

Primary Sources Packet: Camp cont.

Document Two

William E. Dyess, *The Dyess Story: The Eye-Witness Account of the Death March from Bataan and the Narrative of Experiences in Japanese Prison Camps and of Eventual Escape*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1944 (excerpt).

"About 1 June 1942 the American prisoners of war [at Camp O'Donnell] were removed ... to the Cabanatuan Concentration Camp, where they met the prisoners from Corregidor. Conditions were slightly improved, though the camp was still filthy and overcrowded. Rice remained the principal item of diet, although mongo beans, juice, and small fried fish were sometimes issued. In one instance three chickens were issued for 500 men. The Japanese later stated in their propaganda that they were feeding the prisoners of war chicken and eggs.

"Officers were not forced to work at Cabanatuan. The Japanese continued to beat working prisoners. Attempts to escape were punished by death. Lieutenant Colonel Biggs, Lieutenant Breitung and Lieutenant Gilbert, USN, were caught. The Japanese stripped them, tied them to a post in front of the camp gate, and forced passing Filipinos to beat them across the face with a two-by-four board. The officers were kept in the blazing sun for two days without water. Colonel Biggs was then beheaded and the other two were shot."

Primary Sources Packet: Survival cont.

Document Three

William E. Dyess, "The Dyess Story: The Eye-Witness Account of the Death March from Bataan and the Narrative of Experiences in Japanese Prison Camps and of Eventual Escape" (excerpt) 1944

"Our talk and thoughts were almost continually of food; food we had enjoyed in the past; food we craved now and food we intended to enjoy upon our release. At first I wanted steaks; big Hereford steaks from Shackelford County, Texas. Then my fancy turned to eggs - I wanted them fried and by the platter. I dreamed of them. Sometimes it seemed I was wallowing in gargantuan plates of eggs, smashing the yellows and absorbing them through my pores.

"But there were plenty of things to occupy our minds...our hopes really soared when we heard a report the steamer Blackhawk was lying in Manila Bay being painted white to effect the transfer. A day or two later a Filipino smuggled in a package of cigarettes which contained a note: 'Be brave! You will soon be free.' Although I didn't allow myself to believe it, I stopped throwing cold water on our hopes."