifted its attention to the Philippine 71st Division holding the right of the line. The initial barrage threw up a large dust cloud in a plowed cane field in front of the Filipinos, giving Japanese infantrymen concealment as they moved up to the Culo River. The barrage then advanced directly onto the Filipinos' positions. The loud, earth-shaking "carrump" of impacting shells was unnerving to even those not directly affected. When the artillery was lifted, there was an exchange of gunfire for about ten minutes as Japanese infantry engaged Filipinos still holding the line.

Next, the barrage shifted to the 31st Infantry, engulfing the 2d Battalion in a deafening roar of concussive explosions for about 5 minutes. On the left flank, Sergeant Earl Walk's

machinegunners hunkered down in shallow foxholes, wishing they had dug deeper into the hard clay earth and praying to be spared. All Walk could see was choking clouds of brown dust amid the steady thunderclaps of bursting shells. Private Bill Garleb, seemed to disappear when a round burst just inches from the edge of his foxhole. To his amazement, the explosion sent all the blast and fragmentation upward from the hard soil, leaving Garleb unhurt but temporarily deaf. It was the first time the men had experienced incoming artillery and it was more than some could bear. PFC James Spencer, a 1st Battalion medic, raised his head just long enough to see two panic-stricken soldiers abandon their foxholes and dash toward the rear. Captain Richard Carnahan of C Company, waving a pistol, intercepted them, forcing them back to their positions. Captain John Pray of G Company remembered seeing a red bird singing its heart out only five feet from his foxhole as shells crashed all around. It could have flown away, but chose to stay and watch this bizarre display of human madness. If the bird could stand it, so could Pray. He slithered out of his foxhole and crawled along the line to steady his men and check for casualties. Three times his men reported him killed as he disappeared in convulsive clouds of smoke and debris when shells burst near him. Each time, when the dust cleared, Pray crawled on.

The barrage lifted, but the worst was yet to come. No artillery had yet hit B Company's sector, but Japanese infantry suddenly appeared in a cane field on its exposed right flank. Private Harold Garrett recalled that "it seemed that whole field got up and moved." As the firing began, one soldier recalled "It seemed like a bunch of bees hit our position," but not a single man was hit. Corporal Milton Alexander raked the field with his .30 caliber machinegun while two others nearby opened up with BARs. For a moment, the Japanese seemed to falter under the sudden burst of automatic fire, but their advance soon drifted southward along B Company's right flank. Amid the steady crackle of rifle and machinegun fire, Lieutenant Murphy ordered one of his platoons to move around the stream in the company's center to reinforce the right flank. They were in the open as Japanese mortars opened up and although no rounds landed near them, they fled in panic toward Philippine Scout artillery positions on higher ground about 800 yards to their rear. Their panic precipitated a full-scale rout as the entire company, including the command post, abruptly abandoned its positions and fled.

Corporal Paul Kerchum, sweating heavily and running clumsily with his machine gun over his shoulder, had gone about 100 yards with his squad leader, Sergeant Donald Bridges who was carrying the gun's tripod and several belts of ammunition. Kerchum shouted, "What the hell's going on, Don? We aren't supposed to be doing this." Seeing that the Japanese were not pursuing them, the two men dropped behind cover out of breath and hastily set up their gun.¹³ There was no one on their left or right, but there were plenty of B Company men scrambling up the slope behind them. Most ended their retreat when they reached Philippine Scout artillery positions, but at least one man kept going all the way to Limay, about 15 miles down the

¹³ CPL Kerchum (McKees Rocks, PA) survived the war. After his release from captivity in 1945, Kerchum remained in the service, transferred to the Air Force in 1948, and retired as a Chief Master Sergeant. SGT Bridges (Santa Clara, CA) died in captivity at Cabanatuan.

peninsula.¹⁴ Ashamed of their behavior, most hoped for a chance to make amends that day, but it was too late for their commander. For his company's lack of discipline under fire, Lieutenant Lloyd C. Murphy was relieved of command and replaced by Captain John W. Thompson.¹⁵

In contrast, C Company stubbornly held its positions as Japanese infantry closed in with bayonets fixed. Private George Uzelac shook with fright until he began ripping into the packed Japanese ranks with his BAR. The weapon's loud stuttering had a calming influence on him. Lieutenant Colonel Ed Bowes, the 1st Battalion's Commander, ordered his reserve, Captain Cecil Welchko's A Company, to counterattack to regain control of B Company's abandoned sector.¹⁶ The unsupported attack didn't get very far before it faltered under a brief flurry of machinegun, rifle, and mortar fire. Not a single man was hit, but A Company would go no further.

Desperate to retake B Company's lost positions, Colonel Steel committed Lieutenant Colonel Jasper Brady's 3d Battalion to the fight. At the time, the 3d Battalion was in good defensive positions and could perhaps have salvaged the situation from where it stood. I Company was dug in on the forward slope of the first ridge south of the Culo River Bridge and had a commanding view of the main road and B Company's sector to its front. On its left, L Company was dug in among scrub brush just forward of a drainage ditch and had a recently plowed cane field to its front, giving the company excellent cover and clear fields of fire. Behind I Company, K Company was dug in on the ridge's reverse slope and could also cover the main road passing just east of its positions. Nevertheless, Colonel Steel was determined to reoccupy B Company's untenable position in the valley below. Shortly after 4:00 PM, acting on Steel's orders, Lieutenant Colonel Brady directed Captains Ray Stroud (I Company) and Donald Thompson (L Company) to move immediately forward to reoccupy B Company's former positions.¹⁷ Captain Thomas Bell's M Company would support the attack with his heavy and light machineguns and 81mm mortars. Unfortunately, Japanese aerial observers spotted the 3d Battalion forming to attack and trouble was not far behind.

In the distance, Private Grant Workman heard a salvo of four guns, followed by another and another. In seconds, rounds began crashing into I Company, sending bushes, chunks of clay, stinging clouds of dust, and hot shell splinters flying in all directions. One man after another went down. Staff Sergeant John Juvan (Milwaukee) and Private James Clement (Cincinnati) were killed outright and Privates Raymond E. Campbell, John McCann, and William Roberts were

¹⁴ One man did not show up again until after the surrender when he arrived at Cabanatuan. He was the only man in B Company wounded at Layac. He made it on his own to the hospital at Limay and when released, attached himself to another unit. He died in captivity.

¹⁵ CPT Murphy (Bismarck, ND) died with many of his fellow officers aboard the "hell ship" *Oryoku Maru* when it was struck by US planes enroute to Japan in 1944 and CPT Thompson (Seattle, WA) died aboard the *Arisan Maru* under similar circumstances.

¹⁶ LTC Edward H. Bowes (home town unknown) and CPT Cecil R. Welchko (Bonner's Ferry, ID) both died aboard the *Oryoku Maru*. PVT Uzelac (East Moline, IL) survived the war.

¹⁷ CPT John Thompson who took over B Company after Layac, was not related to CPT Donald M. Thompson of L Company.

severely wounded.¹⁸ Like B Company, I Company broke and fled to the rear. Unable to locate Captain Stroud in the melee, Lieutenant Charles Baker tried to rally the company. He and Private Woodrow Griffith earned the Silver Star that day for trying to do what others could not.¹⁹ Captain Stroud was relieved of command for abandoning his company during the bombardment, although his command post was cut off from the rest of the company by artillery fire and could not influence his unit's actions. Nevertheless, he was replaced by Captain Richard Roshe.²⁰

In contrast, Company L, with Staff Sergeant Otto Jensen's heavy weapons platoon of M Company attached and accompanied by the 3d Battalion's executive officer, Major James J. O'Donovan, displayed aggressiveness and confidence as they advanced by bounds from the bivouac area. First Sergeant William McNulty led the point squad, moving about 100 yards ahead of the company's main body, suffering only one casualty throughout the advance.²¹ For his exemplary leadership in spearheading L Company's attack, McNulty earned the Distinguished Service Cross. Enduring almost constant shelling from Japanese mortars and artillery, the company dashed forward 30 or 40 paces at a time, hitting the ground as shells slammed in around them, then rushing forward again before the dust settled. Private Wilburn Snyder, an 18 year old, recalled "There wasn't any doubt in our minds that we could whip the Japs." Corporal Paul Kerchum, one of the men who had halted just behind B Company's positions, was surprised to see Captain Thompson, L Company's commander, waving his men forward with a .45 caliber pistol. Advancing on L Company's right, M Company's machinegunner, led by the company's executive officer, Lieutenant Ernest Fountain, moved forward by bounds to keep pouring a steady volume of fire across the north-south highway. Japanese troops attempting to cross the highway into B Company's former position were scattered, fleeing to a mango grove several hundred yards away.

On reaching a wooded hill about 400 yards to the rear of B Company's former position, L Company encountered the commander of the Philippine Army's 3d Battalion 72d Infantry Regiment who requested support on his left flank where B Company had abandoned its positions. The officer swore his own troops were still holding their position and sent a runner to escort Staff Sergeant John P. Flynn of 3d Battalion Headquarters and PFC Manuel R. Rogers of L Company to his left flank company to see the situation for themselves. Moving cautiously into the valley and across the highway via a drainage ditch, the group reached the command post of L Company 72d Infantry. The Filipinos were indeed still holding their sector, but their situation was tenuous since their whole regiment had only a single machinegun left. The group's arrival attracted enemy fire from a mango grove about 150 yards away. Flynn sent Rogers back to tell Major O'Donovan the situation and then moved alone across the highway to B Company's former position, finding it empty. As he moved along the abandoned line, he was fired on by an enemy patrol moving through a cane field about 400 yards away. About a half hour later, Rogers and PFC Grady

¹⁸ PVT McCann (hometown unknown) fell out during the Death March and was picked up by Filipinos, but later died of malaria. PVT Roberts (Williams, AZ) died in captivity.

¹⁹ LT Baker (Astor, NY) died in captivity at Cp O'Donnell on 5 Jun 1942.

²⁰ CPT Stroud (Williston, ND) died aboard the "hell ship" *Arisan Maru* in 1944. CPT Roshe (Washington, DC) died aboard the *Oryoku Maru*.

²¹ PFC Andrew J. Hickingbottom (Ferriday, LA) of Company M was wounded by Japanese mortar fire while supporting the counterattack with his machinegun. He died in captivity at Cp O'Donnell on Sep 5, 1942.

Gentry, sent forward to serve as runners, joined him. Now under steady fire, Flynn sent Rogers back to tell O'Donovan that B Company's sector was empty, leaving a 500-yard gap in the line. A few minutes later, Rogers returned, unable to get through the artillery barrage still landing behind them. Undaunted, PFC Gentry asked to give it a try and was soon off. Three times that day Gentry braved increasingly heavy rifle, mortar, and artillery fire to convey messages back and forth between Flynn and O'Donovan. For his courage under fire, he was awarded the Silver Star.

Late in the afternoon, Captain Coral M. Talbot's K Company came abreast of L Company and was dispatched by Major O'Donovan to establish contact with whoever held the 1st Battalion's right flank. L Company continued covering the road from its hillside position. Accompanied by Lieutenant Fountain and Lieutenant Zoberbier's platoon of M Company, K Company occupied B Company's abandoned position near dusk. Shortly after dark, one of its patrols linked up with A Company, about 300 yards to the west. The remainder of M Company moved up to provide support, arriving shortly after dark. Major O'Donovan ordered K Company to shift to the right to reinforce the Filipinos and moved L Company up on their left. As K Company settled into its new positions east of the highway, patrols guided by green-lensed flashlights could be seen moving out of the mango grove from which Flynn and Rogers had taken fire earlier in the day. Captain Talbot ordered Lieutenant Zoberbier's machinegun platoon to open fire. The Japanese did not move around any more that night.

Stopped on the right, the Japanese shifted their attention to the left of the 31st Infantry's line where the 26th Cavalry held the foothills of Bataan's formidable mountain spine. Despite heavy shelling that seemed to intensify around 8 PM, the line held, but the situation was bad. All supporting artillery was out of action, the 71st Division was a battered fragment that could not hope to hold its line, the 31st Infantry had lost 2 companies, even if only temporarily, and a squadron of the 26th Cavalry had suffered heavily during the evening's bombardment. To the rear, II Corps' ammunition dump at Hermosa had been bombed, setting the town afire and blocking the main road with rubble. Colonel Steel recommended withdrawing that night to avoid being targeted by Japanese planes the next day. Although some men may still have felt confident of victory, Steel did not. Major General Parker agreed and ordered the withdrawal.

At 10:00 PM, the 26th Cavalry and 31st Infantry received a warning order to move back 3 miles and board trucks and buses that would be waiting on the main road. Because the trail behind the 26th Cavalry and 31st Infantry ran east-west, both regiments had to withdraw parallel to the front, a particularly perilous operation at night while the enemy probed for weak points in the line. Although a bright half moon and clear skies helped the troops stay on course, the illumination also helped Japanese reconnaissance patrols see what was happening. At midnight, the Philippine 71st Division departed and K Company fanned out to cover its sector. Kitchen and supply vehicles lined up on the main road also departed at midnight. On the east-west trail, guides were posted at intervals to keep the withdrawal on course. Companies E and K of the 31st would cover the withdrawal.

A motorized battalion of the 26th Cavalry pulled out with the main body of the 31st Infantry around 1:30 AM on January 7. The roar and gradually fading noise of vehicle engines no doubt alerted the Japanese that a major withdrawal was underway. Company K came out without

incident behind the main body. The withdrawal had gone surprisingly well until Captain Robert S. Sauer's E Company, the last unit on line, began withdrawing. Knowing the sector was being vacated, the Japanese attacked, moving quickly around E Company's open flanks. Finding its withdrawal route under Japanese control and under attack from all sides, the company came apart, breaking into small groups to fight or retreat into the jungle. Hearing the steady rattle of gunfire from E Company's area, Captain Eugene Conrad's F Company turned to fight off the attackers on the east-west trail. Conrad's unexpected initiative took some pressure off of E Company, but it would be days before E Company's last stragglers found their way through the jungle to rejoin the regiment. Miraculously, only four men had been killed and two were missing and presumed dead.²² Captain Sauer's and First Sergeant Beresford Seale's extraordinary efforts to bring their men out alive that night earned them both the Silver Star. The regiment had lost a third of its rifle companies at Layac. All would soon be recovered, but the damage was done. Having gained the Layac line without much of a fight, the Japanese came to have little respect for the best America could muster. They would show their lack of respect four months later on a trek that came to be known as the Death March.

COUNTERATTACK AT ABUCAY

Around 7:30 AM on January 7, the 31st Infantry reached kilometer post 139 near the barrio of Pandan on the main north-south highway, digging in from Manila Bay to a point 1000 yards west of the highway. The men worked feverishly to create a position that would not be penetrated. They were determined that there would be no repeat of the shameful experience they had just endured at Layac. To their left, the Air Corps Regiment was also digging in, but not very well. The 31st was tapped to send experienced officers and NCOs to show them how—more of a drain on the regiment's thin leadership. By January 15, the Pandan position was well prepared, completely wired in, and expertly camouflaged. The regiment could take justifiable pride in its accomplishment, but it would not have the opportunity to defend the position. That night, the regiment was ordered to move to a new assembly area 20 km to the rear at a former Philippine Army training camp west of Balanga. The move was completed by 8:00 the next morning. There, the regiment had a hot meal that would be its last for three days.

After two days of fighting at Layac, eight days of hard physical labor building defensive positions at Pandan on half rations, and a 20-kilometer forced march from Balanga at night without rest, men simply dropped to the ground and slept, oblivious to their surroundings. Balanga had been bombed the day before and was still burning, but the troops paid little attention. Around noon on January 16, the weary regiment was alerted to move again. The Philippine Army's 51st Division had disintegrated and the 31st was ordered to restore a gap that had been cut into the line near Abucay. Fifteen minutes later, the regiment was back on the road with the 2d Battalion leading. Marching 16 kilometers with only two 10-minute rest stops, the 31st reached its jump-off position around 7:00 PM. Filipino troops of the 51st Division were still straggling to the rear, shouting "Japs coming." Behind them, they left their division command post surrounded by the enemy. By 1:00 AM on January 17, the 31st Infantry's lead elements had

²² The dead were PVT Floribert J. Constantineau (home town unknown), PVT Melvin N. Elliott (home town unknown), PVT James A. King (Searcy, AR), and PFC Charles F. Saksek (home town unknown).

advanced to within 700 yards of Abucay Hacienda, a settlement marked by its prominent Spanish-built church.

Because the terrain in the 2d Battalion's zone was overgrown with dense vegetation and segmented by ravines and ridges, soldiers easily became separated from their comrades. In one such incident, Privates Michael J. Campbell, Albert L. Taylor, and George L. Bullock of G Company found themselves isolated when their platoon fell back under heavy enemy mortar, machinegun, and rifle fire.²³ Joining a five-man patrol from an adjacent company, the three advanced deeper into enemy territory, only to be stopped by a torrent of fire that wounded five members of the patrol. Japanese troops advanced on their exposed position, advancing in short rushes preceded by grenade attacks. Tenaciously clinging to his position for two hours, Private Campbell and his comrades picked off at least twelve of the enemy trying to overrun them. He withdrew only after the wounded reached safety and after receiving a direct order to withdraw from his commanding officer. For his tenacity in the face of overwhelming odds, Private Campbell was awarded the Silver Star.

After bringing its companies into alignment, the 2d Battalion's advance resumed with I Company on the left, K in the center, and L on the right. Shortly afterward, I Company began taking small arms and mortar fire and was halted to enable the 1st Battalion to come abreast on the left. Because of the regiment's unfamiliarity with the area, it was decided to delay the attack until daylight. The men had not eaten since 4:00 AM on January 16, intensifying the weakening effect of half rations.

At 8:15 AM on January 17, the 1st and 2d Battalions advanced in parallel columns flanking Trail 12. To overcome its disgrace at Layac, Colonel Steel gave B Company the honor of leading the 1st Battalion's advance. The men had shown little faith in Lieutenant Murphy, their previous commander, but considered Captain Thompson a professional worthy of their confidence. The advance went well despite sporadic outbursts of small arms fire. Most of the Japanese fire came from snipers in trees overlooking the trails. Corporal Charles Ball moved to the head of B Company's column, stitching the treetops with his BAR to shoot snipers out of their perches. The 51st Division's isolated command post was soon rescued. Just beyond, the 1st Battalion ran into stiff resistance as it emerged from an acacia grove. Machinegun fire was so heavy it cut a nearby cane field about knee high. Fortunately, the ground sloped away to the rear, causing the Japanese to fire high. On the skyline across the cane field stood the church spire of Abucay Hacienda, the 1st Battalion's objective.

For what seemed an eternity, B Company lay pinned down by machinegun fire, but eventually there arose problems greater than the Japanese. Corporal Paul Kerchum had lain amid a colony of red ants. When they bit him in unmentionable places, he jumped up as if shocked by a cattle prod, hollering "let's get the hell out of here," dashing blindly toward the Japanese. His comrades followed, charging across the field, shouting and firing wildly. The startled Japanese jumped up and fled, retreating in disorder down a steep slope. Chasing the Japanese, the weapons

²³ All three men survived the war.

platoon drifted steadily to the left, stopping on a steep slope overlooking the Balantay River. The rest of the company eventually formed around it, but it didn't take long for the Japanese to begin probing the position they had just lost. Private Ronald T. Wangberg, the company's only Jewish member, spotted a squad-size patrol moving across an open glade in the valley below. He picked them off one by one as they ran back and forth trying to find cover.

B Company was now in an exposed position, awaiting the arrival of other companies to take up positions on its flank. Captain Thompson decided he would need help to hold the position if the Japanese realized how vulnerable his company was. Communications between units relied entirely on messengers, there was no artillery in range, and II Corps denied a request for tank support due to concerns about Japanese aerial observation. That left only mortars. With all 30 rounds of their 81mm ammunition exhausted, D Company gunners fired World War I-era British 75mm Stokes mortar ammunition from their 81mm tubes, causing them to wobble erratically in flight. Perhaps 3 rounds of every 10 detonated. Several detonated in the dry cane field, setting it afire. The wind blew the flames and acrid smoke back in B Company's direction. Captain Thompson yelled "cease fire, cease fire", but it was too late. Several 75mm rounds hit among his men, catching them in the open as they tried to escape.

After withdrawing, B Company established new positions farther to the rear, but the Japanese were not far behind. Repeated attacks failed to break B Company's new line, but snipers managed to infiltrate behind them. Corporal Paul Kerchum was checking the line after a spate of firing when he tapped the helmet of Private Jim Broadrick who was standing in a narrow foxhole, seemingly asleep. Kerchum hadn't gone much farther when, someone yelled, "Get down, they just got Broadrick." The day's fight had been bloody, costing B Company 5 dead and 7 wounded, one of whom died of his wounds. The company had regained its pride, but at a high cost.²⁴

The 1st Battalion's other companies fared little better. Advancing into an open field in front of A Company, Lieutenant Charles Litkowski, Corporal Robert H. Dickson, and Private Leonard Prusak were cut down by a burst of machinegun fire. Litkowski and Prusak were both hit in the head and killed instantly, but Dickson was still alive, although barely and not for long. Private John Cierciersky, a medic, tried to help him, but was killed by the same machinegun. Perhaps 5 others in A Company were wounded that day as Americans and Japanese blazed away at each other across open ground.²⁵ C Company's only casualty of the day was Sergeant Edgar Congdon, killed by a burst of machinegun fire. D Company, supporting the 3 rifle companies with

²⁴ B Company's dead included CPL Rex R. Annas (Granite Falls, NC), PVT Herman E. Fornass (Santa Clara, CA), PFC Vernon J. Kelly (home town unknown), PVT James J Broadrick (home town unknown), and CPL Floyd R. Rogers (home town unknown-died of wounds). Its wounded included SGT Leo Golinski (Brooklyn, NY-died in captivity at Cabanatuan 1 Oct 1942), SGT Cletis H. Harrison (Chicago, IL-survived the war), PVT William F. Beattie (Kansas City, MO-died in captivity at Cp O'Donnell 8 May 1942) PVT John F. Eighmey (Arlee, MT- died in captivity at Cp O'Donnell 13 May 1942), PVT Jack L. James (Atlanta, GA-executed by Japanese on Nichols Field detail 8 June 1943), and PFC Harold J Garrett (Payette, ID-survived the war).

²⁵ Surviving records are not uniformly precise concerning the date of wounds or awards, sometimes showing only the location or the fact that the person was wounded.

machinegun and mortar fire, suffered almost as many casualties as the companies they supported.²⁶

Throughout the fight, the 1st Battalion drifted ever farther to the left, opening a wide gap between itself and the 2d Battalion. In a move that was to be fateful, K Company was sent from the 3d Battalion to plug the gap that opened between the 1st and 2d Battalions. The Philippine Scout 45th Infantry, starting 6000 yards farther south, came abreast of the 31st Infantry in late afternoon, forming a combined assault force of 13 rifle companies and 4 machinegun companies, backed by 5 more rifle companies and 2 machinegun companies in reserve. Sergeant Earl Walk recalls that H Company moved up the main highway toward Abucay on 1934 Dodge weapons carriers until they were stopped by mortar fire. Private Clarence Carrico was hit in the chest by a mortar fragment and was evacuated to the field hospital at Limay.²⁷ Captain Dwight T. Hunkins ordered the vehicles hidden in a wooded area and the company proceeded on foot for about 1000 yards, reaching a well-prepared position abandoned earlier by Filipino troops. Several Filipino stragglers were incorporated into the company as ammunition bearers. Sergeant Earl Walk had his platoon set up its 2 mortars and its .50 caliber machinegun where they could best cover a sugar cane field in front of the position. Japanese small arms fire whizzed and snapped all around. When Walk fired 20 rounds at the enemy-held woodline with his two mortars, the sector became quiet for a while.

That day, four American P-40 Warhawks, operating from a concealed strip cut into the jungle near Mariveles Point on Bataan, conducted surprise raids against Japanese planes operating over the front lines. Unfortunately, they came too late to prevent another Japanese bombing raid. Corporal William Easler and Private Robert E. Ragan were relaxing in a foxhole in the shade of a huge tree. Without warning, a bomb crashed through the branches, landing directly in the foxhole and blowing its occupants to eternity. Others were luckier. Sergeant Walk heard a dull thud, followed by a muffled explosion. He was bowled over backward by concussion as the ground rose to form a huge mound about 10 feet in front of him. A bomb had burrowed deep into the earth before exploding. Several days later, a Japanese mortar round landed next to one of H Company's machinegun positions, setting off a hand grenade Corporal Franklin O. Warr was carrying in his gas mask container. Warr died of his wounds.

At 4:00 PM, on January 19, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 31st Infantry and 1st and 2d Battalions of the 45th Infantry renewed their advance but by 7:00 PM, units became separated in the dense jungle growth. The 2d Battalion 31st Infantry, advancing with F, G, and E Companies abreast, had to cross a steep ravine to reach its objective. They were supported by a few rounds of artillery from the Philippine 41st Division, but had no other protective fire as they entered the

²⁶ PFC Robert C. Anderson (home town unknown) and PFC Melvin E. Lambrecht (Cheyenne, WY) were killed by snipers and many others were wounded. SGT Oren L. Jenness (home town unknown), SGT Frank V. Miller (Milwaukee, WI), CPL Paul Kerchum (McKees Rocks, PA), PVT Edward J. Blankenship (Stamps, AR), PFC Milarn Cloud (Appalache, VA), PVT Elbert L. Fannin (McCamey, TX), PVT Ronald Hooper (Hebron, CT), PFC Lonza P. Locke (Columbus, MS), PFC Glen W. Moyers (Pueblo, CO) were wounded during some phase of the battle, although the exact date for each is not known.

²⁷ Carrico (home town unknown) died of his wounds on January 26, 1942 and was buried at the Limay cemetery.

gap. The men climbed hand over hand down slippery vines, crossed a knee-deep creek, and ascended the opposite slope in the same manner. As they climbed, they could hear Japanese leaders shouting commands above them. In the tangled underbrush, men became separated from their units and confusion reigned.

On the ridge, the 2d Battalion hit what turned out to be the main body of an enemy regiment moving in the opposite direction. In the ensuing engagement, Private Elmer C. Duffy was hit by a burst of machinegun fire while on point for Company F. He was probably already dead but no one could be sure. Disregarding his own safety, PFC Elmer P. Buehrig dashed forward to aid Duffy and was hit in the face by a burst from the same gun. For his selfless sacrifice, Buehrig was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Private "Red" Dyer charged into the field firing his BAR from the waist. Hit in the arm and chest as he charged out alone, Dyer continued firing until he collapsed. Miraculously, he was still alive and was later transported to a field hospital where he recovered from his wounds.²⁸ Seven others from F Company were wounded before sundown.²⁹ When a Japanese machinegun halted E Company's advance, PFC James H. Cody and Private Albert F. Tresch³⁰ volunteered to silence it. Crawling forward with BARs and hand grenades, the duo not only destroyed the Japanese machinegun and killed its crew, but they also put a second Japanese gun out of action. Their deed earned them both the Silver Star.

Some of the regiment's hand grenades turned out to be unmarked practice grenades and few of the others detonated, costing men their lives. PFC Ronald Wangberg, responded to a Japanese machinegun's fire on B Company by crawling forward in the darkness and throwing grenades at the gun. His first grenade exploded, but missed. Wangberg crawled still closer and threw another grenade, this time a dud. The Japanese gun crew saw him moving and cut him down with a sustained burst of fire. For his valiant effort, Wangberg was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Private Dale L. Snyder, a machinegunner with D Company, joined another man in volunteering to attack the Japanese gun. Crossing 100 yards of open cane field under constant fire, he and his partner reached a point where they could engage the enemy gun with grenades. Miraculously, Dale Snyder succeeded where Wangberg had died trying. The gun was destroyed. For his bravery, Snyder received the Silver Star. When word of the bad grenades reached the company supply sergeants, Sergeant Mike Gilewitch found that some had only a little powder in them and others had none at all.

Major O'Donovan, the 2d Battalion's Executive Officer, reached G Company in the ravine late in the afternoon. He ordered, "Attack at once," but saying it was easier than doing it. Before nightfall, two of the company's platoons had scaled a dry waterfall and reached the top. The remaining platoon did not reach the top until after dark. As it arrived, it engaged a group of

²⁸ PVT Harold O. "Red" Dyer (Corpus Christi, TX) died in captivity at Cabanatuan on July 21, 1942.

²⁹ F Company's wounded were SGT Francis T. Shafsky (Minneapolis, MN), CPL Max M. Greenberg (Brooklyn, NY), PVT Paul Spencer (Oklahoma City, OK), PFC Antonio A. Tafolla (San Angelo, TX), PVT Irby C. Turner (Carrolltown, MS), PVT Alfred R. Welch (Houston, TX), and PVT Raymond M. Worrell (Wisner, NE). Shafsky, Turner, Welch, and Worrell died in captivity.

³⁰ Tresch was wounded at Abucay only 2 days after his act of heroism.

Japanese, but both sides became disoriented in the dark tangle of jungle vegetation. His own men accidentally killed Corporal Stanley P. Nogacek as he returned from a reconnaissance.

The combination of guns, fear, and darkness were to prove tragic again. Uncertain of F Company's progress in front of him, Lieutenant Robert Magee placed his machinegun platoon from H Company at 10-foot intervals along a trail and warned his men to be on the lookout for infiltrators. He sent Corporal Hugh Piper ahead to find F Company. Long after dark, the platoon's point man heard a slight rustling noise on the trail. He jumped up and began firing wildly at a ghostly figure trying to move stealthily in his direction. Hit by the sentry's first burst, Corporal Piper screamed weakly, "Don't shoot, don't shoot!" It was too late. Piper fell dead, hit six times.

As the platoon gathered to see what had happened, Japanese 47mm knee mortars opened up from a short distance away. One shell, luckily a dud, hit the rim of Private Bill Garleb's helmet, slamming his face into the dirt and breaking his glasses. Lieutenant Magee ordered his men to pull back, holding each other's pistol belts as they followed the trail down a precipitous ravine. Magee and Staff Sergeant Williams led, followed by the sobbing soldier who had killed Piper, then Private Garleb, Private Charles A. Henderson, and the rest of the platoon.³¹ As Japanese artillery opened up on the platoon's former position, Garleb realized Henderson was no longer behind him. Reaching a stream, the four men in front were unable to find the path up the opposite bank in the darkness and hid under a ledge to await daylight as the crescendo of fire intensified.

It soon became apparent that they were caught between opposing lines as American mortars and 75mm field guns, and Japanese artillery fired round after round into and across the ravine. The soldier who had killed Piper lost control of his bladder and sobbed, "We're all going to be killed. Please God, don't let us die." Japanese assault troops had entered the ravine and were heading their way, although it was uncertain whether they had been seen. Magee put his cocked pistol against the whimpering man's face and whispered, "Shut your mouth. Another word and I'll blow your damned head off." Fortunately, they remained undetected as Japanese troops stumbled back into the ravine after their attack failed. With the first rays of dawn, the four found the path up the friendly side of the ravine and scrambled to safety. Major Lloyd C. Moffitt, the 2d Battalion's Commander, greeted them, "We thought you were dead." They were soon reunited with the rest of their platoon who had made it safely across the ravine ahead of the Japanese assault during the night.

On January 20, the 31st and 45th Infantry Regiments renewed their attacks, but the effort was impossible to synchronize in the thick jungle terrain. Companies and sometimes platoons fought alone along trails and across the deep ravines segmenting the battlefield. As the 3d Battalion moved forward on the morning of the 20th, M Company fired 80 rounds of its precious 81mm mortar ammunition to keep the Japanese pinned down while I and L Companies advanced

³¹ LT Robert K Magee (Belle Fourche, SD) died aboard a "hell ship" enroute to Japan in 1944. SSG Carl J. Williams (Greenville, SC) died in captivity in Manchuria. PFC Charles A Henderson (Albuquerque, NM) escaped to Corregidor after Bataan's surrender, but was executed on May 13, 1944 by Japanese guards while on a work detail.

across a cane field. Unfortunately, it was too little to keep the Japanese pinned down long enough for the 3d Battalion to get across the field.

Private Burt Ellis, a medic with I Company, was hit in both legs by a burst of machinegun fire. Corporal Marchel D. Easley tried to rescue him, but was cut down by a burst from the same gun that got Ellis. Easley was dead and no one could reach Ellis, an agonizing situation for a unit whose medics risked so much to help wounded infantrymen.³² Moving far to the left, L Company attacked the grove from which Easley and Ellis had been shot. To scout the way, Sergeant Clifford Clegg led a patrol around the edge of the field through thicker vegetation. Spotting a four man Japanese patrol, Clegg's squad ambushed the group, killing or wounding them all. Cautiously, Clegg and his men moved away, fearful of attracting a larger group of Japanese. As time went by and the patrol did not return, Staff Sergeants John Flynn and William W. White went forward to investigate. They found Clegg's squad crouched no more than 50 yards from a group of about 70 Japanese sitting in a clearing, talking and apparently ignorant of danger. There were several Japanese posted in trees, but they seemed oblivious to their duties, talking with their comrades below.

While Private Peter Chamote kept watch, Clegg brought the rest of the company forward, moving them quietly into positions where they could engage the Japanese. Some were unable to see through the thick grass and underbrush that concealed their presence, but were instructed to fire in the direction of the Japanese voices. Such conditions generally cause inexperienced soldiers to fire high, probably wasting much of the available firepower and dissipating its shock effect. On order, the entire company opened fire, scattering the Japanese who quickly responded with heavy fire of their own. Seven Americans were hit in the ensuing melee. Private John Lally, one of the company's medics, carried several men to safety under fire despite being painfully wounded himself. For repeated heroism that day, Lally was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Later, as he was helping to evacuate the wounded to the Regimental Aid Station, a mortar shell blew him into the air, blinding him from the concussion. Although still partially blind and not fully recovered from his wounds, Lally returned from the hospital several weeks later and faithfully continued his duties.

As L Company withdrew from the ambush site, Captain Thompson called for mortar fire, but there was none to send. Captain John Pray of G Company came to L Company's position in a nearby ravine and offered his help. His company had attacked the same position several days earlier and knew the terrain well. Reinforced by G Company, Captain Thompson sent a message to battalion asking for permission to attack, but no response came. At dusk, I Company was ordered to attack but made little headway in the face of intense machinegun and mortar fire. Around 9:00 PM, a detail from Battalion Headquarters Detachment brought up canned rations and all companies were withdrawn to the back side of a protective ridge to eat in relative safety.

³² After dark, a Filipino doctor and his helper came out to rescue Ellis, guided by a lantern. Ellis survived because his tight leggings kept him from bleeding to death. PVT Peter J. Chamote (Jersey City, NJ) died in captivity at Cabanatuan on 19 Dec 1942.

All night long, Japanese voices could be heard infiltrating between the 31st and 45th Infantry Regiments. The same was true on the 45th Infantry's opposite flank. The uncoordinated attacks launched on January 17 through 20 had opened gaps between adjacent regiments and the Japanese were quick to exploit them. On the morning of January 21, the 3d Battalion dug in on the forward slope of a long ridge with I Company on the right and L Company on the left. That afternoon, K Company attacked over the same ground I Company had covered the day before. After taking several casualties, K Company drifted too far to the left and ended up on the 1st Battalion's right flank. The next morning, the 1st Battalion, with K Company attached, wheeled back to face west against a threat mounting on their flank. All afternoon, the Japanese attempted to cross a small, bare hill about 300 yards from L Company's left flank. A machinegun section under Sergeant Harry Neff kept the hill swept clean each time the attack resumed. Lieutenant Armentrout, the attached artillery forward observer, guessed that the area behind the hill was an assembly area and called for fire. Screams and groans could be heard between the whistling and crumping of 75mm shells, confirming Armentrout's suspicions. Shortly afterward, Private Julius Stewart scattered several groups of survivors, dropping several with his BAR as they tried to cross the Hacienda Road into the Barrio.³³

On the evening of January 20, the weary troops were ordered to dig in. Japanese snipers had infiltrated behind the 31st and 45th Infantry and an entire Japanese division attacked across the Balantay River. The main blow fell against the 31st Infantry's 1st Battalion at 10:00 AM on January 21. As the battalion gave ground under steady pressure, the gap began to widen between the 31st and 45th Infantry. Japanese troops poured into the breach and more infiltrated behind the 1st Battalion. After dark, K Company was left in contact while the 1st Battalion withdrew. Enemy pressure mounted on both flanks, causing the company to form a hasty horseshoe defense. Captain Coral Talbot selected a third of his men to form a detachment left in contact, simulating the fire of a full company to give their comrades a chance to make it to safety.

With the Japanese closing in from 3 directions, the detachment would likely be sacrificed. Recognizing the situation's hopelessness, PFC Richard F. Gomes, already wounded and unable to walk unassisted, told his buddy, Private Clifford Mygrant, to leave him his BAR ammunition and he would try to hold off the Japanese while the last element escaped. As the group withdrew, Gomes fired his BAR at anything that moved. Where the escape trail intersected with the main road south, Captain Ralph Hibbs, the 2d Battalion's surgeon, was at a hasty aid station set up by the Medical Detachment to ensure all the wounded were evacuated. He recalls a lone automatic weapon firing as stragglers limped and hobbled down the trail through the aid station. Hibbs credits the lone gun with saving the lives of many stragglers who might otherwise have been attacked on the trail. Soon after the K Company detachment left its position, there was a long, steady burst of BAR fire and a longer rattle of Japanese rifle fire, followed by silence. Gomes' luck had run out.

Days later, Sergeant Morris F. Lewis, K Company's Mess Sergeant, heard Captain Talbot telling Colonel Steel and Lieutenant Colonel Brady that Gomes should receive the Medal of

³³ Sergeant Harry M. Neff (home town unknown) and Private Julius W. Stewart (Clarendon, AR) both died in captivity.

Honor. On the roster Lieutenant Colonel Jasper Brady and Major Marshall Hurt so painstakingly prepared during their captivity at Cabanatuan, is an annotation next to Gomes' name, "*M.H. recommended. After being wounded, and withdrawal of company ordered, told Mygrant to leave him and he would cover withdrawal of Co. Killed a few moments later while firing his AR rapidly.*" Today, no one knows if the Medal of Honor recommendation ever reached Lieutenant General Wainwright's Headquarters on Corregidor where it would have had to be forwarded by submarine to the US for approval. Gomes was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously, perhaps pending approval of the higher award. Local commanders could authorize award of the DSC, but only the President could approve the Medal of Honor.

Private Patrick Davie is the only survivor of the K Company detachment that was to have covered the withdrawal and has testified to Gomes' heroic deed in writing. Clifford Mygrant, hit in the legs during the action, died in captivity. Jasper Brady and Marshall Hurt also died in captivity, as did all of K Company's leaders above the grade of sergeant. Morris Lewis is still living, but was in the rear at the time of the action and has no personal recollection of the event other than the conversation he overheard between Captain Talbott and his seniors. There is little doubt that Gomes' conscious self-sacrifice was sufficient to earn him the Medal of Honor and it would likely have been awarded had the 31st Infantry's records been preserved. Unfortunately, most were destroyed before the surrender, perhaps leaving Gomes' award recommendation in perpetual limbo.

There were many other acts of heroism that day as individuals shunned danger to accomplish a difficult mission under the worst of conditions. Private Walter J. Cox, a medic with I Company earned the Silver Star for dashing across a fire swept trail to come to the rescue of several L Company men who had been hit. He pulled one man to safety and was hit himself while rescuing a second. Lieutenant Dean K. Wood of I Company received the Silver Star for exposing his position and drawing Japanese fire while Cox performed his rescue. When Cox went down, Wood dashed across the trail, firing as he charged. He was hit while helping Cox get the second man to safety. His Silver Star was subsequently upgraded to a Distinguished Service Cross. Two other 3d Battalion medics, PFC Edward J. Golkas and Private William O. Mann, were killed that day trying to help wounded comrades. Mann, wounded during his first foray to rescue a wounded man, was killed during a second rescue attempt, earning him the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously.

At night, Japanese snipers infiltrated through gaps in the line and climbed trees to await their quarry. Shortly after daybreak on January 23, a sniper's bullet found its victim in C Company. Corporal Charles Peterson lay sprawled in the dirt, quivering, with blood oozing from his temple. In a moment he was still. "Oh God, he's dead, my buddy's dead," sobbed PFC Andrew Nickerson as he stood staring at Peterson's lifeless face. "Someone get Nickerson back in his hole," yelled Sergeant Abraham, the company supply sergeant. Staff Sergeant Gerald Farnham quickly complied, knocking Nickerson for a loop, just as another shot rang out. No one was hit this time. Lieutenant Ralph Simmons ordered Private John Novak to find the shooter. The fire could only have come from a cluster of three mango trees, so the hunt was easy. When Simmons' patrol opened fire, the sniper fell quickly, dangling from a rope holding him to the tree. Men kept shooting long after he was dead but one soldier wasn't satisfied and asked Simmons to

allow him to blow the man's head off. Private Walter Southard, disgusted at the request, shouted, "What the hell's the matter with you, you getting' bloodthirsty?" Go to hell, go straight to hell!" sobbed the grieving trooper as he took aim at the dead sniper.³⁴

Japanese bombers soon returned, seriously wounding Corporal Charles Adams and killing Private Jose Campos. When the planes departed, "photo Joe", a reconnaissance plane, watched for signs of another target. C Company lay pinned down all day long for fear they would bring on another air or artillery attack. In the heat the bodies of the American and Japanese dead gave off a foul odor from which there was no escape. To this day, C Company's survivors refer to their position overlooking Abucay Hacienda as "Dead Man's Hill."

Around noon, Captain John Pray of G Company became impatient for news of what was happening. As part of the 2d Battalion, he was supposed to exploit any success gained by the 3d Battalion's attack, but he did not know the 3d Battalion's plan or where it was. He decided to act on his own initiative. Over the next 5 hours, he managed to move his company, now down to 55 men, around the mangrove cluster where I and L Companies had been held up. Suddenly, the company was engulfed in a blizzard of fire. Two men were killed and eight were wounded.

By nightfall, the 31st and 45th Infantry Regiments had drawn back almost to the line from which they began their counterattack 5 days earlier. The troops were exhausted. They had received little food or water, suffered heavy casualties, and got little sleep because Japanese infantry tended to be active at night and Japanese bombers and artillery were active by day. Against that backdrop, a Japanese infantry regiment struggled up Mount Natib in the center of the line and descended down the back side into the rear of the II Corps' line. It was hard for the Americans and Filipinos to recognize, but the Japanese were also running out of steam.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE LINE

On January 24, the 31st Infantry was ordered to withdraw, covering the rest of II Corps as it abandoned the MLR. One rifle company and one machinegun platoon per battalion were left behind to screen the main body's withdrawal. A provisional tank group consisting of two National Guard tank battalions and a battalion of 75mm self-propelled howitzers assisted them.³⁵ As the covering force began withdrawing at midnight on January 25, the Japanese attacked, shouting "Samurai". The infantry fought a stout delaying action before falling in behind a waiting screen of tanks and self-propelled howitzers that remained undetected by the enemy. When the infantry was safely behind them, the tanks and howitzers opened fire at close range, firing straight down trails densely packed with Japanese troops. The engagement threw the Japanese into a chaotic retreat, leaving hundreds dead or dying on the trails behind them.

³⁴ LT Ralph C. Simmons (Spartanburg, SC), Staff Sergeant Gerald C Farnham (Little Valley, NY), Corporal Charles K. Adams (Mondovi, WI), and Private John Novak (home town unknown) died in captivity at Cabanatuan. PFC Andrew E. Nickerson (home town unknown) died in captivity at Camp O'Donnell.

³⁵ The 192d and 194th Tank Battalions were formed from National Guard division tank companies from various state and were dispatched to the Philippines in 1941, shortly before the curtain closed on reinforcement opportunities.

At about 1:30 AM on January 25, the 31st Infantry's last elements to withdraw reached the barrio of Wawa on Manila Bay. Men quickly fell into an exhausted sleep. At 4:00 AM they were awakened for their first hot meal in two days – still half rations. There would be no more sleep that day because the regiment was again designated the covering force for II Corps. All of II Corps, except the 31st Infantry had withdrawn to the Pandan Line. Fortunately, the Japanese were so badly stricken at Abucay that they could not pursue the dispirited units that came off the Abucay Line. By evening it became clear that a covering force was no longer needed and the 31st was ordered to withdraw to a bivouac area 2 kilometers west of Limay. At 3:00 AM on January 26, the 1st Battalion was ordered to occupy a sector on the new line.

From January 28 to February 1, the regiment got a rest. The time was spent cleaning equipment and searching for food since rations were insufficient to keep men functioning in the tropical heat. The entire Bataan Force was starting to feel the effects of gradual starvation, having been on half rations since the end of December 1941. Moreover, medicine was running out and Bataan's tropical jungle, with its plethora of diseases and unsanitary living conditions were taking their toll. Malaria and dysentery became particularly rampant.

On February 1, the regiment was ordered north to an assembly area on the San Vicente River. The motor move was completed around 1:00 AM on February 2. On February 5, amid a sporadic enemy barrage, a howitzer shell hit the 3d Battalion Command Post, wounding Captains Donald G. Thompson of L Company and Richard Roshe of I Company. At dusk on February 5, the regiment moved by truck to assembly areas on the Alangan and Lamao Rivers. The 1st and 2d Battalions were posted 1 ¼ miles west of the main highway's crossing of the Alangan River and the Regimental Headquarters and 3d Battalion were located about 1 ½ miles west of Lamao, near II Corps Headquarters. The regiment would stay in those areas until April 3. On March 1, Colonel Charles L. Steel moved up to become chief of Staff of II Corps. Lieutenant Colonel Jasper E. Brady replaced him as commander of the 31st Infantry. Major Marshall Hurt who had been the Regimental Adjutant in turn replaced Brady as 3d Battalion Commander. On March 27, Lieutenant Colonel Cyril Q. Marron took command of the 2d Battalion, replacing Major Lloyd C. Moffit, who became his executive officer.

Also in March, replacements were sent to the 31st from the Army Air Corps' 7th Chemical Company, and from the Philippine Department's 808th MP Company and Quartermaster Section. What the better-fed replacements found shocked them. Veteran infantrymen of the 31st were emaciated, covered with jungle sores, and sick with serious diseases. Rations had declined to eight ounces of rice and one can of fish per day. To make matters worse, moist rice quickly became moldy in the tropical heat, adding to the rampant diarrhea in the camps. All carabao (water buffalo) on Bataan had already been butchered and eaten, as had the Quartermaster's pack mules, the 26th Cavalry Regiment's horses, and General Wainwright's horse. Men constantly foraged for edible roots and herbs, snails, snakes, monkeys, bananas, wild pigs, and stray chickens, but with over 70,000 soldiers on Bataan, the jungle was nearly picked clean of edible material. Although there were 11 cases of C-rations on each company's mess truck, they were reserved for "emergency" use only and it was a court martial offense to open them without authorization from Philippine Department Headquarters. Everyone grew weaker by

the day and by April, the 31st Infantry Regiment mustered less than a full strength battalion of men able to walk unassisted. How bad would it have to get before someone in authority decided to declare the situation an emergency?

MOUNT SAMAT, THE LAST BATTLE

On April 1, 1942, the Japanese resumed their attack, practically destroying the Philippine Army's 41st Division. Filipino units that had fought bravely in January now simply evaporated under a thundering artillery barrage that lasted for several hours. Bunkers, foxholes, and the men who occupied them were churned and plowed under as the earth erupted again and again in geysers of dirt, steel shards, splintered trees, and broken bodies. Barbed wire that had been salvaged from the abandoned Abucay line at great effort and risk was blasted into shreds, opening wide corridors for waiting Japanese infantry. Any remaining communications wire was cut repeatedly by the barrage, leaving commanders unsure of who, if anyone, remained for them to command. Several thousand stragglers, including intact battalions, fled to adjacent sectors, creating a confused mess with no one quite sure of who was in charge. Bombers and fighters struck anything that moved, making it impossible for reinforcements to move forward. At 6:00 the next evening, the 31st Infantry was put on alert.

At 4:00 AM on Good Friday, April 3, 1942, the 31st Infantry was committed to the breach, advancing toward the San Vicente River around 5:00 that evening with the 1st Battalion in the lead. Thunder and lightning boiled out of a darkening sky, signaling the possibility of a storm. The coming storm would not be of nature's making. Corporals Irvin Hicks and Paul Kerchum of B Company recall that there was no briefing on the situation, only an order to move up. Those too sick or malnourished to fight were simply left behind, as were most heavy weapons. There were few men strong enough to carry a water-cooled machinegun and most mortars were out of ammunition anyway, so some companies went forward with only rifles and BARs. Hicks and Kerchum were exceptions. They and their squads were still in fairly good shape due to repeated midnight raids on the Quartermaster food storage area, not far from their bivouac site. Many others had done the same, even though getting caught was a punishable offense. Starvation was greater punishment, so the risk seemed well worth taking. On the evening of April 5, companies received a hot meal in a clearing somewhere south of the San Vicente River. They were also issued C-rations and cigarettes, the first they had in months. "We got 3 cans of dry and 3 cans of wet rations," recalls Private Tillman J. Rutledge. "We were so hungry some of us sat down and ate all six cans." Around 4:00 PM, Colonel Brady assembled his company commanders and asked Captain Taylor, the regimental chaplain, to lead them in prayer.

Pouring through areas abandoned by units of the Philippine Army, Japanese troops gained the lower slopes of Mount Samat. The 31st Infantry would have to counterattack to throw them off and B Company would lead the attack. The order to attack drove some men to desperation. Here and there throughout the bivouac area, M-1 rifles and .45 caliber pistols barked as weakened men shot off toes or parts of other limbs to avoid having to go into battle. Private Romie C. Gregory, struggling to carry the barrel of his .50 caliber machinegun, felt his morale sink. "It seemed like the whole Filipino Army was going the other way." As B Company advanced

cautiously up a ridge, Lieutenant "Hootch" Sutphin, always in the lead, shot 2 Japanese snipers out of the trees with his M-1.³⁶ Japanese mortars opened up, wounding Sergeants Donald Bridges and George Wood. Captain Thompson ordered Kerchum and Hicks to set up their machinegun and spray the jungle ahead of the company, but they saw no enemy troops. After firing intermittently for about 10 minutes, the company pulled back as word came down that there were no friendly troops on the 31st Infantry's left or right. Private John Armellino, a veteran of two years each in Panama and the Philippines, recalls the horrible stench of death and the haunting sight of gauze bandages hanging from branches in streamers when his company found what had been a Philippine Army division's casualty collecting station.

Between midnight on April 5 and 1:00 AM on April 6, the 2d and 3d Battalions passed through the 1st and almost immediately G Company, leading the column, ran into a fight. Privates Guy H. Prichard, Jr. and James G. Deaton, G Company's point men, were hit by machinegun fire. Prichard, a quiet 20-year-old from Rensville, Pennsylvania, was killed instantly, and Deaton, a tall blond kid from Denver, was hit in the stomach and lay unable to move. Private Wil Sweeney fell with his .30 caliber machinegun into the center of the trail and began firing steady bursts, just as he had been taught on Fort McKinley's B Range. Privates George Bullock and Albert Taylor crawled up on his left and right with BARs. "Sweeney would fire a burst, then I would fire a burst, and then Bullock would fire," recalled Taylor. "It was 30 minutes before we fought our way far enough to get Prichard and Deaton out." Deaton died on the way to the Battalion Aid Station. Captain Denton Rees, a dentist assigned to the Regimental Aid Station, recalled "Our casualties were severe and it was difficult to evacuate them, but we managed with the help of the walking wounded."

The 2d Battalion continued its advance, although more slowly and cautiously. In the dark, men stumbled repeatedly into enemy units, fired at their muzzle flashes, threw unreliable hand grenades, and continued moving forward in a fatalistic assault. Nearby, intense firing erupted in the sector of the Philippine Army's 21st Division, signaling the beginning of the end for that unit. Outflanking the enemy after several hours of maneuvering at great cost, G Company finally drove the Japanese up a steep ridge, securing what was intended to be the regiment's line of departure. Although the 31st Infantry, with the remnant of a battalion of tanks attached, had been scheduled to attack at daybreak, conditions had now changed. F Company started to advance at 5:30 AM, but the tanks did not show up and the scheduled 80 gun artillery barrage artillery did not happen. Shortly after F Company started moving, they walked into an ambush. "The Fourth of July broke loose," recalled Private Tillman Rutledge. "They let us by and then tried to separate us from the main body." As their buddies were hit, men would rifle through their packs in search of cans of rations. Simultaneously, the Japanese hit the tail of the 2d Battalion's column, adding to the confusion.

The 2d Battalion was not alone in its troubles. The 1st Battalion, left to guard a trail junction behind the 2d Battalion, also came under attack. Private Armellino and another man had just reached their designated listening post about 100 yards in front of A Company when the

³⁶ Irvin R. "Hootch" Sutphin, who was married to a Filipina, received a battlefield commission after the battle of Abucay Hacienda. He died in captivity at Cabanatuan on August 9, 1942.

Japanese attack began. Rifle, machinegun, and mortar fire and excited American and Japanese voices reverberated under the jungle canopy in a continuous cacophony for what seemed like an hour. When the enemy withdrew, Armellino and his buddy cautiously returned to their company only to find precious breakfast scattered all over the ground. Milk cans formerly filled with drinking water were riddled with bullet holes. Staff Sergeant Thomas Lupton, the company's mess sergeant, was being loaded onto a makeshift stretcher. One of his legs was blown off and he was near death from loss of blood. He died enroute to the hospital.

Near dawn on April 6, surviving officers reported that the 21st Division had been enveloped during the night and had scattered while escaping the trap. The 31st Infantry Regiment's Antitank Company, attached to the 21st Division, was caught up in the retreat. There was no one left holding the sector. Lieutenant Colonel Brady ordered his men to halt, knowing they lacked the strength to hold an entire division sector even if they were successful in retaking the line. There would be no time to react to Brady's order. The 2d Battalion, still in front, spotted what appeared to be a Japanese regiment moving toward them from Mount Samat. The Americans opened up with mortars and the Japanese responded in kind. Captain Ralph Hibbs, the 2d Battalion's surgeon, was blown into the air, but landed without a scratch. Another man nearby was hit in the trachea, almost severing it. Hibbs, still dazed and temporarily deaf, applied a pressure bandage to keep the blood from flowing into the man's lungs.

Although General Clifford Bluemel, the western sector commander, denied Colonel Brady's request to shift to a defensive posture, Brady ordered the 1st and 2d Battalions to dig in on the most defensible terrain available, sent patrols out to establish contact with remnants of the Philippine Army's 51st Division, and moved the 3d Battalion into a reserve position. To assist the 1st Battalion in securing some steep hills in its assigned sector, a battery of four 75mm guns was assigned the mission of laying down suppressive fire on the objective. The 1st Battalion advanced on line as the battery opened fire. Japanese artillery responded, reducing the battery to three guns, then two, and finally the last gun was silenced. A Company's left flank platoon advanced with only 15 men and 6 fell to mortar and artillery fire before they reached the crest of the ridge. At the top, they occupied former Filipino positions. Swollen, stinking corpses littered the area, making the men wish they were just about anywhere else. Japanese small arms fire soon thinned the platoon to 7 men, but they managed to hold on.

Around 2:00 PM, Colonel Brady sent his reserve companies, K and L, forward to help the 2d Battalion hold its line. The 2d Battalion was taking the brunt of the Japanese 4th Division's main attack. Captain Thompson of L Company was just receiving his orders to move forward when a Japanese shell landed nearby, peppering him with shrapnel and tree splinters and causing him to go deaf. He was evacuated to a field hospital. At 3:00 PM, the 31st was ordered to withdraw to the San Vicente River, moving overland since all major trails were in Japanese hands. K and L Companies covered the withdrawal. Men too weak to struggle with heavy weapons through the thick, tangled jungle simply took them apart and threw the parts into the jungle. One machinegun squad, despairing of ever getting out alive, set up their gun and fired for over an hour until a series of explosions signaled the end of their war.

As A Company's left flank platoon withdrew, it did so individually. The first man dashed down the bullet swept slope safely. The second had a head wound and froze. When someone slapped him, he threw down his weapon and ran toward the Japanese and was killed. The others made their way to a covered position at the foot of the hill. C Company rallied nearby as desperate men shouted to each other over the chaotic din of explosions and gunfire. A barbed wire fence blocked the 1st Battalion's withdrawal until Lieutenants Alfred Lee and Charles Hodgins³⁷ held down a section of the fence, firing their pistols at the enemy to keep them away as men scrambled over the wire. Planes attacked the struggling mass with cannon fire while Japanese troops fired down on them from the heights they had just abandoned. Although few of those hit were killed, men dropped everything and ran in wild panic, hoping to find a spot that could shelter them from the hellish storm of fire. The 1st Battalion ceased to exist as a fighting unit.

Remnants of the 31st Infantry's Antitank Company, totaling three 37mm antitank guns, were positioned to cover the Pilar-Bagac Road. As six Japanese tanks appeared, two of the 37mm guns fired over 40 rounds, mortally wounding the Japanese 7th Tank Regiment's commander, Colonel Sonoda, and disabling two of his tanks. The remaining tanks spotted the two antitank guns and knocked them both out. While the third gun was being positioned to join the fight, it came under intense artillery fire, causing First Sergeant Emanuel Hamburger and the gun's 5 crewmen to take cover in a dugout. Before taking cover, Hamburger ordered one of the men to remove the weapon's breech block. Seeing what appeared to be a platoon of Japanese approaching, Hamburger and two of the drivers fired through slits in the log embrasure. During a lull in the firing, three of the crewmen scurried out of the dugout and escaped. A fourth, Private Homer J. Hernandez of Overton, Texas got out but was shot and bayoneted. As Hamburger and the others tried to follow, they were met by a hail of bullets, forcing them back inside. Private James Mines urged Hamburger to surrender. Hamburger tied his handkerchief to a stick and handed it to Mines who refused it. "Oh no, you're the Sergeant, you go first." At the age of 45, a veteran of the Mexican Expedition against Pancho Villa in 1916, combat with the 1st Division during World War I, nine years of service in China, and eight in the Philippines, Hamburger went into captivity.³⁸

Taking up a new position along the San Vicente River, what was left of the 31st sent patrols out to its flanks to establish contact with neighboring units. Major Addison W. Dunham, who had recently become the 1st Battalion Commander, was receiving a report from one of the patrols when 3 rounds of artillery came roaring in, making a sound like a freight train according to Corporal Joe Keys. Major Dunham (Cambridge, Nebraska), Corporal Charles Ball (Browning, Montana), and Privates Clyde L. Wasson (Bell, California) and Carl E. Gladwetz (home town unknown) were killed instantly. Charles Ball had been B Company's hero ever since he began

³⁷ 1LT Charles L. Hodgins (Snohomish, WA) died in captivity at Cabanatuan on July 31, 1942. 2LT Alfred E. Lee (Carrollton, TX) died at Cabanatuan on December 13, 1942.

³⁸ Remarkably, 1SG Hamburger (Seattle, WA) would survive, remaining in the Army after the war. PVT James E. Mines (Russellville, AL) survived the war, although he is erroneously listed in Colonel Brady's roster as having died in captivity on June 8, 1943. The other soldier who surrendered with Hamburger was PVT Cecil W. Bradshaw (home town unknown). Bradshaw had less than a month to live. He died in captivity at Camp O'Donnell on April 25, 1942.

picking snipers out of trees on the way to Abucay Hacienda in January, but an exploding artillery shell makes no distinctions. Now, half a world away from the Indian Reservation he proudly called home, Ball lay dead. Joe Keys had part of his left arm blown off and Paul Kerchum took a large fragment in his right calf. The number of able-bodied men remaining in B Company had just declined by a third. Everyone who still could run across the slope to take shelter from the barrage.

At 6:00 AM on April 7, Japanese artillery and infantry struck what remained of the Philippine Army's 51st Division on a trail adjacent to the 31st Infantry. Weakened by disease, hunger, and battle losses, the unit could hold on no longer. Surviving Filipino soldiers melted into the jungle to save themselves. Soon the 31st was also under attack. Around 9:00 AM, the regiment was ordered to withdraw to an assembly area near Lamao. The withdrawal route traversed extremely rough and heavily vegetated terrain, causing units to become separated and men to become isolated groups of stragglers. They did not know it, but the entire II Corps line had evaporated. Philippine Army, Philippine Scout, and American troops became intermingled in the general retreat. When the 31st Infantry's remnants reached the Alangan River, there were somewhere between 200 and 300 effectives left. Other regiments of the US Philippine Division were in similar condition.

THE SURRENDER

By the evening of April 8, the situation was clearly hopeless. Senior officers were told that General King would surrender the Bataan Force the next morning. At 7:00 the next morning, all radio operators listening to General King's command frequency heard "DITCH, DITCH, DITCH", the coded signal to surrender. Although exhausted and dispirited, the 31st did not surrender of its own accord. Rather than issuing the order to surrender, officers told their men of the situation and advised them that the time had come for them to decide for themselves what to do. Some of the stronger officers, including Major Peter Calyer, the 31st's Operations Officer, led groups into the mountains to become guerillas. When word of the impending surrender reached H Company, Sergeant Walk had one 81mm mortar round left. He set the mortar to fire at maximum range, fired the 6 lb. projectile at an unseen foe, had his men disassemble the sights and tripod, and scattered pieces of the weapon into the jungle as they marched down the trail toward an unknown fate. One of the regiment's last casualties on Bataan was Major Lloyd C. Moffit, killed by a shrapnel wound to the head in an air attack less than an hour before the surrender. The plucky little major had been relieved of command in March after accidentally shooting himself in the foot while briefing his officers with a drawn pistol, but gamely stayed with the 2d Battalion as its Executive Officer to the very end.

At the time of the surrender, the 31st Infantry's headquarters was collocated with the headquarters of II Corps and the Philippine Division on Signal Hill, a promontory of Mount Bataan known as "Little Baguio" for its cool breezes and breathtaking view.³⁹ Lieutenant Colonel

³⁹ Signal Hill, a promontory on the slopes of Mount Bataan, is served by a steep gravel road leading to kilometer post 97.8 on the Mariveles-Bagac Road.

Jasper Brady told his headquarters security element to bury the regiment's most cherished possessions to keep them from falling into Japanese hands. Major General Maxson S. Lough, Colonel Harrison Browne and several officers who had been transferred from the 31st to corps staffs or other units when the war began were present at the time.

At around 8:00 AM, Staff Sergeant Joe Crea (Headquarters Company), Corporal Robert Scruby (F Company), and Staff Sergeant James H. Steed (H Company), wrapped the regimental colors, national colors, a regimental photo album, and several other items of historical value in waxed canvas. The items were placed in a field safe that was buried face down to a depth of 4 feet on the east side of the gravel trail from Signal Hill. Leaves were spread over the site to make it appear undisturbed.⁴⁰ Near that time, Corporal Lou Read (Antitank Company) recalls seeing Master Sergeant Stefan Widerynski (Service Company), Sergeant Steed, and Captain Herbert H. Eichlin (L Company) burying footlockers containing several pistols, Philippine pesos, and the regiment's records nearby.⁴¹

With ammunition, rations, and supplies practically exhausted and most of his best units destroyed, Major General Edward P. King surrendered the Luzon Force on the morning of April 9. Most of the campaign's survivors were herded into columns and marched 68 miles north to Camp O'Donnell. More died of exhaustion, disease, and random execution by their captors. Their trek, marked by the extreme brutality of their Japanese guards, became known as the Bataan Death March.

Not all of the 31st's survivors surrendered. Some managed to link up with bands of their comrades or Filipino guerillas to continue hindering the Japanese in any way they could. Those too weak to run or just plain unlucky were summarily executed if captured later. Since Corregidor had not yet fallen, others escaped to the island by barge or anything that would float. Among them were Joe "the kid" Johnson and Dale Snyder, best friends since they met at Fort McDowell, California on the way to the Philippines over a year earlier. Johnson ran into Snyder around dusk on the day of the surrender. Both still had their weapons and the Japanese had not yet reached their location near the village of Cabcaben near the tip of the Bataan Peninsula. After searching the beach in vain for an outrigger or anything that would float, they heard a Navy launch headed for Corregidor. Hollering at the top of their lungs, they plunged into the water and swam faster than they ever thought they could. The launch slowed nearly to a stop but was so overloaded it looked as if it might capsize if one of them tried to come aboard. Rather than leave them behind, someone threw them a line and they were towed nearly 5 miles to Corregidor. The trip was dark and frightening, particularly with the Japanese closing the door behind them and

⁴⁰ A comment appears in John W. Whitman's book *Bataan, Our Last Ditch* (Hippocrene Books, NY, 1990) that CPT George Sansep burned the 31st's colors to keep them from falling into enemy hands. His account may refer to the burning of one of the Philippine Scout regiments' colors, since no CPT George Sansep or any other member by that name appears in the 31st Infantry's pre-war or wartime rosters. CPL Lou Read who recalls seeing the colors at the site before their burial corroborates SSG Crea's account.

⁴¹ SSG Crea (Panama City, FL) survived the war, remained in uniform after his release from captivity and retired from the Air Force as a Master Sergeant in 1964. CPL Scruby (Chillicothe, MO) died in captivity at Cabanatuan on May 18, 1942. MSG Widerynski (Manila, PI) died on a detail at Clark Field on December 11, 1943. CPT Eichlin (Easton, PA) died aboard the "Hell Ship" Oryoku Maru in 1944.

sharks infesting the waters they traveled. On Corregidor they were fed a canteen cup of cracked wheat and condensed milk, given a rifle and some clean clothes, and attached to the 4th Marines for beach defense duty.

The Marines treated escapees from Corregidor like heroes, but the escape was only temporary. Within days, Japanese artillery began pounding the island, turning it into a mass of dust, debris, and splinters. Troops spent their days in Malinta Tunnel and nights manning beach defenses. Finally, on the night of May 5, the expected amphibious assault came. Japanese troops landed on the side of the island opposite Johnson and Snyder's position. At dawn, a Marine captain jumped into the shellhole where a squad of soldiers and Marines had established a fighting position. He said the Japanese were between them and the tunnel and things looked bad. Around 1:00 PM Japanese and American voices called out across the island saying the garrison had been surrendered by General Wainwright at noon. With nowhere left to run, men yielded to the inevitable and shuffled under guard into the 92d Coast Artillery Regiment's abandoned motor park, nicknamed "the garage". Men were selected to perform funeral detail, first roping Japanese bodies into a pile and setting them afire and then doing the same with dead Americans. They were eventually herded onto barges, taken to Manila, and paraded through the city streets to Bilibid Prison. Several days later, they were loaded onto cattle cars and taken to Cabanatuan, a camp housing over 5000 Americans. Unlike the men captured on Bataan, those captured on Corregidor were spared the Death March, but that did not assure their survival.⁴²

Another group that had escaped to Corregidor was led by Captain Earl Short, the 31st Infantry's former Headquarters Commandant. The night before the surrender, Short took Sergeants Howard J. Linn and Thomas Proulx with the Shanghai Bowl and 99 cups by barge to Corregidor. There, they hoped to get the treasure out by submarine. For a month, the isolated island endured nearly constant aerial bombing and artillery bombardment. Finally, with the garrison's collapse imminent, Short decided he could no longer leave the regiment's proudest treasure at risk. At around 11:00 PM on May 2, Short's detail buried the bowl and cups on the west side of Malinta Hill just above the Bottomside Bakery. There it would remain for four years—a mute testimony to the Polar Bear Regiment's determination to keep its traditions alive.

⁴² Dale Snyder escaped from the train transporting POWs from Bilibid to Cabanatuan. When recaptured, he was beheaded by a Japanese captain named Maita on May 30, 1942. Fifteen year-old Joe Johnson survived Bataan, Corregidor, and the infamous labor detail at Nichols Field from which many did not return. He was beaten, had his grave dug, survived the sinking of two "hell ships", lived through a coal mine cave-in in Japan, and was only 25 miles from one of the atomic bomb blasts, but he survived to write Dale Snyder's nephew of the experience at the age of 73.

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*MSG sent to Charlie
to critique*

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The Retired Officers Association

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Ref to Allied

Medical personnel is
incorrect (I am informed
DeWalt). Army & Navy Drs
did not have choice to
stay in Manila or their
stations or evacuated
any place. They went with
their units.

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Joe Soldier
has "yaws"—a skin
disease fairly common in
PT. He thought he had
syphilis, and Pancho let
him believe he did. During
~~one~~ "treatment" period,
Joe Soldier brought
Pancho pork loin. And
Pancho, Tex Evans (mentioned
above & still alive) & I cooked
it & ate it.