

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

War Experiences and Recollections: 1941-1944

John A. Pollock, S.J.

Philippine Studies vol. 21, no. 3 (1973): 360–388

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

✓WAR EXPERIENCES AND RECOLLECTIONS*

John A. Pollock, S.J.

DIOCESE OF CAGAYAN
Mambajaw, Misamis Oriental, Philippines

Dec. 8, Monday — Just before noon the Mayor announced the receipt of a proclamation declaring a state of war. Procession of Immaculate Conception Feast called off. Rumors, seemingly fantastic, from unreliable radio fans, about Pearl Harbor!

Dec. 11, Thursday — Our last boat and last mail for many a year.

An occasional letter would come from nearby places, even from Manila, but by messenger only. Many refugees also came by this boat, from Cebu and Cagayan, for our island of Camiguin, small and off the beaten track, seemed safer. Fr. Daigler of Ateneo de Cagayan came to stay with me, help out and to learn the dialect. The Ateneo was already closed. His help would be appreciated, as I was holding two parishes. His cheery companionship was better yet.

Dec. 15, Monday — As no word had come from the Bishop, and little hope of any now, recalling what I had read of war privileges in Europe, I as Vicar Forane sent a letter to the Priests of my district restricting wine at Mass to a teaspoonful, with water only for ablutions. Very few bottles of wine were in stock. My current order due to have been shipped from Manila on Dec. 10 was surely lost. Late in January we received the Bishop's authorization re wine, vestments, etc.

CHRISTMAS was fairly happy, only a taste of war so far. No midnight Mass, account blackout, but good crowds in the morning, and many Communions. The usual barrios covered.

January to April, 1942 — We in the island of Camiguin continued to sit on the side lines. Planes often passed overhead, Japs, on the way to bomb Malaybalay. Our radio station (Bureau of Posts) would get a few minutes warning to our camp. We could not hear the explosions on our side of the island, but on the south side, facing the mainland of Mindanao, the bombings were heard. In Mambajaw we did not hear a shot until June! the first shot of the guerrilla phase of the war.

The number of refugees gradually increased, and our own townfolk faded into the hills, as they built shelters, and moved their belongings to safety. Food became scarce. Camiguin raised mostly copra and abaca, imported rice and corn. Imports stopped, also of course exports. We had no money coming in. Food prices went up, hardships grew apace, and black-marketing. The unused hillsides and later, even the mountain slopes were cleared of brushwood, then of abaca, and planted to food crops, chiefly corn and camote (a kind of sweet potato), gabi and ubi, which are fair substitutes for potatoes, but take a long time to mature, 9 to 12 months.

**Editor's note.* We are publishing these memoirs with a minimum of editing for their historic interest.

Also upland rice was planted, just as nutritious as lowland, but less productive, and so not popular with farmers in peacetime. Camiguin lacks low swampy land, suitable for rice production on a large scale, so we had sold other products and imported rice. The necessities of war changed our economy. After six months or so, we were able to feed ourselves, in fact the poor were better off than before the war.

The common laborer used to get poor wages and was usually lazy and improvident. He lived on polished rice and salted fish, just enough to fend off starvation, all extra centavos went for gambling, etc. To a great extent their hard lot was of their own making. War meant no more polished rice. Salt fish rose to exorbitant prices and could be bought only by the well off, who use it for condiments, not for the basic dish. The poor had always been subject to tuberculosis and beriberi. Now they ate corn or rice, grown locally, cleaned at home, pounded in the old style mortar, for gasoline was no longer available for rice mills. People do not pound it to a polished white, so they got the bran, and got rid of beriberi. Also they got fresh meat, fish and vegetables, so lots of vitamins and health!

By March the prices of pork had gone down to twenty centavos a kilo, so many pigs were slaughtered daily. This was the only way most people could get any cash, nothing else to sell, except the well off, who sold their surplus second hand clothing. But the poor had only pigs and chickens. The chickens gave eggs, and could easily be evacuated to the hills, to the new homes. Pigs would destroy the hill crops, were not welcome, were hard to carry there, and when the Japs would come, they would be a total loss, so sacrifice them now.

The old money went out of circulation, coins especially being hoarded by the Chinese. The government issued emergency paper currency. Some of it was on very poor paper which ceased after a time to be recognizable. Many were hesitant to receive it, and this was true all through the war. At times the guerrilla government forced the people, imprisoning the recalcitrant. The Japs did the same with their mickeymouse money. Everybody knew that was no good, but the majority did rely on our own being redeemed. However it was rather easily counterfeited. Doubts and fears led many to barter.

There were enough radios in town to keep us as well informed as anywhere with censorship and propaganda on the job. In January and March Fr Daigler went to Cagayan by launch, and brought back the latest news, of and from Ours. Cagayan had enough Army to keep posted. He also brought some nice Ateneo library books, all destroyed later in my fire.

In April after Cebu fell (Cebu is the nearest big place to Camiguin, and we always dealt more with Cebu than with our capital of Cagayan) people felt our own invasion was at hand, and more and more went to the hills. After Easter hardly anyone slept in town or in barrios alongside the road. The last Tuesday of April around 6:30 AM, going to a barrio for Mass, I passed over a kilometer of empty houses, and met no one at all along the road. After the landing in Cagayan on May 3, and the surrender of Mindanao it became worse, we were only waiting for our own occupation, and most of the waiting was in the evacuation places in the mountains.

All this time I had continued living in town, even spending the nights in the convento. We were in the upper part of town, with a sheltered escape trail, and sure to get the alarm of an approaching boat, for the few in the lower town would need to pass us on their way to the hills. Camiguin is a little island, our enemies must come by boat.

In town I could get a larger daily congregation than elsewhere, though much smaller than prewar. The regular Sunday program for barrios with centro continued. Both Fr Daigler and I made our retreats. Meanwhile I sent some belongings to the hills, scattered Mass gear in places that might be convenient if Japs would remain awhile and keep me in the hills.

At the convento I improvised an excellent hiding place for extra bedding, clothing, plates, tools, etc. Rats and thieves were an ever present danger in the lonely mountain hideouts. My improvisation was designed against thieves and looters, and its undiscoverability rated nearly 100%. The house was being lived in, which kept down the danger of rats, and we had cats! Fire at the convento I did not fear. We had a good water supply, with a hose connection at each corner of the house, and the hose. The nearest building was the church, of reinforced concrete, only the furniture would burn. All nearby roofs and our own were iron, so less danger of flying embers if the town should be burned, and for the embers that might light on our wooden walls, we had the hose.

For fear of rats and fire at the unoccupied school I stored all the books in the convento. Why not in the concrete church? It was so large and high, it made an excellent target by sea or air, and I feared fire on the inside in the event of a hit, which would be more likely there than with the convento.

Holy Week went off quietly enough, though with the poorest attendance on record. Shortly after that, when Cebu had fallen, a Jap cruiser sailed around our island, and sent in low-flying scout planes. Lots of excitement, but no harm. Fr Daigler had taken his Holy Week in my second parish, then departed for a mission of his own among the Subanon people.

At this time two USAFFE officers came on a search for lime, which was wanted by Fr Ewing who was to prepare quinine for our army. Fr Haggerty had told them that I had a crew of men who made lime. Being doubtful of the quality, I gave them a sample to take away, urged them to try my old lime makers in Jasaan, which would be so much nearer their quinine laboratory. But if they needed my help, I could make a batch for them, up to fifty tons, in three days time, the time the coral rock must burn, but I would need an authorization to violate the blackout, for the fire must go full blast day and night, an open fire, for we have no oven.

How I happened to be ready — which is contra Philippine customs — is an interesting story. Mambajaw had no employment for a year before the war, my old workers were hard up. I formed a sort of cooperative, offering to buy lime which I could use in some of my projects in place of cement. They must gather the coral rock from the sea, and the wood to burn it, in their spare time, without pay. When the work was done, and the lime made, I would buy it, and it would all be profit for them, and their spare time would not be spent gambling or watching others gamble. This was just before the war, when cement was scarce and gone sky high. The men took

me up, gathered rocks and fuel, built a huge pyre, the largest ever seen here, about 15' in diameter, and 8' high, then the rocks were piled on top, enough to make about 50 tons of lime. It was ready to light by Dec. 6, and they were waiting till after the feast day to burn it. War came, and blackout!

The Army was more than satisfied with our lime, and near the end of April a radiogram came authorizing us to go ahead, signed by Gen. Sharp, and ordering 20 tons. We made it, shipped it on the 5th day, a record for P.I. The men were working at it, before it was cool. Several burnt their feet. The flames of that vast pyre had lighted the sky clear to Bohol, 32 miles away, and they thought we had been attacked by Japs, and burned out! so they told me us when we saw them after the war. I paid off the men trusting the Army would pay me, and shipped the lime by launch. It reached Cagayan May 1, just before invasion. (In June 1947 my claim was not yet paid!)

Sunday May 3, after Mass, we were advised by our local radio man that the Japs had landed in Cagayan around midnight, and that their radio had gone off the air about 2 AM. We just stood by. We could get no reports of the fighting in that sector, although we were vitally interested, only 55 miles away by sea, our province. General Sharp surrendered his troops on Sunday May 10. By the 13th rumors began to be heard about the surrender, but we did not believe, supposing only that our troops had been defeated and had fallen back to the mountains as planned. The following Sunday afternoon, May 17, just after Benediction, two USAFFE soldiers, one a lad of my own, whom I had married before he went off to war, Emilio Calapan, dropped into the Church to give thanks for their escape. Emilio verified the surrender and gave some details.

Many soldiers were to follow him. Most units of the surrendered troops had not been marched to designated places, but were ordered by radio to lay down their arms, and wait. As there were no Japs there to receive the surrender or the arms, the majority took their arms, ammunition, food and french leave! the Filipinos to their homes, the Americans to the mountains. It was largely from these men and guns that the guerrilla forces were organized in September, 1942.

At the invasion of Cagayan, the few people remaining in Mambajaw evacuated to the hills, what little business we had was at a standstill. In the daytime a fair number of people could be seen, but at night scarcely more than 20 houses were occupied, mine being one, for it was far enough from the dock to give time for retreat, and also afforded a sheltered retreat without passing thru the town.

By the end of May as even planes no longer flew over and no sign of Japs in our isle, nor even in towns on the mainland except Cagayan, people began to trickle back to town. Corpus Christi, June 4, marked the biggest crowd we had had in Church for some months, and the most Communion since Holy Week. Nearly everyone planned to stay for over First Friday and Sunday before returning to the hills. Friday, a fine crowd again, about half the prewar crowd. That afternoon the Japs came. When they passed the end of the island a hire rig happened to be at that dock (Binoni) where

bancas often land, and started at once for town to give the warning. The Mayor met me on the street returning from inspection in my cemetery, and he told me Japs were expected in 1/2 hour, two launches had passed Binoni.

Hurrying home, I changed, finished my packing as planned, everything always ready and started to the hills, where I had a Masskit, bedding, clothing ready.

At the edge of town I met the Chief of Police and we waited together in a house there until one of his men came to report that the Japs had now reached the municipal building. Then we took off. My evacuation headquarters were only two kilometers from town, and there I waited my own runner with further information. His news was safe, so I went no further this time. The Japs gave out some Manila newspapers, where I read a comment on the recent Battle of Midway, which ran something like this, "some people would call it a defeat for the Imperial Navy, but they do not understand the Japanese strategy. The Admiral wanted to destroy the American aircraft carrier, he did so, so he won the battle, he achieved his purpose."

Our visitors consisted of a Jap patrol, about 40 soldiers, who staid over night received the surrender of the municipal officials, and reappointed them to serve under Jap administration. In the morning they opened some Chinese Stores, confiscated a few things, gave orders to the local officials about confiscating, and left by car for the two towns on south side of this island, while the launch went around with the balance of the soldiers to meet them, and take them back to Cagayan in the afternoon. By 10 AM I heard that they had gone, so I returned to town, and went on as usual. But few people came back, so Sunday was a washout.

Fr Consunji had arrived just before Corpus Christi, and was still with me when the Japs came. When I took off he had staid to dicker with them if need be, and to guard my place. On my return after their departure, he told me how the Lt in command visited the convento, where he asked for the American Padre, and said he must come down to be investigated.

"What will you do to him?"

"If he is good, maybe we will leave him".

On Saturday morning, when the Japs left for Catarman, they had invited Jose Artadi, our Representative in the Phil. Congress, to come with them and assume office as Governor of the Province. Artadi kept refusing them, but followed them to Catarman, and asked Fr Consunji to accompany him. The latter did so, and later told me how Artadi seemed to want to play ball with the Japs, yet kept refusing them. The Japs sailed for Cagayan, Artadi and Fr Consunji returned to Mambajaw, and on Monday Fr Consunji left for his own parish of Gingoog. He had come over to consult me about various wartime measures, was somewhat nervous.

During the following week the puppet officials confiscated very freely Chinese goods, what the Japs said to confiscate, and some besides, apparently for themselves and their friends. Great abuse, from the Chinese viewpoint. Saturday night June 12, the real Chief of Police, prewar, not the new puppet, by the name of Meliton Limbaco, had arranged for a marriage for one of his men for about 8:30. It was done, with the Chief as best man. Just as we finished the ceremony another of his old force sum-

moned him, a few whispers, and the Chief went off with him. An hour later we heard our first shots of the war, when the old Chief staged a coup-d'état, ousted the puppets, restored our flag and PI government, semi-military. It lasted a week. Sunday June 21, a little Jap launch, Tito, came, about 5 PM. Again we had notice when she rounded the point at Binoni, so I stopped the Benediction bell and got ready.

Again I consumed the Bl. Sacrament and took to the hills. This time a big party landed, with horses and bicycles. Lots of excitement. They had only intended to inspect, not to stay, for they were going to Gingoog to occupy that town and the lumber mills there. But learning of the ousting of their Mayor here, they left 70 soldiers to catch the Chief and his men, and to show how to treat the Chinese. This was a tough crowd, and did persecute the Chinese. They went thru the mountains and searched out Chinese in their hiding places. Three times I was warned, from the Jap commander thru the people, not to come down, to stay in hiding, that they were not looking for me, but would be obliged to arrest me if seen. I slept in a different places and said Mass in different places also. The second night I slept in town, in my own home, 100 yards from their headquarters!

Entering town after dark by a back trail I would have to cross only one street that was patrolled by a sentry. Hiding in the bushes till the sentry was well up the street, I crossed quickly and quietly, approached the rectory in the shadow of the church. Alas I found a sentry in front of the church and rectory, a stationary sentry! Suddenly I realized his duty made it safer for me. For with him on guard no stray Jap soldiers could stray into the rectory on a looting foray! So I slipped across the short open space when the sentry was looking down the street and got in the kitchen door unseen. With a good shower, good supper and good talk with Fr Vicente Magto, the Filipino priest from the next town, who had come to cover for me while the Japs remained, and I could look after his parish where the Japs would not likely go. After a good sleep, I got out before dawn as I had come in, playing hide and seek with the sentries, and returned to my hiding place in the hills.

My hiding time was spent largely in hiking in the mountains to learn all trails, the parts where large numbers were hiding, where it would be best to hold Mass to serve the most people, etc. I had no fear for they had sent word they would not look for me, and besides we had heard already when they took Luzon, they were always afraid to enter the mountains, stuck to the roads. So I ambled about at will, only avoiding roads.

On the third day they were on my trail, unintentionally, and not far from taking me. At breakfast time they called at the house where I had eaten the first two mornings, but this day I was two ridges further on! and not due back there till late afternoon for a marriage. Around noon another patrol appeared on a trail just ten minutes behind me, but a miss is as good a mile, at least when the Saints are with one! At 2 I crossed a road, their patrol reached that point at 3, and stopped to eat fruit. But I was nearing where they had been that morning. That night I moved to a tiny hut, almost undiscoverable.

My faithful boy Antonino Cioco was so tired after three days of strenuous hiking, and the poor night's rest on that very uneven floor of the last hut, that we were slow to take off Thursday morning. Just then Fr Magto came as near as he could get to my cliff side dwelling, so I ascended to learn that the Japs had visited the rectory the previous afternoon, inquired for me and again remarked, "Tell him to stay in the hills, we are not looking for him this time, but must take him if met". Also Fr said they were expected to leave this morning. Shortly after word came that they had left, but not all. Also Regelio Lao, a Filipino scholastic of Ateneo de Cagayan, who had been caught in Gingoog at invasion had come on their boat from Gingoog and some American prisoners, who were happy to know that I had escaped, and left word to keep on escaping, in view of their one-day & night experience as prisoners of the Japs!

About 3:30 PM Fr LaO crossed my trail and told me that all the Japs had left, he had gone back to town to make sure when he heard the rumor of some remaining. So I too went back to town. During this visit the Japs had won themselves a bad reputation, maltreating Filipinos who were slow to reveal hiding places of Chinese, or claimed not to know. The poor Chinese who were caught got a worse deal. Our guerrilla force had sworn death to the chief spies who had served the Japs. Friday evening, June 26, they shot one, who undoubtedly deserved death as a traitor, but should have been courtmartialed, not just shot down like a dog. But still he could have escaped, had been warned, had even been shot at in warning, but courted death, unarmed, defied armed men, certainly not in valor, perhaps in bravado, perhaps in too much tuba! I reached him with the Oils, conditionally, in twenty minutes. Mambajaw was also now in a "shooting war".

As the original Mayor, Jorge Ebarle, had refused to go back under the Japs, fearing that he too would be shot by guerrillas as soon as the Japs cleared out, and having promised them that he would stay in retirement, the Japs had refused to go until someone took office. Then a committee of elderly citizens begged the Vice-Mayor, Fernando Corrales to come out of hiding and assume office to get rid of the Japs. He consented, and proved to be a fine fellow. Owners of anything to be confiscated, like gasoline, were warned first, that they might hide it before the inspection! This Mayor was so good for us, that on the next trip of the Japs, they put him out of office, saying he did not serve them!

Interneine war now broke out. One official of a nearby town who had surrendered to the Japs on their first coming, and valiantly helped them since, was told he was on blacklist of our police guerrillas. His uncles and cousins are numerous, and all well-to-do and possessors of licensed firearms. The clan gathered to defend him. The Vice-Mayor tried to arrange a meeting between them and Chief of Police, who did not have any blacklist, as I can vouch. The Chief was ready to go unarmed to the house of the clan, who might retain their arms. They refused the chance for explanations and peace. Meanwhile their biggest man politically, Representative Artadi sneaked off to Cagayan, accepted office as Japanese Governor, and came back with 200 Jap troops, armed with machine guns etc. to catch our 15

police guerrillas, armed with pistols and only 2 rifles! But before he came back another event occurred.

The town, owing to two weeks plus of quiet had again been lulled to a sense of security. The Chief and his men had been keeping out of town at the request of the Mayor for sake of order. Early in July we were invaded by a bunch of 25 bandits, mostly penal colony prisoners who had escaped in the war at time of the surrender. The Chief and his men were invited back to town to protect us, and at once warned the first of the known bandits they meet that they were known, as bandits, and this was war time, and they would be shot on sight. They got on their banca and were gone in an hour! The Chief and his old police returned to duty, the extra guerrillas disbanded. All quiet on Mambajaw front.

But July 14, at 2 AM the new Jap. Governor-traitor arrived on the Tito with the Colonel who commanded this part of Mindanao and 200 troops. This Tito makes a terrible racket, can be heard two miles away, and in the dark, no lighthouse etc. missed the dock, and had to come back. People near the shore had nearly an hour's notice, fled, and warned those of us in the upper town. On all previous occasions the Japs were in no hurry to pick up prisoners, but went to Municipal Building to rest, eat, etc. So I took my time in getting out, gave instructions to Fr LaO who had remained with me till a chance would offer to proceed to Manila.

By 3:30 AM I was more than ready, and would only grow restless waiting for nearer dawn, so I took my boys who wanted to receive Communion, along with Fr. LaO, and gave them Communion, four of them, four or five Hosts at a time, and kept on going the round till the 200 and more Hosts were nearly exhausted, for lack of flour we cut our ordinary small hosts into 4 or 5 pieces, each one nearly an inch long, but only 1/8" wide then putting the remaining dozen in a small pyx to carry with me for use in my Mass in the mountain, I removed my cassock, and clad in khaki, fared forth the back way. My boy felt it was safe to use the street beyond the Church for it was yet dark, only starlight. We started up the street, speaking now and then.

After about 100 feet, he asked me if I heard marching behind us. Mercifully I did not, so had no worry. Later we learned that 40 Jap soldiers crossed our street at that corner just 100, behind us, and turned the next corner, up the back street I had wanted to take, and followed the trail next to the one leading to my chapel. Had we taken that way, which I had chosen we would surely have been seen at the top of the hill against the sky, where the trails divide, and presumably I would have been captured! Score one for the protection afforded by the Holy Virgin!

When Fr LaO left the Church, we found it surrounded by soldiers, some even entered — he was sure I had been taken, escape seemed impossible. Rogelio started from the church about two minutes after I had gone. At the door on the side street he saw a Jap patrol halting, so shut it, and tried the front door, same — another patrol. He went out the other side door and was arrested, and released later when identified. I had beaten those patrols by two minutes. The church was surrounded, but the Padre gone!

At the next corner we passed a big house, the home of some devout souls

who would follow me to any barrio to get Mass, had done so even in previous Jap invasions. So I called to let them know where I would be saying Mass this AM. "Conching, Conching!" I called rather loudly. No reply, and I called to my boy not to wait, we would proceed, probably they had already gone to the hills, so on we went! Conching's sister Lourdes Borrromeo had been in bed, heard me call, knew the voice and came to the window to reply. To her horror she saw a squad of Jap soldiers under the window, coming down the street that I was going up. Not more than 40 seconds had elapsed from my call! Surely I was taken. But no, those soldiers' eyes and ears were held, and so were ours, and we walked right through them apparently. No other explanation seems possible. With a more careful study of the location since then, and the house from which they had come — we know where they had been searching, and arresting! I am absolutely certain that my boy and I walked right through their midst, even speaking as we did so.

The Japs have poor eyesight, and so have I, tho my ears are keen. But I saw my boy just ahead of me the entire time and heard every word and every step. The Japs saw men at other corners 200 feet away, and hailed them every time, all were detained till daylight and identification. The one policeman caught was executed. A little further on, one man coming into town "flashlighted" us, told us how he had taken his children to the hills, asked if many Japs had come, all this only about 100 yards from where that patrol halted just after we went through. When he reached them he was arrested, and his flashlight taken from him. It was a day or two before I knew that I participated in a miracle, a strange feeling of awe comes over one. God be praised!

Shortly after dawn, Rogelio LaO, having now been released went to his cousin's house, the Borrromeo's, to see how they had fared. Lourdes told him the padre had been taken prisoner, and sent him to the jail to see if she would be allowed to send me breakfast! None of them could understand how I could have escaped after what she had seen that dawn.

During the morning the Jap Governor-traitor sent word to me thru Fr LaO to stay in hiding, they were not after me, only the police-guerrillas, but they would comb the hills daily, so I must stay put. Even that morning while I had been waiting for a few people to gather for my Mass, word had come that a patrol was in the next hill barrio, the very 40 men that had crossed my trail first. So I had them stop the bell, grabbed my Masskit and moved onto the next hiding place. On arriving we heard a shot on the next ridge, and presently from our shelter in the hemp grove, we saw soldiers' heads and rifles along the ridge of the next mountain. I moved again to a yet more hidden spot, and there said Mass about 8 o'clock — with no congregation! but also no Japs!

The next few days I did not venture far, but always left my banlag, as such a hut is called here, and hid along streams in forested land, proceeding in hemp groves, which give perfect shelter. The second day the Col. called a meeting of the town, and explained Jap ideas of administration, and asked their views. They asked for a pass for me. He would have to see about that! But he left the next morning without issuing a pass, and 26 soldiers remained to hunt for the police-guerrillas. In two more days the Lt in command gave

Fr LaO a pass for me, which he had translated by a Chinese to be sure, and it said I was a good civirian (they do mix their l & r). So I came down, and the Lt paid me a courtesy call about 5 PM. Lt Kibure was a nice fellow, and everybody liked him. If all the Japs were like that there would have been no war, but had to be loyal. He began the conversation, "We won't talk about the war."

With the Pare back, people began to feel confidence, and slowly trickled back to their homes. This batch of Japanese was very decent, and while no one wanted them to stay, they did not make themselves objectionable. The second Saturday night of August, the 8th, the Tito came again, with a Jap Captain to inspect. As Lt. Kibure had warned me that my pass might not be respected by Jap commanders in other posts, and remembering that the Col. would not issue it, I would have gone to a barrio, ostensibly to do parish work, for they would be angry if I openly distrusted their pass, and take it up. But being Sunday I felt it wiser to stay on the job. They could get me going and coming! The Capt. summoned me right after the first Mass, as I was starting to barrio Tupsan for the second Mass. He questioned me thru an interpreter, and insisted that I be detained since I was born in America, called for my passport. "US at war with Japan", therefore I was enemy. But Lts Kibure & Inamoto, the interpreter, both insisted that I be allowed to remain, as they could not hold the people without me. Tranquility reigned only because of me.

Of course all this was in Japanese, but Lt Inamoto told me a few days later of their appeal for me. But the Captain refused them. Turning to me he said, "Your country at war with Japan, you must go to prison camp". From his tone and his look I guessed what he said. While the interpreter was translating, the Holy Ghost inspired me. "But Captain, maybe you can not call me American, True I was born in US, but if Japanese couple have a baby born while they are in US, you do not call it American baby, but Japanese baby, parents are Japanese. Now my father was a Spaniard (my Jesuit Father St Ignatius) and they are not in the war, and my mother was a Roman, and Italy is on your side in the war". After that was translated, the Captain looked a bit confused, pondered, and released me — for the time being, on condition that I must not talk about the war! The soldier standing at my elbow rattling the handcuffs stepped aside, and I was escorted to the door, a free man! So far so good, sa kalooy sa Dios!

When the Tito returned late in August to pick up the Jap Garrison and take it back to Cagayan — our Jap government was now organized, Mayor, police, etc., I figured that they might have orders to take me along for the concentration camp with the Bishop and others. So I just quietly dropped out of the picture till they were gone. They did not however try to take me.

There had been an order to bring me back with them, but before the launch came, the civilian concentration camp at Impalutac, where Bishop Hayes and the Mindanao Fathers were held, had been broken up, and the prisoners taken from Cagayan on Aug. 19, for Davao. In September the Jap Colonel told the Mayor of Catarman (Adaza) that the white Father in Mam-bajaw, and the other in Catarman (Pedro Reichwein, MSC) would be taken along with the big Chinese to a new concentration camp they intended to

make. When I was told that, I felt that with that warning, if I could not escape I would deserve capture.

On this August trip of the Tito the Japs had brought a Filipino Captain from the prison camp at Kasisang, Malaybalay, a certain Ignacio Cruz, who had long taught in Jesuit schools and was well known to all our Fathers. He was ordered by his captors to make speeches in the local dialect, calling upon the escaped soldiers from the Usaffe surrender to report to the puppet police in each town, and turn in their arms, and get a sort of surrender slip, or pass. Capt. Cruz came to the convento one evening just for a visit with his old friend the Padre. It so happened that at that moment one of the returned soldiers was in my office. So I met Cruz in the sala, till I could find out if he really was merely on an honest visit, that he would not report escaped soldiers, that he had not become pro-Jap. Finding him okeh, I let them meet, as they too were townmates. Cruz told me his system of beating the Japs. Under orders he would make a speech in the plaza, calling on all run-away soldiers to surrender themselves and their arms. The Jap interpreter was listening in on this. Then while the next speaker was hard at it, Cruz would circulate in the crowd, and tell them individually not to surrender any arms and not to give their names to the police.

With the Jap garrison present, my pass in hand, people back in town, I had asked permission to open a little school. The Lieut. said yes, but he would ask the rules from headquarters about books, languages, etc. But just go ahead. Of course there was no one to teach Japanese, and we were supposed to drop English, and teach only in dialect. But all our old books were English, and teachers kept on using English. Some Jap soldiers used to attend to improve their English! The garrison was taken away, but was replaced with one Japanese retired army officer to spy on the puppet government, and report any infractions. Also he should teach Japanese, since he had long resided in the Philippines and knew some English and some dialect. The people did not like this idea of Japanese language, but I could not insult the Japs by closing the school right away. But a week later, at payday, I announced that the funds were exhausted and we would have to stop classes! That saved the day, and my head.

This old fellow was also a good Jap. He never bothered us at all, never looked for or reported radios, provided only that someone would come each day to tell him the news as given from San Francisco, "because the Jap radio all lies!"

Things continued quietly till our town fiesta in Sept., for which occasion the Jap officers were invited from Cagayan by our Jap-appointed officials. It was not a spirit of loyalty to Japan as I looked at it, but the innate Filipino hospitality, which always warmly invites everybody to fiesta. There was plenty of trouble, almost all due to our local officials, who got all excited and bent over backwards trying to please the Japs. The Col. came and was quite all right, enjoyed himself, and made no fuss. Our High Mass was broken up, had to dismiss the Deacon and sub after the Gospel and finish as a low Mass to get the people out in time for their meeting. Too long a story to tell all, but lots of trouble and confusion. I had intended to disappear after the Mass until the Japs would leave the next morning, just

to be sure, but in view of what happened, decided it would be better to face the music. They took no action — I had not been to blame, but easy to make me the scapegoat. But the Col. did tell some officials that I was only free on a very temporary pass, and soon as they would have a boat ready to transfer more prisoners, I would be taken. That was Sept., it is now Dec. — one thing to say another to do! At present they have their hands full just trying to save their lives against the guerrillas, who have almost recaptured the PI with only rifles and a few rounds of ammunition. For every guerrilla killed, nearly 200 Jap soldiers have been picked off. The Jap radio has admitted they must have reinforcement just to hold the PI. On Oct. 5, guerrillas came to Mambajaw, and raised again the Fil-American flags to the joy of all, and the same has happened in almost all the towns of the southern Philippines. The Jap soldiers are beleaguered in just one or two garrisons at most in each province, and a few provinces are completely free.

Now began a new chapter of our taste of war, war by our own on our own. As so often happens in guerrilla warfare, the idea is good, but unscrupulous men take hold of it, and pervert it to their own wicked ends. Undoubtedly the guerrilla force that retook us, and raised again our glorious flags meant well. They had been organized by a Filipino private, Omundang, who had escaped from a prison camp of Japs after the surrender. He was chosen by them to go among his fellow-Filipinos and betray them, spy on those who would not serve Japan. He took his pass, and never went near the Japs again, but began to organize soldiers who had escaped at the surrender, and still had their guns. When other guerrilla forces began striking, this one also struck. Good but alas it did not remain good. A certain Donesa who had spent many years in USA, and also served the Government as a clerk etc. whose brother was a Major in the Philippine Army, promptly joined them. He was a glib speaker and being much older and of wide experience, became practically the real leader. Nothing could be done with out his advice and consent. He was a bandit.

The Japanese Mayor of Talisayan, where first this force began, was captured and about to be executed. He had served Japan before the army surrendered, before the war even had served a prison sentence. He also was a crook, but a glib speaker, and proceeded to talk himself out of execution, then into a job as legal adviser of the C.O. With these two crooks running things, we soon found ourselves badly off. They held all the guns, all the power, and began to trump up charges against anyone who was thought to have money, who could be squeezed for bribes. They refused to let guns, ammunition or men go to any other sector of guerrillas where there was actual contact with Japs. In early Nov. they went to Talisayan, all four Captains and most of the 15 Lieut. of our one company! and the Mayors, Treasurers, etc. to hold a "convention" and arrange for the temporary provincial government until our capital would be freed from the Japs, and the elected officials begin to function.

The morning they disappeared, (Nov. 6, 1942), a Jap converted cruiser paid us a visit. The poor boobs of officers left in charge managed badly, did not obey the one real Lieut. who was appointed in command, fired

with rifles at an armored launch 300 yards from shore, then ran to the hills, the cruiser cut loose with its 3 & 4" guns. After a bit of bombardment which did little harm, for many of the shells were duds, a small landing party of 30 proceeded to loot the larger houses, then fire them. Mine was second to be so honored! They evidently knew there was an American Padre here. For other towns that received such treatment at their hands always had the Church and Rectory spared, as well as Municipal Building, schools and market.

Our beautiful Church, the best then in Mindanao, was hit by 3 shells in the bombardment, and the roof was pierced by shrapnel fragments in several places. A 4" dud went thru the Church, leaving a large hole in each side wall, and was found later on the plaza beyond the Church, in front of my school. A second shell passed thru the roof, arched its way across the church, out thru the roof on other side (the low roof of the two side naves) making a tremendous gap at exit, for it hit a rafter, then 150' further hit the wall of my school, cement, tore a hole like those in church wall, cut through a wooden post, hit the next wall and exploded, tearing out about two square yards of wall, wrecking a partition, some blackboards, desks and cabinets, but not much damage. A third shell, apparently from a mortar, came down thru roof of choir, and exploded, breaking a window. The Jap sailors did not loot the Church, did not even enter!

It was First Friday, and I had just finished my 10 o'clock breakfast after confessions Communions and First Friday devotions in two barrios I visit after the main Church. We saw the boat coming, and while yet five kilometers distant it was clear the boat would be first. Remembering the July visit, when they surrounded the town at once, and since I was on the far side, and must pass entirely thru town to reach home, no hiding places available, I took to the hills where I presently witnessed the conflagration. I was hoping that my boys had saved much according to schedule, including themselves. One of them always enjoyed facing the Jap soldiers and keeping them out, he liked to guard the place. This was a different bunch, and I was praying that he had not faced them. He had not, for when the firing began, all ran from the vantage of point Church tower and finding plenty of bullets and an occasional shell whizzing by the Church door, they went thru the Church and out the back way, and fled. To have returned to the rectory to save their clothes or anything else would have been quite risky, for the rectory was on the firing side of the Church. Result, everything was lost, some stolen by the looting Japs before they set fire to the place, the rest burned.

The loss throughout the town was very great, individually probably more than in any other town in the southern islands, where the war came late. For wherever our troops had been garrisoned, and what were military objectives, our troops planned to burn, if they could not hold. Hence citizens were warned, and all furniture, clothing, etc. was removed. In the beginning we too removed our belongings for fear of a fire if the Japs would come, even though our town was no military objective. But after the Japs had been here, and established their administration, and proved themselves well behaved, we had no more worry. With guerrilla war on, we

felt safe, for it was stronger on the mainland, and surely the Japs will not bother us till they have punished the towns that ambushed their troops and killed even their captains. This was a surprise visit, and revealed plenty of cowardice on their part, attack a defenseless town, avoid the places where we have guerrilla forces that have killed Jap soldiers! This was a Jap navy raid from Leyte, not authorized to visit or raid our province, which was under Jap army in Cagayan.

The aftermath was worse yet. Those bandit officers must make a great show to distract attention from their failure, so they began arresting civilian for being in cahoots with the Japs, bringing them here when the officers had gone to the convention. It was very noticeable that all arrested were of well-to-do families, and of the opposition party in politics! Strangely, most of those arrested had had their houses burned! Brought the Japs for that! We now had a real reign of terror. I tried to intercede for the prisoners, and tried also to advise these foolish guerrillas, but got nowhere. Advice was not wanted.

A bright young lawyer, Benito Chan, who had already had trouble with Donesa learned that he was on the list to be arrested. He applied as legal adviser of the local force, on a day when Donesa was absent, and being of legal right political party was accepted. In a few days he succeeded in turning all the officers, mostly local, against Donesa the outsider, worked up 18 charges against him, all signed and presented to CO. Donesa was disarmed and held in prison. He wrote a resignation Monday pm. and they intended to release him Tuesday AM, as a brother officer, and let him go his way, as long as he would leave Mambajaw. But that night 3 of the soldiers staged a mutiny a/c bad treatment, poor food etc. for the man while the officers were living like kings. Donesa saw his chance to get control here, jumped in, began commanding, the boys were confused, thought he had been released, and had not one Lt resisted him, he would have secured a gun and killed his "brother" officers, and then what a reign of terror we would have had! But the mutinee failed and ran. Donesa tried to escape by banca, but the owner refused to carry him away since he had no pasa. At dawn, he was captured, tried by a fake courtmartial, during which time he was tied to a tree in front of headquarters, and received considerable slapping and kicking. Instead of having a regular court formed in military fashion, all his brother officers, very much the interested parties, as those Donesa had tried to murder, sat in judgment, and without calling the accused or giving him any chance whatsoever to state his case, sentenced him to death; then asked a vote of all the man on their decision. With a viva voce vote, they ayes carried the day. That afternoon Donesa was led down to the dock to be shot. I was not called, but thinking they might forget, I was starting down to see how things were going, and met the march to the dock. A cordon of soldiers had already shut off the street from the dock. They tried to stop me, but I pushed through with a short "What do you mean, your chaplain can not enter?" and went thru!

The CO was glad to see me, sorry he had forgotten, and at once let the prisoner go aside with me, out of earshot, for confession. After my ministrations, as we turned back to the firing squad, D called out in a very loud

voice, "I am innocent of the charges against me, I have not taken any bribes." While he had been charged with bribes, he was being executed for mutiny! The CO then reviewed the case, and asked the officers and men if they stood by their vote. All did. For his last word, the prisoner again proclaimed his innocence, but said nothing about mutiny, and when I learned a year later that he had never personally appeared before his judges, I presume he did not know he was charged with mutiny!

D was then stood near end of pier, the firing squad of four lined up. A fishing boat off the end of the deck was waved out of the line of fire. One officer, the legal adviser, who was pushing the case hardest against D, cried out, "Hurry up, Jap planes might come along, and this deck is a very exposed position". "Fire!" Every bullet went home, and D dropped in his tracks, dead instantly, with at least one in his heart. The four marks were in a straight line, right down the middle of his breast, exactly two inches apart, just like buttons on a vest. Of course I gave the final absolution and anointing at once. It was all over — they emptied his pockets, and took him to the cemetery. The crowd scattered, Jap planes might come anytime, and we were a crowd!

His execution did not bring peace, nor release of his prisoners. They were no longer being held for bribes, but vindictively, by the losers in the last election. But we had hopes for relief. Back in October two Lts. Montalban (later executed in Manila with Osamis) and Salcedo, en route to Manila as contact men for Gen. Fertig, were blown ashore in a storm. While their banca was under repair, they found old friends, and told us about Gen. Fertig being established in Occidental Misamis, showed his propaganda, signed by MacArthur, that guerrillas must unite and organize. Those who would not recognize the authority of Fertig and others appointed by MacArthur would be looked on as bandits on the return of Mac. We explained the case of our local bandits. They refused to unite.

July 1948

Having failed in three years to finish, or even add to these recollections, I shall discontinue them, and just give the highlights and dates from here on.

Early December 42, the three mutineers were caught and about to be executed I intervened to save their lives, at last got a hearing with the bandit guerrillas, and persuaded them to join up Gen. Fertig. They left that same day. But were intercepted at Talisayan by a group of Americans who were coming to clean up bandit guerrillas! These Americans, most notable among them, "Capt. Long" and Hemingway, then came to Mambajaw. From then on our guerrilla troubles were greatly lessened, at times real peace.

January to April 1943 brought us terrific floods, such as had never been experienced in the memory of living men. Stone bridges from Spanish times were carried away. We blamed it on the deforestation. Our steep mountains had never been farmed until this war. Now clearings were made high up, camotes or corn planted, not enough roots to hold the soil in the heavy rains — unusually heavy and continuous this year.

February or March, Lt. Cder Chick Parsons was blown ashore in a storm, and we heard some real news. He was on a mission for MacArthur, seeing the extent of our underground. He did not get out of PI till end of June,

but before end of November had begun the submarine shuttle service, delivering supplies 2, 3, 4 times a month, and evacuating refugees. Any American could go out who choose. I did not choose, my flock needed a shepherd, and I was not sick, by the mercy of God. With Chick I sent news about our men in Mindanao, and tried to send a letter to the folks. It did not reach. But Fr. Provincial did learn about us. When Chick failed to get out soon, he visited other parts of Mindanao, later on contacted Fr. Haggerty, around Talakag.

In early March 1943, Fr. Lucas paid us a visit, spent a few days with me. He had been en route to Gingoog, broke his trip around Kinogitan, when he found a banca bound for Camiguin. He brought news about NN along the coast. On his return to the mainland, he begged some clothing for me from Fr. John O'Connell in Talisayan, and an extra set of breviaries there. Mine had been burned except Autumnalis, and I was using a 1913 set of the old blind secular of Agoho! And going blind on it myself!

My eyes did trouble me considerably, apparently due to the flickering lights from the early days of the blackout, before I had enough sense not to work after dark. There were a few good books in the school library, which my boy would read to me at times, good practice for him, and a good way to pass the time — work was considerably less now, with the flock scattered, and no school, and no correspondence! And I had paper and a typewriter I could have done a lot of historical notes, but lacked the materials for writing, with an abundance of material and time!

In June of 43 Fr. Haggerty came for a brief visit, with a group of officers from Gen. Fertig's headquarters, came on a launch, in style. Free Philippines had now captured a few launches, reconditioned others, found fuel, and had a little fleet. Fr. Haggerty was distributing relief, in cash, guerrilla money, to widows, wives, children parents of *Usaffe* soldiers, in prison, dead, or actually with guerrilla units in other places or just plain missing. He made the arrangements, and left some money for me to continue distributing. We had a pleasant few days, and I learned about the Columban PP on west coast, also about the Jesuits west of Cagayan. Fr. H deplored my barefoot, and on his next trip to the west coast, to Fertig's headquarters, was able to secure a pair of shoes for me. They were light, not very durable, fine for Mass and house use, not her hiking in the rainy muddy season. So on hikes I continued to go barefoot, saved the shoes for Mass and inside, "dressy" occasions! My feet were pretty well hardened by this time.

Hiking barefoot in the wet season wasn't at all bad, indeed was a pleasant reversion to childhood vacations! But in the dry season, it was tough. The baked earth and hot stones burned even hardened feet, burned native feet, more accustomed than mine! And the stones were so hard in the dry season, no give to them, no ooze to sink into under pressure, and some of them were sharp too as well as hot!

Two or three times a year I would make the circuit of the island, visiting all the parishes, checking up, encouraging the Fathers. Once I made the circuit on horseback, but usually on foot most of the way, maybe a barate (small sailboat) part way, sometimes part way on the Mambajaw side by

tartanilla (2-wheel buggy) — I never sought to make a record by walking all the way, but would use any available transportation. Horseback was not always practical. In case of a Jap landing, I could go where a horse couldn't, and go faster in rough trailless terrain. A patrol could easily trail a horse, neigh, even in hiding! Besides a good horse requires care, and corn. Corn was what usually wasn't! I would rather hike than ride a poor horse!

(For over two years I have sought an opportunity to finish these recollections, but can find none. So I shall append here 2 letters, that I wrote in pencil during the period subsequent to this, and let it go at that, rather than delay any longer. It is now July 1943. The part up to the execution of Donesa was written before liberation.)

Mambajao, Mis. Or.
Late April 1944

Dearest Mother*-

Merry Christmas, Happy Easter, Happy Birthday several times over to make up for lost time! to all of you! I pray that God has kept you all in as good health as your son in fields afar. You should have heard of my safety maybe more than once and directly from me once. Here is hoping that good Fr. Downey or some one knows your whereabouts — and this will reach you, I wish I could describe how I expect to send this, but no go yet. A few months ago I wrote quite a long letter hoping for a chance to send it along. Alas the chance never came, but the Japs did, and the letter got lost in the shuffle.

This is a part we often speak of as Free Philippines. It is in one of the many provinces where the Japs keep a garrison in the Capital and maybe one or two other towns, but their garrisons are virtually prisoners; dare not go out except in big patrols, heavily-armed, even with machine guns.

Our whole island is free of Japs for about twenty months now, except for an occasional raid. We know now — since the first one when they burned our town — and we have always escaped since, by the mercy of God. At the first danger signal people begin moving — and all have reached safety by the time the Japs came.

For the past four months though they have come often — to the island, only once to our town — and most people stay in the hills. In earlier days our little harvest was not enough to attract them, but now the big places with big harvest are so strongly defended by the Comando (no longer guerrilla) forces that the Japs can only make a landing if they go in great force — in the thousands. Our little isle is almost undefended, so they can come here in smaller numbers, and move around rather freely. There is not much for them to take but it is so easy to take it, they keep coming back. Now that the tide of war has turned, they are a tough bunch to meet — no hope of holding the Philippines, so they just loot and loot with no pretense of co-prosperity sphere!

September 5, 1944

The expected opportunity mentioned above failed to materialize so I shall add a few more lines as a new hope looms, this time the resumption of

*My mother died Apr. 30, 1944 but I did not know of it till after the war.

regular mail service. There are many indications that the day of our liberation is at hand — let us hope so, and pray.

Since my last account stopped off somewhere after the fire, perhaps I had best go on from there. Were there a decent typewriter left by that raid and some paper, I could do a better job.

The big raid when the Japs burned our town was Nov. 6, 1942. From that day they did not return for over a year. Many a time the people ran, "Sighted" — that English word was always used to signify a boat or a launch was in sight and more or less coming this way. But they never come, just passed on, and the people trickled back to town, the few whose houses had been spared and who dared the thrills of a frequent "sighted".

For two months after the fire the town was almost abandoned. Then the chill mountain air of January drove many people back to the seashore — our only lowland is a narrow strip along the shore. January is the height of our rainy season, and that year exceeded January in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. The mountains were very unpleasant. The rains continued into April, more than two months overtime. By Lent everyone was down who had a home left. Shortly after Christmas, the guerrilla troubles were smoothed over, and we got along much as in peacetime.

By that time the guerrilla forces were organized as Commando forces, in touch with Gen. McArthur. Our force had some launches, and moved about more freely in Mindanao waters than the Japs. The few Jap garrisons were practically prisoners, and the country-side and towns constituted the Free Philippines.

On Holy Saturday afternoon 1943, a convoy passed our town, only a miles at sea, a large freighter estimated by one who ought to know, as about 10,000 tons, a tanker and a destroyer. When first sighted the destroyer was circling about wildly at the rear. They had perhaps come in from the Pacific thru the Surigao Strait — using the longer inland waters to avoid subs lurking in the ocean waters. We knew that there were frequent sinkings in the ocean waters. We knew that there were frequent sinkings in the Pacific off the Surigao coast. After they passed us, they apparently headed for the Zamboanga Strait and again to the open sea. Three days later the radio reported just such a convoy, a 10,000 ton freighter, a tanker and a destroyer, bombed and sunk near Rabaul!

Excuse me that was a different day — maybe July. On that Holy Saturday 3 large boats were seen after passing the end of our island, not directly in front of our town, heading for Surigao. A few days later a Lieut. of the Comando force visited us and told of their fate. On passing out of the Surigao Strait into the Pacific, two of them were torpedoed and sunk by a waiting U.S. Submarine. The third escaped up the coast for a few hours, but met the same fate in the early evening, by another sub lurking further north. Such news was always cheering to us in our long wait. A convoy we actually saw, to be destroyed, was so much more interesting than just three boats!

A couple of times drums of oil, gasoline and a barrel of sauce, like catsup, a Jap dainty, drifted ashored. Then came a sinking only four miles offshore.

Sunday Dec. 5, 1943, a fairly large inter-island vessel, formerly Doa

Hermanos, taken by the Japs and renamed Gimeno Maru, passed close to shore just west of our town — it would have been seen if not for poor visibility due to stormy weather, it was seen in the barrios to the west, then she rounded the volcano, but stood out to sea about four miles, and headed for Cagayan. Her orders were to hug the shore to avoid subs, which were now operating in the interisland seas. Waves were big that Sunday morning and the jagged rocks of the rough cliff forming the sea wall of the volcano were ugly so the Captain did not hug too closely.

Suddenly about 7:00 A.M. while the Captain and Jap officers and civilians were at breakfast, a 6-inch shell exploded on the bridge, then the mast was carried away, then one in the engine room, the boat was ablaze and sinking. The sub which had just delivered supplies to our comando force in Mindanao — headquarters not far from our town, on the trip previous to this it had brought Mass wines and flour for me — had surprised this Maru, too small to waste a torpedo on, and opened with its deck guns. A half dozen shots sufficed. We know they were 6-inch, because the shell cases drifted ashore, with name of sub, and date and place of inspection. Later an old magazine was found with an article on U.S. subs, picture of this one, Narwhal — said to be the first to mount 6-inch guns! She came home to us!

Monday dawn some survivors were picked up who had drifted ashore during the night and until afternoon they still came in. The set of the current carried most of them near to Mambajaw, a few even beyond. Four Japs and 13 Filipino crew members were picked up. Some cargo drifted in — but alas sacks of rice don't float — and 10,000 sacks were there for the Jap garrison in Cagayan. Later we learned from refugees from Manila that that Maru had left Manila with four others. They separated in Cebu. The other four took a southwesterly course towards Zamboanga and the same sub intercepted them, sunk two and crippled two, which limped back to Manila with the story. Events like this have helped to keep up our courage in the long wait.

The survivors of the sunken boat were sent to Comando headquarters on the mainland, and we settled down to renewed hopes. The "aid" as people still call what was promised us before the surrender of the P.I. is getting closer when boats are sunk alongside this isle. About a week before Xmas a Jap launch hung around offshore all morning, came in close about 9 A.M. as if intending to land, and then drew off. From what happened in the afternoon at another town we are sure they did want to communicate with us. But there at Mambajao, the people had gone to the hills as usual when there was a "sighted". But a number of Paul Reveres were near the dock waiting to carry messages of warning or otherwise as soon as the launch quit hovering and did something. Their horses were parked nearby, and they must have given the appearance of cavalry. As the Japs did not know what defense we might have almost 14 months since they had been here, the launch withdrew.

Presently it hooked some fishing boats, asked questions about the recent sinking and then released them. In the afternoon she proceeded to the south side of our island and drew in very close to shore at Catarman. Unlike Mambajao the people did not run — they had never been fired on, raided

or burned out — just an occasional visit from the Japs while the garrison was in Mambajao back in July-August 1942. They gathered along the beach, not to welcome the Japs, but out of curiosity. The Jap interpreter hailed them, asked that the Mayor and Chief of Police come aboard. People shouted back "You come ashore". Japs answered, "If Mayor not there, any official — we have news and information about the new government. Don't you know you have independence now? Granted by Japan last October?"

But officials had no confidence, would not go. Finally 3 Filipino members of crew got in little boat with a packet of papers and pulled for shore. Just then a few guerrilla soldiers, hiding behind trees further along the shore opened fire, contrary to orders of their Lieut. They killed the Jap helmsman who was also interpreter, and machine-gunner. The little boat hurried back to launch, which backed away from shore. People all ran. Another Jap crawled along deck which was being raked by guerrilla bullets, pushed his hand to the machine gun platform and opened fire. There was no aim, bullets went high, every roof near the shore was perforated, no person even scratched. It was about dusk when this happened. Launch stood offshore, out of range till about 10 P.M. then departed for Jap head-quarter in Cagayan. It was thought they were trying to pick up the little boat which had failed to reach them when they backed away. One Jap officer surely killed, some Filipino pro-Jap crewmen probably killed or wounded.

But this meant trouble. The Japs had let us alone for nearly 14 months, unmolested, under our own flag and administration, old U.S.-P.I. officials. Orders from Gen. McArthur to Comando and guerrilla forces were not to attack nor provoke them, for such forces could not defend any town against Jap army. Our forces would retreat before the Jap punitive expedition and the civilians will pay the piper. This has happened many times during this war and now happened again in Camiguin because of the disobedience of those guerrillas who alas shot too straight.

About a week after that incident, the punitive expedition came, on Xmas eve, -Xmas dawn, some six launches with around 400 Jap soldiers. They landed at three points on the south coast of the island. At Guinsiliban, where the guerrilla force had its headquarters they landed at midnight. There is no priest there and so no midnight Mass, but the people and most of the soldiers were in the Chapel having Rosary and devotions. As so often happens with guerrillas, there was not much discipline, no sentries posted or at least did not remain posted and the so-called bolo Battalion, formed of the men of each barrio and town, posted along the shore and the roads each night to give warning if Japs come, did not function well in this district, especially on Xmas night when there were distractions to lure them from their posts. The launches landed far enough up the coast not to be heard, and the Japs marched into town, out the plaza, to the church where they saw light and a crowd, and were mingled among the soldiers and civilians before anyone knew they had landed.

Our soldiers were not carrying their rifles, there was no shooting. Most of the people escaped. About 25 men were taken prisoner and sent to Cagayan to work on a new Jap airfield. Next morning a man near town was ordered to halt, but ran and was shot by the Japs — the only fatality.

In Sagay, the town to which Guinsiliban belongs, the story was similar. The Padre had a religious drama before the midnight mass to draw people away from a public dance in honor of the governor who was visiting there for Xmas. He succeeded — even the shore guards attended. The drama did not finish by midnight. Mass was held. The people asked to let the drama finish before they went home. Padre agreed. Everybody returned to the plaza in front of the Church. Launches were heard. "Never mind, they always just pass. Besides if they land, the guards can warn us". But the guards were also in the plaza. As the drama finished the Japs were there too. Another 25 men taken for work. The Chief of Police who had had no interest in peeping up the shore guards, Bolo Battalion etc. was killed.

The Mayor was stopped by the Jap soldiers. "Who is Mayor here?" He replied "Francisco Chaves".

"Where is he?" "Well he lives in a barrio, you better try his home barrio Guinsiliban." Very clever. Being past 60, too old for their labor, he was released.

But a renegade who was going with the Japs, being a political enemy, betrayed him. "That is Francisco Chaves, the Mayor." The Jap soldiers was angry, ran after the Mayor, and bayoneted him. He died the next day. Houses were looted during two days, rice and pigs and chickens carried off, furniture broken up and burned for fuel to cook with, etc.

At dawn on Xmas they entered Catarman, the third large place on the south side of the island. But the Bolo Battalion there was a model organization of its kind. Warning was given in time. Besides most people went to the hills after the midnight mass. That Jap on the launch had been killed at Catarman, and they rather expected retribution. Only 3 men were caught by the Japs, men who returned from their hiding place to get one more pig or one more bundle — or maybe somebody else's pig! Such raids or even threat of a raid that empty the houses gives a grand chance to civilian plunderers — who can salve their consciences — "If I don't take it the Japs will!"

The Japs staid on that side of the island Xmas and the 26th, looting at will, and seeking the officials, whom they wished to appoint as their officials. None were found. But Sunday before noon a renegade led a large patrol up in the hills some 3 kilometers to a group of houses serving as a hiding place for many families. The Japs surrounded the place and waited quietly till the people got up and came down. This all must do, as the only water is in the nearby brook. All men of suitable age and strength were taken prisoners. The houses were looted and that was all. The Japs went to no other hill places. They seemed to fear there might be ambushes.

Meanwhile what was happening on our side of the island? Xmas morning after the second mass, while I was en route to a barrio about 11 kilometers away for the third mass (8:30 about) a Jap plane came in, flying just over the tree tops. This plane was apparently looking for sings of soldier or aid to be sent by us to the other towns. We had no aid to send, and had not yet learned of their fate. Many were terrified by the low-flying plane and went to the hills. By Sunday night (26th) we knew those towns had

been invaded, and we were warned officially to get out of town, the Japs would likely be in Mambajao by Monday morning. We got out!

The Japs arrived, found an empty town, did some looting, took a few prisoners for their works but released all except three too old to work! A 20 year old lad who plows for me sometimes and does other work, was caught at the edge of town. The Jap soldier held him by the arm with one hand, dropped his gun on the ground and used his other hand to reach for some cord at his belt to tie the prisoner. The other two soldiers were about 25 feet distant. The lad swing his free hand to the Jap's jaw. The Jap reeled, lost his hold. The boy ran. The soldier forgot his gun, ran after the boy. The other two ran, did not fire, their buddy was between them and the target. The target outran them and escaped.

That night at dusk while they were rounding up a few lost stray pigs near the market, one pig ran outside the charmed circle. One of the prisoners who was being used to round them up, ran after the pig. The pig began circling, but the prisoner saw he was outside the pale, and just kept on running — he escaped! The Japs left that night after dark but left lights burning at the corners where they had kept sentries. A few watchful citizens with sinister motives made the discovery and left their own sentries a little further on to warn people not to return, the Japs still here. Then they had an uninterrupted spell of looting!

It was noon the next day before we began to get back to town. A check up here and in the other towns revealed less looting than at first appeared, about three persons dead for the whole island, none wounded, and 73 prisoners carried away to work on Japanese airfields. When these prisoners were released two months later we learned of their unhappy conditions! The day's ration of rice was what an ordinary adult eats for one meal. One half pint (1 glass!) of water a whole day! If you drank it all, no can wash! Just imagine that — in this climate and at hard labor in a tropical sun! There was a fine big river at five minutes walk, but the Japs seemed to fear they would escape. They were paid a pre-war wage but eggs, meat, clothing sold at war prices! They had been carried off as prisoners — no change of clothing — no water to wash with — tropical climate! And Japanese prate about cleanliness and uplifting East Asia in a co-prosperity sphere!

The Japs left word they would soon return to reestablish their government. We had reason to fear they would come. People stayed in the hills, so the Padre did likewise. There did not seem to me much danger in an early return of the Japs, but my place is with my flock. If they stay in the hills better I also stay there. It was much more difficult for me, lots of hiking to reach them all, always on the move, but no use staying in town if no people there. So I hid the trail.

The Japs paid a flying visit to Catarman in late January, a mere patrol, looking for an aviator whose plane fell en route to Cagayan. He had not crashed on our island. They did not land in Mambajao though a launch came close to shore to look for wreckage. In February a big expedition of 400 or more came, again to Catarman, stayed four days, looted plenty, went into the hills, further than ever before. They tried to establish their government, but the people evaded them. Neither threats nor invitations succeeded.

When the patrols invaded the hiding places, the people managed to keep one hill ahead of them, one peak higher. None surrendered, few were taken. On the last day they released the prisoners, including those taken at Xmas, and left the island with threats to return next month and really establish their government. We again escaped this visit.

By Holy Week people felt safer. We had Mass in town all that week and since then Sunday Mass is always in town, where it is easier for a large number to assemble than in any hill chapel. But most people spent the week in the hills and most of my week day masses were in hill chapels. Now and again a launch as boat headed in our direction gave a scare but no Japs has come to Mambajao since Dec. 27 and it is now mid-September. Since Easter I have slept in town except when my mass was scheduled in too far a barrio to reach in good time with a morning start. When I sleep in town I give Communion before starting for a barrio, for there are now enough people nearby to make it worth while. For about a month now about half my masses are in the central Church, about half in the barrios.

Although we have not been "landed" as the local English idiom puts it, do not think it has seemed like peace time to us. We are near the firing line, in the danger zone, the landings, the attacks, and the atrocities are happening all around us every week, keeping us on the alert. I have been sleeping in town, but always with one ear open, and only dared to do so, because of a very safe line of retreat, but of this later on.

In March, the Japs landed 10,000 troops along the Buenavista-Butuan coast of the mainland, less than 30 miles across the water from us. This was Division Headquarters of our comando forces, where the subs used to bring supplies. We used to argue the weakness of the Jap forces raided Camiguin Island with its handful of guerrilla soldiers but apparently dared not to touch the big place where supplies from Australia were being delivered twice a month. By March, as the Japs fell back from the outer ring of islands and prepared for the coming invasion of the P.I., they began to collect troops and ammunition and planes here, and then attacked in force. Their 10,000 made good their landing, but lost about 500 killed against a mere guerrilla force in open fighting. Few guerrillas were lost. In one area where the Japs lost over 100 and failed to drive the guerrillas from their trenches, one guerrilla died of a bullet in the brain and one died of a heart attack — that was their total lost in that sector!

The Japs had now begun real war on the "Free Philippines," against the guerrilla forces that controlled Mindanao and most of the Visayan Islands, that is, the southern and central Philippines. It is possible that they wished to eliminate those forces so they could retreat to the interior when McArthur's troops come. They must know that they will not be able to hold the Philippines when U.S.A. is ready to return. Perhaps their present war is to train their new soldiers or perhaps to keep them occupied while waiting for McArthur or perhaps to build up their morale. 10,000 Jap regulars aided by planes can defeat 500 guerrillas in open warfare even though the guerrillas are well armed and have plenty of ammunition.

With the Japs now established very strongly 40 miles south of Camiguin, and 25 miles N.E., and many launches at their disposal, they began to hook

our sailboats, our only means of commerce with other islands. Camiguin does not produce sufficient food for itself — its main crops have always been copra and hemp. We import food crops and now Jap launches were always lurking in the main channels used by our sailboats. Running before a brisk wind our bancas can outsail any launch in these waters, but the wind is not always dependable. When a banca was caught, usually it was towed to a Jap port, the cargo confiscated and the crew put to work on a Jap defense project, airfield or munition dump etc.

Such hookings kept us in a state of alarm. The Japs might come here any time to get pigs, or prisoners for work or just to loot, or even to set up their government. It would be easy to subdue the three towns on this island and then boast in Manila of 3 more places subjugated. In June they occupied Bohol, 30 miles northwest of us, another important trading place for us. The circle is ever growing tighter.

At this time came a great manifestation of God's providence. In peace time this island had imported an average of 2000 sacks of grain, rice, whole corn and ground corn, each week, besides much flour. Local production of rice, corn and sweet potatoes (camotes) has been greatly increased during the war, but has never sufficed for own needs. Evacuees from other islands have swelled our population. The banca-hooking activities of the Japs was a source of great alarm to most people, especially at that time of year, far from May to September there are never any camotes here. The plants die in the dry season, and the earliest new plantings do not yield before late September. Not much corn or rice would be harvested at this time. In these months above all we depend on imports. Unlike potatoes in America, our camotes only last about a week after digging — it must be a constant harvest.

This year, for the first time in the memory of the living men, the camote plants of Mambajao, survived the hot dry season, and yielded all through the hot months, yielded from 5 to 10 times above normal! God be praised. Only here did it happen. Two thirds of Camiguin Island flocked to Mambajao to buy camotes. We not only survived without imports, we even exported, at the height of the hunger season! God be praised! He took care of us!

In August 1944 McArthur's planes began bombing Mindanao. The first Sunday a couple of Jap boats took shelter close to our shore and kept firing out to sea, apparently at a sub. We learned later that 2 other Jap boats had been sunk a few miles off shore. The current set towards Bohol and no wreckage or bodies floated into our shore. 5 Japs in a small boat came ashore near Talisayan in the mainland, were caught they told about the sinking. Then they were marched off to guerrilla headquarters. After a week a Jap launch cruised along the shore looking for survivors. They found the boat which had neither been hidden nor burned. In a few days an expedition of 1400 men landed at Talisayan to rescue those Japs. They visited all towns and barrios along the coast all the way to where they held the coast.

The orders from Gen. McArthur are not to resist such strong forces. Guerrillas and comandos are not a regular fighting force. They are only to harras the enemy and gather information. But some over-anxious guerrillas

insist on shooting, then run. A handful of Japs killed scarcely help our cause, are not noticed in 1400, but make them angry. The live Japs can't catch the guerrillas, and now that they have no hope of ever winning the Filipinos or holding the Islands, they take a cruel revenge of the civilians, the only ones they can catch.

If all civilians have fled to the hills, the Japs send strong patrols up the main trails and catch those who have not fled so far. Sometimes they had landed up the coast many miles and come over the road — no warning — and civilians are held in town, and well enough treated, till a Jap gets ambushed. But then the time changes. They know they can't catch the guerrillas who perpetrated the ambush. So they take their revenge on the innocent civilians, usually old men and women and children. They kill, burn and slay right and left. Our island has so far been spared this fate — our town was burned and looted, but civilians have never been caught since the ugly side of the Japs came out, since their cause has been so clearly hopeless, and they seem no more to be trying to win the people. Latest report from the mainland and from Bohol are terrifying. Many more refugees have fled to our shelter.

From the invasion of Talisayan and the neighboring coastline, Aug. 19 until September 9 we were much alarmed. In places that coast is only 7 miles from our island. We were sure that if the Japs garrisoned that coast, their patrols would come to Camiguin. Nowhere now was the mainland coast open to our bancas. We were completely cut off, except by radio. By Sept. 4 reports came that the Japs had gone from various points along that coast, but the next day the report would be contradicted. Our town fiesta was due the 10th and we were wondering could we celebrate in town — or in hiding, which meant no celebration at all.

Then Sept. 9, we got our great break, biggest event of the war so far — on the happy side — that came home to us, bigger even than the first supplies, Mass wine and flour and radio by sub from Australia, bigger than the first Jap ship sunk off our island. That morning early, a roar as of many planes was heard, but too far to be seen. Then all morning and afternoon distant explosions were heard. By mid-afternoon word arrived of what was seen at the Eastern end of our island — hundreds of planes — 5 Jap ships bombed and burning, smoke rising over Gingoog, a Jap garrison, after the planes went in that direction. Then Monday reports from the south side of the island, more ships bombed and burning between Camiguin and the big Jap garrison in Cagayan, terrific explosions in that area, and a heavy pall of smoke.

Sunday morning the radio included in the list of Pacific bombings "Northern Mindanao". Tuesday morning the radio began to give details. Maybe we weren't happy! At last the Americans were on the way here. Wednesday morning three waves of about 100 planes passed in front of our town. The Japs all around us got it. For several days not a Jap plane passed within sight or hearing. Apparently every one of their planes in the south was destroyed. Since last May many ships and launches were passing daily. Not a ship has been seen since this task force came, and for several days only one launch appeared to have survived. Now some people say they have seen five.

About 100 survivors from the bombed vessels swam ashore in the mainland nearest to us but were rapidly mopped up. In many instances the civilians whose kith and kin had been slaughtered by the Japs within the last two weeks formed the reception committee. Believe me, the tables were turned. The committee very courteously received these visiting Japs with the Jap customs and usages the Jap officers had just taught them!

The subsequent landing in Morotai and Palau was a disappointment to us, for we had thought that our day of liberation was already at hand. But never mind; we can wait even a very long time. For we have seen in our midst the Allied might strike and wreck the Japs. It is enough. In our region the Japs are now on the defensive. We can wait. (End of letter.)

The Leyte landing was announced over the 5 PM special broadcast from Australia, for the Philippines. An hour later a message came from Gen. Eichelberger to our guerrilla radio advising us that our island would be patrolled all the time, planes by day, PT boats by night. The Lieutenant rushed to me with the message (Lt. Richard Thommes) and as I read it, the roar of a PT boat off our shore was heard!

We heard — and saw the flash of — the last gun in the Surigao Strait portion of the great naval battle of Leyte Gulf. That part of the Jap fleet had steamed by Mambajaw about 10 PM, had been seen by fishermen, and its remnants were between us and Bohol at 7 AM. We had heard heavy firing before and during Mass. When it was renewed at 7, we again went to the belfry, and this time saw three big warships and a destroyer. Heavy smoke over the trees to the right indicated a vessel burning off the end of the island. People in the mountain had seen a plane dive and bomb and hit that vessel. As we watched the big turret guns let go towards that smoke. The fumes of burning oil were strong all that day! A week later a lone Jap floated ashore in a baroto, no oars. He was nearly dead. He could not or would not talk. He died (or was killed) on the way to concentration camp in Balingasag.

All Souls Day, in the cemetery we were distracted, quite happily, by tremendous flights of American planes, forty to a hundred and more in each group. Throughout November and December, Liberators returning from bombing missions to various islands would rendezvous over Camiguin Island in the early morning. Our high mountain top was always visible above the clouds, an aviator told us later. The Libs would circle, 3 or 4 only at first, then more and more, until the whole squadron had collected, then off to Morotai. It was a great sight!

One Sunday at the end of November two minesweepers swept the channel between Camiguin and Bohol. A few days later we saw the Great convoy pass en route to Mindoro, but none of us guessed that would be the next landing. The convoy took hours to pass. From this day on convoys in either directions were one of our chief diversions, and inspirations!

Fr Raymond Lutz arrived in November, from Kinogitan, having heard that we had boats for Leyte. We only saw them pass, none stopped as yet. Father was very nervous, in bad shape, needing to get out, but it was the end of January before he left, by sailboat! He was refused permission on two planes that came in — too risky yet for civilians.

In early December a Catalina landed near the dock, picked up maps of the north coast of Mindanao (which I had helped correct in details), and also a Filipino and 2 Americans officer, who had been ordered to wait here for just such an occasion. The escort of four Lightnings gave us a glorious exhibition that morning. Early in January another came to pick up an aviator (Lightfoot of Alabama) whose Thunderbolt had caught fire over Mindanao after a mission over a Cebu. He too was told to wait in Camiguin.

The first Sunday of February was our great day. Cdr Chick Parsons brought in a fleet of 2 LCI (361 and 365) and 2 LCS, 9 and 10, with arms and ammo for the guerrilla troops in Iligan and Misamis, and ten cases of canned goods and medicines for the Lieutenant, and ten for the Padre! He even remembered my bare feet from his other visit, and brought a pair of GI shoes, a perfect fit! Officers and men, of all faiths, came to Mass, and it was open house all day, ashore and afloat. The men were as delighted as we were. In Leyte there were too many soldiers and sailors, MPs and Off Limits. In the small islands up to now, the people had been wild, naked, kinky haired and no English. Mambajaw gave the fleet a royal welcome. Chick gave me his version of that first sub sinking off Mambajaw, back in Dec. 43. He was on that sub — it was on the way out after he brought our radio and my Mass wine! (The icecream on board was a great treat, after a 3-year fast!)

In March two PT boats called on a Sunday afternoon. The squadron Cdr, a Catholic, was gathering info about Macajalar Bay, between us and Cagayan. Within a week they began their nightly patrols in that area, preceding the landing in early May. In the afternoon they would stop to pick up an interpreter and return him in the morning. They would challenge every baroto — Japs were using them to escape — but they did not want to kill Filipino fishermen! How different from the Jap way! How careful, even though they had sent warnings to fishermen to keep off the sea!

Fr O'Byrne arrived on Easter, having got out of Salay just two jumps ahead of the Japs. He was quite unstrung. He remained until April 14, on which day Fr Lucas arrived on a PT boat from Balingasag with PP Henfling and Murphy. The latter remained with me, for two months, and Fr O'B continued on with Fr Lucas to Leyte, thence to America. Fr L also did not return, was stricken in Leyte, but did not off to USA until Sept. Frs H and L were very emaciated and very malarial. Refugees now flocked to Camiguin, our population grow from 45 to 65,000! Food was a problem but not for long, for in May the Americans landed near Cagayan, and within a month the refugees began returning home.

School was the next question. On June 29 a government school official came to arrange for the opening of the public schools, and we were able to learn for the first time that automatic promotion was approved, namely that the last three months of the last school year were dispensed for high school and grades, and those pupils would automatically enter the next grade above their prewar standing. At once I scouted up a faculty, a very good one, qualified, and by the third week of July reopened Camiguin

Institute, the first postwar high school to open in any province of northern Mindanao.

My living quarters were now very cramped, as I had been using my old grade school for rectory since the Japs burned me out in 1942. The old CI Bldg had been burned at same time, and I now housed it in the grade school building, with myself! The public school had reopened, my grade school was not essential, and besides my books were burned, but many high school texts were around the town. Presently I was able to buy a haunted house in barrio Ballagon, took it apart, brought it to town, and re-erected in on the old rectory site. The ghost has not been seen since!

Manila had been liberated in February, and yet through the following months we had no word from Superiors or any of NN. I learned from people coming from Leyte that many had been repatriated, but no word came direct to us, from NY or Manila. At last in June Fr Jaime Neri came down, but his visit in Mambajaw was scarcely satisfactory, 9:30 pm (and he was dead tired) till 4:30 am! He couldn't even see the ruins by moonlight. Neither heard much of the other's story! On Aug. 15, Fr Reith arrived at dawn, said Mass, heard the war had ended, and went on to the mainland, the first recruit for Mindanao, a valiant one!

In October Fr Hurley came, a very consoling visit, in many places much longer than planned, since he couldn't get out! No boat! The Bishop returned to the Diocese in November, the local post office reopened in December. Fr Cabence and several post war recruits arrived before Xmas. Fr Ocampo came to Mambajaw in early February to learn the ropes — and dialect, and I made a trip to Cagayan to greet the Bishop, my first trip off the island since Aug. 30, 1941. The war was really over, reconstruction had begun. It was great experience while it lasted, something to have gone through, and come out alive! Deo gratias! His will be done!

L.D.S.