

EVACUEE REPORTS:

SWIFT,

WILLIAM D.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA  
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SECTION GENERAL STAFF

APC 500  
21 August 1944

Philippine Evacuee Report #214

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SUBJECT : PALAWAN

From : William Dewey SWIFT, Cpl, USMC 274253



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Name : William Dewey Swift.  
Born : In 1917.  
Service : Four years in the Marine Corps, assigned  
to the 4th Marine Regiment.  
Assignment : Machine Gunner, .50 and .30 cal. A/A  
In P.I. : Since June, 1940.

Interrogated by G-2, GHQ SWPA.

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Although Swift was more observant than most of the evacuees in his group, he was unable to give any information of importance. His information is considered to be fairly reliable.

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CHRONOLOGY

- 6 May 42 - Stationed on Corregidor at time of surrender.
- 24 May 42 - Arrived at Bilibid prison, Manila.
- 25 May 42 - Sent to Cabanatuan, Luzon.
- Jul 42 - Included in group of 300 of most healthy POWs carried to Puerto Princesa, Palawan for work detail.
- Aug 42 - Feb 43 - Worked on airfield near Puerto Princesa.
- Oct 42 - 100 POWs arrived from Cabanatuan to replace those who were sick and who had been sent to Manila.
- 3 Feb 43 - Escaped with Robert PRYOR.
- Mar 43 - Joined Dr. Higinio MENDOZA and his guerrilla unit in northern Palawan.
- 25 Apr 43 - Went to Cuyo for a short time and then went to Tablas.
- 23 Aug 43 - Left Tablas with Captain WHITEHEAD to go to Australia.
- 28 Nov 43 - Stayed in Tawi Tawi with VIGOUROUX while rest of Whitehead group continued its trip to Australia.
- Dec 43 - Mar 44 - Lived with American and Filipino party on Tawi Tawi.
- 5 Mar 44 - Evacuated by sub from Tawi Tawi.

Japanese Treatment of POWs

While the prisoners from Corregidor were marching through the streets of Manila to Bilibid prison many Filipinos endeavored to give them food, but they were immediately beaten by the Jap guards. The prisoners were given rice but no water.

On the train trip to Cabanatuan, each box car was loaded with 150 men. Those who dropped by the wayside because of thirst, while marching 19 kilometers from Cabanatuan to the Filipino Army barracks, were kicked around and left for dead.

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At the barracks 6 persons were placed in a room which was only large enough for 2 people. Many died from malnutrition, dysentery, malaria, and the cruelties of the Japanese.

Japanese Atrocities In Puerto Princesa . Every day some one on the work detail was abused for one reason or another. Usually it was a crack of the rifle but across the back of the knee, or on the back, or perhaps a club on the head if you were not working fast enough or were talking.

WERNER, USMC, and another American were beaten with an iron rod and both had an arm broken for taking papaya.

On another occasion, five Americans, including YORDER, USN, and Jack TAYLOR, USMC, stole some corned beef. They were tied to a tree and severely beaten with a rawhide whip and with a club across the back. Two were revived after fainting and then beaten some more. After being given only rice and no water for five days, they were sent to Manila for further punishment.

When prisoners escaped from Puerto Princesa, all POWs were made to stand in the hot sun for one half a day without food or water and were put on half rations for four days without water.

"KISHIMOTO" ✓: Major and CO of Puerto Princesa prison camp in 1942 and the first part of 1943.

HIGINIO MENDOZA ✓: Dr and guerrilla leader in northern Palawan, a loyal Filipino who was formerly a Captain, MC, Res., PA.

PEDRO MANIGQUE ✓: Major and CO of Philippine Constabulary in Palawan. He refused to cooperate with the American soldiers in an effort to liberate the POWs at Puerto Princesa.

DANNY CLARK ✓ A Filipino mestizo living at Talsbigan, Palawan who furnished Swift with food, clothing and lodging.

MARCELLO ✓ A loyal Filipino living at Talsbigan, Palawan who was helpful to Swift. He is a brother in law of Danny Clark.

EMILIA PONCE DE LEON ✓ A Filipino nurse who was a wonderful friend to Swift and other Americans on Cuyo Island.

MARTINSON ✓ US Medical Corps man who escaped from Puerto Princesa on 3 February 1943. Natives reported that he and his companion were captured, punished, and shot by the Japanese.



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28 March 1944.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM DENNY SWIFT, CORP., U.S.M.C.

I was with the Fourth Marines at Corregidor in December '41 until the surrender April 6th. During that time I was a .50 calibre machine gunner, in charge of a machine gun squad. After the surrender came, we were transferred to Bilibid prison by way of Manila. I was there overnight and then we were transferred to a camp 19 kilometers from Cabanatuan. I was there for about two months. We got rice and food three times a day but never enough food. The men were always hungry. Some of the fellows used to steal food from the galley when we could get away with it. In quarters we slept on the floor, and some of the fellows were lucky enough to have blankets. The only work we did here was practically for ourselves--fixing up the galley, digging drains and heads. There was practically no medicine to speak of and, naturally, some of the fellows died and a lot of people were sick. I was sick with dysentery.

They picked 300 of the healthiest men and transferred them to Palawan. We went by train back to Manila and from there we were transferred to Palawan on the Sanko Maru. We left Manila the latter part of July and got down to Puerto Princesa, if I remember right, on the 2nd of August '42. At Puerto Princesa, we stayed in a constabulary barracks and worked on the airfield

There was a Jap guard out back just inside our enclosure. Once there was a papaya just outside the fence, within easy reach; and two Americans were looking at it. The guard told them to get it. They did; and then he told them to report to the Jap mess sergeant. The mess sergeant got one of those concrete reinforcing rods and beat both of them over the back with it. Each one put a hand back to protect himself and both broke an arm. Another time two sailors were beaten around the face and lips and head because they had picked up rice which was laying on the ground. They would sweep it up from time to time, and would wash and cook it. They finally got caught up with. Another time there were five men who were implicated in getting away with some corned beef. There were some loose boards in the floor of the building and just below that the Japs had their store room. Some of the fellows got in there and stole corned beef. The Jap mess sergeant went through our bags at work and found it. He checked his store room and found some cans missing. The men were kept in the brig for five days, and weren't permitted to drink water. Then they tied them to coconut trees right in the square, and beat them from 25 to 75 lashes apiece with a three-foot rawhide whip. Then they took turns beating them with a four-foot club about the back and hips. Two of the fellows fainted. The last information we got was that they were being taken to Manila for further punishment.

Frequently in the fields we used to be knocked down with a club or rifle butt, and beaten around the face with a fist. One thing that always beat me was the fact that they would rather see fruit--wild fruit--rot on the ground before they would allow us to get it. If the fellows tried to get the fruit and got caught they would get the hell knocked out of them. I was there six months from the 2nd of August until the 3rd of February 1943. On February 3rd a group of us, about 12, were planning to escape. All of them backed out except four. Two of us climbed out a window, got under two fences. Shortly after we got out it started raining. We couldn't see, so we got lost and came right through Puerto Princesa and went north. Next morning we found out we were on the north side of town so we continued north. Two days later we contacted two natives and they gave us food and directed us to Dr. Mendosa and Cobb.

We were with Dr. Mendosa probably a month and a half and tried to organize a guerilla unit there, but the Philippine constabulary wouldn't cooperate with us. We were there for a while and then Captain Whitehead and a few more of us and Cobb, another American by the name of Hugg, and I started out for Australia in a sailboat. We went around to the north of Palawan and on down to Balabac. We repaired the boat from time to time, took on supplies. We had plenty of knives and guns and equipment. It took Captain Whitehead about a year to get it up. He had quite a lot, others of us had pots, pans and some American things. It was August or September when we left Palawan by boat. We were at Balabac in October and November. We got down to Tawi Tawi in November. On Tawi Tawi the Japs came up and tried to make a landing one time. They came in with a launch, towing two sailboats, and they met resistance at the dock. 18 or 19 Japs were knocked off and they pulled right back out again. I was there until the time I came out.

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