

# CHRONOLOGY

The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941 - a little more than 10 hours later U.S. Forces in the Philippines were bombed. We all remember the attack on Pearl Harbor, but it seems few remember the battles fought, and the ultimate defeat in the Philippines.

Almost immediately after the bombing in the Philippines, most of the Naval Forces were ordered to sea, most of the ships going to the Dutch East Indies. Most of U.S. aircraft were destroyed. Only a few torpedo boats and harbor tugs were left behind, the one exception was the U.S.S. Canopus, a submarine tender.

On December 10th, 2,000 Japanese landed on the island of northern Luzon. On December 20th 5,000 Japanese landed on the island of Mindanao in southern Philippines. On December 21 the main invasion force of 43,000 men landed at Lingayen Gulf on Luzon.

On December 23, with the Japanese advancing towards Manila General Douglas Mac Arthur ordered all American & Philippine forces to retreat onto the Bataan Peninsula. There were 15,000 American and 65,000 Philippine troops, under U.S. Command. 3,500 of the men were U.S. Navy and Marine personnel.

On December 24, another 10,000 Japanese landed at Lamon Bay, south of Manila. On January 1, 1942 Manila was taken.

On January 6, with all U.S. and Filipino troops having crossed the Layac Bridge (the main route to Bataan) the bridge was destroyed.

From January 9th to 11th - the Japanese forces attacked the U.S. lines and they were repulsed.

U.S. Forces fought a holding action, giving and taking, but finally on April 9, American and Filipino forces surrendered.

Mac Arthur had left the Philippines on March 11th, and Philippine President Quezon left on March 18th. Before the surrender some of the military personnel were allowed to go to Corregidor.

From April 10th to April 20th more than 10,000 Filipino & American prisoners of war were killed through neglect, inefficiency and individual brutality on their Death March from Pataan to prison camps north of Manila.

On April 29th - Navy PBV's evacuated nurses and selected personnel from Corregidor.

On May 4th, despite heavy losses, a small Japanese force landed on Corregidor. On May 5th tanks were landed and on May 6th General Wainwright surrenders all the forces on Corregidor as well as all American forces in the Philippines.

*Lest  
We  
Forget*

# Why this story?

I, Carroll Robert Post, retired as a Chief Journalist, from the U.S. Navy in 1964. This story has always been on my mind since I assisted in writing a series of books called: "Battle Report". Most of the story is from that series of books.

I worked in the office of Captain Walter Karig, in the Pentagon, in the late 1940's, where we wrote and prepared the books for publication. Captain Karig was the moving force behind the making of the TV series, "Victory at Sea".

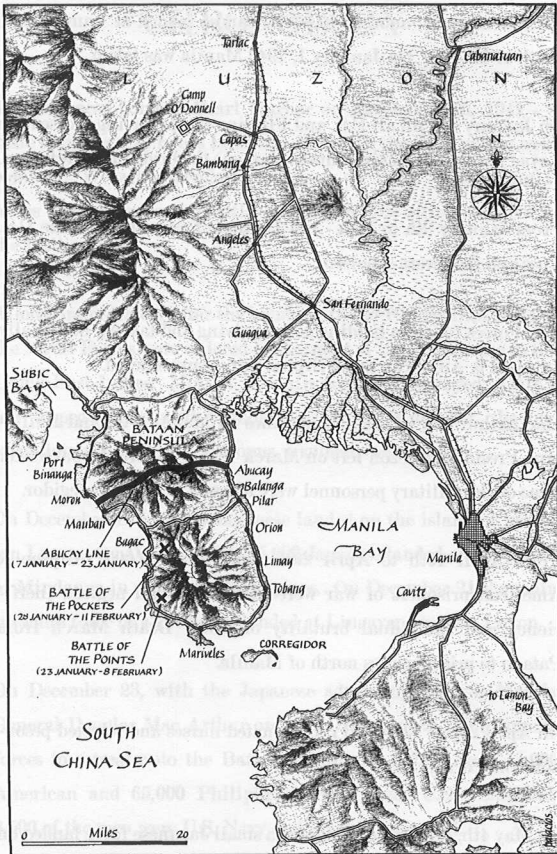
In-as-much as the U.S. was defeated in the battle for the Philippines, and 15,000 Americans were left, either dead or as prisoners of the Japanese.

The American forces fought the almost 60,000 Japanese force, holding the line on the Bataan peninsula and Corregidor. It is assumed that if the Japanese had finished off the Philippines sooner, they might have attacked Australia.

I have always thought that the story of the battle could be told in a movie, using the USS Canopus, as the focal point in telling the story.

Read it and form your own opinion.

*Carroll R. Post*



# LEST WE FORGET

The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7th, everyone remembers that, but history missed an even bigger picture. What was going on the the Philippines.

On December 8th, only 10 hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attacked Manila, which included the U.S. Airfields "Clark" and "Nichols".

On December 10, 1941, the U.S. Navy's Shipyard at Cavite was almost completely destroyed. Between December 8th and May 6th, the U.S. Forces fought a losing battle to stay alive.

And fight they did. There has been little written about those 5 months, because at the time most of the history was being written about action in Europe and the cleanup in Hawaii, those men left in the Philippines, 15,000 Americans and 60,00 Filipino military personnel under U.S. officers, were either dead or in Japanese prisoner of war camps.

In late December most of the American warships were ordered out of the area. The hand writing was on the wall, the Philippines was no longer defensible.

During December, January and February the Army in the Philippines held the Japanese at bay, and probably slowed the Japanese time table, but in March Americans at home began to believe there was not much that could be done. America waited for news from the Philippines, there was a report of the Army beating off a Japanese counterattack on Bataan; it was reported that MacArthur's forces had made gains; the word that the Army was retreating, then word that the Army was digging in for a last stand on Corregidor.

A fact often overlooked is that in addition to the Army personnel, there was quite a contingent of U.S. Navy men involved. When it was announced that a contingent of U.S. Marines was helping in the defense of Manila, the news media clamored for more information, they thought that we were landing reinforcements.

There were more than 3,500 Navy and Marine personnel among the defense force, and all were fighting. Not all of the Navy's activities were unnoticed at the time; PT boats, under the command of Lieutenant Bulkeley sank several Japanese ships, and made the dash out of the area with General MacArthur and Philippine President Quezon.

There was little notice given to the Naval Defense Battalion on Bataan. At the center of most of the Navy's activities was the submarine tender USS CANOPUS, a highly vulnerable ship known to her crew as the "Old Lady".

Until WWII the CANOPUS lived a staid life, built in 1919 for the Shipping Board, she was turned over to the Grace Line, and sailed under the name of Santa Leonora, then in 1921 the Navy took her and converted her into a submarine tender, one of the first ships designated as a submarine tender. She was named CANOPUS for the star of the same name.

When the Japanese attacked the Philippines most of the U.S. Navy ships were ordered to sea. The only ships left were minesweepers, PIGEON, TANAGER, FINCH and QUAIL; the gunboats MINDANAO, LUZON and OAHU, and a few ex-yachts, tugs and garbage scows, and the CANOPUS.

The Old Lady stayed behind to tend her brood of subs as long as possible. The CANOPUS's hold was jammed with supply bunkers, forges, machine shops and the men who knew how to use this equipment and materials.

The fighting forces on Bataan were soon to learn that the men on the CANOPUS could solve a lot of their problems. If the medics on Bataan needed ice, the CANOPUS was the only source for such a commodity, with their machine shops and storerooms, the crew could work wonders in repairing anything.

There were still submarines in the area, and the CANOPUS serviced their wards, but in-as-much as the Japanese controlled the air space, everything had to be done at night. During the day subs present went below the surface of Manila Bay, and came along side at night.

The Japanese knew where the CANOPUS was, but it was not a high priority target until Christmas Eve, 1941. The ship received minor damage, but the building ashore which housed the office of Navy Captain John Wilkes, in charge of submarines, was virtually destroyed.

Admiral Rockwell, senior Naval Officer in the area had moved his headquarters to Corregidor to be near General Mac Arthur, so after the attack on the ship, he ordered the CANOPUS to find a new and safer place to anchor.

In Manila the Army was burning and destroying all supplies and materials which could not be taken to Bataan. It was acknowledged that Manila would soon be in control of the Japanese.

The CANOPUS made its last move with her 400 officers and men to Mariveles Bay on the southern tip of the Bataan Peninsula. Some of the submarines were still operating from the CANOPUS, but with no means of resupply, it was only a matter of time until the remaining subs would be sent on patrol and not return to the "Old Lady".

The spot in Mariveles Bay was chosen, hoping that the ship would be protected from air attacks by the guns of nearby Corregidor. Even with camouflage netting and green paint it was impossible to hide the CANOPUS from the Japanese.

The Japanese pilots, when they delivered their first major attack on Corregidor on December 29th, the CANOPUS must have looked like a camouflaged submarine tender. Heavy bombs exploded all around the ship, but it took only one major hit.

The bomb, an armor-piercing type, went through all the ship's decks and exploded on her steel propeller shaft, starting fires and blasting open the magazines in which quantities of explosives and torpedo warheads were stored. Luckily the bomb also severed some steam lines, which wet down the powder bags and helped put out the fires. The night of Dec. 29th, the crew of the Old Lady was busy caring for wounded and burying the dead.

On December 31st the last of the submarines were withdrawn from the Philippines, and many thought there was no reason for the CANOPUS to remain. They could have made a run for it, but higher authority decided that the Japs were so strong at sea, sailing out to sea would have ended in almost certain sinking.

With the CANOPUS's stores and machine shops, it was considered that even though there were no more subs to tend, they could be useful. The decision as to whether to make a run for it was decided a week later when a Japanese bomber paid another visit, and dropped a fragmentation bomb down the ship's smokestack, and sprayed the decks with shrapnel.

Many men were injured in this attack. The ship's hull was dished in and the ship took a serious list.

It was obvious that the Japanese knew the ship was there, so it was decided to play the hand that was dealt them. Welders sealed up every hole in her side, but they were careful not to change the list, they wanted the Japanese to think the ship was damaged to the point where it was abandoned. They wouldn't waste bombs on an abandoned ship, and it worked. The crew even supported the Japs theory, by burning oily rags during the day to give the impression that the ship was burning inside.

Every night the ship came to life. They were only attacked one more time, but again the crew had played the hand dealt them. They had removed the antiaircraft guns from the ship and set them up on the neighboring cliffs. Those guns had driven off the attacking Jap planes.

Things were simple aboard the CANOPUS, one of the bombs had destroyed the ships supply records. There was no red tape, if someone needed an item and it was there, it was used.



The crew took their tasks seriously, there was no discipline problems, there was no liberty to be taken away, and no fines to be levied, there were no payday.

The CANOPUS hummed at night primarily because the word had spread across Bataan that the Old Lady's shops could fix anything. Parts for airplanes were either found or made. As the crew worked all night it was necessary for them to get rest, so they took over a large storage tunnel which the Army had dug in a nearby cliff, just before the war started.

They built bunks, office space, hospital accommodations, a radio and telephone communications center, and an underground galley, which served the crew two meals a day. Approximately 100 men moved into these quarters. Only one thing really bothered the men, it seemed that water dripped through cracks in the ceiling of the tunnel, but using their ability, they tapped each leak and funneled them into a central spillway, and turned the whole thing into a shower bath.

The Old Lady was not stingy with her comforts, anything they had was available to all the Americans still fighting on Bataan.

Commander E.L. Sackett, the ship's Commanding Officer was one of the last persons to leave Corregidor before its fall. When he returned to the U.S. he prepared a lengthy narrative of the Old Lady's last days in the Philippines, and the story was sent to the families of the Old Lady's men, by that time prisoners of Japan.

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

"Our visitors repaid us in full for any hospitality with tales of their own adventures. Captain Wormuth, the famous 'one-man army', often regaled us with graphic and even gruesome accounts of his many encounters. General Casey, Major Wade Cochrane, Major Kircher, Major Lauman, and many others kept us in touch with the affairs at USAFFE headquarters and the front lines. Occasionally Marine officers from Corregidor would manufacture reasons for visiting Bataan so they could visit the CANOPUS and refresh their memories of better days.

"Bulkeley and other torpedo boat officers enjoyed our ice cream desserts. We were only sorry when our supplies began to fail towards the end, and we could no longer maintain quite as good hotel service for our friends.

"But aside from the morale value of this "hotel service" and aside from the work in CANOPUS's night-humming shops, the Old Lady's men also engaged in activities with a grimmer side.

"One group of men stood watch near the anchorage, in a natural bomb shelter at the base of the cliff, ready to dash aboard as a damage-control party in case their beloved ship should again be damaged from the skies. Other groups manned the guns on the hilltops, groups described by Commander Sackett, as "sailors with itchy trigger fingers."

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

Some of the Naval personnel, lacking any definite assignment, formed the Bataan's Naval Defense Battalion, which was a complete misnomer because they were completely ignorant of correct land-fighting tactics. The newly created foot-sailors operated like a true naval organization with the "Attack and Destroy", theme.

One of the most popular Navy Commanders was Francis J. Bridget, Operations Officer of Patwin Ten. Navy pilot Bridget was often described as "bright-eyed and bushy-tailed". With most of Patwing Ten's planes ordered out of the area, or were damaged or beyond repair, the 150 men and a few pilots were without planes.

At the time Mariveles Harbor seemed to be well protected by the small craft still afloat and by the naval forces clustered around it. The Army had stabilized a front about 20 miles farther north, on the western side of Mariveles Mountain. This left a considerable stretch of thinly defended sea coast between. Most of this coast was very rugged, and backed up by cliffs or dense jungle, but the road that provided the only avenue of communications to the front lines passed quite close to the sea at several points.

Commander Bridget began a series of conferences with senior Army and Navy officers concerning this area, and the result was that he was ordered to form a force charged with its defense.

The 150 stranded sailors of Patwing Ten were ready and waiting, but they were not enough. Bridget "borrowed" 130 men from the CANOPUS, and he "collected" about 100 men from the blasted Cavite ammunition dump, along with another 100 Marines of an artillery outfit with no assignment at the moment. Lieutenant Commander "Hap" Goodall, USN, executive officer of the CANOPUS, was named second in command. Among the other Marine and Naval officers were Lieutenant T.K. Bowers, USN, from Cavite, and Lieutenant Harmon Utter, USN, who was a pilot with Patwing Ten. Lieutenant (jg) Thomas F. Pollock, USN, was made communications officer of this strange new outfit. Pollock later went south by submarine to Australia and then came back on the last flight from Australia to Corregidor, before the fall of the "Rock". The last flight to Corregidor was made by two Navy PBY's.

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

Training was the next essential, and here the experienced Marines made a great contribution. These men were spread thinly through the naval ranks, with the sailors being constantly admonished to "keep an eye on the gyrenes - do as they do."

One of the extracurricular activities of the Naval Defense Battalion, according to Lieutenant Pollock, was the operation of a jungle press newspaper, "reported, written, and rewritten and edited by an Aviation Radioman 1C. "Receivers were mounted in a station wagon and driven to the tops of the hill to get the best reception," said Pollock. "News was copied 24 hours a day. Two editions were published, morning and afternoon, until the paper shortage forced a reduction to one afternoon edition. News was copied from all countries, decoded and put into abbreviated form to crowd as much as possible on four or five small pages. A mimeograph machine, dug up from somewhere, was our printing press.

"Our requests for copies grew by leaps and bounds. The supply could not possibly be maintained. The most we could afford to make was 200 copies. A dispatch rider was assigned to deliver them to the scattered Army units. The soldiers were so hungry for news that they would send a representative on a ten mile hike just to wait along the road to pick up a copy. We would give each unit two copies, and the larger headquarters units three copies. These copies, were nearly worn out before all hands had finished reading them.

"There were times when there was only enough ink or paper or stencils for one more edition. A notice would appear in the paper, requesting whatever was necessary to continue the publication; and, sure enough, the messenger would arrive that night with the required items so we could go to press.

When not training or otherwise occupied, the men of the Naval Defense Battalion spent considerable time in the effort to get a landing strip prepared for the time when - it was hoped by all and believed by few - carrier planes would come winging to the rescue. The Japanese were completely aware of this effort, however, and they dropped bombs with such regularity that the landing strip was never actually finished.

On a day late in January the officers and men set out on what was intended as an extended field hike. This hike was to develop into the Battle of Longoskawan Point. As the men reached the base of Mount Pucot they were met by a file of retreating soldiers who had been forced by invading Japanese from their lookout stations on the mountain.

As commander Bridget had feared, the Japanese had landed in an effort to cut off the front lines. Here at last was what they had been training for, and the foot-sailors tried to remember what they had been taught from the book about fighting on land. Soon they were engaged with the Japanese, who were firing from in front of them and on all sides of them and occasionally from behind them. They could remember nothing in the book that seemed to explain or solve this situation, so they threw away the book.

"Five days of what was probably the weirdest jungle fighting in the annals of warfare ensued," said Commander Sackett, "with all accepted principles violated, and no holds barred. Adjacent units were unable to maintain contact with each other during the night, so of course the Japs put to advantage their famous infiltration tactics. However, this did not have the expected results; because our boys, not having been indoctrinated in the account military principle that it is fatal to be outflanked, simply held their ground and sent back detachments to clear out the annoying intruders behind their lines.

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

Aside from a lack of reserves, the Naval Defense Battalion had entered the battle with another important omission; they had not thought to set up a service of supply.

A runner was sent galloping back to the CANOPUS, where Commander Sackett and his men were anxiously waiting for news. The message was "Send plenty of everything." The CANOPUS's men managed somehow to find some trucks - no detailed information is available, owing to loss of records, it is not known if the trucks were some reported missing by the Army - the loaded trucks were rushed to the front with food, ammunition, blankets, and stretchers and medicine for the wounded. For five days the men of the CANOPUS dropped everything to supply the foot-sailors with everything they needed.

Commander Sackett reported that the foot-sailors did all right, the Japanese were baffled. "A Japanese officer testified to their complete bewilderment, describing the strange conduct of 'the new type of suicide squads, which thrashed about in the jungle, wearing bright yellow uniforms and making plenty of noise. Whenever these apparitions reached an open space they would attempt to draw the Japanese fire by sitting down, talking loudly and lighting cigarettes.'"

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

Despite any different estimate that may be made by historians of the future, with more facts and more perspective to work from, that was Commander Sackett's personal opinion. And Commander Sackett was there.

After the fifth day of fighting, the Naval Defense Battalion was relieved by strong units of the 57th Regiment of Filipino Scouts. These troops were given the highest possible praise by all naval personnel who saw them in action, and who lived or won their way to freedom to tell about it.

The Filipino Scouts had been a part of the Regular American Army, under American officers. They were an elite group. Their entrance requirements were most rigid and they were fiercely proud of their outfit. Best of all they were masters of jungle fighting tactics.

The relieving Filipinos slipped noiselessly up to the American lines. Many of the foot-sailors were not aware of their presence until they felt a hand on their shoulder and heard the quiet password: "Okay, Joe - I'll take over now."

After three days of the Scout's deadly marksmanship, and with artillery support from the big guns of Corregidor, the battered and disorganized remnants of the powerful Japanese landing force had been pushed over the cliffs that lined the seacoast, leaving hundred of dead behind.

Some of the Japs who were pushed over the cliffs were not dead, however, and these remnants holed up in natural caves in the cliff bank. They still had plenty of food and ammunition, and they resisted all efforts by the Filipino Scouts and Army troops to root them out.

Bridget and his foot-sailors had been relieved of land fighting but they had by no means lost interest in the course of events. Now they began to think as sailors again, and from this angle the problem of the the holed-up Japanese was simple:

The Japs should be shot out of their holes from the sea. Bulkeley and his PT boats were extremely busy elsewhere, and no other craft were available. Of course, mused Commander Bridget, there were some 40-foot launches on the CANOPUS and ... The idea caught on like wildfire.

The CANOPUS's shops began to hum again, and soon three of the 40-foot launches began to take on a strange appearance. Several machine guns and a light field piece were mounted on each of the boats. Then the CANOPUS's artificers snipped up heavy boiler plate, hammered it into shape, and built armored shields around the engines and the guns. By that time the three boats were known to one and all as "Uncle Sam's Mickey Mouse Battle Fleet."

No sooner had the first experimental model been finished that Lieutenant Commander Goodall and a volunteer crew were on their way, with the excess volunteers claiming "seconds" on the next trip... provided the boat came back from the first trip.

There was a 7 or 8 mile run to Longoskawan Point from the CANOPUS anchorage, but Goodall and his volunteers made two round trips the first day, blasting scores of Japs from their hiding places. As evidence of their success they brought in two prisoners who were alive but dazed, and a "sample" of three Japanese who had jointed their ancestors.

Mickey Mouse Battleship No. 2 was ready for action the second day, and the hunt kept up as long as the Japs lasted.

A week later and there was more work for the tiny warcraft. At about the time Longoskawan was cleared, the Japs made another landing in force on Quinauten Point, several miles farther north, which was the reason Bulkeley and his PT's were unable to take over at Longoskawan. The PT's had fought valiantly to break up the landing attempt, aided with equal valor by the Army's few remaining P-40's, which dropped small bombs and strafed every enemy in sight. Thirteen loaded barges were reported sunk, and a large destroyer was hit by one of Bulkeley's torpedoes - adding new victories to the PT boats' imposing score.



In spite of the PT boats and the P-40's gallant efforts many of the Japanese invaders got through. Again the Filipino Scouts and their Army brothers-in-arms pushed the enemy into the sea, and again the Mickey Mouse battleships were called upon to disinfect the cliffside caves.

Hap Goodall and his Irregulars did another thorough job, but this time the little expedition was not so lucky. Apparently word of this strange new type of warcraft had seeped back to the Japs, and the Japs showed that they took the threat seriously by sending in dive bombers. Four of these aircraft suddenly hurtled out of the sun as the two Mickey Mouse boats were returning from the scene of their latest triumph. Bombs rained all around the leading boat; it had its bottom blown out, but not before one of the attacking planes was shot down. The other planes strafed as they pulled out of their dives. Commander Goodall, although seriously wounded in both feet, and unable to walk, ordered the other boat beached to prevent the unharmed men from being wounded when the planes returned for another run.

The surviving members of the crew improvised a crude stretcher for Goodall, and hacking their way through the jungle, finally reached a road. There they were picked up by an Army truck driver, who gave them a lift back to the CANOPUS.

At about this time, in mid-February, there began to be indications that the Japanese might be planning a landing attempt on Corregidor, whose beaches were long and loosely defended. The Naval Defense Battalion, with 130 of the CANOPUS's men among them, was now incorporated into the Fourth Marines, commanded by Colonel Samuel L. Howard, USMC, and ordered to duty on Corregidor.

This was all right as far as it went, said the CANOPUS's departing men - they were glad to help out where they could, and all that sort of thing, but if the CANOPUS's orders not to leave were changed, if the ship got permission to up anchor and get out of there, those aboard the ship had better let those on Corregidor hear about it first off. The CANOPUS's men on Corregidor would devise a way to get back across Mariveles Bay before she could sail.

They were kidding threats that if the CANOPUS tried to sail without them, they might be fired at by the big guns on Corregidor. By this time the situation was becoming clear, things were looking bad.

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

There was no denying that things had to take a quick turn for the better in the Philippines - or the end would not be long in coming.

By the last week in March, after a period of comparative lull, the Japs ended all hopes and suspicions that they might attempt to take Bataan and Corregidor by a process of slow starvation. Perhaps the Japanese knew that American submarines has been sneaking in medicines and vitally needed supplies - not enough to be sure, but enough to help. (These submarines also brought in a much greater prize, stuffing and stowing into every available nook and cranny; mail from home.) During the last week in March the Japanese stepped up their offensive to its peak; and by April 6 the remaining officers and men on the CANOPUS knew the front lines on Bataan were in serious trouble.

"All reserves were drawn in for the supreme effort," reported the skipper of the CANOPUS. "Every remaining tank was thrown into the breach. Even the beaches were left unguarded at some points in order to provide all possible reinforcements, but the task proved too great for the weakened troops.

"On April 8th came the news that the Army forces on the eastern flank were retreating toward Mariveles harbor, destroying stores and ammunition dumps in the path of the victorious Japanese.

"All hope of holding Bataan was gone, leaving us with the grim duty of destroying everything that might be of value to the Nipponese. Early in the day the Commandant had told us that no Navy or Army forces would be evacuated to Corregidor, since the island was already overcrowded.

AT 10:30 the night of April 8th the Commandant telephoned that General Wainwright had decided to accept on the island one Filipino Scout regiment and the naval forces at Mariveles. The extra personnel were to augment the beach defenses of Corregidor. Not many of the Filipino Scouts were able to reach an embarkation point before the Japs cut them off.

"Evacuation of the Navy forces had to be completed before dawn, when more swarms of bombers and an advance guard of Jap tanks were expected. Without defenses and shelters, which were being destroyed, the sailors were helpless.

That wild and horrible, yet weirdly beautiful night must be imprinted forever in the memories of all who lived through its spectacular fury. For miles back on the slope of the mountain, burning ammunition dumps lighted the sky and showers of rocket-like streamers, while the ground shook with the heavy detonations of exploding ammunition. A severe earthquake shock felt on Corregidor was not even noticed on Bataan, which was continually vibrating with man-made earthquakes.

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

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

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

"The last three boats, loaded with weary CANOPUS men, had just left the dock when the tortured earth struck back at them. The whole hillside seemed to erupt in an orange burst of flame, hurling huge boulders half a mile out into the bay, lashing the calm waters into stormy frothing waves.

"Evidently, gasoline drums stored in one of the tunnels had broken open when the entrance was dynamited, and the fumes in the corked-up passage had built up a gigantic explosive charge. Our three boats were squarely in the path of that deluge of destruction. Two of them were struck with massive boulders, one of them sinking instantly under an impact which sheared off the whole stern, leaving three occupants in that section struggling in the water. Fortunately they were not hurt, and were soon rescued by shipmates in the undamaged boat. The other damaged boat did not sink, but boulders crashing down through its canopy killed an officer and three men. Nine other men were wounded by the rain of heavy rocks. However the battered boat was still able to run, so the interrupted voyage to Corregidor was resumed.

On the day after the fall of Bataan, which came on April 9th (the Netherlands East Indies had failed a month earlier and Corregidor was to last a month longer.) The Japanese began determined aerial attacks on all that remained of the Navy's gunboats and minesweepers.

The Japanese hoped to prevent these craft from sweeping mine channels leading to Corregidor, and thereby ending the occasional furtive visits of American submarines. The Rock's last link with the outside world. The Japs were successful in knocking out their targets, but not in their purpose. The reason was that the ghost of the Old Lady CANOPUS was very much on the scene in the form of her motor launches.

These small boats were turned over to experienced Mine Force sailors, who used them as miniature minesweepers. For two weeks these crews worked at night, using hooded navigation lights as uncertain guides. Many times mines exploded near the launches, but without causing serious casualties. At the end of two weeks the channel was clear again, and submarines could bring in the vital supplies and take out key personnel. One who went out on the last submarine before Corregidor's fall was Commander E. L. Sackett, USN, skipper of the Old Lady, a ship that was dead and gone forever.

Bataan had fallen and now the Japanese were not to be denied in their desire to take The Rock, driving the U.S. from the Philippines "forever".

The Japanese had the force to accomplish the conquest. The days of fighting with never enough of anything, the days of fighting with bare hands, the days of heartbreak - all these were about to come to an end for American forces in Asiatic waters.

Commander Melvyn H. McCoy, USN, one of those to surrender on Corregidor, later became one of the first ten American military prisoners to escape from the Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in the Philippines, and Commander Mc Coy has provided an account of Corregidor's last hours.

"Even in the depths of the solid rock tunnels of Corregidor," said Commander McCoy, "we could feel the vibrations of the almost constant Japanese barrage. One night toward the end of April the barrage lifted for a short time. Hundreds of people went out into the open for a breath of air and a smoke. It was pitch dark. The only light came from the few stars, and the occasional faint glow of a carefully shielded cigarette. Suddenly the group of people around the tunnel entrance seemed to be struck by lighting.

"There was a awful glare and a mighty crash. A salvo of Japanese 240-mm shells had landed in the midst of the group. Just that one salvo - no more.

"Fortunately it was dark and the survivors did not have to look on the scene around them. But it was hours later before the hospital staff completed their amputations, transfusions, brain operations and other work.

"About midnight that night I went off duty in the radio shack in the Navy tunnel, and I went out to the tunnel entrance where the tragedy occurred. There I found one of the nurses who had helped the doctors during the evening. She was crying her heart out on a sandbagged machine gun. I did not know whether she had suffered a personal loss, or whether our situation in general had become too much for her. She obviously had come out into the dark to hide her emotions from the wounded, so I tiptoed away and did not disturb her."

"That incident occurred on the night of April 6. By the following day the "Situation in general", had reached its last desperate unfolding.

"At 11:55 on May 6, 1942," said Commander McCoy, "I wrote out the Navy's last message from The Rock and handed it to a radioman First Class at the sending apparatus. 'Beam it for Radio Honolulu,' I said. 'Don't bother with code.' Then the message began to go out. 'GOING OFF AIR NOW. GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK, CALLAHAN AND MC COY.'"

"There were approximately a hundred and twenty-five naval officers and men in the Navy Tunnel when the first Japs came in, some three hours after the surrender. The Japs were ready with bayonets and grenades. (They entered the Army Tunnel with tanks and flamethrowers.) When they saw no sign of opposition they lowered their rifles and became almost jovial as they got down to the pleasant business of looting. The practice was officially forbidden, so Japanese officers made a point of not entering the tunnel for almost two hours after the enlisted men first appeared. By that time everything of value had been taken.

"The Japs seemed to prize above all our wrist watches. I saw one burly Jap marine with watches all the way up to one elbow.

"Halfway up to the other, and with a bayonet aimed at another Jap who was trying to beat him to an additional prize. Besides watches, fountain pens also were highly prized by our captors. There were numerous scuffles between the Japs over possession of these articles.

"The first officers to enter the tunnel were non-coms, sergeants. As the first one entered, a Jap soldier was hopefully searching me - everything of value in my possession had long since been taken away from me. The Japanese sergeant slapped and cuffed this soldier brutally, the soldier standing rigidly at attention, and the sergeant blandly ignoring the evidence of previous looting that was in plain view.

"The Japanese battle action did not end with our surrender. On the day after our capitulation, Japanese planes flew at minimum level over The Rock and dropped bombs, first making sure that their own men were out of the way. Casualties on our side were slight, and the Japs evidently were only bolstering a threat made to General Wainwright that, unless all the forces in the Visayan Islands surrendered, all on Corregidor would be massacred.

"And it did not take us long to learn the temper of our captors. A gun crew on nearby Fort Drum, called 'the concrete battleship', had fired into a Japanese assault party a few days before Corregidor fell. A high ranking Japanese officer was killed. This officer's brother, on the Jap headquarters staff in Manila, ordered that the men on Drum be given special attention. They were beaten and hazed unmercifully for forty-eight hours. Another incident occurred when a Japanese sentry began to beat an Army enlisted man without provocation - we did not know at that time that such actions were commonplace. The soldier made as if to hit the sentry with his fists. He was shot dead by another sentry before he could complete the motion."

That was the beginning. Months were to pass before Americans were to hear, from those fortunate few who escaped, of the "March of Death" from Bataan to Camp O'Donnell, of the death and disease at Cabanatuan, of the mistreatment and misery of American military prisoners on Mindanao.

Even as Corregidor's capitulation was announced in Communique No. 76, its officially emotionless words nevertheless conveying a world of sadness and despair.

The first sentence of Communique No. 77, issued the following day - May 7, 1942 - took an entirely different tenor. That sentence read: "Very excellent news has been received."

The communique went on to tell of the losses and damage sustained by the Japanese in the opening Battle of the Coral Sea. The first six months of the war - to the day - had closed with victory, a victory then beyond the estimate of anyone, a victory to be overtopped a month later by the rout of the Japanese at Midway.