

THE ACQUISITION OF MY CAMERA AND THE PICTURES THAT FOLLOWED

After over three years as a Japanese Prisoner of War, all of the captives were looking forward to the end of the war. Finally, on August 15, 1949 we marched down to the factory as we did every day and went to work. About 10:00 AM the air raid siren went off. As usual the Japs ran the men back to the camp and as usual we received no other details.

Later in the morning a small plane flew near the camp over a field next to our camp and dropped five men with parachutes. We were told to stay inside our barracks. Some time in the afternoon I saw an American officer having discussions with the Jap officer.

On August 20, 1949 the Russian soldiers came and took over the camp from the Japs. They turned the Americans loose under the U.S. Army. On August 24th, B-29's dropped pallets of food, clothing, and medical supplies. We got more than we could ever use for a whole month. Each day more and more supplies tied on pallets were dropped by parachutes. Again it was more than we could use.

Each of the men took food and clothes out to the local civilians and sold them for cash. It became their money for future dealings. Now the airfield was repaired and the B-29's are able to come in and bring in medical people so that they can take those in need of hospitalization out. Now the Americans were all over Mukden. One of the men who was on the crew of the B-29's had a box camera. I had a Japanese saber so we made a deal. Although this was a great trade, I had no film. This presented quite a problem. By the way his name was Ashley Hudson from Mount Pelier, Vermont.

I had money so I went to town going from store to store asking with hand motions if they had film for my camera. Finally, I was in a store trying to explain to the clerk about the need for film, when a Manchurian came over to me and in perfect English said, "What are you looking for?" I explained the need for some 120 film. I found out that he was with the American Tobacco Co. prior to the war.

We went store to store and we finally found one that had 13 rolls of #120 film. Of course I took all 13 rolls. An aside to the story, he took me back to his home to meet his wife and small daughter who was sick. Their shack had a dirt floor in fact I think I had better conditions in my P.O.W Camp than he did. I asked him if I could come back the next day.

The following day I came back, his daughter had died during the evening. He and I went gift hunting. I bought some "soap stone" carvings and other gifts. Then I gave him money to buy some things for mom and the girls back home.

I took pictures of the camp and back on the railroad to Manila, PI. I took pictures on the ship back to the United States and I saved the last picture for the Golden Gate Bridge.

To get back to my newly found friend, when I got back to the camp I found we were locked down. There was no visiting and camp was getting ready to move out. For some unknown reason I ended in the rear gate and just as the convey started out here comes my new friend. He threw a package to me which I caught. It had some silk scarves and handkerchiefs.

My new friend was Litien Fams c/o Dah Hsing Kung Sze Dah Hsi Cheng Memli
His Hwamen Wai: Mukden, Manchukoo. I tried to contact him later but without
success.

I brought the 13 rolls of film back safely. I checked around for a film lab to have
the film processed. They were able to print every picture of the 13 rolls. As I was taking
the pictures many of the men asked for copies. One of my orders was for \$1500. I sent
the pictures to various men and they all sent me the money they owed. This is the end of
the small story.



American Defenders of Bataan
& Corregidor, Inc.
JOSEPH A. VATER PNC
EDITOR OF QUAN
CONVENTION SITE
COMMITTEE