

## Lest we forget . . . . .

From Sgt. Clemens J. Hoffmann in Osaka, Honshu, comes a letter, especially appropriate for Memorial Day—lest we forget the sacrifices made by those boys who will never return to the homes of their native land—and the torture they endured at the hands of their captors before death brought relief from pain.

To Clem, who is with the army of occupation in Japan, has fallen the difficult and heartbreaking task of hunting for the graves of the victims of Japanese atrocity and seeing that burial is made in a Military cemetery, properly registered.

His letter reads as follows:

14 May, 1946

Dear Leader Folks and Friends:

It's been two months ago since I left Nagoya and the Bakery Company to await reassignment at Camp Tarumi some odd 15 miles south of Kobe. It was a rather beautiful camp which was situated on the edge of the shore, the ocean roaring some 200 feet below us. We used to take hikes into the wooded hills every afternoon for a little exercise and for the sake of its relaxing effects afterwards.

The following Monday after my arrival there I headed the list of 28 other fellows scheduled to join the 3064 QM Graves Registration Company at Osaka the following day. On our arrival there we all had a little talk with the Commanding Officer who told us about the outfit's job and just what to expect. As one of the few noncoms there I was put in charge of a recovery team several days later.

My first job was to supervise the disintering of 14 American fliers who were executed at a prison camp several miles from our company area. Here I witnessed the evidence of some of the Japanese

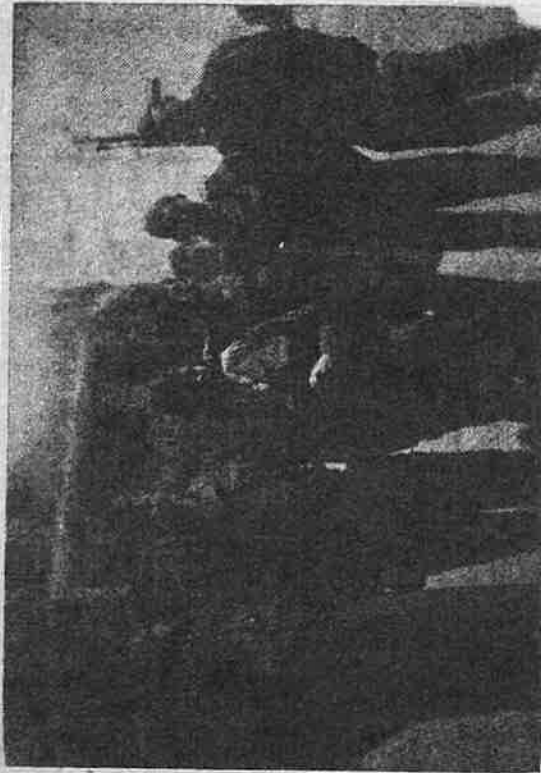
cruelty. The mangled bodies were thrown into their graves in not a very peaceful position.

Only one of the fellows still wore his shoes. They were all blindfolded and their hands and feet tied with thin wire. Their clothes and bones showed evidence of the use of bayonets and all but two had bullet holes in their skulls. There is little I can add to the recoveries we have made since then.

Our outfit works hand in hand with the Civil Investigation Corps who give us information as to the location of some of the graves. This information they pump from War Criminals in captivity. We in turn give the evidence that we uncover to the CIC.

On the fourth of April, Pfc. Obert Aurich, from Beemer, Neb., and I were assigned to escort some of the bodies to the Military Cemetery at Yokohama about 200 miles from here. It's a thirteen hour ride by train which we made at night. Since the sixth of April was Army Day we got permission from our CO to spend the weekend in Yokohama and Tokyo vicinity to look up Art Polt. We spent all day Friday at Yokohama carrying out our orders so the following morning we boarded the train for Tokyo to watch the 1st Cavalry Division parade there.

I caught up with Art after the parade just as he was getting on his truck to head back to the Cavalry area. I guess there wasn't a happier bunch of GI's in the army just then. Aurich and I rode along out and after chow we spent the rest of the afternoon getting acquainted with the Cavalry. It's a swell outfit, and now is made up mostly of the unlucky 43rd Division low pointers who were stationed on



This picture was taken in front of the Tokyo post exchange and shows six homesick Nebraska boys enjoying a brief visit in Japan. Reading from left to right are Obert Aurich, Glen Nissen, Clem Hoffmann, Elmer Obermeier, Clarence Obermeier, Art Polt.

the Philippines just before the war ended. We wound up the day with a show at the Cavalry theatre and a cup of coffee and doughnuts at the Red Cross.

Sunday afternoon we headed back to Tokyo to see the sights, parts of the Tokyo Castle area, the Red Cross, McArthur's Headquarters, and the most beautiful of all, the Ernie Pyle Theatre. We stopped at the Tokyo PX for a hamburger and a coke. While we were eating someone tapped me on the back. It was Clarence Obermeier from Grand Island and Glen Nissen, with whom I took boot training. Clarence told me to come over and meet his brother. Before we could be introduced, his brother, Elmer, was shaking hands with Art. They had also taken training together at Camp Hood. No doubt Glen has

already been telling you folks back home of his experiences in Japan after his emergency furlough home.

For the last few weeks I've been working in the office with the title of Personnel Clerk. Quite a job when its time to sweat out the pay rolls. And this life wouldn't be worth living if it wouldn't be for Cpls. Gallagher from Boston and "Buzz" Olinger from Wisner, Neb., who keep the morale rating in this office pretty high.

As we say here in Japan on parting: Sayonara, to Mrs. Cox, the Major, Kreg, Bill, Bob, Julene and Freckles and all the Pierce folks.

A Civilian on Detached Service,  
OLEM

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