

**Walk a Little Faster:
Escape from Burma with General Stilwell in 1942**

by

Henrietta Thompson

**A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts (in History)**

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December, 1992**

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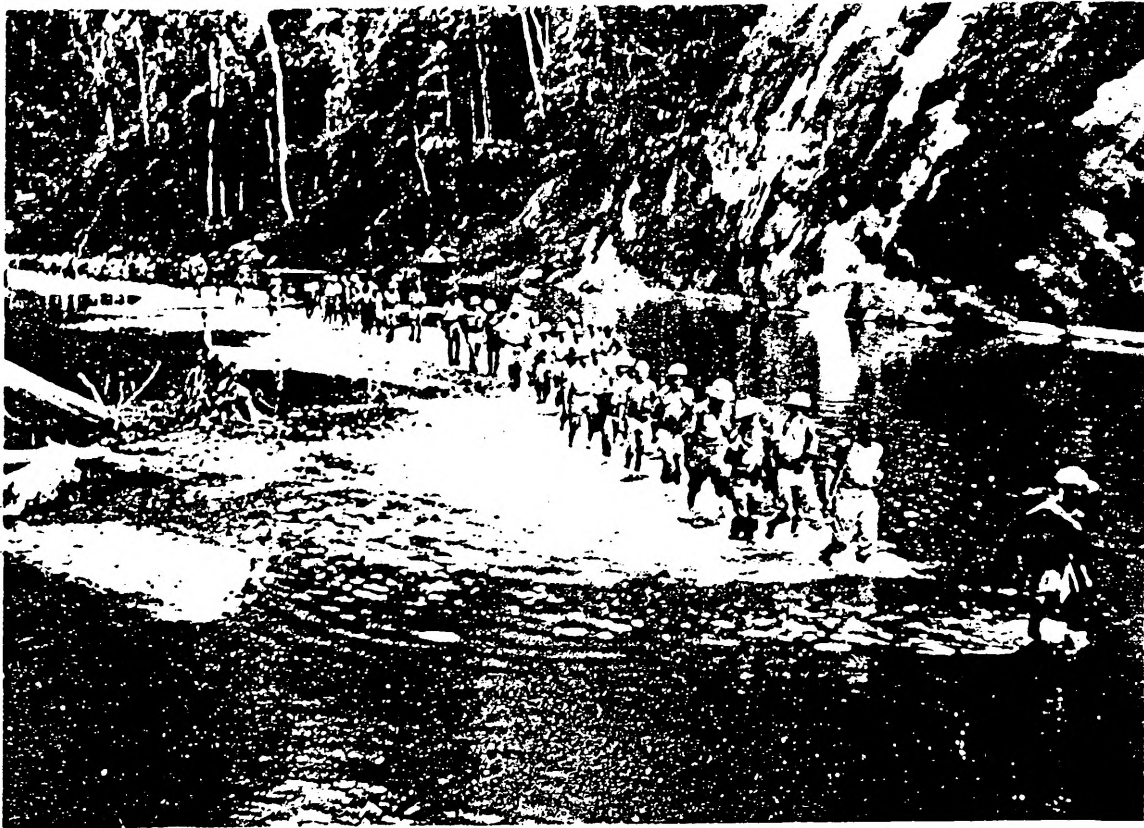
An abstract of the Thesis Presented in Partial
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This paper describes why and how from 1971 to 1974 I traced the members of a group of 114 men and women who, like hundreds of thousands of others, were fleeing from Burma after the Japanese invasion of that country in January, 1942. The group walked approximately two hundred and fifty miles from Burma to safety in India under the leadership of Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell of the United States Army in May, 1942. This event became known as the Walkout.

Woven in to the narrative of my search are the recollections of those I interviewed, the Walkout participants and others even remotely connected with the event. How the participants happened to be with General Stilwell, what the Walkout was like, and what became of them are described in their own words.

The paper includes a comparison of their journey with that of others who also walked out of Burma, and a comparison with other historical marches is made. The meaning of the Walkout to history, and its meaning to the participants are described, as well as what my search meant to me.

Walk a Little Faster:
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The Walkout Begins - May 7, 1942

"Will you walk a little faster," said a whiting to a snail, "There's a porpoise close behind us and he's treading on my tail."¹

"The whole idea was to keep *walking*, and the General tried to set the example himself. Sometimes when the whole column seemed to be just dragging along, he and I would go to the end and then *run* back to the head. If Stilwell — who was then fifty-nine years old — could do that, then surely the others could *walk a little faster*."²

ဖြေ လှမ်း : သွက် သွက် ၊ ရှေ့ သို့ ဆက်³

Preface

A sweltering hot afternoon in the summer of 1971 at my home in Jenkintown, a suburb of Philadelphia, was a turning point in my life. Heavy dark clouds hung over the house and threatened a thunder-storm at any moment. Perhaps a good storm would clear the air and bring some relief to a typically long, hot, and humid summer in the Delaware Valley. But the impending storm made me nervous and to take my mind off it, I did something I seldom did, I began to read in the afternoon.

The book I was reading was Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911- 45 by Barbara Tuchman in which, among other matters, she describes the complicated political reasons for General Stilwell's presence in Burma when that area was attacked by the Japanese in 1942. When I came to a chapter titled "A Hell of A Beating," I read that the Allied defense of the country collapsed in less than two months after the General and his Headquarters staff arrived in Burma. General Stilwell refused to be flown out to safety in India at the last moment. Although it was not his original intention to do so, he walked out. With him went a motley group of 114 men and women. There were American military and civilians, British military and conscientious objectors, Chinese, Burmese, mixed Asiatic people, and a little dog named Jim.⁴

That number 114 seemed to jump at me from the page and the more I looked at it the more it seemed to challenge me. How did all these people happen to be with General Stilwell? What became of them? I decided then and there try to trace them.

I knew that General Stilwell had died in 1946, but perhaps it would be possible to write an article or book describing how the others viewed what seemed to me to be a unique and historical event in which they had taken part nearly thirty years before. My children were grown and had left home, I was free to travel, and I was tired of the volunteer work I had been doing for years. Here was the challenge I needed.

During the next three years I visited twenty countries around the world and more than that number of states as I criss-crossed this country. I talked to and corresponded with dozens of people who seemed to have even the remotest connection with the event. I found forty-three of the participants and I learned enough about all of the others to be able to hypothesize about what had become of them. I was overwhelmed by the response to my requests to meet them, by their eagerness to talk to me, by their hospitality, and by the remarkable quality of their recall. The decision I made that hot summer afternoon in Jenkintown led to one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had and it completely changed my life.

I put together the material I had gathered in book form and had it privately printed by a local printer so that I could send copies of it to the people I had interviewed. I had it copyrighted but I did not try to have it published. Instead, I decided to go back to college after a fifty year hiatus. At the same time I was offered the first paid job I had ever had. As a result, it took me four years of evening classes to get my B.A. degree from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, and after graduating I decided to go on to Graduate School. This brought me to the University of Maine where I met Professor David C. Smith. He read the book I had had printed and suggested that I revise it as my Graduate thesis for an M.A. degree in History, weaving together the story of how I traced the participants in the Walkout with what they told me.

What follows is the story of how I found the answers to my questions and what the answers were. In the words of those I interviewed can be heard "...the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream." ⁵

Henrietta Thompson
Jenkintown, Pa. 1971-74
Orono, Maine 1992

Acknowledgements

Over the course of the last twenty years I have often thought about the men and women who shared with me their recollections of a unique and historic event, the Walkout from Burma in 1942. I think of them with affection and gratitude for the way in which they welcomed me into their homes in this country and in other countries around the world. The enthusiasm with which they supported what I was trying to do spurred me on then just as it has continued to do as I have now revised what I wrote at that time. To the many men and women, however remotely connected with the Walkout, who made possible the original version of this paper twenty years ago, my heartfelt thanks are expressed in Appendix A.

I would like to thank Professor David C. Smith who urged me to combine the Walkout interviews with the story of how I found the participants thirty years after the event as the topic for my thesis. Thanks also to Professor Smith, I discovered what had become of one of the participants in the Walkout whom I had been unable to trace twenty years ago. With Eric Severeid's kind permission, I have included the story of that discovery in Appendix I.

I am extremely grateful to the several librarians at Fogler library at the University of Maine, and to those at the Bangor Public Library who managed to find the sources for some obscure quotations.

My thanks to Major Patrick Cooney, editor of Armor Magazine, US Army Armor Center, Fort Knox, Kentucky, who has given me permission to include in my paper several passages from an article written by Colonel Vivian Davidson-Houston in the March-April 1944 issue of US Cavalry Magazine.

I would like to thank Chris Bowditch and Cornelia Tierney for their helpful suggestions in revising my text, and my son, Henry Thompson, for his patience and advice on how to get the best out of my computer.

Above all, I would like to express my gratitude to my daughter, Anne Thompson who, despite her academic commitments and her own literary endeavors, over the years has unfailingly supported my efforts to make something readable out of my material.

Author's Note

The ranks and occupations of those mentioned in Parts One and Two of this paper are as of 1942. In Part Three they are as of the time of the interviews.

The epigraphs are from comments made by various members of the group.

Dialect and broken English have been transcribed from the taped interviews exactly as they sounded to me. I have left them that way in order to preserve the integrity of someone's speech.

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Part One:
The Cast Assembles

I didn't particularly want to be there or doin' any of this. . . .

Prologue: The Clearing

General Stilwell's walk out of Burma began on the morning of the 6th of May, 1942 when a group of weary people straggled into a clearing in the jungle somewhere in the northwest region of Burma. Some came on foot, others arrived in battered U.S. Army staff cars, trucks, and jeeps. Still others were crowded into Red Cross trucks. Everyone came to a halt because there was no way out of the clearing except for a narrow wooden bridge across a small stream. The vehicles were parked around the edges of the clearing. The people began to sort themselves into several groups, more or less according to nationality, and waited to be told what was going to happen next.

When some semblance of order was achieved, General Stilwell stepped to a cleared space in the center. Though it was still early in the morning, the atmosphere was already oppressively hot and a thick cloud of dust hung in the heavy air. Despite this, the General appeared wearing a wind-breaker, heavy Army boots and leggings, and a stiff-brimmed World War I campaign hat. His face was drawn, he looked tired, but in tones of unmistakable authority, he began to speak.

He told the group that he would take responsibility for leading them to safety in India but from now on they were going to have to walk. It would be no ordinary walk, however. The destination he had chosen was the town of Imphal in India, some two hundred and fifty miles away from the clearing.

In order to stay ahead of the pursuing Japanese as well as the hordes of refugees pouring out of Burma, the group would have to walk at the rate of 105 paces to the minute, the standard U.S. Army marching pace. Because the torrential rains of the summer monsoon season were due to start in about ten days, it was essential that they reach Imphal ahead of the downpour.

They would have to walk wherever they could, along trails that were ill-defined and seldom used and they would be out of touch with the world. He had chosen this route because he hoped the Japanese would be as unaware of his whereabouts as he was of theirs.

The walkers would have to cross the Chindwin River where they might be cut off by the Japanese coming up the river in gunboats. Once across the river, they would have to climb the Naga Hills. These "hills" were actually mountains, seven to nine thousand feet high. They have for centuries constituted a natural barrier between Burma and India. Stilwell then told his followers that they were to discard everything except that which they could carry themselves. Whatever food remained was to be pooled. There would be no waiting for anyone; the walk was going to be tough and discipline would be strict. If anyone did not care for these terms, they would be given a week's rations from the meager supply on hand and could make their way alone. Before turning away, the

General added one more comment. "Well," he said, "We're in this together now, and if you will do what I tell you, I guess we'll make it."

The reactions of his listeners to the General's words were as varied as their backgrounds. Prior to the war these people from all over the world were for the most part unknown to one another. Now under General Stilwell's leadership, they were about to undertake together a hazardous journey of uncertain outcome. They would also become involved with one another in a manner they could hardly have foreseen in the peaceful years before the war, caught up as they had been in their disparate cultures and pursuits.

It was as if some whimsical stage manager had assembled a bizarre cast in this remote and beautiful corner of the world and then, realizing the absurdity of the script, had thrown it away and left the actors to get off stage as best they could. In time they would scatter once more all over the world and Burma would return to its remoteness and beauty, almost as if they had never been there.

For now, however, the stage was set with the assembled cast gathered in the clearing. There was silence for a moment when the General finished speaking, as the implications of what he had said sank in. Then there was a flurry of activity as everyone went about their preparations for getting off stage as best they could.

Chapter One

Getting Started

A good many years had passed since I had done any serious research, and I had never done anything quite like this project. As I embarked on my work toward the end of the summer of 1971, I found out very quickly that it was hard work, that it took persistence, a certain amount of nerve, and in my case, a lot of logistical planning. I enjoyed becoming an amateur detective, however, and I discovered that "Chance favors the prepared mind."⁶

I began my research by compiling a list of those people mentioned in Tuchman's book who had any connection with the Walkout. I consulted her Bibliography and Chapter Notes where I found the names of Jack Belden and Dr. Gordon Seagrave both of whom had walked out with General Stilwell. Belden was a war correspondent and had written Retreat With Stilwell in 1943.⁷ Seagrave had written Burma Surgeon⁸ in 1943 and Burma Surgeon Returns in 1946.⁹ These books were out of print, but I managed to find copies of them at Allen's, a tiny bookstore in Philadelphia crammed to the ceiling with out-of-print books. I also found a copy of The Stilwell Papers which was a collection of diary-like letters written by General Stilwell during the war to his wife, Mrs. Winifred Stilwell.¹⁰

From these books I picked up many more names to add to my rapidly growing list. I immediately wrote to Jack Belden in care of A. A. Knopf, his publishers, informing him of what I was doing and asking him if I might see him. My letter was returned from Summit, New Jersey marked "no forwarding address." So I put him aside for the time being.

I was also very anxious to talk to General Frank Dorn, retired by this time. He had been General Stilwell's Senior Aide during the campaign in Burma and had done the maps and end papers for Tuchman's book. I hesitated to ask Mrs. Tuchman for his address. I felt I should do my own research and I felt somewhat in awe of her. I did write to her, however, and told her that her book had inspired me to undertake my project. She sent me a postcard thanking me and wishing me luck.

A few days later when my sister and Mrs. Tuchman happened to be guests at the same dinner-party, Mrs. Tuchman asked my sister if I was digging into something controversial that had come up between members of the General's Staff when the retreat began. This was not the case; neither my sister nor I knew what she was talking about. I did learn about the episode later but it certainly was not the focus of my project. Much later I did have to write to Mrs. Tuchman for help

and her prompt reply eventually led me to a Chinese General's lonely grave in Malaysia.

The names of the military members of the group that were mentioned in Tuchman's book were described with their rank as of 1942. It occurred to me that several of the Colonels on the American Headquarters Staff might have been promoted to General by the time of my work. I sent a list of their names to the General's Locator in Washington--a service for those wishing to locate retired flag officers--and asked for their addresses.

I became familiar with the Adjutant General's Office of the United States when I was a volunteer with the Red Cross during the war. I was fortunate in being able to follow my husband when he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was stationed at Eglin Field, a godforsaken barren stretch of fifty miles of scrubby palmettos in Florida's panhandle. The field lay along the shore of Choctawhatchee Bay and was an ideal location for the Proving Ground Command. It soon became apparent that all wives who wanted their husbands to be promoted were expected to work with the commanding General's wife at the Field's branch of the Red Cross of which she was Chairman. So, of course, I volunteered, though I would have anyway, as that was the sort of work I already had been doing at home.

There were frequent plane crashes during the tests that were carried out--tests in such matters as high and low level bombing, fire-bombing, and skip-bombing of mock-up ships on the Bay. It was my job to help the wives and families of the men who were killed. This entailed a considerable amount of communication with the Office of the Adjutant General and its departments, and one of these departments was the General's Locator. At a time when it was almost impossible for civilians to get a telephone, I was provided with one in my home for this job, as it was considered to be essential military business.

The General's Locator replied to my query with the names of those Generals who had died and the addresses for those who were still living, including among them information about General Dorn. They also told me about other government departments to consult for non-general officers and enlisted men. One of these was the U.S. Army Air Force World Wide Locator and another was the department of Finance and Accounting, Retired Pay Division in Denver.

I immediately wrote to General Dorn in Washington, D.C. telling him what I was doing and asking for an appointment. Later, through the Air Force Locator, I would find Captain Donald O'Hara, an oral surgeon on General Stilwell's staff in Burma.

I wrote to the National Archives in Washington and asked if there was any sort of roster of the Stilwell group. My request was referred to Mr. Avery at Modern Military Records, C. B. I. Theater, (China-Burma--India) in Suitland, Maryland. He replied that there was not much to work on. For some reason the records of that war theater were, for the most part, destroyed at the time, he said, but he would see what he could do. A few days later I could hardly believe my luck when the mail came with a letter from Mr. Edwin Flatequal at the National Archives. (See Appendix B). It contained three pages of "electro-plated" copies of General Stilwell's "War Diary," declassified

shortly after Tuchman's book was published. It was written in several different handwritings and seemed to be spattered with sweat or rain spots.

The entry for May 8, 1942 read, "Party now consists of" and listed the roster of people who were with General Stilwell on that date. They were divided into several groups; Americans--military and civilian--British guides, Chinese and British military, Mechanics Oriental, Mobile Surgical Unit, Friends Ambulance Unit, and Refugees. What a gold-mine this was for me! Now I could co-ordinate my list with General Stilwell's roster. (See Appendix C for the roster.)

Mr. Flatequal also informed me that Sun Publishing in Iowa had recently published a book by General Dorn called Walkout: With Stilwell in Burma.¹¹ When I wrote for it, the reply came from Neil Maurer, publisher of a monthly magazine called Ex-CBI Roundup. He said that Dorn's book was actually published by Crowell Publishing, from whom I then ordered it. Maurer also suggested that I subscribe to his magazine, which I did. After I received my first copy, I submitted a letter to the magazine asking for information on anyone who had been on the Walkout, or if anyone knew anything about it, to contact me. That letter was to bear fruit; it led me to Lt. Robert Belknap in New York, to Sergeant Dean Chambers, and to Dara Singh in Malaysia. Belknap and Chambers were on the Walkout and Singh was with General Stilwell in the second Burma campaign.

While I waited to hear from General Dorn, I read Seagrave's book, Burma Surgeon Returns. Dr. Seagrave was the son of Baptist medical missionaries and was born in Burma. Before the war he built a hospital in the northeast corner of Burma at Namhkam, near the Chinese border. There he and his wife Tiny, who was a registered nurse, ministered to the medical needs of the local population, trained young Burmese girls to become nurses, and indoctrinated them into the Baptist faith. The hospital was destroyed by Japanese bombing during the war and Dr. Seagrave appealed to the Baptist Missionary Society in Philadelphia for funds to rebuild it. The Society hired a fund-raiser named John Rich. I can still remember the *flash* of recognition I experienced as I read that name, for chance must have favored my prepared mind. Several years earlier I had served on a committee to raise funds for a new gymnasium-auditorium at one of my children's schools. We too hired a professional fund raiser named John Rich. On the hunch that he might be the same man, I telephoned his office. The minute I gave him my name, he remembered me, saying, "Abington Friends School, 1954!"

I knew that Seagrave was dead, but I asked Rich if he knew what had become of the nurses who had been with Seagrave in the Mobile Unit. Indeed he did, he said, and added, "Seagrave was a louse!" What was more important was that he told me that one of the nurses was currently working at the hospital where I had been a volunteer for years. Her name was Ruby Thaw Johnson and she lived not very far from my home. So even before I heard from General Dorn, I went to see Ruby Johnson.

It had never occurred to me that the first of my interviews would be with a Burmese nurse

who had been a participant in an event that had taken place nearly thirty years before half way around the world from where we both then lived. I had imagined myself travelling to far parts of the world to find all these people, but it was just a twenty minute drive from my house to hers in another Philadelphia suburb.

I could not have chosen a more delightful person than Ruby for my first interview. I was to find that devotion to duty and refreshing innocence during those terrible war years had been the outstanding characteristics of the nurses I would meet during the course of my research. Ruby was the first of the nurses who were to enchant me with their charm, naturalness, and cheerful spirit.

Ruby, her husband Bob, and their daughter Jinny lived in an attractive split-level house surrounded by dogwood trees. Ruby was a delightful person, petite, with a creamy peach-colored complexion, just a touch of gray in her glossy black hair, and a lovely smile. As she greeted me at the door, I commented on the beauty of the trees and I was struck by her common sense. She told me that she and Bob had bought and planted the trees as gifts to each other over the years instead of spending money on frivolous presents at Christmas.

She immediately made me feel at home. Over coffee and cookies we chatted about our families and how remarkable it was that we worked at the same hospital. We even consulted the same pediatrician. Then in answer to a few questions, she explained how she came to be living in America.

Ruby, Nurse, age 20
Seagrave Mobile Surgical Unit

We really didn't know much about anything except our duty.

"When the Allied campaign to regain Burma began in 1943, the Seagrave Unit was once again attached to General Stilwell's staff and I went with it again. At a field hospital in northern Burma at Ledo, I was a surgical nurse with Dr. Isador Ravdin from the University of Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia.¹² After the war, two other nurses and I received Fulbright fellowships to do graduate work at the Margaret Hague Hospital in Jersey City. When Dr. Ravdin heard that I was there, he sent for me to work with him at University Hospital. I joined the local Baptist Church and I met and became friends with John Rich and his wife. I met Bob at church, and when we were married, the Riches gave the wedding reception.

"I came from Lower Bassein in Burma," Ruby continued. "My father was a Baptist missionary and I had heard a lot about Dr. Seagrave's famous hospital in Namhkam. I had always wanted to become a nurse, so when I was old enough, I went there for training. We worked hard and we knew little about the world except missionaries and our class-mates. We were protected from outside events in the hospital life but we did have some American records and when we weren't working we sang along with them, like Negro spirituals and popular songs sung by Doris Day. We

didn't even know the war was coming until Dr. Seagrave told us. We really didn't know much about anything except our duty.

"When the Japanese invaded Burma in January 1942, Dr. Seagrave offered to provide a Mobile Surgical Unit to the British to assist them in caring for the wounded from the battlefields. He suggested to the nurses that since Burma was *our* country and the British were defending it, we might like to volunteer to serve in the Unit. All the nurses volunteered and I was one of those who was chosen. The Unit consisted of Dr. Seagrave, his hospital staff, several cooks and orderlies, and nineteen nurses.

"We had no idea of what we would be getting into when we went down to the front. As soon as we got there, Dr. Seagrave told us to rest, we were in the war now and we needed to be ready for whatever came. So we went to bed and at about two in the morning, here came the trucks loaded down with Chinese wounded. They were being brought in by the FAU (Friends Ambulance Unit) boys, the English conscientious objectors who had been sent out to help the Chinese before the Japanese invasion of Burma. From then on we were working night and day, with very little rest. There was lots of bombing and we were constantly having to move everything back from the front as the Japanese advanced. I was often very afraid, and the more scared I was the more I prayed. I think I was closer to God then than I ever would be again. My faith in God kept me going through the horrors of what was happening. You cannot imagine how ugly and terrible it was.

"When General Stilwell and his party arrived, Dr. Seagrave offered the Unit to the Americans. He was promptly given a commission as a Major in the U.S. Army and the Unit continued its work as part of Stilwell's staff.

"I remember that on the staff there was a dentist, an oral surgeon, named Captain Donald O'Hara. General Stilwell assigned him to work with the Surgical Unit. He was doing not just dentistry but also surgery and sometimes he would operate with only his trousers on. His chest was covered with curly hair and we had never seen a white man like that before. At first we were shocked but when we got used to him we nicknamed him Uncle Bear.

"When the retreat began, our Unit was told to pull out and get up to Shwebo as fast as we could. There we were to meet up with General Stilwell, we would stay with him.

"I didn't know about this at the time but someone told me later that one of the American officers objected to the nurses being included in the group. He felt that we would just be an extra burden. He said that since we were Burmese and this was our country, we should go back to our own homes. Evidently General Stilwell was furious, and told the officer that if the nurses were left behind, he would be left behind too. That put an end to the argument and as it happened that officer was very friendly with us. Of course I could not have gone back to my home, Bassein was already occupied by the Japanese."

This must have been the little flare-up to which Mrs. Tuchman had referred when she was

talking to my sister.

"We went in the trucks that were driven by the F.A.U. boys," Ruby continued. "In my heart was the sadness of defeat, not just for my own country but for our good friends the British and Americans and Chinese who had come to help us. I had seen the fires set by the Japanese and I had heard of the atrocities they had committed on the poor prisoners and refugees, and I had heard about the traitors who had turned against the British. There was no way I could find out what had happened to my family, and I was sure that I would never see them again.

"When we got to the clearing and heard that we had to walk, I wasn't as thrilled about it as some of the other girls were. They thought it was going to be like a picnic. I didn't feel very well, my menses had stopped during the campaign and some of the other girls' did too. I was subject to malaria and pneumonia to which we would surely be exposed.¹³

"Suddenly here we were thrown in with a large group of strangers. I was shy and it made me uneasy. But I was young and I was a practical person, so I faced the fact that what you have to do, you do. We found it hard to walk at first and I didn't like it very much."

• • • • •

Ruby told me that there was another Burmese nurse named Hla Sein then working at the Margaret Hague Hospital in Jersey City, New Jersey. Ray Chesley, who had been on the Walkout, was a lab technician at the same hospital. When I wrote to Hla Sein later, I received my only refusal for an interview from a member of the Walkout. She wrote me that she did not want to see me or to be reminded of any of that part of her life. Ray Chesley, on the other hand, said he would see me any time,

Thanks to him, however, I eventually had an opportunity to interview Hla Sein some months later after I had interviewed Chesley at his home in Teaneck, New Jersey. I invited the Chesleys and Ruby and Bob Johnson to lunch for a little "Burma Reunion," and to my delight the Chesleys brought Hla Sein with them. She quite willingly allowed me to have a little interview with her by ourselves.

Ruby also gave me the names of other nurses still living in Burma, as well as the address of Tun Shein in Rangoon. Tun Shein was the general factotum of the Seagrave Unit and took particular care of the nurses on the Walkout. Ruby went on to say how much she wished she could go back to her country to see her family but she couldn't afford it. When I went to Burma the following summer, I told her I was going, and she asked me to do her a favor. She said that her father had kept a diary during the entire war. He had written it on the back of a calendar which hung in his kitchen. When the Japanese searched his house, they ignored the calendar. After their father's death, Ruby's sister Jeanette who lived in Maymyo, had kept the calendar. Ruby had never seen it and she asked me if I would get it from her sister and bring it back with me. I am happy to say that I was able to do so. My meeting with Jeanette provided me with the opportunity to meet and interview a very interesting man in Maymyo. His name was John Moonie and he had met

General Stilwell when he was in Maymyo in 1942. The interview had an outcome for which my mind was not prepared.

Chance, however, continued to favor me. Here was a network that was still intact after nearly thirty years and I was the beneficiary. When I told Ruby that I was hoping to see General Dorn, she asked to be remembered to him. She had always admired him, she said. That was the beginning of another kind of network for which I became responsible. As I met more of the members of the Walkout group, I was able to pass along news of those I had already seen. This in turn led to further recollections and messages.

Three years later when I came to the end of my travels and was putting my material together, I asked Ruby if she would provide me with the title for my manuscript written in the Burmese alphabet. She was very hesitant at first, she felt she could not do justice to what I had written, but after consulting with her sister Dorothy, she sent me several choices. Literally translated into English the one I chose means, "Go forward with brisk footsteps," a poetic phrase that I am sure would have pleased General Stilwell and even Lewis Carroll.

After I had seen Ruby and made notes of our conversation, I realized that I should have a tape recorder for any further interviews. I bought a small one that could be operated from an electrical outlet or on batteries, and I practised using it on my husband. In support of my efforts, he gave me an electric typewriter for Christmas, a machine I had always been afraid of, but once I got used to the speed with which it recorded my multiple typos, I came to love it.

In January of 1972 I heard from General Dorn. He apologized for not having answered my letter sooner. He said that he had been spending Christmas in Carmel, California with Mrs. Winifred Stilwell, General Stilwell's widow, and her family. We arranged for me to see him in his home in Washington later in the month and he volunteered to ask General William Holcombe if he would meet me at the Army and Navy Club while I was still in Washington. General Holcombe had also been on the Walkout and lived in nearby Mount Vernon. He too was retired. This was an unexpected favor for me on Dorn's part.

By the time I heard from Dorn I had read his book, which was a good start, but I looked forward to my interview with him with some trepidation. Here was I, a middle-aged housewife, finding myself suddenly in the big leagues. Tuchman was a recognized and popular historian and Dorn had not only done the end papers and maps for her book, he had had several books published before his most recent one on the Walkout. Nothing daunted, however, in my best outfit and armed with my new tape-recorder, I set off for Washington on the "Metroliner" to interview the two generals.

I need not have worried about meeting General Dorn. He was not at all intimidating, he was charming. One of my friends who knew him had told me that Dorn had been one of Washington's most popular bachelors until he was married just a few years before, and I soon found out why.

I was greeted at the door of a beautiful white brick house on Embassy Row by a handsome

silver-haired gentleman of erect military bearing who ushered me into a sunlit drawing room. It was furnished with stunning Chinese screens and other *objets d'art* that he had acquired during his years in China. There were several of his own etchings on the walls and a bookcase contained copies of his published works, among them A Gourmet General's Cook Book. He said he loved to cook, particularly Chinese food.

His wife was upstairs preparing their tax returns, he said. She took care of all their business affairs which left him free to do his writing. We went into his den for the interview. I asked permission to use the tape-recorder and to be allowed to quote him in anything I wrote that might be published. He agreed to my requests and I always did this with anyone I interviewed. I gave him Ruby's message and he said he had often wondered what had become of all the people who had taken what he described as "that little stroll through the mountains." When I told him about having received the pages from General Stilwell's War Diary, he said that yes, it probably was stained with sweat and rain and it was written in different hand-writings because different people kept it up to date as they went along. Then he began to talk about himself.

Lieutenant Colonel Frank "Pinky" Dorn, U.S. Army, Age 40
General Stilwell's Senior Aide

If Pinky Dorn said something was going to be done, you could be sure that it would be done, you could count on him. He was a conscientious officer and he was one of the handsomest men in the U.S. Army. But he had red hair and he could be plenty irascible at times.

"I didn't choose the Army as a career," General Dorn began, "my father chose it for me and got me an appointment at West Point. I would much rather have gone to architectural school but I found that after a while I rather liked being under the all-protecting wings of 'Holy Mother Army,' and as the years went on I found that those wings were a great shelter.

"I was with General Stilwell for twelve years in China before the war. He was a Colonel in those days, he was the U.S. Military Attaché. I was devoted to him and his family. We went to language school together and learned not only the language but to love the country, its people, and its culture. And we developed a healthy respect for the Chinese fighting man when he was properly equipped and fed. But we didn't have much respect for most of their Generals. This was during the fighting between the Chinese and Japanese in the late 1930's after Japan invaded China in 1937.

"I was General Stilwell's Assistant Military Attaché in China and when he was transferred to Fort Ord in California, I became his Senior Aide. We were stationed there at the time of Pearl Harbor and I went with him to Washington, then on to Chungking, and from there into Burma. During the few short weeks of the abortive campaign, as the General's Senior Aide I attended all the conferences with the British and Chinese--Alexander and Slim and Chiang Kai-shek--and I met Madame Chiang. In fact, she took quite a shine to me.

"I had been in on all the plans, of course, so I knew pretty well what was coming. We bitterly resented what the Chinese generals were doing behind Stilwell's back, how they kept dragging their feet, how they refused to carry out Stilwell's orders, and then how they just suddenly began disappearing almost as soon as they had gotten there. The decision to withdraw all forces from Burma on May 1 was made by the Allied commanders. Stilwell's original plan was to try to get his group, and as many of the Chinese troops as there were left, up to Myitkyina in the north. If he could get up that far, he thought that when the monsoon rains came, the Japs would get bogged down and there would be a chance for him to regroup the Chinese and drive the Japanese out of Burma at a later date.

"The group left Maymyo in the headquarters staff cars and jeeps and trucks and headed north, but by the time we got to Indaw, the railway line to Myitkyina was hopelessly blocked by a train that had been wrecked by some damn Chinese general. The Japanese were almost at Myitthar then anyway, so Stilwell decided to head west toward India. We went as far as we could through the jungle until the vehicles began breaking down one by one. On the morning of May 6 we came to a clearing where Stilwell called a halt and decided that from there on we would have to walk.

"He divided the group into four major categories--Americans, British, Chinese, and the Seagrave Unit. This was not in any sense a class separation, but just what a military man would do, into platoons, so to speak, each with its own leader. Stilwell, of course, headed the whole group with General Sibert as his deputy. The American group included all our military and several civilians as well.

"He named Colonel Davidson-Houston, the highest ranking British military officer there, to command the British group, and General Tseng to be in charge of the Chinese troopers who had been appointed by Chiang Kai-shek to be Stilwell's so-called "honor guard" during the campaign. Dr. Seagrave was in charge of his own Mobile Surgical Unit which included the British FAU boys and some stray refugees.

"The oriental servants and mechanics and drivers were under our direction, and when two Forestry Service officers joined us, they went along with the Americans. In fact [Major] "Beaver" Barton, was the eccentric one who used to have endless conversations with Stilwell about geography and astronomy and mathematics, and they developed a great respect for one another.

"One of the civilians with us was the Reverend Breedom Case. He was an American Baptist missionary who had been Dean of the Agricultural College at Pyinmana, and when the front was down there, he supplied us with fresh meat and vegetables during the campaign in that area. He was a remarkable man and Stilwell asked him to join us in the retreat. He spoke all the native dialects and he was to prove invaluable in securing porters and bargaining for food at the villages we passed through. Incidentally, the only map Stilwell had of Burma at that time was one from the National Geographic Magazine, similar to the one you have.

"The other civilians who were with us were Jack Belden, a war correspondent for Time Magazine, and a guy named Lilly. He was a real screwball who had been with the American Technical Group down in Rangoon and somehow had attached himself to us. And there were two Chinese, both named Chow. One was a war correspondent who had been assigned to cover Stilwell's mission in Burma and the other was an interpreter."

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After nearly three hours of talking, General Dorn excused himself and in a few minutes returned with his wife. She invited me to stay for lunch and I accepted. After a cocktail, we went in to the dining-room where the table was set for three and Mrs. Dorn produced a meal which had obviously been prepared beforehand. Apparently Dorn had waited to see what kind of person I was before inviting me to stay for lunch, and I evidently had passed inspection.

It became a very social occasion. They had been to a ball the night before and one of Mrs. Dorn's partners was a cousin of mine, and we discovered that we had other friends in common. After lunch they showed me their current hobby. It was a doll-house which they had built together, an exact replica of Ash Lawn, President Monroe's home near Charlottesville, Virginia. On a table in the doll-house library was a tiny replica of Dorn's book, Walkout.

When General Dorn and I resumed the interview after lunch, he remarked that someone who had written a book after the war about the Walkout had said he could be irascible at times. "Well, I sure as hell was irascible that morning in the clearing and who could blame me." He paused for a moment as if he were reliving that morning so long ago in the far away jungles in Burma. "It was up to me to see that the General's orders were carried out, to try to help him pull this thing together, to get all those people the hell out of there and not to waste too much time doing it. Suddenly we had this big gang, it seemed a lot more than when we'd left Maymyo. I knew we didn't have enough rations for the length of time I thought it was going to take us to get out, and I didn't know how we were going to carry what we did have.

"And I was worried about the Old Man, he was showing the strain of the last couple of months. Neither of us much wanted to think about the fact that we were retreating. When you're a military man, that's not what you're supposed to be doing.

"As far as walking was concerned, I wasn't worried about that, I'd been in the Army a long time. I'd been trained for rugged conditions and plain living and I'd been on plenty of long marches. But I *was* worried about how the rest of them were going to make it.

"While the great 'throwaway' was going on in the clearing, a number of us inched one of the jeeps across the little bamboo bridge and the General and I and Reverend Case set forth to find a trail to the little village of Nanantun where we hoped to find some rafts and coolies. This journey turned out to be about ten miles through terrible terrain. There weren't any rafts there but Case, because of his wide knowledge of the people and the dialects, began negotiations with the head man

for some porters to carry our supplies the next day when we would have to walk. He was also able to buy a large supply of rice.

"Later that evening two Tibetan mule drivers came through the village with a team of twenty tiny mules. We sent the Chinese troopers after them and persuaded them--for a fee--to reverse direction and carry our heaviest loads. We thought they were probably opium smugglers on their way for another load. The General was really pleased about this bit of luck and he wrote in the diary, 'Oh boy! What a break!'

"The rest of the jeeps were driven across the bridge back at the clearing--there were seventeen in all--and on the other side they were reloaded. Then they ferried the stuff from there along the trail we had made to Nanantun until by the end of the day they had brought it all in. There were no trails beyond Nanantun, so the jeeps were abandoned there and put out of commission. We learned later that the Japs found them and got most of them running again."

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After this gratifying encounter with General Dorn and his wife, I went to see an old friend--Lloyd Free--who also lived in Washington. Lloyd had taken polls for Nelson Rockefeller and had done hundreds of interviews. I wanted his advice on interview techniques. He listened to a few minutes of my tape and said I was very good. He then proceeded to tell me how interviewing really should be done. I have never forgotten his words. "Don't answer the question when you ask it, and when a person pauses, don't interrupt the thought, let the pause last." I carried a memo to myself called "Listen to Lloyd" afterwards, and it was invaluable advice. Lloyd also suggested that I get a copy of The Tape-Recorded Interview by E. D. Ives, a standard guide.¹⁴

General Dorn had told me that when he asked General Holcombe if he would see me, Holcombe had said he didn't see why *I* should want to see *him*, Toochman [sic] had already written a book about Stilwell. But he had kindly agreed to come in from Mt. Vernon to talk to me the next morning at the Army and Navy Club in Washington. He was waiting for me when I arrived rather breathless and flustered because the taxi I had ordered was late in picking me up. He was kind about it, however.

Colonel William H. Holcombe, age 51
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Colonel Holcombe was a real gentleman of the old school, a fine engineer. His Army career was an example of the great service rendered our country by many of the career officers in peace and war.

"I was born and grew up right here in Washington," General Holcombe began. "I was the son of a minor Civil Service employee and it was my ambition to go to West Point. Through some family connections I got my appointment and graduated in 1914, going from there straight into the Corps of Engineers. Thereafter my career took me all over the States as well as to Japan and China,

the Philippines, Panama, and Europe.

"Prior to my appointment to General Stilwell's staff shortly after Pearl Harbor, I had not known the General, and the only other ones on the Walkout I happened to know were [Colonel George] Sliney and [Major General Franklin] Sibert. We made the long and rather hazardous flight from Miami to Delhi, taking about ten days to get there, and I remained in Delhi until mid-March when I joined Stilwell in Burma.

"I wasn't there long before it became apparent that we were going to have to get out either to China or to India. I hadn't been there long enough to get any particular feeling about the country or the people, but neither was I particularly perturbed that we were fleeing. I hadn't questioned the presence of American forces in Burma and I didn't question the retreat. I considered that I was obeying the commands of higher authority. If we hadn't gone when we did we would have been overtaken by the Japanese and I unquestionably would have been disposed of.

"There was little call for my abilities after I arrived in Burma, but an incident stands out in my memory of the trip after we left Shwebo and were on the way up to Indaw. We came to a little creek where a bridge over it had collapsed. We had to wait several hours while some Chinese coolies laboriously repaired it. It was frustrating to me as an engineer to have to stand idly by without my men or the materials with which to do a job I knew so much better how to do.

"When I learned that we would have to walk I had no fear of the outcome. I had the utmost confidence in Stilwell. I had had some form of dysentery in the previous days and I was in a somewhat weakened condition, but I felt that I could make it. I met the situation much as I had any other in my life. I would face up to it and do the best I could."

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One thing about which Lloyd Free had not warned me happened after this interview, which I did not learn about until I was returning home on the train. I was so anxious to listen to the tape of the interview that I plugged in my earphones and turned on the Replay. *Nothing!* I had forgotten to push the red "ON" button because I had been flustered when I arrived late. This was another lesson I never forgot. I learned something else from this experience. I immediately began writing down what I could remember and found that I remembered a great deal. This was good to know in case I ever forgot again or if someone might not want me to use the tape-recorder, which occurred once or twice.

Despite the mishap with the tape-recorder, I was thrilled at how well the first three interviews had gone. I was beginning to get the answers to some of my questions and I was off to a great start. Even better, in January 1972, I was going with my husband on one of his business trips to the Far East. The Insular Lumber Company--the company for which my husband worked--was in the business of the manufacture of Philippine mahogany. The headquarters of the company was in Philadelphia, but the mill which produced the lumber was on the island of Negros in the Philippines.

We had lived there for several years before the war, but fortunately my husband was transferred to the Philadelphia office just before the war. It was part of his job to visit the mill several times a year and I went with him when I could. This time we were to stop off for a few days in San Francisco and San Diego for several of my husband's business meetings. This trip might be a great opportunity to trace some more of the General's Headquarters group, many of whom were mentioned in The Stilwell Papers.

The best person to get in touch with for information about these people, therefore, would be Mrs. Winifred Stilwell, General Stilwell's widow. Accordingly, I directed a letter to her simply at Carmel, California. I was in luck; her daughter, Mrs. Nancy Easterbrook, who also lived in Carmel, answered my letter. She wrote me that her mother would be happy to see me and we set up a tentative date in May when I planned to be on the West Coast. She added that Paul Jones, who had been on the Walkout and was a close friend of the Stilwell family, lived in San Rafael, Marin County, just across the Bay from San Francisco.

In addition, Mrs. Easterbrook informed me that Mrs. Williams, widow of Colonel Robert P. Williams, lived near her in Carmel. Colonel Williams had been the Medical Officer on General Stilwell's staff and had been on the Walkout. I wrote to Mrs. Williams and she sent me a copy of the diary-like letters her husband had written to her during his months in Burma.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Winifred Stilwell died a week before the appointment I had with her. Also Mrs. Williams was not well at that time, and I did not get to see her either.

When I wrote to Paul Jones, he said he would be delighted to see me. He sent me the names of three others who had been on General Stilwell's staff in Burma who were then living on the west coast. They were Dick Young who lived in the San Francisco area, Fred Eldridge who lived not far from Los Angeles, and Carl Arnold, who lived at Oceanside, near San Diego. How lucky could I be!

I wrote to these three asking if I could see them. Dick Young was about to leave on a trip to China but the other two agreed to see me. I began setting up my itinerary to fit them in on my trip. Here was another example of a Walkout network still intact among many people after thirty years. This made my project very exciting.

I was feeling pretty pleased with myself at how well I had arranged everything. I was really looking forward to my trip, so it was all the more of a blow when I received a letter from a man in Scotland named Peter Tennant. Even now, so many years later, I can remember how dismayed I was when I read it.

Some weeks earlier I had started to track down the men who were listed in General Stilwell's roster as the Friends Ambulance Unit, the FAU boys Ruby had mentioned. Eric Johnson, a teacher at my son's Quaker school in Philadelphia, had driven an ambulance in North Africa for the American Friends Service Committee during WW II and I asked his advice. He told me to talk to Bronson Clark at the A. F. S. C. in Philadelphia. Bronson suggested I write to the Friends Service Council in London. Ronald Joynes replied, saying that he had forwarded my letter to Peter Tennant,

the man who had been in charge of the FAU in China and Burma. Peter wrote me that he had recently received another letter very much along the same lines as mine. It was from a man named Alan Lathrop, curator of manuscripts at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. If we were not acting in concert, Peter suggested that perhaps we should be. What a blow! Here was someone who apparently had had the same idea that I had had, and was in a far better position to be published than I was.

I immediately telephoned Alan. He told me that he was planning to write about the Walkout from its medical aspects based primarily on the diary of a Captain John Grindlay. Grindlay had been a surgeon at the Mayo Clinic who volunteered for the Magruder Mission in Chungking before Pearl Harbor. It was similar to the military mission established later in Viet Nam. When Stilwell was given the assignment to Burma, he selected Grindlay to go with him as Staff Surgeon.

Alan had spent six years researching Stilwell and he too had received a blow when Barbara Tuchman called him in 1969. She was writing her book about Stilwell and she wanted to examine the papers of Henry Wallace--Vice President during Roosevelt's third term--which were at the University of Minnesota. Alan had to tell her that she could not have access to them as they were not to be released until 1971, twenty-five years after Wallace's death. Mrs. Tuchman must have been disappointed, too.

Alan suggested that we exchange whatever information we had, so I went to Minneapolis and spent the weekend. Alan and his wife were very hospitable young people and we became good friends. Alan had much more useful material for me than I had for him. He gave me a copy of John Grindlay's diary which was full of day to day personal reactions to the strain of non-stop surgery on the wounded during the campaign, the appalling heat, how much he suffered from sunburn, bugs, leeches, and numerous other discomforts.

Alan also told me about a book I should read, Fred Eldridge's Wrath in Burma, written in 1946.¹⁵ Eldridge was an ex-newspaperman who was a reserve officer assigned to General Stilwell's staff, and whose address Paul Jones had given me. Alan also suggested that I write to Antony Brett-James, director of Military Studies at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, in Camberley, England. He might be able to help me in tracing the British military in the Stilwell group.

After going over each other's material, Alan and I decided that what we were doing was so different that we were not in conflict. In the end, he dropped his project and I had the field to myself.

Upon my return from Minneapolis, I wrote to Peter Tennant telling him of Alan's and my decision. If Peter would send me the addresses of the FAU members who had been in Burma, I would try to get in touch with them and would continue on to London after my visit to the Philippines. Peter sent me their addresses and kindly invited me to visit him and his wife in Scotland when I got to England. From his list I picked Martin Davies to write to first because he lived nearest to London, and he replied that he would contact the others with whom he was still in touch,

unfolding still another intact network.

Since I would be going to England, I followed Alan Lathrop's suggestion and wrote to Antony Brett-James at Sandhurst telling him that I was going to be in London. I gave him the names of the British military and the two Guides on the Stilwell roster, Major Barton and Caston. His answer was enormously helpful.

He told me that Caston's correct name was Herbert E. Castens. He suggested that when I was in London I should try to see Lieutenant General Sir Geoffrey Evans. General Evans had written a book called The Johnnies.¹⁶ It was about a group of ten men who had been Indian Forestry Service officers in Burma before the war. After the British were driven out of Burma, "Zed Force" was formed and these were the Johnnies. Because of their extensive knowledge of the forests and the terrain, they were flown into Burma from India and dropped behind Japanese lines to radio information back to British Headquarters in India where plans were being drawn up for the re-taking of Burma. Castens had been one of the Johnnies.

I wrote to General Evans sending him the same names I had sent to Brett-James and asked if I might see him when I got to London. He replied that he would be happy to see me and in the meantime he would see what he could find out about the names on my list.

This was the nature of my research up to this point. I followed leads, anxiously awaited answers to my letters, made appointments, and packed for an around the world trip according to my husband's ultimatum on luggage. He was used to travelling alone a great deal, and he hated to have to use a porter. I was limited to a weekend suitcase that he could carry and an over-the-shoulder bag. The system was that I would carry his briefcase, my shoulder bag, and my purse while he carried his and my suitcases and his own shoulder bag. It seemed impossible at first but somehow I managed, and I came to see the wisdom of his dictum later when I was on my own. In mid-February we took off for San Francisco. But the manner of our departure was not quite what I had expected.

As the plane was accelerating down the runway before lift-off, it suddenly decelerated and came to a stop just before the end of the runway. I was scared to death. The pilot announced that he had received word from the tower of a bomb threat to the plane and we would have to return to the terminal. But we did not do so. We taxied as far away from the terminal as the plane could go. There we were told to get out quickly, taking only a coat and handbag, and to walk to a nearby field. Buses to carry us back to the terminal had been sent for, he said.

The plane left us standing there and trundled off out of sight. Fortunately it was a mild day as we had to wait about half an hour until a convoy of buses arrived and carried us back to the terminal. There we waited for four hours. No one could or would tell us anything until finally there was an announcement that the plane had been checked out, there was no bomb. When we were seated once again, the pilot told us that the long delay was caused by the fact that the dogs who were trained to sniff out bombs were not at the airport that morning. This was the day of the week on which they went for their training! A false bomb had been hidden on the plane and when the

dogs finally arrived, they found it immediately but there was no real bomb. The pilot then announced that all drinks were "on the house," and off we flew to San Francisco full of good spirits.

Chapter Two

West Coast and Far East: February - March, 1972

From San Francisco we flew to San Diego for one of my husband's meetings. The next morning I rented a car and drove to see Carl Arnold at the music shop he operated in Oceanside, not very far from where we were staying.

There were several customers in the store when I arrived. Carl turned them over to someone else and took me into his office. We had a cup of coffee while he told me about himself. Paul Jones had written me that Carl had gone out to Burma with General Stilwell, but I did not know until I met him that Carl had not gone on the Walkout.

Lt . Carl Arnold, age 25
U.S.Army Reserves

Carl was a peach of a fellow with a great deal of musical talent.

"It has always been one of greatest regrets of my life that I didn't go along on the Walkout," he said, and he laughed when he added, "Maybe General Stilwell figured he couldn't use a music teacher in the jungle. But I always felt that he sent me out to India ahead of him because he knew my parents and he knew I was an only child. He was that type.

"And he wanted a headquarters set up in India while he was coming out. Since I'd been doing HQ work with Colonel Eckert in Maymyo, he sent us both out. He also wanted someone to tell the people in India exactly what had happened.

"I was from Los Angeles," Carl went on. "I wasn't married and I was teaching music when I was called up in 1940. I was ordered to report to Fort Ord near Los Angeles, where General Stilwell was the commanding officer. I was put to work teaching music to draftees. It was my job to pep up the image of the Army in peacetime, so I put together a show called The Wizard of Ord which went all over the state and made quite an impact by telling what the Army was all about.

"I became friends with the Stilwell family and they knew my parents too. I was on my way to a party at the Stilwell's when I heard the news about Pearl Harbor. General Stilwell appointed me as one of his aides and when we were leaving for Washington before flying out to Burma, Mrs. Winifred Stilwell asked me to be sure the General didn't lose his glasses. I felt she was telling me to take care of her husband. All I could think of when I heard we were going to Burma was 'The Road to Mandalay.' I had no idea of where it was and I had not had any courses in college that

would have taught me what we might be getting into.

"The 'old China hands' like Stilwell and Dorn knew something about the Orient, but most of the rest of us were pretty naive about foreigners and foreign countries, and it was the first time *I'd* ever been to a foreign country. I was in the group that went out in the planes from the States. That big old flying boat, I'll never forget it. It was piloted by Captain Ledesma of Pan Am.

"When we got to Calcutta I was supposed to go on to Chungking and I was all ready to go when the General drove up and said I was to stay back and he'd talk to me later. Well, I didn't need any more orders than that and, I'll be a son of a gun, the plane I'd been to supposed to go on spattered all over a mountain."

This was the first of many instances I would hear about when Fate intervened at the last moment to save someone from death. These "near misses" gave me the shivers.

"We went on down to Burma later," Carl continued. "I had been listed as an Aide in Washington because they didn't know what else to call me, but I never got the insignia. You might say that what I was in Burma was an assistant.

"At the headquarters where we set up in Maymyo we just weren't a fat staff in any sense of the word," Carl continued. "There were only about thirty-five of us altogether and we all had multitudinous jobs to do. My job was to take messages down to the front for the General or to relay them from him when he was down at the front. Although at the time I didn't know it, Burma was already a lost cause by the time Stilwell got there. He *did* expect to get more out of the Chinese troops than he did, but even though he was responsible, they weren't his troops. When they began sneaking back to China, he found he just couldn't hack it. When the decision to retreat was made, we pulled out of Maymyo and went on up to Shwebo and that's where the General sent some of us out. Getting everybody onto the plane in Shwebo was done in a terrific hurry. The Japanese were strafing and dive-bombing and Haynes, the pilot, was quite anxious to take off. When we finally did take off, we flew close to the ground for about forty minutes so that the Japs couldn't spot us and I've never been so scared in my life. They were after every one of us and they definitely wanted to get their hands on Stilwell just to prove that he was vulnerable."

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After my interview with Arnold I returned to the hotel where we were staying. When I played the tape of the interview that evening, I burst out laughing. Somebody had evidently been trying out one of the organs in Carl's store and "Stars Fell on Alabama" was the first thing I heard. I thought I had lost the whole interview, but the song only lasted a few minutes and fortunately it did not drown out anything important.

The next day my husband and I drove to Los Angeles where I dropped him off at the airport for another meeting and I went on to Corona, about fifty miles east of Los Angeles, to see Fred Eldridge.

I picked him up at his newspaper office in Corona and from there we drove to his home. I found out right away that what had been said about him was true; he entertained me all the way with very amusing stories about himself and his past.

I had been intrigued that where he lived was called a "walnut ranch," a new concept to me. It was in a lovely valley and this "ranch" was what I would have called an orchard where acres and acres were planted with walnut trees. I met Fred's charming wife and after lunch Fred talked about Burma. He and his wife had been to Rangoon a few years before and had seen some of the people I hoped one day to see.

**Captain Fred Eldridge, age 31
U.S. Army Reserves**

Fred was a big handsome guy and a great story-teller.

"I grew up in California," Fred began. "My father was in general farming and then he put in walnut trees. We were comfortably off and I guess I was pretty soft and spoiled.

"I went to Pomona College and joined the ROTC but we had very little in the way of military training. When I graduated, I went to work for The Los Angeles Times and then I was called up for military duty as a Second Lieutenant in the Reserves as a Public Relations officer. I was assigned to General Stilwell in the Third Army Corps at Fort Ord. Along with Carl Arnold and a lot of others, we put on a play called The Wizard of Ord which was a publicity stunt, an effort to put across the image of the Army in peacetime, to let the public see what the Army was all about. Carl was a music teacher, he was in the reserves too. He was just a peach of a guy.

"Pearl Harbor came along shortly after that and we went to Washington and then when Stilwell was tapped to go to China, I was taken along on that too as Public Relations officer. I was part of the original party that flew out there. We had two Russians with us, a Major General and a political Commissar, black boots and suit and hat and all that. They left the group at Basra, in the Persian Gulf, and took off in a plane that crashed over the Caspian Sea and they were both killed." (This comment also gave me the shivers.)

"When we got to Burma some time in January 1942, we set up our headquarters in Maymyo and then everything went to hell. The Chinese troops suddenly vanished and we had to get out of there. I'll never forget the night before we left.

"General Stilwell wasn't there, he was off at the front somewhere and we were sitting around this shack and suddenly Colonel McCabe came bursting in and he was scared. He was a regular career officer and he knew enough to be scared. He said we'd had a division of Chinese troops there that morning and now we hadn't got a single one, they'd vanished, broken up into twos and threes and hightailed it for home! They were the Chinese troops who were supposed to be fending off the Japanese and they were *gone*, they would have been routed by just a couple of Japanese battallions.

And there we were, stuck. The Japs could outflank us immediately and any chance we'd had of making a retreat with the Chinese troops was gone.

"McCabe, being a military man and knowing the facts of life, was scared and I must say I was shocked listening to those officers saying we'd better bug out of there, right now. It seemed to me that we shouldn't bug out of there until we had orders to do so and Stilwell wasn't there. How could we get in touch with the general who was, after all, in charge of us? Fortunately, we soon got word from him to go, to pack up and get out of there.

"There wasn't much planning. We just grabbed a bunch of rice and butter and canned goods and stuff and we loaded all the headquarters vehicles we could find and drove down to Mandalay and from there on up to Shwebo where Stilwell was to join us. When he got there we sat around a few days while he was trying to figure out what to do. First we were going to Myitkyina and maybe make a stand there, but then we learned that that was cut off and the General decided to head west toward India.

"It was at Shwebo that they sent in a plane to evacuate the General but he wouldn't go. But a lot of other people were sent out, including Arnold and [Colonel] Eckert. Arnold used to say that the General didn't have any use for a music teacher in the jungle, he wasn't any more of a military man than I was. But the truth was the General knew he could trust him implicitly and he wanted those two to get to India and tell them where he hoped we'd be coming out.

"I had been told to fly out too when the plane came in, but I had already decided I wanted to stick with Stilwell. I felt that his presence in Burma was historical and how he was going to get out would be historical too. It was a tremendously dramatic thing and being a newspaperman, I wanted to be damn sure it got recorded. So I took one of the cars and went for a ride out of town and waited until the plane left, so I got to go along by disobeying orders. Stilwell once told me later that I was the worst soldier he'd ever seen! Hell, I wasn't a soldier, I was just a newspaperman in uniform.

"When we'd left Maymyo in such a rush, one thing was regrettable, we lost touch with several of our servants. We were supposed to meet them somewhere, we felt obligated to get them out, but I don't know what happened, they didn't show up and we left without them. But while we were in Shwebo, [Colonel Adrian] St. John and I went down to the river and there as far as we could see on both sides of the river were thousands of refugees, they were just packed solid. All of a sudden there was someone tugging at my sleeve. It was Peter, one of the servants. They'd gone somewhere to meet us and we weren't there. St. John thought they'd run away so they shouldn't be allowed to come with us. I told Peter this and he said, 'Oh but Master, if you will help us a little bit, God will help us all.' So of course we took him along.

"We left Shwebo in the vehicles and headed north and that part was very hot and dry. I don't believe we were worried about the Japs then, we didn't know precisely where they were, but they

didn't know where we were either. They were foot soldiers without any fast transport and they had the same problem we did, you can only walk so many miles a day. The thing you had to think about, to be concerned about, was the monsoon.

"When we reached the clearing I wasn't particularly worried about having to walk, I didn't know enough to be worried. But I knew that if we wanted to survive and didn't want the buzzards flying around up there in the mountains picking our bones, we'd better get the hell out of there any way we could. We weren't going to have any helicopters coming along to pick us off the mountaintops.

"We threw away all our surplus stuff and much of it was picked up by the Chinese soldiers and Indian servants. In some mysterious manner one of the Chinese troopers found a German helmet--of all things--out there in the jungle and he wore it from then on.

"I had a diary and a camera which I kept. And of course, the famous--or rather, the infamous--thing I did was to get away with taking a bedroll along. I put all my spare clothes in it, even my winter uniforms that I'd brought from the States. That meant that when we abandoned the jeeps the next day and we got some mules, it would mean that something more essential for the group couldn't be carried. When the General heard about it, I got chewed out all right! It was an incident I wasn't very proud of and when he chewed me out, he was right, dead right and I retained my respect for him. I certainly learned from that to obey orders and not to be so selfish."

After my interview with Eldridge I drove back to Los Angeles, and I almost ended up in Santa Monica when I nearly missed the exit for the airport. I had really learned about "life in the fast lane" with all the driving I had done in an unfamiliar part of the country. This was before the 65 mph speed limit came into effect. The freeways were four lanes; first you entered the minimum 40 mph lane then each one from there on graduated upward in speed. By the time you got all the way to the left lane you had to go 80 mph if you didn't want to get run over from the rear and if you stayed in the ones in the middle you began to feel as if you were being attacked by barracudas as other cars kept cutting in and out around you. I turned in the car with a sigh of relief, an old friend took me out to dinner, then I flew to San Francisco and spent the night at the airport motel, prior to my appointment with Paul Jones.

The next morning I took the bus to the downtown terminal in San Francisco where Paul picked me up. We drove to his home in San Rafael. It was a beautiful drive over the Golden Gate bridge which I had never seen before. I thought about the time I had sailed from San Francisco on the S.S. President Hoover in 1934, when there was no bridge between San Francisco and Marin County. I was on my honeymoon, headed for a new life in the Philippines. I can still remember the thrill of sailing through the Golden Gate out into the Pacific Ocean toward a magnificent sunset. When I told Paul about it, he said that the bridge had already been built when he came to San Rafael to live, and it was hard to imagine how people got back and forth to San Francisco before it was built.

He and his wife Loomis were in the process of packing up to move to San Diego where they had lived before the war, but they both took time off from their packing to visit with me and give me lunch. Paul had over five thousand pictures that he had taken during the war and kindly let me borrow several of them.

Captain Paul Jones, age 33
U.S.Army Reserves

Paul did one hell of a job maintaining some kind of order on the railroad during the fighting.

"I grew up in California and my father was a Congregationalist minister," Paul began after we had lunch. His wife continued her packing as she listened to us. "I went to Oberlin College and after graduation I went into the Army Air Corps as a cadet but I developed such terrible hay fever that it put an end to my flying. So the Army offered me a reserve commission in the Chemical Warfare Service attached to the Air Corps which I accepted. That's how I got into the Reserves. We had to take a couple of weeks' training every year.

"After graduation I was doing some radio announcing in San Diego when the Reserves Unit there put on a party for the outgoing Army Reserves Training officer who was to be replaced by Stilwell. Stilwell and his family came down for the party but nobody knew them, nobody was paying any attention to them. I found them sitting out on this kind of a verandah at the Woman's Club where we were throwing the party and I felt it was terrible, it was discourteous. So I hauled some other people out and introduced them and got them started, got them interested in him. We got to be friends right then and it carried on for years and Stilwell was godfather to one of my daughters.

"So when the war started in Europe and it looked like we were all going to get called up for a year's duty, Stilwell suggested that I put in for Fort Ord where he was going to be commanding officer of the Seventh Division. I got transferred from the Air Corps into the Infantry and went to Ord with him.

"When we got to Burma it was my job to keep the railroad running. It was decided between General Stilwell and the British commander General Harold Alexander that the Americans would evacuate the Chinese wounded on the railroad and the British would use their trucks to evacuate their own wounded.

"So I was running up and down the railroad line trying to get the trains running, bringing supplies for Seagrave and evacuating the Chinese. We'd pick them up from the Seagrave mobile hospital somewhere near the front, pile 'em all on the train, run the train up to Mandalay and dump 'em. At one point I had a half-breed railway worker and a Chinese executive, the manager of a railroad back in China, and the three of us were running the railroad in Burma. This guy who was rated a General in China was actually shovelling coal into the firebox!

"It was hot, plenty hot down there in the plains just before the monsoon. I was really a sad

looking sack, I was hot and dirty all the time. But I was so busy, going day and night, that I didn't have time to think about being scared. When I slept it was from sheer exhaustion. I didn't lie there and think about things, I just lay down and went boom, even though lots of dangerous things kept happening, like strafing by the Jap planes and bombs, but I was just too intensely busy to be scared.

"When I was travelling up and down like that I used to use the British soldiers for Intelligence. I didn't smoke so I'd take my ration of cigarettes and it was amazing what these guys would tell me for a pack of cigarettes. Things I never should have been told. So every so often I'd check in at Maymyo and tell the Boss what was going on.

"There was a tremendous difference between the old colonial officers and the B.O.R.s--British Other Ranks--who didn't exist unless they had the good taste to die! You take the ordinary British 'Tommy,' he's a great guy, but they sure had some lousy officers.

"I came in to a station one time and I was all alone in one of those handcars. There was a British battallion on a train there, with enlisted men and non-coms sitting around. I said to them, 'How about some chow?' They answered that they didn't have any food. I knew the box-cars were full of food, but they were sealed and the soldiers were not supposed to open them. The officers were way down in their private car at the end of the train. I said that was crazy, I'd get them some food. I made the soldiers get me a hammer out of the locomotive and we broke the seals open. I put their cooks to work and we all had chow.

"I was sitting there shoveling the food in and this Lance Corporal comes up to me and gives me this rigid British salute and asks permission to speak to the Captain. I just had on my Captain's bars, and there was nothing else to show that I was an officer in the American Army, and I told the guy to sit down. He replied in the best regulation British Army manner, 'Sah! I can't do that but some of us have been talking things over. We're going down to the front and we want you to command our Unit.' I said, 'You've got to be kidding! What about your own officers?' 'Don't worry, sah, we'll take care of them.' At that time I was game for anything, but even I knew better than to get involved in something that could create an international incident! When I told the Boss about it later, he said, 'Why didn't you do it?' He was always kidding that way.

"Some months later I was walking down a street in Calcutta and there was a bunch of British soldiers across the street. One of them yelled out, 'There's that damn Yank!' They came over to me and reminded me about the incident on the train. Most of them had gotten out safely and they were so glad to see me they made me an honorary member of their battallion and gave me the insignia of their unit.

"One thing an American officer has pounded into him is that his men come first and I could not understand how the British could treat those men in such a shabby way. Of course what they had there in Burma was an unusual situation with those colonial officers of the Royal Engineers.

"By the end of April I was told to take my last load of Chinese wounded to Mandalay and to

get on up to where the rest of the bunch was in Shwebo after they'd left Maymyo. I was glad of it, I was pooped.

"When the Boss decided not to let them fly him out, the whole point was that at this time in 1942 the position of the white man in Asia was at just about the lowest level of prestige that it had ever been. We had been blasted at Pearl Harbor, we'd been kicked out of the Philippines, the British had had to surrender Singapore and the Japs were just taking over all of southeast Asia. Their whole bit was 'Asia for the Asiatics,' and they were moving in.

"Here was a white man--Stilwell--who, in name only if not in fact, had been given command of Chinese troops and he was not going to run out on them. Stilwell understood the orientals and he knew what their reaction would be. He knew what losing face meant and he was not going to let that happen.

"I think what made the Walkout historical was the white man's position in the Far East at that time. It gave them a little something, at least there was one white man that stuck by them. It had no effect on Chiang Kai-shek but it did have an effect on the Chinese troops. It was this action, the Walkout, that gave the General the stature, the authority to take on the training of the Chinese troops at Ramgarh afterwards.

"And he chose the right route. There were those who argued that he should take the route the British did through Kalewa but he said, 'Nope, we'd just walk into the Japs. I figure they've got too much of a head start on us down there.' And he was right, a lot of the British got caught by the Japs at Kalewa and most of them were killed.¹⁷

"The Boss had been talking to some of us about the possibility of having to walk even before we got to the clearing. He said to us that if we got to India some of us would probably hate his guts. But it was getting impossible to keep the vehicles going. So when he told us in the clearing to start walking, I wasn't surprised. He said, 'We're in this together now, and if you'll do what I tell you, I guess we'll make it.'

"I wasn't disturbed by what he said, I had complete faith in him. But you know, it's funny. . . when we were flying in to Burma and I looked out of the window of the plane down at all those mountains and jungles and rivers, I said to somebody, 'Gee, I'd sure hate to have to walk out over that,' and here we were less than two months later doing just exactly that! While everybody was still getting their gear together in the clearing, Doc, [Colonel Robert P. Williams] our Medical Officer, asked me to go with him on foot to Nanantun to test out what it would be like to carry our own gear and to hike in the worst heat of the day.

"We figured it would be about eight and a half miles. We would follow the trail the Boss had taken in the first jeep that got across the little bamboo bridge, and we found that we couldn't have gone another ten paces by the time we got there.

"The heat and the humidity were unbelievable and the Doc decided right then that General Stilwell was going to have to figure out some way to do the walking in the early hours and to rest

during the worst of the heat in the middle of the day. Otherwise the people would never be able to stand it.

"I was absolutely bushed. I wondered when we started walking if this journey to so-called safety in India might be an 'appointment in Samarra,' and after walking to Nanantun I began to think I was right! ¹⁸

"At the camp in that little village there was good water which didn't need to be boiled and I drank plenty and got some much needed rest. It was there that they got the radio working for the last time. They sent out messages to India asking that bearers meet us with food at Homalin on the Chindwin River. It broke the sergeant's heart when he had to crack up that radio. It was too cumbersome to take with us."

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At the time of this trip to the west coast our son Henry was a student at Berkeley. On the day that I saw Paul, Henry was sailing in a race at Tiburon, not far from San Rafael. Just as Paul and I finished the interview, with perfect timing my son's friend Deirdre arrived to pick me up. She drove me to the Yacht Club where we watched the end of the race which, unfortunately, my son did not win. When he had put his boat away, he joined us and we drove once more to the airport with which I was now becoming quite familiar. We had dinner together and that night I flew to Honolulu. The next day I spent on Waikiki beach and reviewed the tapes of my interviews. When my husband joined me a day or two later, we flew to Tokyo. On that day--which happened to be my birthday--we crossed the International Date line and we lost that day. I felt that I could rightfully claim to be one year younger than I was, since I never experienced that particular birthday.

After a night in Tokyo we flew to Manila. While I was in Manila I went to several South-East Asia Embassies trying to trace any of the Asiatics on the Stilwell roster. I had no luck at the Malaysian Embassy but at the Singapore Embassy I was given the name of Mr. B. C. J. Buckeridge in Singapore. He had lived in Singapore for years before the war when it was the capital of the Federated Malay States and before it became an independent country after the war. It was suggested that "Buck" might know something about the British military on the roster.

I went to the Burmese Embassy for a visa to Burma in case I got a chance to visit that country at a later date. I was informed that since I was an American citizen, not a Filipino, that it would have to come from Washington. I felt pretty embarrassed that I had not thought of that.

I also went to the Nationalist Chinese Embassy to request a visa for Taiwan in order to try to find out about General Tseng and the Chinese officers and men who had constituted the "honor guard" assigned by Chiang Kai-shek to General Stilwell during the campaign in Burma. It was the most beautiful Embassy I had ever been in. Huge red and gold arches led from one room to another and at each one I was bowed through by smiling gentlemen in elegantly tailored suits and with lots of gold teeth. It happened that that was the day on which President Nixon had recognized mainland China as the People's Republic of China and, so to speak, had "divorced" Chiang Kai-shek's

government. I did not know that at the time but I think the people at the Embassy did know it because I was first introduced to the Military Attaché, then to the Commercial Attaché, then to the Press Attaché, and after having repeated my reasons for wanting to go to Taiwan to each of them, finally--with many more smiles and bows--I was ushered in to the Immigration Officer who promptly stamped my passport with a visa which was good to visit Taiwan at any time.

From Manila we went to Negros for ten days at the mill while I made and cancelled plans to go to Taiwan. My husband did not want me to go to Taiwan at this particular time, he said. It might be unpleasant. We would go to Singapore instead and from there I would go to London.

While I was in Singapore, I went to see Mr. Buckeridge. His house was not far from my hotel and we sat on the verandah that was shaded with giant mimosas. From the rafters hung dozens of flower pots full of delicate tiny orchids. We sipped lemonade while we talked. He told me to call him "Buck," that everyone did. I gave him my list of the British military on the roster and he said he would work on it. Then I asked him to tell me about himself.

"Before the war I was a British Civil Service Officer. I was the Fire Warden of Singapore," Buck told me. "I was at my job putting out huge fires from the bombing when the city fell to the Japanese. Fortunately I had gotten my wife out to Bombay just in time. All British residents were captured and put into prison. But I was held back so that I could keep on in command of the fire-fighting forces putting out the fires. When that was accomplished, the Japs took me off to prison. This was the infamous Changi prison camp that had room for at most four hundred people, but there were five thousand of us there. More than half of them died. I almsot died myself from a raging fever, but a Ph. D. doctor gave me half of his last aspirin and I survived!

"On the way to the prison in an open truck full of other British prisoners, I saw the *ayah*, the servant girl who did our laundry in her home. She was standing by the side of the road with a crowd of Chinese and Malays and they were all jeering and spitting at us. Four years later when I was released, one day the *ayah* showed up at my home with the clean laundry she had done four years before. She wanted her old job back and I was so amazed that she had lept my laundry all those years, I took her back.

"I joined my wife in Bombay and we went back to England on leave. I picked up my salary that had been accumulating for years. With part of my money I bought one of the ten Rolls Royces that came off the line in 1946 and had it shipped out to Singapore where I took up my old job. Come on," he said, "I'll show you. We'll go for a ride."

He had kept his car in beautiful condition. It was dark blue and highly polished, and the interior still had that wonderful smell of real leather. The motor seemd to purr as he took me on an extensive sight-seeing trip around Singapore. He pointed out all the places where the fires had been the worst, the wharves where the Australian frog-men had sunk three Japanese naval ships with underwater limpet bombs, and he took me up Mount Faber--three hundred feet high--named for the

man who thought of putting rubber erasers on pencils. He drove me through the Botanical Gardens and showed me the Zoo. I told him that I had visited them both when we went home from the Philippines in 1937. He said that during the war the people of Singapore had broken into the Zoo and had butchered and eaten the animals. They had killed and eaten their own dogs which I knew had also been the case in the Philippines. Even nine years after the war when I first returned to the Philippines, the scarcity of dogs was quite noticeable.

As we drove around Singapore, Buck paid absolutely no attention to the rest of the traffic and I was terrified at first. But I noticed that whenever we approached an intersection where a policeman was standing on a little platform under a colorful umbrella, all traffic in either direction stopped, and we sailed through as if we were royalty. When I commented on this, Buck said, "Oh yes, they're used to me, they know the Rolls. After all, who else do you know who owns a car that is ten per cent of a major company's output?"

The next day I took off for London on B.O.A.C. by myself. As I went through the security check at the airport, a bell rang. It had registered the embroidery scissors in my carry-on bag. I had to hand them over to an attendant who assured me they would be given back to me once we were in the air. When we were under way, I asked the purser for them. He returned them to me, saying, "You may have them if you will promise not to stab the skipper with them. Ha ha ha!" I did not find that terribly funny but I was glad to get them back.

From Singapore we flew across the Indian Ocean to Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, for refuelling in Columbo. It was beautiful coming in over the coast rimmed with surf, and glistening tea plantations growing right down to the edge of the beach. From there we went on to Bombay where we stopped for quite a long time. I was the only one left on the plane who was going on to London. I wandered around the terminal which was not particularly interesting, then went out and joined a group of silent little Indian children who were sitting on some steps in the shade. I watched a group of laborers, men and women, who were working on a patch of ground where the pavement had been torn up. Every movement each person made seemed to me to be a perfect example of "work to rule."

At least ten people were involved in the task. One man standing beside a pile of gravel had a small scoop with which he ladled up some gravel and placed it in a small metal dish. A tired-looking, bedraggled and very dirty woman with a small wooden platform on her head, would stoop down and the man would place the dish of gravel on her head. Then the woman would rise slowly and gracefully, and in a stylized sort of movement, she would walk slowly about fifteen feet to the other side of the dug up patch, take the dish from her head, and fling the gravel into the bare spot as if she were sowing corn. Two or three men standing around the torn up ground would slowly rake the gravel into place. While one woman was doing this, other women would be slowly walking over to have another dish of gravel placed on their heads. It was like some ritual dance, as the women passed back and forth, not speaking, just endlessly repeating the procedure. I wondered how old the

little children would be by the time the job was finished.

At Bombay an entirely new cockpit and cabin crew came on board. Our next stop for refueling was Kuwait. Little did I dream while I was working on this paper in 1991, that Kuwait would be the focus of the world's attention. Even in 1972, however, the middle east was in just as much turmoil as it is today. When we landed at Kuwait, only those whose destination it was were permitted to go in to the terminal because Anwar Sadat of Egypt was to arrive at any moment. The rest of us stood around outside the plane while it was refuelled. What I remember of Kuwait is that it was fearfully hot, flat, dry, and dusty.

When we arrived in London, the plane and I were the only ones who had come all the way from Singapore that day. As the bags appeared on the carrousel, the other passengers picked theirs up and left. The carrousel stopped turning. There were several bags still on it but none of them were mine. I went in search of someone to help me and found a very disagreeable B.O.A.C. hostess. When I told her my sad story, she impatiently said, "Oh well, *Singapore* , what do you expect. B.O.A.C. shares the counter there with Qantas. Your bag is probably in Sydney by now. But it will turn up some time and we will see that you get it." Whereupon she turned on her heel and left.

While I was talking to her a porter had come up and was listening to us. When the hostess left, the porter said to me, "Don't worry, love. I'll go look for your bags." He was gone for at least half an hour but when he reappeared, he was carrying my two bags, (I had two on this trip. My husband had let me bring an extra one because I was going to be staying for at least a month in England.) I nearly cried with relief. He told me he had waited until all the cargo that had been picked up along the way had been unloaded and in the very bottom of the hold, there were my bags. I almost kissed him, I was so relieved. He saw me safely to a taxi and I was off to my hotel.

Chapter Three

The U. K.

London

In London I stayed at Old St. James House Hotel where my husband and I had stayed before. It had once been a private house and was in a short *cul de sac* at the end of which was the Overseas Club, popular with retired members of the former British Indian Services. It was very gratifying to be greeted by the hotel porter with, "Oh, it's you, Madam! Welcome back." After I settled in my room, I telephoned Martin Davies and as he was teaching, we arranged that I would see him on the coming weekend. Then I telephoned General Evans and he said he would be glad to see me the next day. By now it was five o'clock on my little travelling clock, exactly twenty-four hours after its alarm had awakened me in Singapore that morning, and I gratefully sank into bed.

I suppose the hotel might be called "quaint." There were no public rooms or dining-room. The "lift" could accomodate only the porter and two passengers. It was operated by a rope on which the porter pulled to take it up or down. The switch-board was in a tiny cubby-hole just off the front entrance and was also operated by the porter. There was a telephone in my room but all calls had to go through the switch-board and since this too was operated by the porter, if he happened to be taking someone up or down in the lift I often found myself waiting for quite a long time before I could place an outgoing call. Sometimes friends trying to reach me gave up after waiting so long for someone at the desk to answer. It was one of those ancient switch-boards with plug-in cords and sometimes when the porter wasn't there, all the red buttons lighted up as the calls came in. Despite these drawbacks, the hotel was very conveniently located just off St. James Street, the rooms were comfortable and quiet, and a continental breakfast was provided from some mysterious source.

I hardly ever saw any other guests. The guest-book, however, gave proof that there were other guests, "gentry" who had been coming for "the season" year after year, the porter told me. If by chance I found myself waiting for the lift with one of these rather daunting human beings, we stood in silence without acknowledging each other's presence.

The morning after my arrival I set off once again to see a General, this time Lieutenant General Sir Geoffrey Evans. As I rode in a taxi to his house in a quiet square in the middle of London with the trees just coming into leaf, my feelings were not unlike those I experienced before I met General Dorn. This General was not only a war hero who had been knighted, but he too had had several books published, and again I felt out of my league. But as in Washington, I need not

have worried. Again a handsome gentleman of erect military bearing, with silver gray hair and a well trimmed moustache met me at the door accompanied by his wife. After a few pleasantries, Lady Evans retired to another part of the house where she, like Mrs. Dorn, was attending to her husband's business affairs in connection with the books he had written. She had typed all his manuscripts, she said.

The General led me up several flights of stairs to his den. There we talked for more than two hours in a room that was a veritable museum. It was filled with mementos from his tour of duty in India, campaign flags of his Warwickshire Regiment hung from the corners of the ceiling; medals, ribbons, and decorations were in glass cases, autographed pictures of General "Bill" Slim, General Harold Alexander, and "Monty"--General Bernard Montgomery--were on end tables and on his desk. Books lined one wall from floor to ceiling. Deep red leather armchairs were in front of a fireplace in which a little coal fire merrily burned, and it was all very cozy.

It was obvious when he began to talk that General Evans had spent some time trying to find sources for me. He gave me the names of several of these, among them General Hobson of the Royal Signals Regiment Association who might be able to help me find the Officer Cadets listed on the roster as "ciphers."

While General Evans and I were talking someone from the Bureau of Public Records telephoned telling him to suggest to me that I read a book by a General Frank Dorn called Walkout that had just been published. I had to admit that I had already read it, in fact had met General Dorn, but I was very appreciative.

When I asked General Evans about the Johnnies, it was disappointing that the first thing he said was that "Castens wouldn't play." What he meant by that was that when he was writing his book and tried to get in touch with Castens, Castens refused to see him and would not talk to him. On top of that, as charming as he was, General Evans was a little evasive as to how I could get in touch with Castens. He said he thought that he lived somewhere near Maidenhead or Reading, and I had to be content with that.

He told me that another of the Johnnies was a man named Webster who did agree to talk to him. But, he said, when the Burmese "noseys" in London found out about it, Webster had to stop coming to his house. So perhaps Castens had a good reason for not talking to Evans.

It was now time for me to leave. General Evans telephoned General Hobson to say that I was coming. I was offered a glass of sherry but *not* invited to stay for lunch, it was the housekeeper's day off, the General said. I declined the sherry as I wanted to be on my way. Then, on pain of death if I failed to return it, he loaned me his copy of The Johnnies. Lady Evans came down to say goodbye, and I walked the few blocks to see General Hobson.

Another handsome and charming General, this time in uniform, his chest covered with service ribbons, received me in his office. General Hobson told me that he was with Headquarters of the

British IV Corps in Imphal when General Stilwell and his party arrived there after walking out of Burma. He said he met Colonel Davidson-Houston--which he pronounced 'Hooston'--after the war. He would have been the key man for me to see about the British military, but unfortunately he had died in 1965. His cousin Clear Davidson-Houston had all his papers. When I tried to contact this gentleman I learned that he was ninety-two years old, was not very well, and could not see me.

General Hobson gave me the name of General Holbrook to contact in the Adjutant General's Office and also suggested the Office of the Cadet Force. By now I was getting hungry, so I put that off for another day. I had some lunch, went back to my hotel, and began reading The Johnnies, which made me all the more determined to find Castens. That part of my search was to challenge whatever talent I thought I had as a detective. It would take me to parts of London no tourist ever sees and I loved every moment of the search. But before I could really concentrate on that I had my interview with Martin Davies.

As Martin and I had arranged, I took a morning train to Leatherhead where he met me and drove me to his house in nearby Fetchum. Those two place names have always intrigued me but I forgot to ask Martin what their origin was because our conversation was immediately very lively. As we drove along Martin told me about the Teacher Training School of which he was the Warden, or director. It was exciting to listen to Martin as he talked about his work. The school held refresher courses for teachers to put them up-to-date on the latest developments in teaching methods. It was an innovative program that had just been undertaken by the State and he was very enthusiastic about it. I was to find out that he was enthusiastic about anything he undertook.

His wife Celia was out when we arrived but when she came in she brought lunch in for each of us on trays and we ate while Martin talked. At first it really was not much of an interview, I just let Martin talk as he went through several photograph albums. The more he talked about the pictures, the more excited he got as he went over hundreds of them from his months in China and Burma with the FAU. It took a while before I got a chance to ask him to tell me something about how he happened to be on the Walkout.

Martin Davies, age 21
Friends Ambulance Unit

Those F.A.U. boys were a real heroic group. They would do anything except fight. They were pacifists, true conscientious objectors, but they really won our respect even if we didn't agree with their opinions. Without them some of the group would never have survived.

"I was not a Quaker but I went to Quaker schools in Cheshire until I was sixteen," Martin began. "When the depression came along, my mother could no longer afford the fees. We moved to London and I went to work for Fairey Aviation as an apprentice. I travelled eighteen miles each way to and from work on my motorbike which turned out to be good training for what was coming.

"When the war broke out in 1939, that changed everything. I was going to be called up for military service on my twentieth birthday in November but I chose to serve my country in some non-military capacity. I applied to the FAU and was granted Conscientious Objector status provided I would do relief work for them. This was very agreeable with me, so I went into training at Northfield and then had special training as a mechanic at Highgate.

"The whole thing was slightly ironic. Of course we wouldn't have been in the FAU if we hadn't had some concern for other people. The reason you're a conscientious objector, unless it's a phony thing, is because of some humanitarian reason, some attachment to the human race and a tolerance of people under no matter what conditions. You've got some sort of ideal and you want to get involved in something which might be useful. We thought we would be serving on the battlefields of France as the unit had done in World War I.

"But then the 'phony war' began and there weren't any battlefields in France. Some of us were sent down to London to do rescue work in the blitz. Then somebody got the bright idea of sending us to China. China had been fighting the Japanese for several years and since the Japanese were the aggressors, we would help the Chinese.

"In mid-June of 1941 about forty of us were sent out and we were immediately dubbed 'the forty saints.' We went out on an old British ship, the Molda, in a convoy of eighty ships. We didn't know where we were going or that we would be crossing the Atlantic and the Pacific and not going around Africa as was usually done.

"We went through constant fog in the North Atlantic and then a terrible storm off Greenland. We were attacked by German U-Boats and one of the ships went down. The convoy broke up and we went alone after Halifax. We stopped in New York for two days on the fourth of July but everything was closed. Then we went down the East coast, through the Panama Canal, up the west coast, out to Hawaii and the Fiji Islands, then on to Australia. From Australia we went up to Penang where we were transferred to an old Chinese coaster which eventually got us to Rangoon. "That was the only way you could get to China then. We studied Chinese the whole way out and the trip took thirteen weeks. We'd left England in June and got to Burma in September, 1941.

"When we got to Rangoon I spent a while assembling Red Cross trucks, then we drove them up to Lashio and from there over the Burma Road delivering medical supplies and equipment to Kunming in China. That was as far as the Road went, altogether about a thousand miles of driving from Rangoon. We made several of these trips and I'll never forget how indignant we were when we found out that one of our loads consisted of nothing but Bibles for Chiang to give to his Baptist pals!

"We lived on the road in our trucks most of the time and it got me down sometimes, what with the trucks breaking down and the constant dust and bouts with dysentery. It was interesting that later, despite what we went through in Burma, we all felt better there than we did in China. On the whole, Burma was cleaner and there was better sanitation.

"When the Japs invaded Burma in January, 1942, we couldn't drive the Burma Road any more, so first we offered ourselves to the British Red Cross and brought in their wounded to Dr. Seagrave who was serving at that time with the British. When the Americans came in, Doc Seagrave offered the Mobile Surgical Unit to General Stilwell and several of us opted to stay with him.

"We found ourselves in just as warlike conditions as if we had been soldiers. The bombs that fell on us didn't know that we were CO's and though we never took up arms, there were plenty of times when we wished that we could take a potshot at the bastards who were dropping the bombs. But in some miraculous way, none of us ever got wounded. Brian Jones broke his collar-bone when a jeep turned over on him and Bill Brough got spinal meningitis and both of them were flown out when we got up to Shwebo, but otherwise we stayed in pretty good shape.

"They kept moving the surgical unit back as the Japanese got closer and sometimes we had to drive as much as seventy miles to find them. We brought the wounded in by the dozens, seventy or eighty at a time, draped over the bonnets of the ambulances, lashed to the sides, any way we could. There was a certain percentage of loss, of course, but we brought an amazing amount in, and as soon we brought one load in, we turned around and went back for more."

Martin paused here for a moment to show me a picture of himself standing on the steps of a building where the Chinese dead were laid out waiting for the FAU to take them to a burying site. He was shouting at his buddies to bring out some more dead, there was still room on the truck.

"Ten stiff a day, we want more pay," they would joke with each other, he said. "It was the only way we could stand that gruesome task. But we never had any problem about what to do with the Japanese wounded. There weren't any. They all either got killed or killed themselves before they would let themselves be taken prisoner.

"There was one funny incident before Bill Brough got ill. He had taken one of the trucks down to the front and he didn't come back for hours. When he did come back, he walked in and reported that he had lost the truck, it had been blown up under him and somehow he had escaped unhurt. Tom Owen's immediate reaction was, 'Did you bring back my socks?' 'What socks?' says Bill. Tom's reply: 'They were in the cab of that truck, dammit, my only spare pair!' He was really cross and Bill was somewhat put out. 'He cares more about his damn socks than he does about me!'

"It was pretty backbreaking work and we were tired most of the time. Our clothes were filthy and covered with blood and we smelled. We gave our clothes to the nurses to wash for us when we had a chance. So in all truth, I guess I would have to say that we weren't too disappointed when that part of it was over."

At this point Celia brought in tea and we paused while we ate delicious little sandwiches and a fresh cake she had just baked. We chatted about our children; they had two girls and a boy, just as we did.

When we resumed the interview, Martin asked me whether a certain little side-light had come

my way about Peter Tennant. Since Martin was the first of the FAU I had met, I did not know what he meant. He called it the "schism" in the FAU in Burma.

"Peter Tennant was the leader of our group while we were in China," Martin resumed, "but he was in Kunming at this time. When he heard about what he called our 'mutiny,' he was very angry. He sent word for us to come back to China to help the Chinese, which he said was what we had been sent out to do. But it was no longer safe to travel the Burma Road and we felt that bringing in wounded from the battlefield was really what we had originally been trained for. At the last minute Peter came belting down on a truck to check up on us, which was a pretty nittish thing to do since it was obvious he wasn't going to be able to get back. This annoyed us because it meant just another person to provide for. He was one of our worst drivers, madly inept, in danger of hitting trees and totally unmechanically minded. Doc Seagrave was furious with him when he ruined one of the trucks by getting it stuck on a stump. Seagrave called him 'our hot-shot racing driver.'

"I'm afraid we weren't very nice to him. He was much too serious for us, much more like 'Quaker gray' than we were. But he did hold up his end when we had to walk.

"When the retreat began and Seagrave went with Stilwell, we went along. After we left Shwebo and before we had to abandon the vehicles, something happened that is the kind of thing you remember. Little Bawk, one of the nurses, was driving a jeep with four or five or six of the nurses in it with her. She was just ahead of me and I could see that she was about to run into difficulties and there was nothing I could do about it. She was taking the jeep up a steep bank sideways. You know, a jeep is jolly good but if you get it at too much of an angle it will go straight over, and it did and deposited all those girls out in a heap. I thought for an awful moment that the jeep was going to roll over on them but it didn't, it stood on its side. There the girls were, all in a heap, howling with laughter. So we just pushed the jeep back onto its wheels and off they went again.

"Seagrave had given us the status of almost uncles to those girls and it was a funny mixture of girlfriend, boyfriend, and uncle. We felt we were responsible for them, we were helping get them to safety. It was paternalistic in a way although we were the same age. We each had our individual attachments, but we loved them all 'round too.

"We knew pretty well by the morning we came to the clearing that we couldn't keep on driving the trucks indefinitely. We'd been driving hard for the past week without enough to eat and no sleep, file-driving along the dikes out of Shwebo, then trying to pass the hordes of refugees and the fleeing Chinese troops by driving over the fields and getting stuck on the stumps and in the sand and heading into the jungle.

"This particular morning wasn't much different from the previous days and nights we'd been wandering around in the jungle.. We weren't even aware of what day it was. Ever since daybreak we'd been battling our way through the trees and undergrowth and we had to stop every few minutes while a trail was cleared. Men with saws and axes were going ahead and as we followed them, the

lead vehicles made it somewhat easier for those coming behind. But obviously it was a losing battle and it became apparent that unless we hit a road, we were going to have to stop.

"Suddenly we broke out into a clearing. Beside it was a stream across which was strung a narrow bamboo bridge and on the other side of the stream there seemed to be no trail at all. It was a relief when somebody up ahead gave the order to halt.

"We were told to park the vehicles and to collect ourselves into various small groups. The American soldiery were in one group, the British in another. The ambulance drivers joined the Seagrave Unit and the nurses. Some Chinese soldiers stood near General Stilwell and in a separate group there were the servants and the Asiatic drivers and mechanics for the trucks. So there we waited for the 'pep talk,' the hot story of what was going to happen next.

"When Stilwell told us we were going to walk, we laughed! I must confess that General Stilwell had a slightly comical appearance to us in that Boy Scout hat, and with his long cigarette holder. His American accent was a joke to us. We tended to discount the military as a whole, they were outside the orbit of our morality. The military concept cannot stand up to the man of reason. But we realized that he was probably the only person within a thousand miles who *could* get us out of there because he had the authority to use the means that were available, whatever they might be.

"There was a slight sinking of the spirits at his words because we were all so desperately tired but we were not downhearted. We just thought, 'Well, this is it.' We knew we were in danger and we had to get out. It wasn't a central point in our lives just then, we'd been through so much worse, working at a hectic pace bringing in the wounded. But we lived for the moment in those days, and it seemed an adventure.

"I had been a Boy Scout and I had done a bit of camping. I was pretty athletic and though I was tired, I was physically fit. I felt I had some idea of the priorities of existence, the sort of thing one should have in this situation; food and clothing, those are the priorities, really.

"The one thing I knew for sure that I would need would be plenty of socks to keep my feet right, so I took great pains to collect all I had. I took a straight razor because I didn't know if there would be any place I could buy blades where we were going. And I took my camera and about ten rolls of film which by very good fortune I had happened to buy not long before. And I took my diary.

"We weren't allowed to take a bedding each but we'd say, 'I'll take this bit and you take something else,' and we would share it out. I don't remember that we had any food but whatever we did have, we would share it between us and I felt that I was as prepared as I could be."

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After my interview with Martin I spent the next week typing my interviews on my rented typewriter and setting up my next round of interviews with the FAU, including a trip to Scotland to see Peter Tennant. I continued my pursuit of the British military and the two "guides," Castens and

Barton. Some of my efforts were exhausting and fruitless, but gradually my mind became more "prepared" and chance started to favor me.

I spent one morning at the original but shabby Somerset House looking up birth certificates of some of the British on the roster without any luck. An astonishing number of other people were doing their own research, all of us crowded on to a balcony with a narrow passage between the shelves, heaving the enormous leather bound volumes off the shelves to read them and make notes, then trying to squeeze them back into their proper places. When I returned some years later, the new Somerset House was all glass and glitter and computers, much more efficient but singularly lacking in the historical charm of the old building.

I then began to follow up on General Hobson's suggestions. General Holbrook at the Adjutant General's office sent me to the Commonwealth Office and the Cadet Officers Association, similar to the U.S. ROTC. I could find out nothing about Castens as an Indian Forestry Service officer at the Commonwealth Office so I went to the Cadet Officers Association. A gentleman there suggested the Old War Office in Whitehall.

I should point out that at all of these offices I was always treated with the greatest courtesy. Many of the offices I visited were in cavernous buildings that had escaped the Blitz. They were filled with Dickensian type clerks who summoned an escort for me. These escorts were generally retired Sergeant Majors of the Royal Marines in full dress uniform covered with service ribbons, and wearing a visored white cap like our Marines.

At the Old War Office I had to state my purpose, get a pass, and be escorted down miles of corridors and stairs to musty, dusty record rooms so vast that I was afraid I would never find my way back alone. I was briefed by a very helpful young man on how to find my way from one reference volume to another, and how to interpret all the cryptic symbols in them. I settled down for several hours and I found Major W. D. Haigh from the British military group on the roster. His address was in Nelson, Lancashire. The letter I wrote to him a few days later was returned from Nelson with the words "Gone Away" written in a careful hand by the Postmaster, but it did not say, "No forwarding address." It was not until several more letters came back to me marked that way that I caught on that, at least to me, it was a somewhat puzzling euphemism for "deceased."

I joined the Town of Westminster Public Library, the nearest one to my hotel. My daughter had given me a commission to do for her in connection with some research she was doing at Harvard on the Hutton family of Marske. I pored over Who Was Who,¹⁹ Kelly's Handbook to the Titled, Landed Gentry and Official Classes,²⁰ and Burke's Genealogical History of Peerage, Baronage and Knightage.²¹ I tracked down the Historical Manuscript Commission with a charming librarian named Janes, which he pronounced Jines. He made me jump when he said, "Ah ha, I've got him!"

Though this particular search had nothing to do with the Walkout, I found it highly

entertaining. When I told Mr. Janes about my own search, he was also most helpful to me in suggesting books on the war in Burma. I took out several of these, among them A Sinister Twilight,²² Desperate Journey,²³ and Sittang: The Last Battle.²⁴ These books gave me the tragic picture of how ill-prepared the British were in Burma for the Japanese invasion and how heroic but inadequate were the two Infantry battalions that tried to hold back the Japanese.

Mr. Janes also told me to try the Public Records Office in Chancery Lane. When I went there I was told to go to the Round Room which was a huge rotunda with shiny oak paneling, and partitions that seemed deliberately designed to conceal the clerks who sat behind them at their high desks. I finally found someone who sent me to the Long Room. Another clerk, after quite a long search, told me I should go to the India Office across the river! This was where all the records on Burma were kept before the war.

It was a long way away and as it was getting late, I went to the Central Reference Library instead for a different approach. There in Standard and Poor I found the current addresses for companies which had operated in Burma before the war, Burmah Oil and the Irawaddy Flotilla Company. Through them I later was able to trace one of the Oriental Mechanics and, as it happened, also the two British "officer cadets." Just for fun I looked up my husband's company and to my surprise there I was in London reading his name in a reference library.²⁵

Next day I did go to the India Office, in Orbit House across the river on Blackfriars Road. A large sign posted inside said that due to bomb threats one had to surrender one's coat and umbrella or any other suspicious looking object. In my search in the India Forestry Service Records, I found there was a gap of four years, 1941-44 when nothing was printed, I was told, "due to the paper shortage." Someone told me later that the India Office had been heavily bombed in the Blitz which was why there were such sparse records, but no one mentioned that to me while I was there. But to my amazement I did find Herbert Castens listed it in with a brief biography that said he had attended Queen's College, Cambridge, 1926. This was the first solid clue to come my way about this elusive man.²⁶

I had finished reading The Johnnies by then. I could not get over the photograph of General Evans that was on the back cover. It showed him in uniform and wearing the now familiar beret made popular by "Monty." He had a wicked gleam in his eye and he was incredibly good-looking. I could not wait to see him again! I rang him up to ask if I could bring the book back. This time we sat in the drawing-room on the first floor and Lady Evans joined us. I congratulated him on his birthday which had been on the previous Monday and he said, "You certainly read The Times carefully, don't you?" Well, yes, I always did, I said, and being a fan of British Royalty, I always read the Court Circular too. Right beneath the Circular the birthdays of British notables are listed and having been knighted, Sir Geoffrey was one of them. Feeling rather daring at this point, I asked him what the ceremony of being knighted had been like. He said he could not remember a thing

about it at the time but Lady Evans had been at the Palace for the ceremony and she told me about it. She said that he did everything just right. The Queen Mother knighted him with his own sword and he did not split his trousers when he knelt down to be dubbed, his greatest fear, she said, as they both laughed. He did not trip over his sword, and he remembered to back away after it was done.

When I said I did not think I could ever write anything as readable as his book, he said, "Rubbish," and gave me a good squeeze as I was leaving. He was still quite a charmer.

When I was not working, I indulged myself in the evenings with some social pleasures. Paul Jones had told me that his daughter Julia was working in London. In appreciation for how much he had helped me, I invited Julia for a drink and took her out for dinner. She was very amusing and it was a pleasure to be with an attractive American girl again. She told me about the U.S. Air Force officer she was in love with and I learned last year from Paul that subsequently they were married. "General Joe," as she called General Stilwell, was her god-father but she never knew him, he died on her first birthday. But she grew up with the Stilwell children and grandchildren and she remembered a great deal of what her parents had told her about her father's career. It was almost like having another interview.

I went to the theater several times. Unlike its counterpart in Philadelphia, London theater was flourishing and inexpensive. One night I went to a play called Alpha-Beta, starring Albert Finney. It was a very powerful play about disintegrating marriages. Half of the women in the audience were weeping by the end of the first act, the men were looking guilty, and several of both sexes walked out at the intermission. On another evening, Alec Guinness in Journey Round My Father was a pleasantly bland contrast.

By the end of that week I had made my plans for the journey to Scotland. I had decided that I would rent a car and drive to see Peter Tennant. I could visit some friends along the way and I would try to see Bill Brough in Newcastle. Though he had not been on the Walkout, Bill was one of the FAU boys who had been in Burma and had joined the Seagrave Unit.

Not having driven in England for several years and never by myself, when I went to the Hertz agency to rent a car, I explained to the agent that I did not want to start right out driving through London traffic. When I told him that I would be going first to Hingham in Norfolk County, he said he would arrange for me to pick up a car in Norwich. He assured me that the traffic would be far less heavy than around London, and that I should have no problem.

Journey by Cortina

I took the train to Norwich where I gave a taxi driver the address I had been given for the garage where I was to pick up the car. It seemed to me that we went a very long way into the country to get there, but evidently the office in London had taken me at my word when I said I did not want to have to drive in heavy traffic. In any event, when we arrived at the garage, the

attendants said they had been told nothing about me, but I had my contract with me and after several telephone calls, they agreed to let me have a car. They hunted around and found a Ford Cortina. It seemed awfully big to me and I asked the mechanic to let me test drive it with him, but he was impatient to get back to work and breezily assured me that I was going to be *A-Okay*.

For the first few miles I was sure I had a flat tire until I realized that I was hitting the curb on the left side, so anxious was I to be sure to stay on my side of the road. After the initial terror of slowly negotiating the first two or three roundabouts, while giant lorries angrily blew their terrifying klaxons at me, I gained some confidence and made my way to Hingham to spend the night with an old friend from the Philippines.

The next day, through flat and boring countryside with very little traffic, I did something I never did at home. I picked up a young man with a rucksack hitching his way home. He was a college student doing research on the forests of the U.K. They were rapidly disappearing, he said. He was very good company and when I told him what I was doing he was much interested in a period of history about which he knew nothing. After dropping him off at Galashiels, I went on to the river Humber where I would take a ferry across to Hull. On the map this had not seemed to present any problem, but not so. The ferry was an ancient Cunarder and getting a car on board could only be done by negotiating a narrow wooden ramp with no guard-rail. Here the attendant in charge of loading the ferry was a friendly looking man and I stopped to say that I was apprehensive about taking the car onto that ramp.

There was nobody behind me and as I looked at him, I decided he must have been in World War II. I have to admit that even before I began my research I have often asked the casual person if he or she was in World War II, and I have had some fascinating conversations as a result.²⁷

I asked the attendant my usual question. Not only was I right about him, he had been a "B.O.R." (British Other Ranks, e.g. non-officer,) in the 14th Army with General "Uncle Bill" Slim and had walked out of Burma via Kalewa when the allied forces retreated. Unfortunately, a line of cars had formed behind me as we talked and I had to face that narrow ramp. My new-found friend assured me I could make it, and with a "Cheerio" he waved me on. I did make it onto the ferry without mishap and made my way to the lounge where I restored myself with a cup of coffee during the crossing to Hull. When I have returned to Hull in later years by train, I have seen the magnificent bridge that now crosses the river at Humberside, and have thought about the friendly B.O.R. at the ferry, now replaced by the bridge. I wish that I had been able to find him and talk to him again

After visiting my friends over-night in Hull, I went on to Marsk to try to carry out the commission my daughter had given me. Unfortunately the manor house, a handsome one, was closed. Only a caretaker of the estate was there. She told me that the family was then living in Durham, and I could do no more.

I went on to Gateshead across the Tyne from Newcastle, where I was to interview Bill Brough. I chose to stay there rather than in Newcastle to avoid the traffic of a big city. As it turned out, I would have done better to stay in Newcastle. Bill was then a consulting psychiatrist at Claremont House, just across the bridge from Gateshead. This was a half-way house for mentally disturbed patients on the outskirts of Newcastle where Bill saw his patients twice a week. He told me to meet him there at six-thirty.

I was advised to take the "Tyne-y" bridge, as it was called, because it was much smaller than the newer bridge that led to downtown Newcastle. Even so, because of the time of the appointment, I hit all the going-home traffic. I made it all right but I could not find my hotel when I went back to Gateshead after the interview!

When I arrived at Claremont House I was told that Dr. Brough was on the telephone and I was ushered into a lounge where the patients were gathered after their supper. This had once been a private home and the room showed signs of wear and tear. I sat down beside one of the patients on a dilapidated sofa and she immediately began chattering away. It was an enormously interesting experience but eerie too. It was like being at a play about disturbed people but this was not a play. The young woman told me that she was going home the next day for a weekend visit but the thought made her nauseated. Another patient joined in, saying that she was nauseated too, she had eaten too much at supper. "They give you too much to eat at this place, what a waste it is. I can't eat it all, what with all my allergies. But I love a cuppa tea and a biscuit, don't you, love?" she said to me. Another patient came over to me and said, "Watch out for her. She's a schizophrenic and she'll be after you all the time."

Then a tough-looking middle aged woman stood in front of me and belligerently asked me if I was "coming in," or was I just an out-patient, or was I a social worker? I was getting more and more uncomfortable. It was almost funny but it was really terribly sad, so I was enormously relieved when Dr. Brough came in and took me to his office.

Bill Brough, age 23
Friends Ambulance Unit

If Bill had gone on the Walkout he would have been dead.

I told Bill about some of the conversations I had had while I waited for him and I mentioned that one of the patients had said how much she looked forward to her shock treatments. He looked surprised but he said "Well, she isn't one of mine. I gave up those treatments some years ago. Yes, I surely would have died if I had been on the Walkout," he went on. "But I resented that I missed it, that I was not involved in that historic event. So when I became so ill and had to leave the unit, I was disappointed.

"My years with the FAU were the most formative ones of my life. My father was a miner in

Northumbria and my mother died of cancer when I was fourteen, leaving a large family. I left school and went to work for less than a dollar a week. It was the great depression. I was an errand boy, I never did get a real education. I worked at various jobs in the village until the war broke out. The doctor and the parson were the highest kind of position to aspire to, or if one were very, very clever one could get a scholarship and become a teacher. If one were tall enough, one could become a policeman, but I wasn't tall enough for that, so that was out. These were the horizons in that little village until I got away in the war and met people who came from circumstances somewhat like my own. Some of them were educated or had even gone to university. I began to dream of the possibilities there might be for me.

"When the war broke out and I was called up, I registered as a Conscientious Objector and joined the FAU. I was not a Quaker, my family were all Methodists, but it was a personal protest, an objection to the inevitable recourse to fighting as a solution to the difficulties between nations.

"My father had been in World War I and my brothers were already in the Army but they supported me. Nobody else did, but they felt that what I was trying to do was adequate, correct, and appropriate for me even if it wasn't for them. One of them was killed later and the other one lost both his legs. I didn't think that being a C.O. was the complete answer but it was an attempt to stand up and say, "It's not *right* that we should go on fighting this way.

"For the first time I met educated, articulate people in the FAU. It was a tremendous opportunity. I never thought that I would find myself in charge of this, that, or the other but all the time situations arose and one *was* in charge. When this first happened, I thought there must be some mistake, I'd find out soon enough, so I'd do whatever it was. The problem had to be solved no matter how inadequate I might be.

"Most of the time we didn't think that what we were doing was good or not good, we just thought it was part of what had to be done. We were doing a fairly honest, straight-forward, competent sort of job. The fact that we were doing anything at all in a situation where so little was being done was because we worked together, we were a *unit*. We had worked out our difficulties, we knew each other. We had trained together and we were a functioning unit. And we had motivation for being there whereas most of the others were there from sheer happenstance.

"I was in charge of that group of the FAU while we were in Burma and when we got up to Shwebo, we were uncertain what was going to happen, whether we might even be captured. But by then I was almost too ill to think about it.

"I had dysentery and was sent out to Myitkyina on the train and from there was flown out to India. Bryan Jones, who had turned over in a jeep and had a broken collar-bone, was also sent out to look after me. Peter Tennant had just come down from China where he had been our boss when we were there, so I handed over the group to him when I left.

"It was a fortunate accident that I was so ill. By the time we got to India I had cerebral

malaria with a fever of one hundred and six degrees and I was unconscious for three days. It was touch and go even in a modern hospital in Calcutta. So I surely would have been dead if I had been on the trail, on the Walkout. When we went back in to Burma later, we passed the skeletons and bodies and bones of the refugees who had died on the way out and I would have been one of those bodies."

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It was dark by the time the interview ended and I had no trouble getting to the bridge but somehow I got onto one of those "fly-overs" with the yellow fluorescent lights which seem to impede my vision rather than help it. I could see the hotel in the distance but I could not find any way to get to it. I got off on a ramp that turned out to be the road to the sea, and was on the other side of the fly-over from the hotel. I came to an intersection where I had already been before and I stopped to think. Just then a beautiful white shiny Rover marked POLICE in huge letters drew up beside me. I told the officer I was trying to get to the hotel and he said, "It's rather *difficoolt* to tell you, just follow me." So off we went, back onto the fly-over again and within two minutes were back at the hotel. I never figured out how we got there, but I was certainly happy that that Police car came along when it did.

The day after I saw Bill Brough I headed for Callander which was in the Central Highlands, about fifty miles north of Edinburgh. Somewhere along the way I stopped to telephone to say what time I expected to arrive and a very well-trained voice said she would tell Mrs. Tennant. Peter had sent me a card with directions for getting from the little town of Callander to his house which was called "Invertrossachs." It was rather a gray day but I drove along happily fantasizing about a Scottish manor house with a staff of servants and ghillies for stag-hunting.

Following the map out of Callander, I turned off on to a narrow road and drove about six miles along a lake in a valley between dark hills whose tops were covered with snow. I was told later that, "All this is ours, as far as the eye can see." There was a distinct smell of what I thought was peat smoke.

At last I came to a gate-house beside a closed gate. A rather grumpy woman stuck her head out of the door and said, "Just go on up, but mind you close the gate behind you." Having dutifully done as I was told, I went along on what was now little more than a farm track.

Suddenly I came around a corner and there was a large house with scaffolding on the face of it. There was a circular driveway in the middle of which someone was working in a flower-bed. This individual was wearing a man's battered brown felt hat, a sweater with a ragged shawl over it, high thick wool socks and Army boots, and was smoking a stubby little black pipe. I was reminded of Mr. McGregor in The Tale of Peter Rabbit. I got out of the car and said that I was looking for "Invertrossachs." Barely looking up, this person replied in a cold tone, "This is "Invertrossachs." You must be Mrs. Thompson. I am Mrs. Tennant. "

She finished what she was doing, then said, "Would you like to look around? Peter is heather-burning." Two people came out of the house and she disappeared with them. I walked around the flower-bed feeling totally rejected. After a while she reappeared and in effect said, "Come on in." So I got my suitcase out of the car and followed her. The face of the house on the left side was torn off and the front hall was wide open. Painters' drop-sheets hung down from the ceiling.

Mrs. Tennant told me that the woodwork was full of dry-rot and had to be replaced. She led me up a broad and handsomely carved staircase and took me to my huge and icy room. Then she led me down the hall to the bathroom. It turned out to be right over the front hall and only a billowing cretonne curtain was between me and a fifteen foot drop to the hall below. Later, when I had occasion to use the bathroom, bats flew in and out around the curtain.

She then took me to a cluttered and chilly little sitting-room where we had tea by a fireplace which gave out a great deal of smoke until the coal began to burn properly. As the room warmed up, Mrs. Tennant began to thaw a little too. Until then I had felt just like a "new girl" at boarding school being put down by the head mistress. Having seen her smoking a pipe, I offered her a cigarette which she gladly accepted. In fact she smoked quite a few of them before my visit was over.

After a while Peter blew in, followed by numerous dogs and two young girls whose names were mumbled so that I never really knew who they were. Peter was entirely different from his wife. He was very cordial, very much the country gentleman, handsome and chatty and hospitable.

In a little while Mrs. Tennant said that it was time for everyone to have a *baath* if we were to have dinner at eight. "Mrs. Thompson can go first." Well! What a storm of protest I created when I said I would not have one. It was embarrassing but it was hilarious at the same time. I stubbornly continued to refuse, saying that I had had a bath that morning. Mrs. Tennant shrugged her shoulders and departed. When I later told a friend at home about this episode, he said, "Henrietta wasn't the ugly American, she was the dirty American."

Mrs. Tennant appeared for dinner in a long silk gown with an apricot colored garment over her shoulders that looked like a bed-jacket. Peter had on a dinner jacket with a bow tie that was slightly askew, narrow tartan slacks, and patent leather dancing shoes with black grosgrain bows, such as I had not seen since I was a girl. The girls brought in what turned out to be a delicious meal.

Mrs. Tennant, quite the social hostess by then, began talking about her family, the Nettlefolds, who were in "screws," she said. "I'm *county*, you know." I did *not* know, but later, when she asked me about my family, I said that my parents were Virginians. "Oh, that's in New England, isn't it?" "No," I said, "in fact Virginia was settled before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock." Then, to needle her a little, I added, "I'm *county*, you know." She actually laughed heartily and said, "*Touché!*" After that everything was very relaxed.

We went back into the little sitting room after dinner and Peter began to talk. Mrs. Tennant told the girls to sit on the floor and be quiet, but every now and then she interrupted to jog Peter's memory.

Peter Tennant, age 29
Friends Ambulance Unit

Peter was the serious one, much more serious than the rest of us.

"I was older than the rest of the chaps," he began. "I was one of the few who was married and we had two children by then. I was in the business of building houses.

"I was not brought up a pacifist. My father was Under Secretary of State for War under Kitchener in the first war and my whole upbringing and background took militarism for granted absolutely. But when World War II came along, I became a pacifist because I simply felt I could not see Jesus Christ behind a machine-gun. My family were shaken to the core but they accepted it."

Here Mrs. Tennant interrupted. "Your lovely wife suggested that you get in touch with the Quakers and they told you about the FAU." "That's right," Peter resumed. "I took my training and then went out to China via Rangoon. We left Liverpool on a steamer ironically named The Empress of Japan. My wife saw me off and it was the usual wartime parting, that was bad enough. But then, because the ship was so new and so fast, there was no need to put us in a convoy. As soon as we were out in the Atlantic and headed south, we were bombed and machine-gunned and the ship caught fire.

"We finally managed to get the fire under control and limped back to the northwest coast of Scotland accompanied by Sunderland flying-boats and a corvette. We were sent back home and told to wait. In due course we started all over again, this time on The City of Cairo, a very, very ancient ship. This time it was *hell* for my wife, she was sure she would never see me again.

"We were in a convoy but we were the slowest ship which meant that the others had to go at our speed. We lost a very high percentage of the convoy and the commander broke it up and left us on our own. This was a very uncomfortable feeling after having seen the other ships being shot up and sinking in no time at all, a matter of seconds, from the torpedoes. However, we survived and took the immensely long journey around the Cape and to Rangoon. The first effort was in February, this was in April. We arrived in Rangoon in July 1941.

"We spent about a month in Rangoon getting the trucks ready to drive up the Burma Road to China. The head man who had been sent out from London to look after us was Robert McClure, a Canadian, a brilliant surgeon and a very good motor mechanic. He was *bursting* with energy and *bursting* with ideas. The first thing he suggested when we landed was that we arm ourselves with pistols. You can imagine the impact of that on these highly sensitive pacifists! He hadn't the slightest idea about Quakers or pacifists. He was a very attractive character but his mind flitted all over the

place."

Mrs. Tennant spoke up again: "I do not think I could endure . . . another Robert B. McClure." Peter: "Shh!" He resumed: "We had to report to the British Embassy in Chungking to show them that we were prepared to be responsible because we had a grant for our alternative service. We also set up a program with the Chinese Foreign Office for delivering to Kunming the relief goods that were coming in to Rangoon. So I was made 'number two' under McClure, but since he was all over China on whatever his latest scheme might be, I was really in charge.

"Shortly after the Japanese invasion of Burma, the FAU who were down there were seconded to the Seagrave unit. I felt that it was my job to go down to Burma and get them to come back into our original work in China. We had with some success set up an efficient transport system with the Chinese armies delivering to them the supplies brought up from Burma. I felt that the Seagrave thing was an irrelevancy, not our proper task.

"But when I got down there they had fallen in love with Seagrave or his work or both, and they didn't want to come away. And just at that moment, the retreat began and I had no alternative but to go with them. In many ways they let me know that they were not pleased to see me.

"I was in this very awkward situation. I had come down, you see, ostensibly to wean them away from Seagrave, therefore I was not considered to be one of Seagrave's group or of my own group"

Mrs. Tennant: "But they wouldn't have let you die, would they?" Peter: "Oh no, no. That would have been against their principles." "I see," said she. "Thou shalt not kill, but needst not strive, officiously to keep alive." "No," said Peter, "It wasn't as bad as that, but I was a bit of a lone figure because of the position I had taken.

"When Stilwell addressed us in the clearing, I knew the reason for our haste. I knew that the Japs were very close, that they were after our party and one would guess that they were after Stilwell.

"He sorted us out into groups; we were then about a hundred strong I think, and we took what we could carry. We had been driving hard without enough to eat and no sleep and the food situation wasn't going to be all that rosy, but the walking aspect didn't bother me. I'd been walking all my life and I was in reasonably good condition."

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At the end of Peter's interview, he poured some whiskey for Mrs. Tennant and me and himself. We chatted as we sipped it, and shortly after that we went to bed.

The next day was Sunday. After a splendid breakfast of Scottish oatmeal with heavy cream enjoyed in a sunny breakfast room, Mrs. Tennant and I took off, she for church and I to head south. Peter stayed home to see me off and to answer any calls he might get from people in need. He was a "Good Samaritan," one of a group of people formed to give help to anyone who needed it, and he said he often got calls on Sundays. He must stay at home in case someone needed him.

Back to London

Once out of Scotland, it was a long boring day on the Motorways to Liverpool. These are the convenient fast-moving roads similar to our Interstate highways but of course this completely eliminates the slower routes through picturesque villages. Getting into Liverpool was a nightmare, so I turned in the car there, spent the night with friends, and took the non-stop "Flying Scotsman" to London the next day. The British Rail "Inter City" system was a real treat for anyone who could hardly go anywhere on a good train in the U.S. any more.

I had a great deal to write up about my trip, and I had several more interviews coming up. I continued my pursuit of the British military at the Imperial War Museum. This splendid repository of information and artifacts from all of Britain's military history is heaven on earth for anyone doing war research. At the Information desk I explained what I was looking for. I signed in and was given an escort, a retired Sergeant Major in uniform with a chestful of ribbons. With one hand behind his back, he ceremoniously escorted me to the lift and we rode to the third floor which is not open to the public. Here he bowed me along several corridors and through closed doors to the secluded chambers of the Deputy Librarian. The Sergeant Major was much too dignified for me to chat with, but he would return for me when I was ready to leave, he said.

A wonderfully bright young woman asked how she could help me. I gave her several names of the British military and within about five minutes she was back with three volumes. One was, of all things, a bound volume of issues of the U.S. Cavalry Magazine, March-April 1943²⁸ with an article by Colonel J. V. Davidson-Houston about the Walkout and two books he had written called Armed Pilgrimage,²⁹ the story of his war years, and Armed Diplomat about his subsequent service.³⁰ This was the man General Dorn had told me had been put in charge of the British military by General Stilwell when the decision to walk out was made in the clearing. Of course I could not take these works out, so I settled down to read as much as I could and scribble notes as fast as I could. Nothing I could have found in this man's papers if I had been able to obtain them from his ancient relative could have yielded more than I found as chance favored my prepared mind on page after page of the U.S. Cavalry Magazine.

Davidson-Houston was a graduate of the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst where he received a Double First in Russian and Chinese languages. He had spent most of his foreign service in the Far East prior to the war, at which time he was forty years old, and a Colonel in the Royal Engineers of the British Army.

He and his Deputy Assistant, Major O. C. M. Dykes, were serving in Mesopotamia in January, 1942 when they received orders to proceed to Delhi. There they waited for five weeks for further orders, "meanwhile doing nothing other than playing polo and sightseeing and feeling not very proud of it. "Finally they were ordered to report to the British Military Mission in Chungking.

On the last lap of the journey from Calcutta they happened to be on a plane with General Stilwell whom he described as "bespectacled, spare of build, nearly sixty years old, and resembled Uncle Sam without the beard."

In Chungking it was Davidson-Houston's job to train three Chinese commando groups in demolitions. Then it was decided that he would be more useful in Burma where he could assist General Stilwell in training the Chinese troops as they arrived, but they had to wait for weeks for approval from Chiang Kai-shek. While they waited, they had hours with nothing to do. "We took long walks in the surrounding hills where I was struck by the beauty of the pink magnolia, the cherry blossoms, and yellow rape," he wrote. He went to a Chinese dinner where he said the entertainment was provided by "heavily built Chinese girls galumphing about in ballet costume."

At the European dinners they had to go to, ". . . the cooking was fraught with difficulties and peanut butter." Finally, on April 20, 1942 he and Dykes flew from Chungking to Lashio in Burma where they ran into General Orde Wingate. He and Davidson-Houston had been contemporaries at "The Shop," the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. Though he did not really know Stilwell yet, Davidson-Houston commented here that Wingate was like Stilwell "intelligent, determined, courageous, but self-opinionated and intolerant. They were both filled with restless energy."

By the time they reached Stilwell in Maymyo, the front was being drawn back and they decided that the best thing to do was to stay with Stilwell. "After that, it was a case of 'follow-my-leader,'" he wrote.

When the retreat began they moved up to Shwebo with the Americans. At this point in his story Davidson-Houston commented, "Having arrived in Burma by air and with a roving commission, and then being immediately thrust into the retreat, entailed an existence which in the Far East can hardly be surpassed for discomfort . . . travelling without an orderly." In Shwebo, by chance they ran in to a British Major, "Beaver" Barton, a heavily bearded fellow in a slouch hat who had managed to secure a compartment on a train that was headed for Myitkyina. Barton, unlike Davidson-Houston, had a servant with him named Sam who had lost everything but his trousers. Barton invited Davidson-Houston and Dykes to share the compartment with him. The train got as far as Indaw but there it halted because there had been a serious collision on the line up ahead. There was nothing to do but to get off and seek some other means of escape.

Here they were joined by a Forestry Service officer, a giant of a man over six foot six who, like "Beaver," wore a broad-brimmed hat and a dense black beard. His name was *Castens!* When they set off to find a lorry they encountered General Stilwell's "little ginger-haired Medical Officer," [Colonel Robert P. Williams] who invited them to join the Stilwell group, which they did. "From Indaw we proceeded westward for several days in seven heavy trucks and about twelve jeeps," Davidson-Houston wrote. He went on to describe the terrible congestion on the roads, which he said were alive with refugees walking, carrying each other, riding in bullock carts and on pack

ponies. "There were Indian troops and Chinese soldiers and civilians, and British officials, and I was not clear how the Stilwell group managed to sort itself from all these hordes. In fact I think all sorts did join his group without permission. When we went into the jungle and could go no further in the vehicles, the General gathered us in the clearing and told us that we must walk from there on.

"I was put in charge of the British military though I had never seen any of them before. The majority of them were not fit to undergo hard marches by reason of having previously been motorized or chairborne."

Davidson-Houston went on to describe the walk to the first campsite at Nanantun carrying full packs. Even with the temperature over one hundred and five degrees, and carrying a full pack, he still noticed that the woodland path was carpeted with mauve orchids, something no one else mentioned. Poetically, he wrote, "It was a picturesque sight as we came into the village at dusk as the fires were started. They flickered on the Shans armed with *dahs*, and the cheerful little Burmese nurses with flowers in their hair, singing English hymns and Negro spirituals."

In these pages I discovered a man who was perceptive and articulate. I enjoyed his wry sense of humor, a man who was able to laugh even under the most trying circumstances. It was unfortunate that General Stilwell never got to know Davidson-Houston; he made some derogatory comments about British "sissies" in his letters to his wife. I feel sure that he would have appreciated a mind that could encompass both Russian and Chinese, and could be as witty as the General himself.

Not only was this article good reading, it also told me a great deal about the author and the Walkout from a perspective different from any I had so far heard. I could check off six names from the Stilwell roster that I had now picked up. Including Davidson-Houston himself, they were Major Dykes, "Beaver" Barton and his servant Sam, Colonel Robert Williams, and Castens. My determination to find Castens was even greater than it had been before.

Out of dogged persistence I went back to the Commonwealth Offices. This time Colonel A. A. Dacre, O.B.E. sent me to an office on Millbank Street, close to the Tate Gallery. There Mr. Lamb told me that his was just a very small branch of the Foreign Office. He told me that I should go to the Commonwealth Coordination Office on King Charles Street. He did not tell me that it was in the Foreign Office itself. He gave me very explicit directions which I conveyed to the taxi-driver, and which somehow turned out to be the Tradesmen's entrance for what was in fact the back door to the Foreign Office on Whitehall. This I discovered as I made my way unquestioned by the help who courteously showed me the way to the front desk. We went along several dingy corridors, past coalbins, shelves of canned goods, meat lockers, and crates of vegetables.

The Information Officer was startled at the direction from which I appeared. She was also baffled when I explained to her that I was trying to find someone who had been in the Indian Forestry Service in Burma. She suggested that I should perhaps talk to the Burma Desk Officer for

Southeast Asia. She rang him up and let me talk to him and again I explained what I was looking for. The connection was poor and our conversation was interrupted several times while trolleys filled with documents tied with red tape trundled by over the tile floor. In frustration I finally said, "Do you have a minute? Maybe I could give you some more information if I could talk to you." He replied, "I have lots of minutes. I don't think I can help you, but anyway, come up to room W46 A."

The Information Officer seemed surprised, but she filled out the proper slip and gave it to a messenger named Brenda. The messengers here were women in blue uniforms with red crowns on their lapels. Brenda looked very smart in her uniform as she took me up to the second floor, chatting all the while about the weather. "It's very windy but the sun is shining, and that's always nice, isn't it?" she babbled on. As we proceeded along interminable tiled corridors, we passed windows that overlooked a courtyard. Brenda pointed out the sleek Daimlers and Bentleys which she said belonged to the diplomats of foreign countries.

The Burma Desk Officer turned out to be a handsome bearded young man of about twenty-five named Michael Roberts. He was in a huge room with three desks and he seated me at his. At one of the other desks, two men were talking in very loud tones about the Philippines to a young woman. At the third desk a young man was huddled over a telephone the entire time I was there.

This was the Ministry of Overseas Development Pension Department. Mr. Roberts said that if Castens had been a Forestry Service officer under the British before the war, he should be receiving a pension. He telephoned someone named Miller who said he would look into it and call back. When he did, Mr. Roberts said, he would ring me up. I gave him my name and telephone number but without much hope. From my experience in the U.S., I knew that the pension people would not give out an address, one had to write a letter to be forwarded by them. This was what I had to do in London with the Adjutant General's Office, and so far I had had no reply from anyone. Mr. Roberts also suggested Social Security, the British Legion, and Army Pensions.

As I was about to leave, Miss Grant, the Philippine Desk officer, stopped to speak to Mr. Roberts. She told me that the news from the Philippines was that they had sent up a rocket. I never did find out what that meant.

As Mr. Roberts escorted me downstairs, we chatted about his career. He told me that he had passed the initial Foreign Service examinations and had started pretty much at the bottom of the ladder. Burma, the Philippines, and Thailand were Third Desks, he said, and pretty low.

To my surprise, when he ushered me out of the building, I was in the courtyard I had seen from upstairs. I walked past a number of chauffeurs who were lovingly polishing their elegant cars. I went on through an archway on the other side of the courtyard and there I was in Downing Street, right in front of Number 10! Two bobbies were standing there and politely unlocked a gate to let me

out into Whitehall. How ironic that I got *in* so easily to the Foreign Office and had to have a gate unlocked to let me *out*.

I walked a few blocks to the British Legion where Mr. Rose told me that there were five thousand branches of the Legion and that there was no central list of members. This was another dead end since I did not know where Castens lived. Mr. Rose suggested that I try "Burma Star Association" that sounded like "Ex-CBI Roundup." He looked up the address and the name of the Honorable Secretary. It turned out to be miles away, down in a basement and everyone by then had gone home for the day. I was ready to give up for that day myself and went back to my hotel.

As I had expected I heard nothing from Mr. Roberts. During the next week I had four more interviews, all connected with the FAU. The first interview was with Bill Duncumb in Cirencester, which is pronounced "Sissester." I took the train and Bill met me at the station. He was a big solid looking man with a gentle voice. He drove straight to his house as I was expected for supper. It was a converted schoolhouse which they had bought at an auction. I met Mrs. Duncumb and their two sons and almost immediately we went in to supper. The boys expressed delight that I had come because Mrs. Duncumb had made their favorite "pooding". It was some sort of cake with green angelica, a froth of whipped cream and egg white on top.

During the meal Mrs. Duncumb told me about herself. She said that she met Bill in India when she went out as a surgical intern in 1952 and they were married there. She became a surgeon and they had two children by the time they came back to England on vacation after five and a half years. It was a tremendous culture shock, she said.

When they had two more children, they decided they wanted them to go to English schools. They had recently returned to England to live. That had worked out well for the children and for Bill, she said, but it was terribly hard for her to learn to be a housekeeper and do all the work after years of servants. and being a busy surgeon.

We had coffee by the fire in the sitting room after supper and even I got too hot. I noticed that Bill called Mrs. Duncumb "wife" when he asked her to open a window a little bit. I felt somewhat presumptuous when I asked him to tell me how he happened to join the FAU. He was very courteous but I was somewhat in awe of him.

Bill Duncumb, age 25
Friends Ambulance Unit

Bill was a very special sort of chap, one of a kind, a real Christian.

"No, I never carried a weapon," Bill said when I started the interview. "The others had guns in their trucks in case they were ambushed, but I never had one. I remember that I wore a cross on a chain around my neck, an FAU cross, and I carried that right through the war with me. I was a

little older than the rest of the boys and I had been in training as an accountant. I lived in London and had been involved in Christian work for some years. It was a difficult time when the war came along. When it came to pacifism, I felt that as a Christian I should do something constructive, but I should not be a member of the armed forces. So I declared myself a conscientious objector, eventually was granted that status, volunteered for the FAU, and thereby landed in Burma.

"I was one of the later ones to arrive. We came out by convoy, arriving in Rangoon on St. Valentine's day, 1942. I made one trip to China but then was posted to do some accounting. Then I was assigned to Seagrave and within three weeks of that we were walking out. I only had time to make two or three trips down to the front for the wounded, the others had made many more, had been through much more than I had.

"When we arrived at the clearing that morning, General Stilwell stood in the middle of the group giving instructions and said if there were any questions, now was the time to ask them. I don't remember what if any personal effects I carried. Somewhere Eric found a great flowing cape and he wore that. Peter had on his beautifully fitting long Edwardian trousers. George had found an American helmet and stuck it on his head and Tom, what I remember about him is that he had started growing a beard which finally got to be quite a good size.

"I felt that under General Stilwell we were in the best of hands and though we were tired from the driving and lack of sleep, walking was just a matter of overcoming that fatigue. We knew that we were in danger and that we had to get out.

"We started out walking from the clearing that afternoon and it was hard work even though it was on the flat. It is always extremely hot in Burma in May. We were in a sort of plain in the blazing sun and that made it tough going. It was well over a hundred degrees in the shade and there wasn't any shade. Lack of sleep the past twenty-four hours also made it very tough.

"But suddenly an extraordinary thing happened. We were going along and we came to a little stream and there beside it was an English lady sitting under a parasol. Her servants were with her and they were brewing tea and she invited us to have tea with her. That made all the difference, we were able to go on quite refreshed.

"The jeeps kept going past us back and forth, carrying the sick and the urgent things. That is the time that really sticks in my mind as the hardest, that first afternoon in the heat on the level. I think it was purely from lack of sleep. Apart from that there would have been nothing to it. I reminded the rest of the group that during peacetime we used to walk in Epping Forest on Sunday School outings and we did it for fun.

"It got cooler in the afternoon when we were getting near the campsite. Tun Shein had gone ahead and set up the campfires for the evening meal and it was quite a pretty sight, they were twinkling in the dusk. The jeeps had picked up the nurses for the last half mile and they were helping Tun Shein and they were singing and this cheered us up. We were somewhat separate from the Stilwell group in a sort of campground to ourselves near a pagoda."



About nine-thirty I asked Bill to drive me to my hotel. He apologized for the room I had been given, it was a tiny converted stable-boy's room, he said, but it was about the only room available in the whole town. A horse owned by the Queen Mother was racing the next day at nearby Cheltenham and the town was full of people who had come for the races. Actually the room was perfectly comfortable and it was fun the next morning at breakfast to listen in on the conversations of the racing crowd.

From Cirencester I took a bus to get to Cheltenham where I would take the train to Birmingham to see George Parsons. The bus was a double-decker like the ones in London, but this one was green. Of course I sat in the front seat upstairs and it seemed funny to be driving along narrow country roads through freshly plowed fields in such an urban kind of transportation.

In Cheltenham, I had to wait quite a long time for the train. Over the loudspeaker came an announcement telling the waiting passengers that the train was late because the locomotive had run out of water! At some point, across the tracks a man in an orange life-jacket appeared and blew a hunting horn to warn us that a freight train was coming through. After it had passed, he blew three short blasts to say the track was clear. Fancy that on some American rail line!

George met me in Birmingham and drove me to his home in the nearby suburb of Bourneville, where Cadbury chocolates were made and where George worked. He showed me the Cadbury estate which Mrs. Cadbury--who was a Quaker--had turned over to the FAU for their training during the war. The Cadburys were a famous Quaker family, one of whose members was a classmate of my son's at his Quaker School in Philadelphia. Paul Cadbury was the real founder of the FAU in World War I, George told me.

George, his wife Mary, and their teenage daughter Diane lived in an attractive house with a garden in the back. It was full of flowers just coming into bloom. Mrs. Parsons greeted me at the door. We had lunch and she told me about some of her wartime experiences. She was from the "black country" north of Birmingham, she said. She was conscripted into the Land Army and had to work on a pig farm for a Scotsman and she could not understand a word he said. She had to muck out the pig-sty every day and she was always up to her knees in mud. It was terribly cold and wet and she was miserable. After six months she asked for a transfer and was sent to a farm with market gardens owned by three old men. She lived in a hostel with sixteen other girls and she liked that much better.

When George and I began the interview, Mary listened in whenever she was not preparing the tea and supper. I was urged to stay for supper to save George a trip. He was to take his daughter to a dance and would pick her up after he took me to my hotel.

George Parsons, age 23
Friends Ambulance Unit

George was a handsome curly haired fellow, and he could really play the piano--particularly "Tiger Rag."

"My family wasn't particularly well off. My father worked for Cadbury's, the chocolate company, and I went to the local schools. There wasn't enough money for me to go to University and I wasn't bright enough to get a scholarship. So when I'd completed my A Levels, I went to work for Cadbury's too.

"Paul Cadbury, who was a director of the Company, was the real founder of the FAU in World War I and I knew him quite well. I had heard many exploits of the FAU in World War I. Somehow they had fired my imagination. I wasn't a Quaker but when the war started in 1939 I felt that I had to *do* something but I didn't want to join the Army. When I learned that Paul was going to start up the FAU again, I registered as a conscientious objector and joined the FAU. Perhaps I wanted to join the FAU more than I wanted to be a conscientious objector, but it was a very exciting time. I was like all the young people today, wasn't I? I wanted adventure. I went into training camp right here on the Cadbury farm and we had an almost military type training. It included route marching, "Square Bashing," drill, and First Aid as well as home nursing. After about three months of this toughening up, we were sent to London University School of Oriental Languages under two professors and a Chinese chappie.

"Then came the call for China and I suppose I volunteered because I wanted to travel, to see the rest of the world. I had some second-hand knowledge about it because geography had always been of great interest to me. I don't think I was really concerned about the Chinese people as my primary reason for going!

"We went out by boat to Rangoon in November 1941 and assembled the Red Cross wagons. They were Studebakers, and we drove them up to Kunming. Then we would hitch-hike back along the Burma Road. When the FAU lorries arrived we assembled those too and drove them to China. We also had some specialized vehicles, a mobile surgery and a mobile workshop.

"When we knew the Japs were coming, we had to get out of Rangoon but three of our lads--I think they were Tom and Eric and Martin--went back to the docks and managed to get some lorries that weren't ours but had been left lying about on the decks in bits and pieces. So they assembled those too and drove them out. They had rather an exciting time getting out of Rangoon, too! Then we joined Seagrave and brought the wounded in from the battlefields until the retreat began.

"The morning we got to that clearing had been preceded by several days and nights of hectic driving. There was no time for serious thinking, we lived for the moment in those days. We knew the walk would be hard work but we were used to that.

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After we had supper and before George took his daughter to the dance, I asked him to play "Tiger Rag" for me. He played it so stirringly I felt I was back at Palmer Stadium in Princeton! His daughter was embarrassed, but I loved it. I also asked George if he knew anything about the three refugees who were listed with the Seagrave Unit on General Stilwell's roster. They were Mr. and Mrs. Hole and Mrs. Hole's sister, Zeli Boller.

George did know about them. He told me that Mr. Hole was British and was a secretary in the British Secretariat in Rangoon. Mrs. Hole and her sister Zeli Boller were Eurasians.

Zeli Boller was a typist for a business firm in Rangoon. Her husband was an Indian Sergeant in the British Army and had gone to the front with his outfit when the war broke out. Zeli had done some typing for the FAU boys when they came down to Rangoon on their trips from Kunming. George added here that he and the other boys thought that she was "quite a dish."

When Rangoon was evacuated in March, the FAU gave her and the Holes a ride in their trucks as far as Lashio where they left them. Some time later, after the Stilwell group had left Shwebo on their way north, they ran into these three again.

They had lost all their belongings, they had no one to turn to, and they asked if they might join the group. Peter Tennant, who was nominally in charge of the FAU group by then, gave his consent. When General Stilwell had a roll call of the entire party, Dr. Seagrave caustically referred to them as "those three the Friends picked up."

When George came back from taking his daughter to the dance, we talked some more about the other FAU boys. He had not seen Bill Duncumb or Bill Brough for ages though he still kept in touch with Martin. After a while he took me to my nice little "Country Hotel," and the next day I went back to London.

On the way back I stopped off for an hour or so in Coventry to visit the new Cathedral. It had recently been completed to replace the one on the same site that was destroyed in the worst German bombing raid of the whole war. As I approached it, the first thing I saw was part of a huge wooden cross lying on its side in a pile of rubble just where it had fallen during the bombing.

The new cathedral was very modern, quite startling in fact, with huge glass windows and lots of light wood panelling. Although there was a magnificent rose window at the east end, I was not sure whether I liked the overall effect of such a startling break with the traditional Gothic. The symbolism of the new cathedral, however, rising like Phoenix from the ashes of the old, was very moving. Alas, I was also reminded once again of the dreadful act of reprisal carried out by allied bombers on the defenseless city of Dresden, much of whose beauty and charm would never rise again.

The Search Continues

Back in London my next interview was an FAU double-header with Eric Inchboard and his wife Ruth. They lived outside London and when I asked if I could come to see them, they said they

would prefer to come in town to see me. I have always thought it intriguing that with his unusual name Eric chose architecture as a career. He had just come back from Poland where he had been the architect for a new Intercontinental Hotel. Before he left for Warsaw he had finished converting a house into an office for Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and he wanted to show it to Ruth. It was just two houses away from my hotel and I occasionally saw Fairbanks coming and going in a beautiful red Jaguar.

I asked the hotel porter if I could have tea brought up for me and my guests in my little sitting room. This being England, the answer was. "Of course, Madam." So Ruth and Eric came for tea and I interviewed them together.

Eric Inchboard, age 22
Friends Ambulance Unit

Eric was blustery, muscular, teasing, and talkative, and he would never have survived without Ruth.

When I told Eric that someone had said that to me about him, he said, "That's absolutely true. I was like all of the boys, we each had our special attachments with the nurses and Ruth and I were boyfriend and girlfriend on the Walkout. Ken Grant more or less played the field.

"While we were in India after the Walkout, I was very ill with pneumonia and she took care of me and she saved my life. So of course I had to marry her!"

Here Ruth joined in. "And I've been taking care of him ever since! I take care of his very old mother and his ancient uncle too. They live with us, that's what all families in Burma do."

"The other things they said about me were true, too," Eric continued. "I was pretty frivolous, I'll admit. I was a birthright Quaker, the only one in the group who was actually a Quaker, but I hadn't given it much thought. I grew up in Willaston, Cheshire and was brought up very comfortably. I went down to University but I took it too casually and got thrown out. I was one of those 'anyone for tennis?' characters and as long as I could get in a good game of tennis, I never gave a thought to anything else.

"So I started in on an engineering course and this seems an awful thing to say, but the war was almost a godsend for me. The war came along and I never found out if I could have passed the course. I opted out of being a Quaker, I became an apostate. I wanted to make a statement, to be a conscientious objector because of my own beliefs, not because I was a Quaker. So I went into the FAU.

"I really believed that you *could* turn the other cheek, but in the end I found I couldn't. It becomes a personal sort of thing when someone is pooping at you from behind the next tree. But that's another story.

"I completed my FAU training just in time to be sent down to London for the worst of the

blitz," he continued. "I knew there was nothing I could do about those blokes up there dropping the bombs but there was plenty I could do about getting the people out of the bombed buildings.

"Then we were sent out to Burma. We worked with the Seagrave Unit assembling the trucks. When the Japs began bombing Rangoon and everybody started running away, we really looted those trucks. I had been made official wharf super and I had a pretty shrewd idea of where everything was. I had a permit to take out any of the Red Cross equipment and believe me, they were Red Cross on the outside but what they had on the inside was nobody's business, and I took a lot of truck spares. We even found some clothes for the nurses. We were bombed all the time down on the wharfs and there wasn't any RAF so it was rather a relief when we got away from there.

"When we started on the Walkout, we weren't at the best of our form, we'd been working at a hectic pace bringing in the wounded to the Seagrave Mobile Unit. We'd been having some pretty restricted sleep but we were anxious to get out, to get it over with."

Ruth Inchboard, age 20
Seagrave Nurse

Taking care of people came ahead of our personal safety. It was what we were trained for.

"I came from Kentung," Ruth began, while Eric paused for breath. "I was sent to a private school so that I wouldn't get germs! My uncle was the headmaster. It was a Baptist school and I learned English there. Not that I liked it, I hated the English lessons and used to skip off to hide in the loo. My uncle would give me extra lessons in the evenings because I skipped class. Later, when I married Eric, my uncle said to me, 'So you ran away from the English lessons and now you brought the Englisman home instead!'

"I went into training with Dr. Seagrave and I joined the unit that went with General Stilwell. We didn't know what the war meant. We could never stay in one place for long, like the place we were for tonight, we would leave tomorrow and they would come and bomb the place where we had been. We took care of the wounded and we looked after people; flat feet and all the rest of it. Taking care of people came ahead of our personal safety, it was what we were trained for.

"When General Stilwell tell us we have to walk, we are very sorry we can't take what we have been collecting, quite a few things from the places we had been. You know, clothes and shoes, glasses, medical supplies, materials for longgyis--like a sarong--things like that. But we weren't afraid. We didn't mind the walking, we thought it would be like a picnic. We were happy all the time, we were singing even if we have blisters. At first the Quakers, those FAU boys, they never thought about singing, they're all so formal, but later they teach us to sing Gilbert and Sullivan."

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My last appointment with the FAU then living in the UK was to be with Tom Owen. The only other one to get in touch with was Ken Grant who was with UNESCO in Guatemala. Like Martin

Davies, Tom Owen was a school-teacher. He invited me to come for tea on the Friday after I had seen the Inchboards. His home was in Leighton-Buzzard, not very far outside of London, another odd name for my collection.

For the next few days after I had seen the Inchboards, I continued my routine of typing my interviews and trying other approaches to find the British military and Castens. At the suggestion of an American friend who was a bibliophile, and using his card as an introduction, I joined the London Library. This was a private institution in an elegant house in St. James Square. It cost me twenty pounds to join but it was well worth it. Mr. Stevenson, the librarian, and I were the only people there. After an hour of intensive indoctrination, he turned me loose.

The stacks I wanted were on different floors that were reached by very scary narrow iron spiral staircases. The floors were not made of flooring but of metal grids like the iron matting thrown down as temporary landing strips in sand or fields where there are no proper landing places. These grids were similar to the stacks in the Bangor Public Library and I was afraid I would get a heel stuck in one of the holes.

I went right to the Cambridge University Lists for Queen's College and found Castens immediately in the list of the class of 1926 but no degree was shown. His address was of that date. I did write to him there but my letter was returned, not "Gone away," which pleased me, but "Untraceable." At least, I thought, he might still be alive.

It was not until later that I learned that the date given in both the Cambridge and Oxford Lists is the year in which someone entered the University, not the year of graduation as it is in American colleges. I found no one else that morning as I continued my search, but I had the feeling that there was a wealth of information to be discovered in this fantastic place, if only I were persistent enough to find it. But my head was swimming, I could not absorb any more for the time being. Besides, I was starving. I have found that intense research always makes me hungry after three or four hours! So after a snack at The Golden Egg Bar, one of the wonderfully convenient fast food places that were everywhere in London, I walked back to my hotel. The weather was marvellous; children were flying kites in the parks, giant beds of daffodils were everywhere. It was a wonderful time to be in London.

When I got back to my hotel, there was a letter for me, "On Her Majesty's Service," and my spirits soared. But it was a letter from Colonel Dacre at the AG's office in which he wrote that he had served in Serembam, Malaysia and knew Dara Singh. Again this was not the Lieutenant Singh on the Stilwell roster but I was beginning to think I should get in touch with him, having by then heard about him from three different sources.

Still nothing, however, from my friend Mr. Roberts at the Foreign Office. I put Castens out of my mind for the time being and next day I took the train to Leighton-Buzzard to see Tom Owen.

Tom met me at the station and on the way to his house he drove me past an ancient eighteenth century windmill which he said he and a group of friends were in the process of restoring.

When we got to his house, Mrs. Owen--whose name was Fergie--brought out the tea and Tom began to talk. It was interesting that both Fergie and their teenage son sat listening the entire time because, they told me later, they were hearing things about Tom that they had never heard before. This turned out to be the case several more times during the course of my search.

Tom Owen, age 25
Friends Ambulance Unit

Like all Welshmen, Tom had a marvellous voice.

"When the war came along most people looked at it one way or the other, there weren't any people in the middle," Tom began. "You either had to go along with it or you thought that war was so horrible that you had to stand against it. And so you had to find something that met the degree of your protest.

"I grew up in Colwyn Bay in Northern Wales. My family were Methodist Calvinists but they had no part in my decision to become a conscientious objector. It was simply an original wish on my part and I joined the FAU on religious grounds of my own. There's nothing further to be said about why I did it.

"I went to Northfield for my training. For a long time all we did was hospital work and a bit of London blitzing. Serving in France was out because of the phony war. Then somebody got the bright idea about the war in China which had been going on for years. They asked for volunteers and I was one of them, and we were promptly waffed off to China.

"It was a glorious journey going out and we studied Chinese all the way. When we got to Rangoon we began carrying medical supplies for the Chinese in Red Cross trucks from the Rangoon docks over the Burma Road to Kunming. Often on those trips into China we'd get stuck on the road and have to sleep in the trucks. We got down to the basics of living. Baths were the least problem, you just got soaked in the rain. Occasionally we would get cold. There'd be an afternoon shower and it was miserable, but we slept anyway. We would stop wherever we were and gratefully lie down and sleep the sleep of the just.

"When the Japanese came in, we were sent down to the docks to evacuate all the stuff we could and on my last convoy I got stuck behind a roadblock put up by the Japanese. If it hadn't gotten lifted, I wouldn't be here today. This was in Rangoon a few days before it fell and we saw the breakdown of living. Everywhere things were falling to pieces, no telephone, gradually no police, no law. You began to understand that the enemy was right in front of you.

"Then came the appeal from Seagrave for some of our drivers to carry the wounded from the front to his mobile hospital. Seagrave had offered the unit to Stilwell when he got there and had set up the hospital at Pinyinana, about fifty miles behind the lines. We drove up there and began pulling the wounded off the battlefields and driving that fifty mile journey back and forth.

"By then Seagrave had been made a Major in the U.S. Army Medical Corps and he took such an extravagantly romantic view of it and of General Stilwell. *We* didn't have too much respect for the military in any case, and generals meant less than nothing to us. But Seagrave had this Boy Scout attitude toward the whole affair and Stilwell was next to God as far as he was concerned. He'd say, 'Here am *I*, serving under an American *General! Me, a Major in the U.S. Army!*' He talked in those extravagant terms.

"Stilwell had his headquarters in Pyinmana in the hospital compound and we were bringing the wounded there. On the way back from the front we saw a lot of six-by-sixes behind us--Chevrolet trucks--all pulling out. There were a lot of them, all with guns on them, and we figured out that since they were heading away from the front, there must be a retreat on. So when I got to the hospital, I went in to see Stilwell.

"I just had on a pair of shorts with me underpants hanging down below them. I was a proper sight but I walked in without any ceremony at all and said, 'General, your army is retreating. Did you know? It looks as if there's a fair amount of stuff pulling back.' And he said, 'Oh no, it's all right. They're just re-grouping. I'll let you know if anything happens.' So I went to bed and at about three o'clock in the morning the General was knocking at the door telling us not to get excited, but we'd better move out, we were retreating!

"These were the Chinese troops we had seen pulling out, the ones Stilwell was nominally in charge of, but their commanders weren't taking any chances on getting caught by the Japs and they were pulling out without orders from Stilwell. So we moved on up to Shwebo and waited there until Stilwell came. In a day or two we headed north.

"When we gathered together in the clearing and Stilwell told us we were going to have to walk, we laughed! We laughed at his histrionics and at his Boy Scout stance. How else could we feel? We looked at each other and laughed.

"We had another chap standing with us, one of the British 'other ranks' who told us that this was the sixth time they'd done this. They'd been in retreat after retreat after retreat all through the campaign from the beginning at the Sittang River and they told us we were lucky we only had to do this once. They were a job lot we had picked up, they were just wandering around. They had bandages around their heads and arms, and one of them was on crutches.³¹

"We were tired but we were not downhearted, so when Stilwell said we had to walk, we just thought, 'this is it,' but it seemed to me to be an adventure. It wasn't a central point in our lives just then, we'd been through so much worse. This was a time when we *lived* and we were interested in what would happen."

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The interview continued after supper until about nine o' clock. Tom took me to a different station--Cheddington--to catch an express train and I went back to London. This was the conclusion

of my interviews with these wonderful FAU men and I felt very grateful to them and pleased with how much I had accomplished.

When I got back to my hotel that evening after seeing Tom Owen, there was a message for me that Mr. Roberts had telephoned. It was too late to do anything about it that night. I thought up all kinds of diversions to make the weekend pass as quickly as possible I even went to a play called Jumpers with Diana Rigg. I did not understand the play but she was beautiful, wearing a gold wig and little else.

As I telephoned Mr. Roberts Monday morning I thought, "Will he have something useful for me or will this be just another dead end?" I was in for several surprises. First Mr. Roberts said that on pain of death I must never reveal his name, so I have never done so. I made up the name I have been using for him. Who knows what might happen to him even after twenty years if somebody found out what he did for me?

He did not say how he had found out, but he gave me Casten's address and telephone number. He lived at Woodbridge near Ipswich, and the name of his house was "Rockbottom." I laughed when Roberts told me that. I was sure this must be the right person. Somehow that "Rockbottom" seemed to tie in with the concept I had been forming of this man. Though I could not have explained why at the time, I turned out to be right--perhaps the "prepared mind" was working again.

Now I was faced with a dilemma. My husband was beginning to wonder if I was ever coming home and time was running out. Would I queer my chances forever if I went against one of Lloyd Free's rules? He had told me that when I did not know someone, when seeking an interview I should always write first explaining the purpose of my visit rather than telephoning. No one likes to be caught off guard and it is easy to turn somebody down on the telephone. A letter would give that person more time to think about what I might want to know. But having spent so much time and effort trying to find Castens, and because there was not much time left for an exchange of letters, not to mention the arrangements for meeting that would have to be made, I decided I would take a chance. If this were the right man and if he would not see me, I was never going to get to see him anyway. If by some happy chance he agreed to see me, I would never have a better opportunity. Having thus rationalized my decision to my own satisfaction, I rang him up. I decided that if he asked me how I had gotten his number, I would say that I would explain when we met. If he would not see me, I did not have to tell him anything.

He answered on the first ring. I asked him if he was Herbert E. Castens, formerly of the Indian Forestry Service. "You mean in Burma?" When I said yes, he said that indeed he was. I briefly described what I was doing in connection with the Walkout and that I was very anxious to meet him because his name was on the Stilwell roster. Could I come out tomorrow? He immediately said yes! We discussed trains, he said he would meet me and drive me to his house, and that he would have to tell his wife to get in some more food. Then he said, "How did you get my address?"

As I had planned, I said that I would tell him all about it when we met. I described what I would be wearing. He said that he no longer had a beard but that I would recognize him because he was over six feet tall. The conversation ended when he said he would be waiting for me outside the ticket gate if the train was on time. *He* was always on time, he said. Then to my surprise he said, "Thank you for calling." It all seemed too good to be true after all the fruitless digging I had been doing, but it *was* true. Next day I took the train to Ipswich, the train was on time, and there he was, as promised.

It was ten o'clock in the morning when I arrived but Castens immediately proposed that we go to a pub. I was not aware that they were open that early but I thought that we could talk there as well as anywhere. So off we went in an absolutely tiny car, an ancient DAF 44, he said. Even I had to squeeze in and he drove with his knees practically under his chin. When we got to the pub, he ordered two whiskeys. I said it was a little early for me, so he drank them both. Then he explained why he wanted to talk to me before we went to his house.

"My wife's name is Maureen and she is totally deaf," he said. "That is why I had to shave off my beard so that she can read my lips. She is fearfully jealous of strangers because she has no way of knowing what we are talking about. She is much younger than I am, she is my second wife and she is very beautiful. We had twins and one of them tragically killed herself while she was at University, and suddenly, out of the blue, Maureen went deaf. Nothing could be done to restore the nerve.

"I went to Queen's College, Cambridge but I dropped out because I owed them too much money and I went into the forestry service in Burma. I married a 'domiciled European,' that is someone who has an English father and a Eurasian mother. We had three children and when the war came along, she took them back to England and later we were divorced. Maureen is fearfully jealous of my first wife and the three children. I have to see them surreptitiously whenever I can and you must make *no* mention of them or my first wife when we get home."

We were in the pub quite a long time while he told me this tragic story. I could see in his craggy face the impact these terrible events had had on him. It was obvious how deeply he cared about Maureen, how protective of her he was. This became even more evident when we got to his home. It was what he described as a "country villa," surrounded by flower-beds full of daffodils and a vegetable garden where I could see lettuce and tomato plants.

Over the front door was a sign proclaiming that this was "Rockbottom." Here we were met by Maureen who indeed was perfectly beautiful. We went into the living-room where we had sherry and I could see how carefully she tried to understand what I was saying. Then we had lunch which consisted of a delicious fish soufflé, something I had never had before, and fresh salad from their garden.

When we went into the sitting-room after lunch, Maureen left us. Castens said she could not read my lips because I spoke with an American accent. That seemed strange to me at the time, but I

have learned since then that it is difficult for most deaf people to read the lips of anyone speaking with a "foreign" accent.

Before he started talking about the past, Castens said, "I want you to know that in spite of what I said earlier, we get along quite comfortably here. We garden and read and watch the telly, and as you can see, Maureen is a marvellous cook. But her deafness isolates her from the rest of the world and she is completely dependent on me. So I want to be sure that I have done all I can for her before I die."

I asked him to tell me about his career and he began by saying that he had had terrible nightmares the night before after my telephone call. I felt terrible; I was sure that our conversation had reminded him about some of the horrors of the war and I felt guilty, but he did not seem to blame me. He ascribed it to the central heating. Maureen kept the house too hot, he said, and he had to get up several times to have a glass of water.

Herbert E. Castens, age 40
British District Officer
Indian Forestry Service, Katha Division, Burma

Castens was one of the bravest men in any theater in World War II.

"My father was an artillery officer and my childhood was spent moving continually from one Army post to another. After the first World War we didn't have much money but I got a minor scholarship and I went up to Queen's College, Cambridge. Then the money ran out.

"I spotted an advertisement about probationers wanted for the Indian Forestry Service, so I applied. I was accepted and went back to Cambridge for two more years on a reasonable stipend of two hundred pounds a year. For two years I was studying forestry. We went on tours in France and Germany and Austria but we never saw any trees of the sort that we would be dealing with in Burma except in the Botanical Gardens.

"Then I was sent out to Burma. I spent two years working in Prome as an assistant on Working Plans. I spent my money too freely when I first got out there and I could never afford to get up to Maymyo, the cool hill station where everyone went on their holidays. Then I heard about something called ABRO, Army Burma Reserve Officers. It was quite a good racket. You had to do a fortnight's training every year and the training camp was in Maymyo. I got to go on double pay and at just the time one wanted most to be there, when it was the hot season in Prome.

"So I joined up and every time I went up I had to do some sort of parade ground drill and all that rot. They were a dreary lot up there, the regular Army. They had jungle training out on a plain outside the town. It struck me as so absurd, these people whose job it was to defend Burma didn't know anything about the jungle at all. We were all cluttered up with bloody leather boots and puttees and a sort of Stetson hat. We were doing our military preparations as if we were on Salisbury Plains or Flanders or something like that! God almighty, we were never going to be fit for

jungle warfare, as the Japs were going to prove.

"Then I was posted to Maymyo on Working Plans, the Maymyo Division plans. This entailed counting the teak trees in the forests, girdling the ones to be cut, and getting out plans for the next thirty years' use. I met my first wife there and we were married. Then I was posted to Arakan, then Katha, each one a five year tour of duty.

"In the Forestry Service each officer had a bungalow allotted to him. The kind of community it was depended on the station. In Arakan there were twenty or so Civil Service people; a District Commissioner, Forest Police, someone from the Excise Department, a Headmaster of the Highschool, and there were a lot of odd Scotsmen from the rice mill, engineers and people like that. There were two or three lads from Burmah Oil, marketing people. Then of course there was the local Arakanese population, but we didn't have much to do with them because Europeans couldn't. We had a Club, but it was strictly for Europeans.

"The life was quite pleasant but it was a limited society. For five years you lived with the same people, you had your ups and downs with them. There were people you didn't like from the time you got there and there were people you liked quite a lot. You had an ordinary social round and you would go out sometimes and shoot snipe and come back to the Club and have snipe for breakfast. Other people played tennis and bridge at the Club and that sort of thing.

"In the cold weather, the end of November to the beginning of March, I was on tour in the forests most of the time. My wife didn't go with me; we had three young children for her to look after until we sent the boys back to England to school. It was rather a bleak life for her but it was the part of the year that I liked best. When we lived in Katha, I lived in the jungles for five or six months of the year. In Katha we did have non-Europeans in the Club but the integration was fairly confused. Mary, our little girl, was the only one of the children with us then. Some of the Anglo-Indians had families and she mixed perfectly freely with them. When she left Burma she could speak five languages, a lot more than I could. I had to call her in to interpret when I was speaking to the servants in the garden. She could speak Manipuri and I couldn't.

"There again in Katha, your friendships were definitely limited. There were only about a dozen people you met at the Club and there were only three or four with whom you had any sort of intellectual or personal form of return. You'd got to the state where you'd heard all their stories and they'd heard all yours and you'd said everything to each other so damn often, the only thing to do was to get drunk so that you could put up with it again.³²

"Going on tour was a welcome change. When one was on tour, one travelled First Class! A retinue of servants, baths, a table laid for you. In peace-time one marched very comfortably with elephant transport. You would carry a bottle of whiskey along but only in case you met somebody. You didn't carry beer because you were alone. You did a five or six mile march to a suitable campsite with water and grazing. The boys would set up a huge tent with a little screened verandah outside the bedroom part of it. I'd have a bath in a portable tin tub, then I'd sit down and have

dinner, then I'd read. You did a five or six mile march to a suitable campsite with water and grazing. I had a lovely little hunting dog, a Springer spaniel named Jim and I always carried a shotgun along in case I wanted to shoot some small game. It was a beautiful gun made for me by Jeffries, the best gunsmiths in the world. It had an exceptionally long stock, the longest they had ever made, especially made for me because I was so tall. If it was big game country, I had somebody along with a rifle as well.

"Now. . . about elephants. . . . an elephant must never go more than fifteen or twenty miles in seven days and they must not march more than three or four days out of seven because they have very small stomachs and they have to be allowed to graze often. So your marching was very comfortable. You would have possibly five or six of these marches between inspection points.

"The inspection consisted of checking on the men in the forests who were carrying out the Forestry Service plans, counting the trees, girdling the trees to be cut, felling the trees and moving the timber down to the river or to the nearest railway where it would be shipped on. These latter operations were carried out by private firms, but the government owned the forests and it was our responsibility to see that it was properly done. That was the sort of life I lived and the sort of luxury it was and it was very, very pleasant.

"I had nothing to do with the government of Burma, I was way up in the north. I thought it was run by a group of popinjays and they didn't know, or didn't want to know, what was coming. I had trained with some of the officers down in Moulmein and I knew the Burma Rifles Battallions were not fit for jungle warfare. They were *lost* when they got off the motor road. Right up the the last, when we were turned out, I had a great deal more respect for the natives than I did for some of my own countrymen. I pointed out to them that their policy of drilling any initiative out of the natives by their own arrogant behavior made it impossible for the natives to develop any great degree of responsibility. It was not a case of racial incompetence as they claimed. The Burmees *were* competent people, but the government officials despised the Burmese and kept them in subordinate positions.³³

"After my last home leave, I was made District Officer for Katha. I was there for almost five years and I was there when the war in Europe began. England needed more and more timber for her middle east operations. I organized a terrific program of extraction. Everything was speeded up, trees were felled before their time, the timber had to be moved out at top speed.

"I was driving myself and others all out, with no prearranged rest or sleep, working at top capacity even before the damn Japs came in to Burma. I knew they were coming, I heard about them through the grapevine, and I knew there was no decent defense. When they bombed Rangoon on Christmas day, I hauled Mary out of school and drove her and her mother to Shwebo. From there we flew to India and I put them on a boat back to England. Things were tense between my wife and me by then and she was glad to get out. Then I went back to Katha.

"For the next three months I did what I could to make the government stock the trails with food, the trails I knew would soon be flooded with the helpless refugees from Rangoon and the rest of the country as the Japs advanced. As they got closer and closer to Katha, I knew that I was soon going to have to get out but I hated to leave. I had lived a long time in Burma, I cared about the country and its people. I'd had a close connection with it for years and I had this horrible feeling of shame at what had been imposed upon us by the damn Japs, at the disaster that had overtaken the country. I was so tired and dispirited, so ashamed at what had happened to the country, that I was thinking of just diving into the jungle, just live there 'til the Japs left, but fortunately I didn't do that. I packed up some food, took my dog Jim, and I headed west.

"I got down to Indaw and that's where I ran into Barton. I wonder what the hell ever became of Barton? The only name I knew him by was 'Beaver,' he had an immense beard. I was with him in Maymyo many times before the war. If you want to get in touch with him get in touch with Caius College, Cambridge. He was about my age, he would have been about 1923 at Cambridge.

"He was a Triple First Class Honors graduate, an eccentric. He lived in an undisciplined way. He had a certain amount of money of his own and he'd wandered all over China, all over the frontier zone on his own. He'd been working with me before the evacuation. He was a brilliant mathematician, statistician, a polyglot. He spoke about seventeen languages and all the Chinese dialects, just picked it up as he went along. He couldn't be in a place for five minutes without knowing the language."

Suddenly the prepared mind took over. At last chance had favored me in regard to Barton, who so far had been almost as elusive in my search as had Castens. I would pursue this clue as soon as I could.

"Somewhere before I got to Indaw I ran into the Chinese troops on their way back to China," Castens went on. "They hadn't done any fighting. My God, we hated them. I had heard about Stilwell quite a lot and I knew the Chinese Generals never wanted to do anything but keep themselves in a tight little circle so that they wouldn't get killed, they never did any real fighting. And the way some of the troops behaved, oh, it was outrageous! They're quite cruel--ruthless--you know. I remember a story which struck me. It was about one of the planes going over the Hump with Chinese troops on board. One of these Chinese was being sick all over the floor and an American private who couldn't speak Chinese came walking through. He pointed at the vomit and indicated to one of the soldiers to clean it up and put it out the door. They didn't do that, they put the Chinese *soldier* out the door!

"By the time we got to the clearing I was so damn tired I was pleased to be a member of a party I hadn't got to organize. I was deeply, horrifiedly ashamed at the way we had been turned out of the country. I was determined that some day I would go back to erase the horrible shame. It wasn't until later that I learned that Stilwell had the same burning desire to go back in to Burma

and take it back from the Japs.

"But for the time being I could just be a follower. I had no responsibility at last, I could just relax completely. But when I saw what the Stilwell group was going to take with them, I was flabbergasted. I thought they were grossly over-equipped. A couple of ration packs and sacks of rice would have been sufficient, but that's the way they did it, like flying lav paper over the Hump later.

"But since I wasn't in charge I didn't have to worry about it and as for walking, I really didn't mind. Actually I didn't know the area at all, it was completely strange to me, I had never been west of Indaw. I think Stilwell put me down as a guide because of the Indian wars in America where the mountain men knew the trails.

"Among my personal possessions I had my gun. Barton took along his servant who had been with us all along. He was a little Welshman, you could hear his accent a mile away. He insisted on carrying my gun on the trek out and somehow I never got it back.

"And I had my dog Jim, a Springer spaniel, a lovely dog. I had to leave him in India when I went back into Burma later with the Johnnies. I left him with some priests at a Catholic Missionary school and the first time I got back, he was there. But the next time when I got back, he had been got by a leopard while he was picking up a shot pheasant in the jungle. No better death for a hunting dog!"

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Castens and I had talked so long that he drove like mad to get me to the train I planned to take back to London. It had already left by the time we got to the station, but while I waited for the next one, I was happy just to sit and think about this remarkable man. On thinking about why he had agreed so readily to see me I decided that it was probably because I approached him through the Walkout, not the Johnnies.

Incidentally I saw General Evans once more before I left London, but I did not mention that I had seen Castens. I was not about to tell him that I had succeeded where he had failed. *He* was somebody who could *really* get Mr. Roberts in trouble.

The day after I had seen Castens I went back to the London Library to follow up on what he had told me about "Beaver" Barton. The Cambridge University Register disclosed that a George Elliot Barton was a member of Gonville and Caius College in 1923. The Caius College Biography--similar to American University Alumni Records--showed that he had been born in Melbourne, Australia, and had a record of military service in World War I, first as an enlisted man and then as a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, Minings and Signals. He was admitted to Cambridge in Michaelmas Term, 1921 and had graduated with a Class I Geography Tripos. He had been a member of the University Officers Training Corps--similar to the R.O.T.C. in this country--and his permanent military number was listed there. When he 'went down' from Cambridge he became a member of the Royal Observatory Expedition to observe the eclipse of the sun in Sumatra in 1926.

Thereafter he travelled in China and was surveying in the Shan States in Burma in 1933. He was listed as untraceable after that year. It now remained for me to get in touch with the Honorable Secretary at the College to see if any further information was available since the Biography had last been printed. The Secretary replied that he knew exactly the same as I did and nothing further.

As I had done before in trying to track down Castens, I wrote to the Adjustant General's Office of the Royal Engineers in Stanmore, Middlesex. The reply came from Colonel J. W. M. Stevens, MBE. He gave me much the same information I had gotten from the Caius College Biography but with one or two interesting additions. When Barton went to Sumatra, Colonel Stevens said, he failed to notify the Army authorities that he was going abroad, and his commission was terminated by the War Office. The Military Attaché in Peking notified the War Office in 1931 that Barton's last known address was in Maymyo, Burma and that he was at that time on his way to Tengyuen in Yunnan Province in China.

The prepared mind nudged me when I read Colonel Stevens' letter. Barton's military status must have been restored or he was re-commissioned, because Colonel Davidson-Houston mentioned that when he met Barton in Indaw during the retreat in 1942, Barton was wearing the red badges of a Major.

Colonel Stevens suggested that I telephone "Mr. Checkit" at Hayes, Middlesex, and gave me the number. When I reached this number, I told "Mr. Checkit" that Colonel Stevens had told me to call him, and explained why I was calling.

"Mr. Checkit" turned out to be a department of the Army that kept the 199A File on military personnel, similar to the U.S. Army 201 File, which caught me entirely by surprise. When "Mr. Checkit" said very politely, "I don't think I could release his 199A File to you," I replied that I certainly did not expect him to, I just wanted to know how I could get in touch with Barton. After some further uncertainty on "Mr. Checkit's" part, I invoked the name of Lieutenant General Sir Geoffrey Evans. Whereupon "Mr. Checkit" said he would get back to me. Within half an hour he telephoned with the disappointing information that George Eliot Barton was "P. N. E." Translated, this meant "Permanently Non Effective." By now I was beginning to feel that way about myself as far as Barton was concerned.

There was still one more avenue to explore which I had been slow to act on. I suddenly remembered that Colonel Davidson-Houston was sent to Burma to lead Chinese troops in something then called Bush Warfare. By the time he got to Maymyo, the Bush Warfare School, which had been organized by Brigadier Michael Calvert in 1941, was defunct.³⁴

Colonel Stevens had written me that Barton had been in Maymyo before the war. *Ergo*: Brigadier Calvert might know something about Barton.

I went back to the London Library once more and looked up Calvert in Kelly's Handbook. I had never had any luck trying to find anyone from the Walkout in it previously, but this time I was

in luck. Calvert was listed and his address and a telephone number in Canford Cliffs, Dorset were given. A call to that number got an interior decorator who was re-doing the living-room, he said, and he added that the Calverts had moved some time ago. He gave me the number of the rental agent, which turned out to be in Poole.

A startled lady at the rental agency said that the Calverts had moved to Manchester over a year before. She would try to find the address for me, she said. After quite a long time, she came back and said that the only address she had was that of his bank, the Cox & Kings branch of Lloyd's. That happened to be on Pall Mall, right around the corner from my hotel. Suddenly things were looking a little brighter.

The bank, not surprisingly, said they could not give me Calvert's address but they would be glad to forward a letter to him. I duly wrote to him in care of the bank, giving him my Jenkintown address because I could not wait any longer in London to hear from him. It was time to go home. My search for Barton had to wait for a while.

Chapter Four

The U.S.: April to June 1972

Spring in Pennsylvania had caught up with London by the time I got home in the middle of April. I did not hear from Brigadier Calvert until the middle of May. His letter came from the University of Manchester where he was a Hallscomb Research Fellow in the Department of Military Studies. He wrote that he had known Barton briefly in Maymyo but did not know what had become of him after the war. He also included the names and addresses of seven people he knew who might know more about Barton than he did. This list led me to some interesting correspondence when some months later I took up my search for Barton again.

I wrote to thank Brigadier Calvert for his help but I did not have much time to follow up on these names because two weeks after my return, my husband informed me that we would be going back to the Philippines in June. The manager of the operations of the lumber mill on the island of Negros had asked for a three month's emergency leave and my husband would take his place for that time. I would have to put my search for Barton aside until later in the summer.

I decided that on the way to the Philippines I would go to Burma before rejoining my husband. I sent off my passport to the Burmese Embassy in Washington and they kept it for so long I was afraid I would not get it back before we left. In desperation I finally telephoned and learned from U Py Kyaing that it had just come back from Burma where it had been sent! It was good luck for me that instead of being a visa for three days as had previously been the case, it was now good for a week. I immediately wrote to Tun Shein telling him when I expected to be in Rangoon. Tun Shein was the member of Dr. Seagrave's unit who looked after the nurses on the Walkout and whose address was given to me by Ruby Johnson.

I plunged in to setting up more interviews before we took a short vacation in Maine. I wrote to Mrs. Winifred Stilwell asking if I could see her while we were in San Francisco on the way to the Far East. Her daughter--Mrs. Nancy Easterbrook--replied and gave me a date for an appointment. Unfortunately, a few days later I received a letter from her saying that her mother had died.

I also wrote to Dick Young who, I hoped, might be back from China by then, and asked for an appointment. In my letter I asked him if he knew anything about Fabian Chow or Tommy Lee, two other names on the roster. Dick *was* back, and agreed to see me at my familiar stamping ground, the San Francisco airport motel. He gave me Chow's address in Honolulu, and an address for Tommy Lee's brother. When I wrote to this gentleman, he replied that Tommy lived in Hayward,

not far from San Francisco. So I was able to set up three more appointments.

While I was in the Far East I hoped to be able to trace General Tseng, the man who was in charge of the Chinese troopers who were Stilwell's "Honor Guard." I knew that Barbara Tuchman had gone to Taiwan to interview some of the Generals who had been with Stilwell in Burma. By now I felt that I must write to her. She replied that Tseng had not been among the Generals she had seen in Taiwan, but the information she sent me led me to Tseng's lonely grave in Malaysia, the grave of a man without a country.

Meanwhile, I was determined to find Jack Belden. I knew that he had written articles for Time and LIFE during the war, but my letter to him in their care was returned saying "No Forwarding Address." Then I found out that the books he had written after Retreat With Stilwell were published by Harper and Row. Surely he must still be receiving royalties from some of his works. When I wrote to Harper and Row, they replied that they could not forward any mail to him. Somehow I felt that I was being given a run-around. I telephoned their office in New York and was put through to a kind assistant editor. When she said she could not forward any mail to him, in desperation I asked her if she would at least tell me in what part of the world he was living. Finally she said, "If you will send me your letter to him with enough postage on it for Europe, I will forward it to him." I wrote to him, giving him the address where I could be reached in Copenhagen when we stopped there on our way home from the Philippines in October. I sent it by registered mail to Harper and Row, and hoped for the best.

Shortly after I got back to Jenkintown I received a letter from the Ministry of Defense in Middlesex, England in answer to an earlier query about Major O. M. T. Dykes, Colonel Davidson-Houston's Deputy Assistant. The answer I received about Major Dykes came from Colonel A. A. Dacre, OBE. He suggested that I try the Indian Army Records, Ministry of Overseas Development. "Incidentally," he added, "having served in Serembam, Malaya, for many years I knew Dara Singh well. You should look him up when you are in Kuala Lumpur." I did write to Dara Singh and he replied that he was not Lieutenant Singh but that he had been General Stilwell's personal body-guard in the second Burma campaign. He said he would be delighted to put me up at his club in Serembam, Malaysia when I got to Kuala Lumpur. Of course I wanted to see him and I wrote to him immediately saying that I would let him know when I knew just when we would be in Kuala Lumpur.

Following Colonel Dacre's advice, I wrote to the Ministry of Overseas Development asking about Major Dykes. The reply came from Colonel N. J. Price, (Retired). Colonel Price sent me back to Colonel J.W. M. Stephens! When I wrote to Colonel Stephens apologizing for bothering him again, I enclosed a letter to Dykes. Colonel Stephens replied light-heartedly that I had nothing to worry about, that sort of thing happened all the time. He said he had forwarded my letter to Dykes via Private Bag to Pretoria, South Africa. He commented at the end of his letter that he wondered if Brigadier Dykes would be able to unfold the mysteries of that era, something I myself had been

working on for some time!

Just before we left the States in June I received a letter from Dykes, now a retired Brigadier, dated April 30, 1972, and postmarked Unkomaas, Natal, South Africa. It read as follows:

Dear Madam, I am now living in South Africa but if there is any help I can give you "by post," I shall be only too pleased to do so.

The Burma performance that you are interested in is somewhat overshadowed--for some of us--by subsequent operations and events. If you could contact Colonel Davidson-Houston whom I accompanied, he would be able to give you any information from the British angle that you may need. He was an official interpreter in Chinese and, I believe, in Russian. He would have a fair insight into the Chinese mentality.

As you well know, General Stilwell had the unenviable task of liaison between Chiang Kai-shek, commander of the Chinese forces in Burma, and General Slim, who was commanding the "Burma Corps." I had no idea that Davidson-Houston had been bursting into print. I must try to get a copy of Armed Pilgrimage that you mention.

Yours, O. M. T. Dykes

I immediately wrote back enclosing my list of the British military and a copy of the picture of them that I had shown to Professor Moonie. I also felt that I should tell him that Davidson-Houston was dead.

I then made appointments to see "Lieutenant" Robert Belknap and "Colonel" Benjamin Ferris on the way to Maine. Belknap lived in Hillsdale, New York near one of my friends where I was to spend the night. I had gotten his address from Ex-CBI Roundup earlier. "Colonel" Ferris was now Brigadier General Ferris, retired. I had gotten his address from the General's Locator. He lived in Center Lovell, Maine.

I telephoned Ray Chesley whose address had been given me by Ruby Johnson. I made an appointment to see him at his home in Teaneck, New Jersey on a Sunday when my husband and I were going to New York City for the night.

When we went to the Chesley's on the appointed day, Mrs. Chesley gave us lunch and afterwards Ray and I sat in the dining-room over coffee. When Ray began to talk, I could not help myself, I laughed. The first thing he said about himself was that he came from Hopbottom, Pennsylvania. I laughed because I had seen the sign for Hopbottom whenever my husband and I took the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania turnpike on our way to see his parents in Elmira, New York. We thought it was a funny name. Now I had met someone from there, and I could add that name to my list of unusual place-names such as Leatherhead and Leighton-Buzzard and Fetchum. After a few moments of conversation about this coincidence, Ray continued his story.

Ray Chesley, age 29
U.S. Army

Chesley was a nice fellow, a brilliant man.

"I was just a country boy," Chesley began. "I'd done a lot of fishing and hunting and I was used to the outdoors. I had to work while I was going to school, then I worked in a lab while I went to college. I wanted to be a doctor but it became too much of a struggle and I had to quit college and work full time in the lab.

"This was in 1932 and in those years, at least in Hopbottom, it was considered a disgrace to accept welfare. One worked at whatever kind of job was available, accepted full responsibility for whatever tasks were assigned, did the best job one was capable of, and didn't worry about collecting overtime if the job went beyond five o'clock.

"I volunteered for the Army in my twenties, long before Pearl Harbor. My motivations were the same as everyone had when we saw that war was coming. We believed that it was our duty to defend our country in every way that we could. I was assigned to Carlisle Barracks and because I had worked in a lab, I was transferred to the Detached Service Group and from then on ran the lab.

"In 1941 a call went out for volunteers for the Magruder Mission and I signed up and almost immediately was sent to Chungking in China. There wasn't much to do at first from a medical point of view, so I spent a lot of time in the radio room as we were short of Signal Corps people. The coded messages came pretty garbled and it was a lot of fun trying to straighten them out. That's how we learned about Pearl Harbor.

"Some time after that we learned that General Stilwell was to be assigned to Chungking. As soon as he got there he was put in charge of two Chinese armies that were to be sent to Burma. Shortly after that I was ordered to Burma myself, to serve under Colonel Robert P. Williams, General Stilwell's Medical Officer.

"I knew very little about the country though we knew that the Lend-Lease supplies were being sent from Rangoon to Chungking via the Burma Road. Because this ran almost the entire length of Burma, I tried to find out as much as I could about the country and the people while I was still in Chungking. Oddly enough, I got most of my information from the National Geographic magazine.

"I joined Stilwell in Maymyo in March. He already had his American staff set up there. I worked with Colonel Williams who was taking care of just about everything and I was trying to get the medical supplies set up for Dr. Seagrave's group. Captain John Grindlay and Captain 'Mac' O'Hara were the surgeons with him.

"I didn't go down to the front and I was never under attack, but I hadn't been there more than two weeks when it became evident that we weren't going to be there very long. In fact, we pulled out of Maymyo about the end of April.

"I remember going up to Shwebo and there were all these Chinese soldiers in trucks and they kept cutting in and out of our convoy and trying to push ahead. They were the soldiers who had run away and I remember thinking, 'They aren't soldiers, they're just a bunch of bandits!' We were glad to get away from them.

"I didn't think much about it that we had to walk, I was just a good soldier, I didn't get paid to think. I guess all I wondered about was how far it really would be and how long it would take, and if we could get across the Chindwin before the Japs headed us off. I was strong, I was perfectly physically able, so I wasn't worried about walking. About all I had to carry was my own gun and my mess-kit and things like that."



As I listened to Chesley, I was struck by what he said about defending his country as compared to what the FAU men had said to me. All of them had felt a need to serve their country as best they could, but they had taken such different ways to do it. Perhaps the slaughter of a whole generation of England's young men in World War I had left a mark so deep on the next generation that they refused to be a part of it. Young men in America knew very little about what war was really like.

A few days after my interview with Chesley, I drove to see Bob Belknap in Hillsdale, New York. A terrifying thing happened along the way while I was on the Garden State Parkway, a divided highway in New Jersey. As I was driving along I noticed a car parked on the grass on the right side of the road some distance ahead of me. Suddenly it pulled out onto the highway and instead of heading north as I was doing, it made a one hundred and eighty degree turn and was coming straight back toward me in my lane. I swerved onto the grass on my right, he swerved to *his* right, bounced off the guardrail on his side and careened down the Parkway in the wrong direction. Fortunately there was a toll booth within the next mile and I was able to report what had happened. Somewhat shaken by this narrow escape, I proceeded cautiously on my way.

When I arrived at Bob Belknap's home I was greeted by a housekeeper who told me that she was English and that she had been Bob's nanny when he was little. She brought me tea on the porch of a beautiful old farmhouse in the Berkshires while I waited for Bob's return from a class in Economics which he was teaching twice a week at the local Community College.

After he arrived he brought out some old photograph albums. In one of them there were pictures of Jakarta where he had been stationed for two years with Standard Oil after the war. It turned out that he knew my cousin who was the U.S. Ambassador to that country when Bob was there. Once again coincidence touched my research, and it turned out to have touched Belknap in a way he had not expected when he found himself with General Stilwell on the Walkout.

Lieutenant Robert J. Belknap, age 27
U.S.Army Reserve

Belknap was hell of a nice fellow, but he sure didn't know how to drive a truck!

"I grew up in Yonkers, New York where the Stilwells came from. I never talked to Stilwell on the Walkout until one evening when a group of us were sitting around a fire and just talking. Stilwell joined us and said he'd heard I came from Yonkers--by then he had found out about most of the people in the group--and when I told him my father's name, he said, 'I used to play football with him on the same high-school team. What was your mother's maiden name? Oh, was she Marjorie Jackson? I remember her, she was very pretty. I took her to the dances at the Academy once in a while.' I didn't know anything about that and my parents were dead by then. When I saw my aunt after the war, she remembered about Stilwell and my mother. She said that everyone in those days called him Warren.

"I went to Cornell after high school," Bob went on, "and graduated in 1934 with a reserve commission in the ROTC. I didn't plan to be a soldier, it was just what you did in college in those days. I never had any desire to be a military man. I majored in Civil Engineering and after a couple of other jobs, I went to work for Standard Oil and in 1938 they sent me to India.

"After about a year I came to like India very much. It took that long to break down the reserve of the British and to feel that I was part of the life there. I had an interesting job that was almost entirely with the British. I was a bachelor and there were lots of parties and golf and tennis with the British community.

"I travelled all over the northeast area of India but I never went to Burma. I didn't know much about its history or the political situation but Burma was part of Standard Oil's India division just as it was part of the British government of India and I knew the lay of the land.

"When Pearl Harbor happened and because I was a Reserve Officer, I reported immediately to the American Consul in Calcutta. 'Here I am. What do I do?' They had no idea what to do with me, so for four or five months I went about my job. It happened that this involved laying down petroleum supplies for the Ledo Road which was to originate in Margherita in Assam. So I travelled in a part of the country in which I would later find myself with Stilwell.

"By the end of April I got orders to report to Stilwell in Maymyo. I had no uniform, no boots, no insignia, no dog-tags, but I managed to dig up some British khakis similar to the U.S. ones and I flew out to Myitkyina. I took along my much-prized typewriter. I didn't dare leave it to the tender mercies of my roommates in Calcutta!

"From Mitch I planned to take the Yunnan-Burma Railway to Mandalay and thence up to Maymyo. I didn't know at the time--that's how good our intelligence was--that Maymyo had already been occupied by the Japanese by the time I had started off from India.

"I got in to Mitch and it was swarming with refugees and Chinese troopers trying to get out

of the country back to China. It was chaos. Nobody knew anything, but rumors were flying that Mandalay was gone as well as Maymyo. The railway line was being bombed, so was the town. The hospital trains were limping in having been bombed along the way. Filth and misery were everywhere, looting was rampant.

"Nonetheless, a train merrily set out loaded with British troops, priests, and me. These troops were the Gloucestershires who had been wounded earlier in the fighting and now, able-bodied, were returning from hospitals in India to rejoin their regiment in the defense of Mandalay!

"As the train inched along, making one mile forward and two backward because of the congestion on the line, the Jap bombers spotted us. We would all jump off the train and run into the woods while the bombs fell. But this was too much for the soldiers. They were good chaps, but they had had it. They began to mutiny, to try to desert, and I was appalled when one of their officers pulled a gun on his own men. I decided then and there to leave the train and make my way to General Stilwell by some other means. The next day that train was destroyed by the bombs. If I'd stayed on the train I wouldn't be here today." Once more Fate had intervened to keep someone from death, I realized.

"Somewhere near Shwebo I ran into Captain Paul Jones, General Stilwell's transportation officer who was still trying to straighten out the shambles on the rail line. I never did get to Mandalay. Up to that time I had been plenty worried about 'little old me,' and I would have been even more worried if I had known how badly the war was going. But once I ran into Paul--though I learned that things were worse as far as the war was concerned--at least they were now somewhat better as far as *I* was concerned.

"The very day I got to Shwebo there had been a conference between Stilwell and General Alexander who was heading up the British forces. They had decided to start the retreat immediately. I was given the job of driving a truck which I had never done before in my life, and Tommy Lee finally had to take it over from me.

"Lee and Laybourn and I were the junior officers and we shared the night watch and the detail for gathering firewood for cooking. All I had to do was do what I was told.

"I didn't know where we were going, I wasn't in on any of the councils of war. I just drove the truck and tried to keep it going as long as I could, sometimes as much as forty hours at the wheel. Such roads as there were, were clogged with refugees, thousands of them--Sikhs, Indians, Tommies, Chinese--the entire population of Burma seemed to be fleeing the country.

"One of these refugees I'll never forget. He had a broken leg and he had a house-boy with him and they were trying to get out to India. He was an American and he came from Yonkers. When I spotted him, I reported on it to Stilwell and all he said was 'Sorry,' and we had to leave him there. There was no way he was going to make it. This really upset me but at least I was able to give him a gun.

"We drove through the jungle, got hung up on tree stumps, some of the trucks fell through the little bamboo bridges, tires wore out in a day. We forded innumerable little streams and were constantly getting stuck in sand and mud. It was really gruelling trying to keep that outfit moving, and finally the trucks began breaking down one by one and we had to abandon them. Then we came to the clearing and we had to scrap everything.

"I was dismayed when I learned that we had to walk! In the first place, we'd be walking in the direction from which I had just come the week before. In the second place, I was still wearing the ordinary shoes I wore to the office where I'd been working in Calcutta. I had no qualifications for walking at all. I wasn't in shape and I felt I'd be more of an impediment than anything else. The prospect seemed pretty awful.

"We had to discard the non-essentials so I left my typewriter in the back of one of the trucks after I'd taken a picture of it! I loved that typewriter, I just couldn't bear to break it up. But I kept my camera and a couple of dozen rolls of film. Later the Signal Corps took my negatives and distributed them to various magazines. They never gave me any credit and I had a hell of a time trying to get them back."



When the interview was over, I told Bob that I was on my way to see an old school friend in Lakeville. She and her husband, who worked for Stan-Vac in Manila before the war, were interned at Santo Tomas University in Manila for three and a half years by the Japanese. When I told Bob their names, of course he knew them too, and they saw one another fairly often. Here was a double link in the Walkout network of coincidence, and one in which I was one of the links. I spent the night with my friends and we talked a lot about the people we both knew who had been interned with them.

The next day I picked up my husband at Logan Airport in Boston and we drove to Norway, Maine. There we spent the night at a motel near Center Lovell, where I was to see General Ferris in the morning.

It was early in the morning when I reached the lane to his house. The sun barely penetrated through the thick pine forest as I drove along. The house was a huge rambling classical nineteenth century "cottage" on Lake Kezar. General and Mrs. Ferris greeted me perfectly politely, but rather stiffly. There was a certain aloof Boston air about them. Like all the generals I had met, he was tall and distinguished looking, and carried himself in a military manner. I was not offered anything though I could have done with a cup of coffee, I was cold. Instead, I was led immediately to a very long and chilly verandah overlooking Lake Kezar. On the verandah was a forest of faded cr  tonne-covered wicker furniture, also typically nineteenth century.

General Ferris was the first person I interviewed who asked me not to use the tape recorder, but he did not object to my taking notes. Mrs. Ferris worked on a jigsaw puzzle while we talked.

Colonel Benjamin Ferris, age 50
U.S. Army Infantry

Colonel Ferris was a senior officer, very "regular Army," but a fine old gentleman.

The first thing General Ferris said as he started to talk really startled me, coming as it did from this rather formal gentleman, "In to-day's jargon you might say that I was a 'high school dropout,' he began. "I grew up in Pawling, New York and I'd always known that I wanted to go into the Army or the Navy. When the opportunity arose, I took the competitive examinations, passed them, and entered the Academy at West Point without ever having finished highschool. I graduated in 1915 in the class with Dwight Eisenhower and Omar Bradley and *other* distinguished individuals," he said, with a wink at me.

"For the next twenty-five years, my life followed the traditional path of the U.S. Infantry officer with various posts around the country and in Hawaii. In 1917 I married a young lady who had been a class-mate of Madame Chiang Kai-shek at Wellesley.

"When World War II broke out, General Drum was selected for what later became General Stilwell's job and Drum selected me to go to China with him. However, Drum was relieved and Stilwell was given the job and he asked me to go along with him. I said, 'Sure! I'm willing and able, I'm glad to go with you.' It was an assignment, a job, it was what I had been trained for. I had known General Stilwell when I was an instructor at Fort Benning. He was my immediate supervisor of command.

"He was a very energetic, athletically-minded chap. He didn't like any milk-toast type of person. I remember seeing him there at Benning running around the cinder track in his shorts every morning. He was a nut, you might say, about physical fitness. He didn't like anyone not to be in good shape, good condition. I wasn't particularly fond of him but I admired him.

"So we went out there in those archaic planes. It's a wonder we ever got there! We went to Miami and then to Natal in South America and then across the southern Atlantic to Africa. We flew at night to avoid attack by enemy warships. Then we flew across Africa to Egypt and on to Calcutta in India and from there to Lashio in Burma, through clouds and rain and anti-aircraft fire.

"I knew nothing about Burma before we went there, it was just another job. It was our duty to do what we could to help the British get rid of the Japanese. We set up our own little Headquarters unit in Maymyo. I was in what you might call administrative work, taking care of supply and the encouragement of morale. I was helping General Stilwell in any way that I could. If you're a professional military man, you've got to do what you see as your duty with the means that are available to you. In Burma they were meager, to be sure. But my goodness, we went over there in an advisory capacity, not to fight, and we did what we were supposed to do as long as we could.

"Attached to our unit there were the native mess servants and the drivers for the staff cars. The General had a Chinese body-guard which was supposed to protect him from assassins. And later

we had Dr. Seagrave with his nurses and those fine FAU boys.

"We were there for over a month and we were bombed. Things were developing fiercely along the front. The British were doing the best they could and eventually we did get some Chinese fighting troops but they weren't very well equipped nor as well trained as we had hoped. Of course we didn't have any American troops and we didn't participate in any of the fighting.

"Then came that curious sort of thing, a kind of collapse, a general feeling of 'what the dickens, what can we do?' When the British troops began to pull back, of course the Chinese did too. The Japanese were getting closer and closer and General Stilwell, who was somewhere down at the front, sent back word to get out of Maymyo and get across the Ava bridge at Mandalay before we got cut off.

"So that's what we did. We got up to Shwebo, some fifty miles north of Mandalay and we were there for three or four days. The British Headquarters was there too and we were trying to develop with them just what the future action should be. Shortly after that General Stilwell decided that we would walk out to India.

"I wasn't worried about walking, I was perfectly fit, I was in good shape. We *had* to walk out to save our lives, that's all there was to it. You did what you were supposed to do, you followed orders, that's what military training is for.

"So I gathered together what I knew I would need most and that was plenty of clean socks. I took all I had, three or four pairs, and a blanket, and I had a very comfortable pair of boots that had been issued to me. That was largely a matter of luck, and I was lucky."

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After a few short days of vacation in Maine, we were off to San Francisco, Hawaii, and the Far East, this time without incident. I rented a car in San Francisco and drove to Hayward to see Tommy Lee.

The Lee's house was surrounded by flower gardens and shrubs in full bloom. As the Lees came out to greet me, I commented on how lovely the place was. Tommy said that now that he had retired, gardening had become his passion.

When we went inside, I learned that Mrs. Lee came from Manila so we chatted about the Philippines over a cup of tea. She gave me messages for her cousin who lived there and I would deliver them to her when I got to Manila. Then I was given a cup of coffee which was followed by a lavish Filipino meal topped off with juicy ripe mangoes. It was a struggle to get down to an interview!

As Tommy started to talk, I was in for another surprise. His family emigrated from China before he was born and his father became a coal miner in Winnemucca, Nevada. My mind was prepared, I knew that name! The wife of the manager of the Manila office of my husband's company had come from Winnemucca. Here was an interesting coincidence as far as I was concerned, and yet

another name to add to my unusual Walkout place names.

Lieutenant Tommy Lee, age 34
U.S. Army, Field Commission, Burma

Tommy Lee's skill with motors and equipment squeezed the last possible mile out of every vehicle.

"There were eight children in the family," Tommy began, "and times were really tough, it was the depression. So another family named Lee adopted me and we went to live in California. I worked my way through highschool and I joined the ROTC there. I studied all kinds of mechanics, I liked tools, and I worked at anything I could get. Whatever I learned now would come in handy later.

"I started thinking about college but we were a poor family and I couldn't make it financially, so I went out to Hong Kong instead. I had a lot of experience in engineering by then, I'd done some drafting, I'd had mechanical training and I'd known about cars since I was twelve years old.

"So in Hong Kong I became a representative of different aircraft companies like Lockheed, Curtis-Wright, Pan Am, and I flew all over China and Indo-China. Sometimes I was co-pilot, sometimes the mechanic. Anything like that, I did it. I was working out of Canton in 1937 when the Japanese invaded it, so I went back to Hong Kong and then I went to work for General Motors. They sent me out to instruct the Chinese mechanics all over the place, like Haiphong, Hanoi, Kunming, down the Burma Road from Kunming to Lashio in Burma. They were helping the Chinese government set up service in these places and I would go along to listen to their complaints.

"It was beautiful driving down the Burma Road, but it was pretty rough for me. All that time I never slept in a bed. I slept in a truck or under it or out in the jungle in a hammock. Then I got a car that was practically my home. I carried my bedding-roll, my cooking utensils, my food supply, and my gasoline supply.

"I was working for GM when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. One day an American officer walked up to me and asked if I would like to join the American Army. He was Colonel Adrian St. John. I replied that since he asked me in such a nice way I would have to accept. On the strength of that little bit of ROTC training I had had in high school, I was commissioned as a First Lieutenant right there on the spot!³⁵

"I never did have any insignia or uniform or dog-tags until after we walked out, and I knew that some of the regulars in that group looked down on me. But I knew how to get along in that country, I'd been living there a long time, I knew some of the language. I was an American-born Chinese and I looked like all the other orientals. I could have put on native dress and looked like one of them.

"I ate the native food and I used to eat a bitter melon that had a quinine content instead of taking atabrine for malaria like the Americans did. I once suggested that they eat native food and I

thought they were going to court-martial me for that!

"I went to work for Colonel St. John there in Rangoon. He was the U.S. commander of the area of Rangoon and the Burma Road set-up. We assembled the trucks and sedans and jeeps that were coming in from the States. It was an even bigger operation than GM had. We had pretty inefficient equipment and unskilled help, but we kept turning them out.

"Even before Pearl Harbor I knew the war was coming. I knew when the Japanese occupied Bangkok they were preparing for an invasion of Burma. The natives had radios and were listening to the Japanese, *they* knew the war was coming. But the British made no inquiries. When I tried to talk to them about it, they would say, 'What are you talking about? You don't know the country.'

"It was awful after that. The Japs came in to Burma at Moulmein and massacred the British at the Sittang River, and they began bombing Rangoon. Everyone started pouring out. The people were fleeing in droves with no preparation, no food, no protection. Then the authorities released all the prisoners from the jails and the animals from the zoo and it was a nightmare.

"We used to dive into the monsoon drains when the bombs fell and I caught a piece of shrapnel in my leg and one in my back. I picked that out by looking in a mirror. Shortly after that we evacuated Rangoon and I was put in charge of the convoys to get up to Stilwell's headquarters in Maymyo. It was a free-for-all getting there. The roads were completely clogged with refugees, the roads and bridges were in bad shape, and we were constantly under attack from the air. I nearly got killed once by a British Tommy. I'd been issued one of those new type helmets and this Tommy came out of the bushes and yelled, 'Halt! We've got a Jap here!' He was about to let me have it when Colonel St. John yelled out and saved me. Then when they found out we were Americans, they tried to join us, to join up with the American Army. I used to go into the jungle to sleep after that, it was safer!

"When we got to Maymyo, Colonel St. John and I drove around getting the transport organized and we set up the motor pools with local drivers and mechanics. I was riding around town one day with some officer who was driving the jeep. The jeep fell off a bridge and the Lieutenant jumped out. The jeep fell on him and killed him. I stayed in the jeep and I wasn't even scratched. When I tried to raise the jeep off of him, a group of Chinese soldiers were standing there and looking on. They just stood there and laughed."

I mentioned to Tommy at that point that others I had seen had told me something similar to his experience when Fate stepped in to save them from death. He said, "Maybe so, but I attributed it to my own good sense."

"When we pulled out of Maymyo," Tommy went on, "I was the Motor Transport officer under St. John and kept the vehicles going as long as I could. We had constant breakdowns and no spare parts and we had to carry our own gasoline, of course, and it was all extremely difficult. I must say though, I felt perfectly terrible when we had to destroy the last of them when we started to walk.

"It didn't make any difference to me that we had to walk. If we didn't start walking pretty soon, we'd have to stay and fight, and I'd rather walk than fight! I wasn't afraid of walking, I wasn't afraid of anything. I'd been in lots tougher situations in China and this was an organized group. From what I'd seen of him, Stilwell was tough, hard as steel, and he was a real leader. And I was ready to get out.

"I took my camera and a lot of precious stones, I knew they would be valuable one day. Burma is full of precious stones--rubies, sapphires, things like that.

"Shortly before Pearl Harbor I had gone down to Manila on vacation and I got engaged. I had my fiancée's picture with me and a cross with pearls that she had given me when we got engaged. I kept it all through the war."

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After my interview with Tommy Lee I went back to the airport motel and Dick Young came to see me there around noon the next day. His eighteen year old son was with him and I suggested that we have some lunch sent in. They could not stay long, Dick said, they would just have some soup.

While we ate we chatted about the people I had seen and looked at the pictures of the Walkout that Dick had brought. When he began to talk about himself, the son settled down in a corner of the room and quietly read the telephone book for what turned out to be a two hour interview. Once Dick got started, he did not want to stop, and I did not want him to.

Captain Richard M. T. Young, age 25
U.S.Army Reserve
General Stilwell's Junior Aide

Dick Young idolized General Stilwell. He was very protective of him.

"I was born in Hawaii of Chinese-American parents," Dick began. "I went to private schools there and then I went to the Colorado School of Mines and joined the ROTC. After graduation I took a job with a steel mill in Yunnan Province in China.

"I was interested in foreign countries and peoples and I wanted to go to that area. I went out as a metallurgist and it was very, very beautiful. I got to know the whole area from Yunnan down in to Indo-China, but I didn't know anything at all about Burma.

"While I was out there I wrote a paper on the metal producing facilities of China. When I got called up to active service in 1941, somehow that paper had gotten into the hands of the Chief of Intelligence and I was transferred from the Corps of Engineers--in which I had received my commission--into Intelligence. I was already working in Washington at the time of Pearl Harbor.

"One day General Stilwell's Aide asked me to go over to the War Department--what we called "Mahogany Row"--and I met General Stilwell. I didn't even know who he *was* , but the first

time I saw him I knew I could believe him, trust him. There was just no question.

"He asked me if I would like to go back to China and I said, 'Yes, sir!' 'When can you go?' 'Tomorrow, sir!' So that is how I got on his staff, and in about a week or so we left.

"At that time the General's assignment was to take Magruder's place as Chief of Staff for Chiang Kai-shek and to take over the CBI theater. He may have known he was going to Burma, *I* certainly didn't. All I knew was that we were going to Chungking.

"I was in the General's plane, along with Clare Boothe Luce and some of the American officers. I had no specific duties, I just went along as a member of the General's staff. I was made his Junior Aide before we reached Chungking. "Pinky" Dorn was his Senior Aide then. We stayed in Chungking for a few days and then we flew down into Burma.

"In Maymyo my job entailed a lot of liaison with the Chinese troops as they began coming in. I was in on the General's plans, that is, I wouldn't say he let me *in* on what he hoped to do, but you just heard snatches of conversation, and I was close enough to overhear when the meetings took place.

"I was there at the Headquarters when the 'Gimo' and Madame Chiang came there and the Japs tried to bomb them. Some of us would dive under the great big table in the middle of the room. Others of us would get in the trenches outside and watch the bombs falling. I would wonder when one would fall on me, but I felt fatalistic about it rather than fearful. General Stilwell used to stand with his head and shoulders above the trench to watch.

"We were never under what you would call battlefield conditions. Sure, we were bombed plenty of times but what I mean is that none of the Americans was ever fighting on the battlefield. I was with the General when he was directing the troops at Toungoo, but we weren't actually in the line of fire.

"When the retreat began, all I *knew* was that we would go as far as we could with the cars and trucks and jeeps. We didn't think we would get as far as Myitkyina. Somewhere along the line we would surely have to abandon the vehicles, but I didn't know where that would be. In the back of my mind I knew all along that we might be going to have to walk. I didn't have any idea of what kind of a walk it would be, except I knew that if we went to India we would have to leave the railway line and the roads to the north. We'd go in the trucks as far as possible and at some point abandon them, and go across Upper Burma to the west. I was comparatively young at that time, it made no difference to me.

"To me it was just a tactical necessity. I suppose General Stilwell recognized the significance of it at the time much more than I did. *He* was looking very far ahead. He had wanted to preserve as many of the Chinese troops as possible, but it was the Chinese generals who had deserted *him*, and the troops had had to obey their own commanders. You can't blame them for that. Stilwell meant nothing to them at that time.

"So I think the decision to walk out was very significant from a political point of view. Stilwell wouldn't fly out if the troops couldn't. It was an astute move that showed Stilwell's foresight, integrity, and ability as a commander. He wanted to get back to Burma later as commander of the Chinese troops and this showed that he had not deserted them. This was to have a tremendous effect on them later.

"When we started north from Shwebo, the turmoil was unbelievable, the refugees were in chaos. You just knew that a lot of people were going to be dying, that this whole mass of people could not outrun the Japanese, some of them were bound to be cut off. A lot of them attached themselves to us. All of a sudden we got so many people around, I think the General was very much upset, and angry too. But he permitted it because I suppose he figured they'd never make it on their own. He knew it would cut down our mobility, and he was concerned about the rations too. We knew they were in very short supply, but as long as the people kept up, we'd be all right.

"It didn't worry me that we had to walk. I had no fear for myself. I knew we'd make it out somehow and I didn't really believe the Japs would cut us off at the Chindwin, though we did have a pretty good idea that they couldn't be much more than a day or two behind us.

"Nobody really knew what it was going to be like, but the General did have a map, maps were his hobby. He had studied every little trail and stream and figured out the route as best he could. He was always a terrific student of terrain. I think the people in the group recognized his leadership, and that he was the one person who could get them out. One look at him and you'd say, 'This man knows what he's doing.' You were in the presence of authority.

"So everyone went through his personal gear . . . you know you always take two or three times what you really need. I think by the end of the day most people had discarded most of their loads, the weight was too much. I think I ended up with a knapsack, a tooth brush probably, a change. I don't even remember what I took."

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The day after my interview with Dick, my husband and I flew from San Francisco to Honolulu where we stayed at the Halekulani, an old-fashioned four story hotel on Waikiki beach. For years it resisted all offers of millions of dollars from real estate developers who wanted to put up yet another high-rise hotel. I am afraid that since that time it has finally succumbed and has been replaced by one more huge hotel that, as I understand it, just adds to the number of unoccupied rooms on the island that cannot all face the ocean.

I telephoned Fabian Chow when we got there, and the next afternoon he drew in to the courtyard of the hotel with a flourish, handed his shiny new station wagon over to the attendant with a wave of the hand, very much in command of himself and others, it seemed. We sat on the *lanai* outside my room where it was terribly hot. I wanted a cool drink and offered him one, but he replied that he had taken care of all that before he came! He seemed to be in a hurry, so I did

without.

In reply to my letter asking him if I could see him, he had said that he really had very little to tell me. As I had discovered already when other people had said that to me, Chow also was wrong. He had a great deal to say and he acknowledged afterwards that he was surprised at how much he remembered. This always made me feel good.

As he left, he offered to get me all the liquor I wanted at half price. He was in the grocery and liquor business, he said, and supplied the Halekulani with all its liquor. Unfortunately I could not take him up on the offer since I could hardly carry it with me on the plane.

Fabian Chow, age 33
Chinese War Correspondent

I had one advantage over some of the others—I at least knew where Burma was!

"I was born and grew up as a poor boy in Shanghai," Chow began. "I was educated first in Chinese schools and then I attended St. Xavier's School where I learned English. The brothers called me Fabian because they said they could not pronounce my real name which was King Tso.

"My father gambled with all his firm's money and went to jail. So I had to get a job to see me through college. I became an apprentice on an English newspaper. But it was very hard work with long hours, sometimes to two or three o'clock in the morning. I could not keep up with my classwork, so I quit college and stayed with the paper.

"I worked very hard and got promoted to reporter. It was a hard life for me. Actually, I never did enjoy the work. I was so busy studying my English and gathering information, sometimes I didn't sleep even. I covered marriages and funerals, court cases and police cases. I was always on the go. It was a grind.

"Then they made me a political correspondent, interviewing Chinese politicians. Frankly, my English was not good enough for me to carry on my duties, but I had a lot of friends who helped me out and sometimes they supplied me with a 'scoop.' I did this for about ten years.

"After the war started in China in 1937, I was sent to Chungking and worked under Dr. Hollington K. Tong, Vice-Minister for Information. We went to different places in the war area to report the war conditions and the morale of the troops and I wrote human interest stories for their hometown papers. We also gave out stories to the foreign correspondents in Chungking who could not cover as wide an area.

"It was a hard life but many of us were living together in Chungking and we didn't mind the hard work at all. I was used to it and morale was high. Everybody did not complain in spite of the constant bombings which drove many people away. We always had some kind of fun.

"When General Stilwell came out and was sent to Burma, I was sent there and stationed at his Headquarters in Maymyo. My mission was to get the exploits of the Chinese serving under

Stilwell as widely publicized as possible. Fred Eldridge was in charge of writing the American reports and he helped me with mine.

"The fighting was still going on when I got there but shortly after that the retreat began. I went up to Yenangyuang to cover General Li-jen Sun's withdrawal through the oil fields. He was very calm. He won my true respect and admiration, I felt that he would be at the top one of these days.

"He had only candles in the room while he was making the plans and I was with him the whole time. I was very jittery myself. After all, the troops were leaving and I didn't know whether we would have to walk or run or what! But he remained very calm and all the troops were withdrawn safely and then the oil fields were blown up before the Japanese could get them.

"After that Colonel somebody who was going in a jeep from Burma back to China asked me to go along with him and I was quite tempted. But then I remembered that I was assigned to General Stilwell's mission and I should stick with him. So I stayed behind and later I learned that that Colonel got killed when his jeep overturned on the Burma Road."

Of course I had to tell Chow that Fate had intervened for Tommy Lee in the case of a jeep, just as it had for Chow. Chow said he could not claim it was good sense on his part not to accept the ride, just his job that held him back.

"So I stuck to my job," he went on. "When the retreat began I was assigned to General Stilwell, that is why I am listed under the Americans on the roster. Listening to him in the clearing, somehow fear never entered my mind, maybe because I was young or optimistic. I'd heard about the monsoon but I didn't give it a thought.

"When Jack Belden abandoned his typewriter, I picked it up and carried it. I threw away the case. When General Stilwell saw what I was doing, he said that I should get rid of it. But I said to him, 'General, as a military man, you carry your weapons. The typewriter is my weapon so I have to carry it with me.' So he allowed me to take it along."

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I forgot to ask Chow if he carried that typewriter all the way to India. If so, it would have been quite a remarkable feat in the light of the journey that lay ahead.

Chapter Five

Burma

Rangoon

From Honolulu my husband and I flew to Tokyo and the next day from there I flew to Hong Kong and Bangkok. Between Hong Kong and Bangkok the plane passed over Vietnam at a very high altitude. From the window of the plane I could see the Mekong Delta and the great twisting Mekong River. This was the time in 1972 of the intense United States bombing of Vietnam. Though I did not see any planes, I was very uncomfortable knowing that thirty thousand feet below people were being killed by our high level bombing. While travelling in the Far East at that time, when presenting an American passport at Customs in many of these countries one was treated contemptuously. We were not loved for calling Asians "gooks." This was particularly true in Bangkok where I had to change airlines to get to Rangoon.

The flight to Bangkok was very late leaving Hong Kong. Not only was I uncomfortable about flying over Vietnam, I was also worried that I would miss my flight to Rangoon. There was only one round-trip flight a day between Bangkok and Rangoon. I asked the purser if he thought I would make the connection and he seemed doubtful. To my surprise, he went forward to speak to the Captain and returned to say that the Captain had radioed the Burmese airline to hold the plane for me, and they did! I made the connection and so did my bags. As soon as I was on board, the plane took off.

I was on a 727, pride of the Union of Burma Airways. "U. B. A. Flies Everyday!" was their motto. The only other passengers were some very unattractive and loud American men I was to run into later, to my chagrin. The interior of the plane was colorfully decorated with scenes of cold climate sports--ski slopes on snow-capped mountains, bobsled runs, ice-skating. I found out later that U.B.A. had bought the plane from Northwest Airlines and did not have the funds to redecorate it. It seemed incongruous to be surrounded by such scenery as we flew over the dense tropical forests on the mountains that isolate Burma from the rest of the world. I was reminded of what Paul Jones had said when he first saw Burma from the air, "Gee! I'd sure hate to have to walk out over that!" Fortunately, I was luckier than Jones had been.

Before I went to Burma I talked to the company's Danish agent in Scandinavia. His name was Dan Bjørner. He was also an agent for a teak manufacturing company and had been to Burma several times, his most recent trip having been two years before I went. Dan told me that Burma

was a very *triste* country, very *quiet*, he said. The country had suffered a great deal from strikes and insurgency more or less organized by armed communist groups that fought against each other and against the military government. The government was trying to introduce communism in Burma "the Burma way," whatever they meant by that. There were confrontations with some of the still pro-British tribes, such as the Karens, Kachins, Shans, and others.

He also said that the government had taken over all the shops quite a few years before, and all their fronts were painted a sickly green and numbered. The result was that most of them closed down. But there were still interesting and colorful markets away from the center of town, he said.

From what he said I could see that, just as Castens had foreseen, because the British had failed to give the Burmese people any experience in self-government, the post-colonial disorganization had led to a sorry state. From having been the world's largest exporter of rice under the British, by 1972 Burma had to import rice.³⁶

Ne Win was President when I was there. The government was becoming increasingly repressive and the country was desperately poor.³⁷

The government owned and operated everything--the banks, the airline, the railway, steamship, and bus companies, the hospitals, the schools, the hotels--so many of which under the British were owned and profitably operated by foreign companies. In an effort to erase all traces of the British, shortly before I arrived the government had ordered traffic to drive on the right side of the road even though the few and ancient cars that still existed were built with right-hand drive. Many times I witnessed the confusion and near accidents this created, particularly when a bullock-cart was involved.³⁸

My first experience of Burmese bureaucracy occurred when I went through Customs and Immigration at the Rangoon air terminal. I was put through an unpleasant inspection of my person and my belongings. I had to declare the value of my "jewels" even though they consisted of only a wedding-ring and a plain gold bracelet. My camera and tape-recorder were carefully scrutinized and I was told that I would have to produce all these possessions when I left Burma.

All foreigners had to pay for everything in "hard currency." I had to fill in a form which stated how much U.S. currency I had with me and was told that I must have no more than that amount when I left. It was quite obvious that official Burma despised my country but wanted my money.

All this officiousness took a very long time. It was the beginning of the monsoon season, the hottest season of the year, and the Customs shed was terribly hot. The only good thing about the whole procedure was that the American men from the plane were behaving so badly about the formalities that they were being given a harder time than I was.

When the officials were through with me, I gathered up my belongings and to my astonishment there was a little note in my right hand. I had no idea how it got there and it scared

me. I could not believe that someone could have put that note in my hand without my noticing. Were the "Burmese noseys" after me? I waited until I was outside the terminal to read it. It said, "Mrs. Thomson U Tun Shein. With Brown Jerkin & green checked shirt." Just then a smiling gentleman accompanied by a boy came up to me and said, "Welcome! I am Tun Shein."

As we got into his venerable thirty year old Morris station-wagon, he explained the note. In the past, Tun Shein said, he had been imprisoned for anti-government activities and might still be being followed by the secret police. He did not want the Customs officials to know who was meeting me, they might not have let me in. Somehow the boy who was with him had slipped into Customs and put the note in my hand. I did not find any of this particularly reassuring and decided that I should call on our American Ambassador to Burma as soon as possible.

Tun Shein took me to his house where I met his wife Lulu. She was one of the Seagrave nurses who had walked out with General Stilwell and she and Tun Shein were married after the war. Their house was a Hostel for young Baptist seminarians.

When I told Tun Shein that I wanted to see as many of the nurses as possible, he told me where they were living and those it would be possible for me to see in the time allotted to me. Several lived in Taunggyi and I should go there first, he said. From there I could fly to Mandalay, and from there I could arrange to go to Maymyo. Of course I wanted to go to Maymyo to see where Stilwell had his headquarters in 1942.

Tun Shein said that all flights, no matter what their destination, left Rangoon at 7:45 in the morning and returning flights all came in before dark. The manager at the hotel could make a reservation for me, he said. This seemed a wonderfully simple way to schedule flights since there was no competition. I was to discover that U.B.A. was a zippy little airline that, in its unique way, functioned very well.

After a chat with Lulu, Tun Shein took me to my hotel. It was the same Rangoon Strand Hotel that had been there since the days of the Raj, now owned by the government, of course. There was a certain air of faded gentility about it which I found rather charming. The atmosphere was entirely different from the officialdom at the airport.

The manager and his assistants were Indians who spoke perfect English with British accents. The houseboys and waiters were Burmese who did not speak *any* kind of English, but it did not matter because they were cheerful and obliging. This turned out to be true of everyone I met, once I was away from the bureaucracy of Rangoon.

I was taken to a huge room on the second floor which was cooled by a big, lazy fan hanging from the high ceiling. Only the dining-room was air-conditioned, I was told. The bathroom was huge too, and there were still traces of the Japanese whose officers had occupied the hotel during the war. Apparently they made some kind of alcoholic beverage in the tub because the enamel had been eaten away. There were also scars in the walls along the hall where the drunken officers had slashed

at them with their sabers.

I got a rude shock when I sat down on the bed and nearly cracked my spine. I was used to *bahuka* beds in the Philippines--woven bamboo covered with a sheet--which were quite comfortable, but this was something else. It was made of narrow wooden slats with a paper-thin mattress and a sheet over it. I did manage to sleep on it, but I was careful how I sat down on it after that.

Before going in to dinner, I gave the manager the dates on which I wanted to travel to Taunggyi, from there to Mandalay, and then back to Rangoon, and asked him to make the reservations. Then I went in to the icy-cold dining-room. Only one large round table was set. Seated at it--inevitably--were the noisy Americans from the airport. Since there was one empty seat, the waiter ushered me to it, thinking, I am sure, that I would like to be with my compatriots.

They insisted on buying me a drink and asked me all sorts of questions about what I was doing there. As the conversation turned to World War II and Stilwell's controversies with Chiang Kai-shek, one particularly obnoxious man said, "You can tell she's well-educated by the way she speaks, but she's been brain-washed! She must be a communist." This was all said in an offensively jocular manner. I hated every minute of it, but I did not have the courage to get up and leave, I just shut up entirely and was then accused of being a poor sport. Talk about UGLY Americans! Fortunately after that night I never saw them again.

Next morning I went to a bank to cash an American Express check. The teller was gone a very long time and when she came back she said she could not cash it for me. When I bought the checks in the States the woman who sold them to me made a small check-mark to indicate where I should sign them as she witnessed my signature. When I counter-signed one at the bank that morning in Rangoon, I failed to make a check-mark by the signature. I suppose the teller thought I was a forger. Fortunately the hotel cashed it for me later.

From the bank I walked to the American Embassy. Two youthful pink-cheeked United States Marine guards admitted me and I signed the visitor's book on a desk under a gruesome photograph of President and Mrs. Nixon. Then I was taken in to the office of our Ambassador, the Honorable Edwin W. Martin.

I told him that I wanted him to know where I was going. He was tremendously interested in what I was doing because Stilwell was a hero of his. He met Barbara Tuchman when she went to Burma and he had read her book. He said that for months he had been asking the Burmese government for permission to travel around the country. He was put off by one excuse after another until he finally gave up. I told him that I planned to be back in Rangoon on the following Thursday and would call him. I do not know what he could have done if I *had* disappeared, but it made me feel better, particularly when he said I had done the right thing. He also gave me the name of Carl Taylor, the U.S. Consul in Mandalay.

I took a trishaw from the Embassy to Tun Shein's house. A trishaw is like a rickshaw except

that the cab is pulled by a man on a bicycle and can carry two passengers. This kind of transportation gave me an opportunity to observe how truly sad the city was. There was hardly any traffic and such as there was consisted of World War II vintage cars, trishaws, and pedicabs, another version of a rickshaw for just one passenger, and a few bicycles. Faded pale green one and two-storey cinder-block buildings were cracked and streaked with mildew and peeling paint. There were no young people carrying "ghetto-blasters," there were no loud-speakers blaring at the corners, and there were no shops. I was told later that under the British, even if you did not have much money, at least there were shops with plenty of goods for sale. Now if you had any money, there was nothing to buy. I saw no women, but the men on the streets were soberly dressed in white shirts with ties and dark blue trousers, almost as if they were in uniform. They looked preoccupied and grim. It was indeed a sad and quiet city. It was entirely different from the other Oriental cities I was used to where noise and confusion and color were the norm.

When I got to Tun Shein's house, Lulu brought in a delicious-smelling stew for lunch, but to my surprise she did not eat with us. Tun Shein said she was too shy, she did not think it was proper to eat with me. This was disappointing and somewhat disturbing. From what the FAU men told me, I gathered that there had been complete egalitarianism between them and the nurses during the Walkout. I was surprised that there still seemed to be a residual sense of subordination on Lulu's part, left over from the British or perhaps from Lulu's training as a nurse.

I concluded that it was really the same thing I had sometimes encountered in Japan. Oriental men, I had been told, thought that their wives were too "uncouth," they did not belong in what was considered to be a man's sphere, whether it was a business meeting, a meal, or an interview, even with another woman. Later when I urged Tun Shein to let Lulu tell me about herself and the Walkout, he did tell her to come back and talk to me. But he tried to answer my questions to her before she could gather the English words she wanted to say. I could understand this; he did not want me to think she was ignorant. But when given enough time, she was perfectly articulate. One of the FAU men had said she was a monkey, and I could see why. She had a good sense of humor.

This is not in any sense meant to convey criticism of Tun Shein. He was a very kind man, but he was a lot older than Lulu and he still held to the old Oriental way of male dominance over women.

It became obvious to me as I listened to Tun Shein that his philosophy of life was based on helping other people. The letter "U" in front of a man's name in Burma is a title of courtesy, not exactly like "Mr." but denoting one in the position of "uncle." That was what Tun Shein was to the nurses during the Walkout. They loved him and trusted him, and knew that he would take care of them.

U Tun Shein, age 38
Seagrave Mobile Surgical Unit

Tun Shein was the kind of bloke who could turn his hand to anything.

"I grew up near Bassein in Lower Burma where my father was in private business," Tun Shein began. "We were Karens, one of the many tribes that are not Burmese. We were Baptists, we spoke English in the home, and I went to British schools. That's why I was put in jail, they thought I was in one of the pro-British groups.

"My father decided to go into the Baptist ministry but somehow there was still enough money to send me to Engineering School. The trouble with me though was that I didn't study hard enough and I failed the engineering course and went into Liberal Arts. Then I got a job teaching English and Math. Burmese was a language that was also taught, but English was the medium of teaching.

"After I had taught for two years, I decided I wanted to go into the ministry myself. In order to have enough money to go to the Theological Seminary, I took a job with one of the big timber outfits, McGregor's, up in central Burma in Tagu,--the *lomas* or hills--that divide Burma north-south like a spine.

"I worked for them for seven years, 1933 to 1940. The selection of the trees to be felled, the girdling, the plans, were all drawn up by the Forestry Service, but we did the actual running of the whole operation, the logging, the cutting, the planting, all that. Then at the end of the season when all the trees had been felled, the logs were hauled out of the forests by elephants to the nearest river and made into huge rafts. Then the rafts were floated down-river to a rail-head or sometimes all the way to Rangoon.

"I used to get to ride down on the rafts and I really looked forward to that. There was everything to do with. There was a nice little house on the stern where I had my own bed, and I had a table to work on and a fireplace. It was quite simple and efficient. I built a little platform and I lined it with mud, and that was my hearth and I could cook anything and everything.

"Along the river there were many little villages where we tied up at night. I would go ashore and bargain for a pig or a chicken and get rice and vegetables. If there was time, I would go into the surrounding forest and gather wild berries and ferns and roots to add to the usual things. That was one of the happiest times of my life and I wish I were up there right now!

"But just about a year before the war started, I had made enough money to go to the Seminary. Then when things started happening, the seminary closed down and I began to wonder what I could do, how I could help.

"Then one day a man came in to the Baptist Mission in Rangoon where I just happened to be. He was lining up drivers for trucks to carry medicines for the British Army which was already fighting the Japanese over in the eastern part of the country. This man was Dr. Seagrave, the American Baptist missionary from Namhkham Hospital who had offered his hospital staff to the

British Red Cross. He was lining up American medical missionaries and trucks and supplies in Rangoon and he needed one more driver, and in me he found one.

"Imagine me, Tun Shein, one Karen among all those American missionaries! But here was the chance to help that I had been looking for. So I arranged with Dr. Seagrave that I would join him as soon as I could. I would work in any general capacity as well as drive a truck, and that is what I did. I joined the unit.

"Dr. Seagrave and the nurses were doing the surgical work, the rest of us were running around doing this and that. When we could, we would go to Rangoon and pick up more jeeps and trucks. But by then we were already retreating and the bombs were falling on Rangoon and on us too. So when General Stilwell arrived, we joined up with him.

"At that time I was more or less in administrative work, trying to get food and supplies and things like that. I was also doing some of the cooking, I was used to that. But later on, without any planning, I took on more and more responsibility.

"I had no feeling about it, there was nothing to it that we had to walk. I had been walking up and down the hills in my forest work, nothing new. I had never seen the General before but from the way it looks, he's an old hand, and though he's thin, he's tough. So you don't worry any more about it.

"I could do the cooking for our group and I would look after the nurses as best I could. We knew we had to stick together. Nobody knew what we might be getting into, we might be walking into danger. But we knew we were lucky to have General Stilwell as the leader of the whole group, and you had the feeling you could leave everything in his hands.

"I started out with a bedding-roll, but I soon threw that away and I used my *longgyi* thrown over my shoulders to carry everything in so that I could have it handy. Then I wore shorts like the British did. I had shoes but I went barefoot because I was used to that."

I asked Tun Shein to tell me what a *longgyi* was. He explained that it was the Burmese word for the wrap-around skirt that both men and women wore, similar to a sarong. He showed me how he tucked his shirt in at the waist of the one he was wearing, and how he could make the *longgyi* into a sack in which to carry things. The short blouse the women wore that hung loosely at the waist was called an *inggyi*, he said.

"The girls had a terrible time deciding what to take. They opened their little cases and went through everything. They exchanged things with one another and they ended up throwing most of it away and wearing their oldest clothes.

"When we started out, all those who were worn out and tired could not make the pace the General set. The girls had a hard time. I went on ahead and when we got to Nanantun, I was told that we were to go to this pagoda and it was a nice place. There was a fine well there. I started right away to prepare the evening meal. I liked cooking and I used the native foods and cooked *our* way.

The smells were so good the Americans were envious of us. They didn't have anything like that."

I told Tun Shein about my visit with Castens and he was interested to know that Castens had been on the Walkout. He had never met him. These two men of totally different backgrounds had been engaged in aspects of the teak industry that depended on both of them, yet they were unaware of each other as they walked out of Burma in the same group. I liked it that in their work each, in his own way, had travelled "First Class."

We laughed about what Tun Shein and Eric Inchboard had in common, they had both failed at Engineering School. He said they had often compared notes on their brief academic careers. And of course both of them had married Seagrave nurses.

When Lulu joined us, I thanked her for the delicious chicken stew she had prepared for our lunch. She giggled and said, "Not chicken, pigeon!" I was to have pigeon quite often during my week in Burma and it *was* delicious, as long as I kept thinking of it as squab.

Lulu was full of giggles as she gradually became at ease with me. When I told her about Martin Davies, she wanted to know all about him and his family. She went into fits of laughter when I told her someone had called her a monkey. She said yes, she loved to play jokes on the boys. When they brought their smelly clothes to the nurses to be washed, she would hide them, say she had lost them. Things like that, she said. Anything to take their mind off what they were doing, carrying the bleeding wounded and the dead. Yes, she was Martin's girl-friend on the Walkout, but nothing serious, just nice.

**Lulu, Nurse, age 20
Seagrave Unit**

We were happy all the time, raining or sunning.

"I grew up in Bassein where my father was a clerk for the British administration," Lulu said. "We didn't have much money so, because I was a Baptist, after ninth grade I chose to go to Namhkam for nurse's training because there was a Baptist Mission hospital there. My family had enough money for that.

"I was happy there. It was hard work, but I was happy. I had one more year to finish my training when the war broke out. I never thought about independence for the Burmese, there seemed no reason for it. I had been to British schools and I had always liked the British. I had not known about the threat of war, I didn't know much about life except my nursing. When Dr. Seagrave told us his plans, I wanted to go with him to the front lines. I didn't want to be left behind at the hospital.

"We went to the front line, we worked day and night, and early in the morning we have to work. I had never seen anything like that before. The boys brought in seventy, eighty wounded at one time. We just had to keep working, to do our duty, so busy we never thought about the war.

"When General Stilwell told us we have to walk, we hope. If he say to go, we go. If he say don't go, we do that too. We don't mind about the walking, we were happy all the time, raining or sunning, no matter.

"It was like a bazaar when we traded our clothes in the clearing and we carried very little. We can't carry very much because we were going to be climbing and walking, go up quick, up and down. We had a bottle and a plate to carry. We tied them up. There were many of us so we were not scared. Maybe a little bit worried about the jungle. But there was nothing to worry about. Tun Shein arranged everything for us, he was there to take care of us."



Taunggyi

After my interviews with Tun Shein and Lulu I returned to my hotel and prepared for my journey up-country. I apparently was the only guest for dinner in the hotel that evening, so I was taken to a small, stuffy dining-room. There I was served with what my children called "brown meat animal," some meat of unknown origin disguised in thick gravy. I had no idea what it was and I did not ask. Then I went to bed early as I was to be called at 4:30 in the morning in order to get to the airport which was quite a long way from the hotel. My wake-up call was by a waiter bearing a tray to my room with good hot coffee, rolls, and English marmalade. Having breakfast in bed was one of the luxuries of travel I enjoyed most.

It was pitch dark when the taxi came to take me to the airport, but just as Kipling said, the dawn did come up like thunder. One moment it was dark, then suddenly the red hot-looking sun seemed to shoot up from the horizon.

I was glad I got to the airport early. It was absolutely packed full of people and their belongings; huge crates, bundles, cages with chickens, suitcases, and steel trunks. For the first time I found out how really noisy Burma could be. Fortunately this area of the terminal was just a huge shed, outside of which I could see a row of shiny planes lined up for boarding. These were the Fokker "Friendship" planes, the turbo-props of which U. B. A. was very proud. But I knew that they also flew DC 3's, plain old propeller "Dakotas", the work-horse transport planes of the World War II era that were still in use all over the world. I wanted to fly to Taunggyi in one of them just as Stilwell had done thirty years before. But when I checked in at the ticket counter, I was told that I would be flying on one of the Fokkers. I asked if there was any flight to Taunggyi on a DC 3 and was told that yes, there was, but the Fokker was much nicer. I politely persisted until the clerk finally agreed and gave me a different boarding pass. His manner showed that in his eyes I had lost face, but I did not care, I was perfectly happy to be an eccentric American as long as I was not ugly about it.

As I looked out toward the tarmac, I soon saw an ancient Indian porter taking my bag off a Fokker and carrying it to a DC 3 parked by itself at some distance from the terminal gate. Like me it had lost face.

At 7:30 most of the passengers streamed out to the Fokkers. At 7:45, one by one they all took off. Then a group of us made our way to the DC 3. I began to wonder if I had made a bad decision when I saw how many of us there were and how much cargo was already on board in the aisle and piled on top of the seats in the rear. Somehow we all crowded in and took any seat we could find. They were just like bucket seats, though they were arranged in pairs, not along the sides of the plane. They were narrow and made of hard, cold metal. My seat-mate was a man holding an enormous bundle on his lap. As soon as we took off it became icy cold but soon the co-pilot brought me a cup of something hot that tasted like *creme de cacao* which was quite stimulating, to say the least!

I held a 1946 version of a National Geographic map of Burma on my lap. I knew that in 1942 the only map Stilwell had of Burma was one from the same magazine that could not have been very different from mine. I began identifying with Stilwell. We were now flying over the terrain where the General commanded the Chinese troops for the only time during the campaign. It was a successful battle for the town of Toungoo. But the Chinese troops began drifting away and within a few days Japanese reinforcements re-captured the town and overran the area. This defeat was the beginning of what soon became the final retreat. I could feel the bitterness and frustration experienced by Stilwell as his orders were constantly countermanded by Chiang Kai-shek.

As we made our approach to the so-called Taunggyi aerodrome, I really felt as if I were back thirty years in time. There was just a grass field and a small shed with a wind-sock. It turned out that it was situated an hour's drive from the town itself. When we landed, most of the other passengers disappeared. I was told that I would have to wait until the Fokker came in from Mandalay before a taxi would take me to Taunggyi. This was the plane I would have flown on if I had not insisted on flying on the DC 3. It went first to Mandalay where it picked up passengers and the Mandalay newspapers, all to be delivered to Taunggyi in the taxi.

So I sat on a bench outside the shed and waited. The temperature was quite pleasant, much less humid than Rangoon, and I could see the mountains, the *lomas* of which Tun Shein had spoken and where he had worked for McGregor's. When the Fokker came in, the newspapers were thrown into a broken down sort of jitney that was the "taxi." My bag and several metal trunks belonging to the passengers from Mandalay, all natives, were loaded on the roof, and off we went. The trunks fell off several times when we went around hairpin curves as we got up into the mountains. We all laughed and got out and helped put them back on the roof.

The drive took an hour but it was wonderful. It was a whole new world. I began to see the thatched *bashas*--or huts--in which the natives lived. Every possible kind of transportation was on the road; bullock carts, children riding on carabaos, blue state-owned buses full of laborers, and occasional cars as ancient as the one we were in, not all of them remembering which side of the road they were supposed to be on. We passed Lake Inle where fishermen propelled their skiffs with

a pole held in one hand and a leg wrapped around the pole. They looked like giant cranes as they swiftly flew across the shallow water, spearing fish with a long spear held in the free hand.

My bag and I were finally deposited safely at the Taunggyi Strand. The manager of the Rangoon Strand had telephoned for a reservation for me. It was really a government owned guest house, a pretty little bungalow in which there were no other guests. It was surrounded by lush tropical plants and it was cool and clean. The manager, also an Indian, greeted me, took me to my commodious room, told me not to flush the toilet more than once as there was a shortage of water, then invited me to come into the lounge for coffee and sandwiches. There he introduced me to another man who was his friend, he said.

We had a great conversation. They asked me if I had been to Burma before. I said no, but that I had lived in the Philippines. The manager asked me if I knew Henry Byroade who had previously been U.S. Ambassador to Burma and was then Ambassador to the Philippines. I did know Ambassador Byroade, so we talked about him and his wife. The manager said that when Byroade was stationed in Rangoon, unlike Ambassador Martin, he *was* allowed to travel around the country. He would have someone from the Embassy drive his car to Taunggyi--a little red MG, he said--and he and his wife would fly up for a week's vacation. "They stayed right here in this hotel," he said proudly and with emphasis. "They sat right where we are sitting, and talked just as freely to me as you are doing now." He admired Americans, he said, and how democratic they were. I was pleased that there were some Orientals who did not think we were all bad. Later when I talked to Byroade in Manila, he said how much he enjoyed his vacations at that little hotel in Taunggyi and wished he were back there right then.

When I told the two men in the hotel why I was there, it turned out that the manager's friend was a relative of Dr. Ba Win who was married to Little Bawk, one of the nurses I had come to see. He obligingly wrote out the directions to her house, and the manager sent for a taxi. This taxi was something like a VW, small and battered. The stuffing was coming out of the seat cushions and the windows were broken, but the engine ran smoothly enough. The driver was unshaven and looked like a *dacoit*. *Dacoits* were the bandits who held up and robbed people on the highways during the war. Of course he did not speak English but because I was under the *aegis* of the hotel manager and was going to visit a prominent doctor, I felt that I was safe. When I offered him an American cigarette, the *dacoit* was mine for the rest of the afternoon.

Dr. Ba Win's house was an imposing two-storey frame house, very new and expensive looking in what seemed to be a secluded part of the town. The front door had a locked iron gate in front of it which the taxi driver shook and shook. Finally a plump lady appeared, very well dressed and carefully made-up. This was Little Bawk. She had heard from Tun Shein that I might be coming. She invited me in and we sat in the front hall which was spacious and attractive with beautiful modern furniture, colorful rugs, and a bookcase full of books.

Little Bawk told me that she and her husband were going to a conference so our conversation was not really an interview. The gist of what she said was that she was twenty-three when the war started and was in nursing at the hospital in Namhkam hospital. She went along with Dr. Seagrave when he set up the Red Cross Hospital unit, first for the British and then for the Americans.

"I learned to drive the jeeps and the big trucks along with three other girls, and I still can," she said proudly. I told her that Martin Davies had told me that she was driving the jeep that turned over and dumped all the girls out, and she really laughed at that and said she remembered it well.

Dr. Ba Win came down from upstairs at that point and joined us. Like Tun Sein, he immediately took charge of the conversation. He spoke softly with a cultured English accent. He told me that he had been educated in England, that he had read Tuchman's book, and was at the time reading Slim's Defeat into Victory, a book I too had read when I was in London.³⁹

After a few moments of conversation along those lines, pleasantly but firmly he said, "You can say that my wife was like all the girls in the Seagrave unit. She was devoted to service and ready to do whatever came along. She still is. We run a clinic together where I am the doctor and she is my nurse. Now we really must go, or we will be late for the conference." So I thanked them and left after they gave the taxi driver directions to the home of Sein Bwint, another of the Seagrave nurses.

What a contrast my visit with Sein Bwint turned out to be. We drove through the main part of the town to an area much like the *barrios* in the Philippines. Here there were small houses with thatched roofs, open windows without panes, and with big wooden shutters that could be dropped when it rained. Some were on stilts, and pigs and chickens mingled underneath the house. Sein Bwint's house was similar to the other houses, but there were no pigs underneath, only chickens.

She and her husband, whose Anglicized name was Jack Diamond, welcomed me warmly. We sat at a table by an open window and had a cup of tea as we talked. It was cool and lovely; plump little multi-colored paper triangles hanging on strings from the top of the window blew about soundlessly in a gentle breeze. They were charming, like flowers blowing in a meadow.

Sein Bwint was a lovely, gentle person, thoughtful and articulate. She smiled when I asked if I could use the tape-recorder. "You are going to take my voice back to America," she said.

She was still working because she was badly needed to train young women to be nurses. She was what was called a "Sister Tutor." Her job was becoming increasingly difficult because the government insisted that courses which were formerly taught in English were now to be taught in the Burmese language. There just were not any Burmese words for some of the medical terms, she said, and she was constantly frustrated by trying to explain the terms.

Her husband was a quiet-spoken man who let Sein Bwint speak for herself. He had been a teacher in the grade schools. He was only fifty-five years old, but he was forced to retire. This was government policy in order to give employment to as many people as possible, even though it meant putting anyone over fifty-five out of work.

Sein Bwint, Nurse, age 20
Seagrave Unit

You did what you had to do because you were supposed to.

"I came from Taunggyi and because I wanted to serve, to help people, I went into training at Namhkam. I was in my fourth year at the war time. Dr. Seagrave told us a little about the war coming and when he said we would be going down to the front, I wanted the experience of caring for war casualties. It was a wonderful experience.

"You did what you had to do because you were supposed to. You obey your leaders and you do your duty.

"The first day after the clearing, we loved it. It was like a picnic. But some got tired and had sore feet and got blisters. We had had very little sleep the night before. We were not dismayed that we had to walk, but we were disappointed that we got no rest. But we were happy to be together, it was a sisterhood."

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When I asked Sein Bwint if she could tell me where to find Big Bawk, she said, "Oh, yes. She works at the hospital where she is on night duty just now. We will go to see her." I protested that we should not wake Big Bawk if she had been on night duty, but Sein Bwint assured me that it would be all right. Big Bawk would be terribly disappointed if she did not see me. So Sein Bwint and I crowded into the back seat of my taxi and drove to the hospital.

It was a modern three storey building built with funds from the Soviet Union after Burma became independent and was staffed originally by Soviet physicians. Sein Bwint told me that two of them defected to Burma, married local Burmese girls and were still working at the hospital

Sein Bwint also told me that Big Bawk was divorced and had one daughter who lived with her. Because of her long service at the hospital, Big Bawk lived in a small apartment behind the hospital that was provided by the government. Sein Bwint went in and waked her up and she and her daughter came out. We sat down in garden chairs outside her apartment and talked. When I apologized for waking her up, she said, "No matter! I am so happy to see you."

That made me feel wonderful. It was a feeling that was often engendered by these dear women. They seemed so pleased that I came so far just to see them. And I was pleased too.

Now I understood why she and Little Bawk had been given their *soubriquets*. Little Bawk was short and plump, Big Bawk was tall and very thin. They had the same last names but they were not related. Big Bawk was the first nurse I met who was divorced. There was a subtle difference between her and Ruby or Lulu or Sein Bwint, even Little Bawk, who perhaps was not quite as innocent as the others. Big Bawk seemed more worldly, tougher in the sense that she reflected the independence of a woman who had had to make her way on her own. She had done well.

When I told her I had seen Little Bawk that day she said, "So! You have met Dr. Seagrave's

favorite . . . ha-ha-ha," and burst into laughter. I did not pursue this even though Tun Shein had hinted at the same thing. Perhaps that colored my impression of Little Bawk. Just the same, I found it pretty funny myself. It was still something the others in the unit talked about, and apparently to Big Bawk it was a huge joke. I assumed that this was what John Rich was referring to when he called Seagrave a louse.

Big Bawk, age 21
Nurse, Seagrave Unit

Big Bawk trained herself to sing like Doris Day.

"When I was a schoolgirl, I lived in Bhamo," Big Bawk said. "I attended the vernacular school where I passed through the Seventh Standard, but my mother died when I was in my senior year and it wasn't possible to continue my schooling. I applied to Dr. Seagrave's hospital in Namhkam and entered training in 1938. It was very famous for all the care of the people in the country around there.

"I had been training there for four years when the war broke out and spread all over the world, even in Burma. We had no idea the war was coming, we were caught up in our training and duties at the hospital. We knew nothing about the rest of the world. We knew very little about anything except our duty.

"We did sometimes see the American movies and my favorite star was Doris Day. I learned all her songs and I could sing them in her voice. We were paid about three rupees a month, about ninety cents American money at that time, but we didn't have much to spend it on. Our whole time was taken up in learning our duty.

"When Dr. Seagrave told us about the war and that the Japanese had invaded our country, he instilled in us a feeling of patriotism, that we should be happy to work for the people that were trying to save our country. When he formed the Red Cross Mobile Surgical Unit to care for the British wounded, he chose the nurses to go with him to the front lines and to learn to drive. I was included and I learned to drive the big trucks and the jeeps.

"We joined in the British Army as a Red Cross unit for two months. Then in April the Chinese Fifth Army was working under the control of General Stilwell--the American--and he called for our unit. So Dr. Seagrave and a team of about twelve nurses went down to the southern area under the Americans.

"Dr. Seagrave did not want us too close to the front lines, so we camped at Pyinmana about thirty miles north of the front. We got there about four o'clock in the afternoon and Dr. Seagrave ordered us to rest, to take a bath, to have our dinner. He said, "Girls, we are in the Army now. We are in the front lines, so you be careful, everybody. You must rest while you get time, so go to bed early." So we went to bed early, about eight o'clock and about two hours later the trucks came in

and everybody got up. It was all the Chinese wounded, the casualties brought in by the Friends Ambulance Unit. They bring I think about three trucks full.

"From then on we start operating on them, doing the surgery. If there was something we were not trained for, all of us got trained very quickly. It was on-the-spot surgery, anaesthetics, all the rest. We worked for three days and four nights continuously, hardly any sleep, no rest at all. We had to move the unit back from the front after that as the fighting got closer and closer. We could hear the guns and the bombs falling and sometimes we were shaking with fear.

"When the fighting finally ended we drove north for two or three days to Shwebo where we joined up with General Stilwell who came up from the front. On the way, I can remember seeing the poor refugees all trying to get away. They were mostly in very bad condition. Most of them were starving and they were suffering from bacillary dysentery and very many of them died.

"I knew nothing about General Stilwell. I never met him, never spoke to him, but Dr. Seagrave told us about him. When we went into the jungle, he spoke to all of us together in the clearing. We can hear him quite well. He was standing in the middle and we were standing around him. It was crowded but we can hear.

"When he told us we have to walk, as that time we were so young, we didn't feel anything. We were ready to go anywhere, we were strong enough. As far as I was concerned, I was not at all scared.

"We didn't know where the Japanese were but we knew we had to hurry. We knew the monsoon was coming and that we must get to Imphal, but no need to worry, General Stilwell was taking the responsibility.

"We threw away all our clothes. We choose the ones we like the most and threw the others away in the jungle. It looked like a bazaar with all the clothes hanging on the trees. All we took was two pairs of clothing and a bag. We also had a canteen and a first-aid kit. We carried it ourselves, we had no porters to carry.

"When we started to walk, some of us had no experience to walk. It was hard on our foot, we found it quite hard to do at first, to walk as fast as the General told us to. But the last half mile the jeeps picked us up and we were so happy we were laughing and singing when we came in to the camp."

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It was getting late as Big Bawk talked and it was time for me to return to my hotel. I took Sein Bwint home and when I got back to the hotel I paid off the taxi driver and gave him some more cigarettes. He gave me a big smile as he took off.

I had my supper and went to bed early. I was struck by the absolute silence as I dropped off to sleep. Suddenly, about two hours later, I was terrified as I was jolted out of a deep sleep by the most appalling noise coming from what seemed to be right under my bed. I did not know that dogs slept under my bedroom and a dog-fight was going on. The dogs seemed to be determined to make

me as unhappy as they were. Someone finally came and broke up the fight, but I had a hard time getting back to sleep.

The next day I took a taxi back to the aerodrome, this time in a relatively intact pick-up truck in which I was the only passenger, and it was an uneventful ride. Again I waited there for the plane that was to take me to Mandalay. No more DC3's, this time. I had to fly in a Fokker, and it would be a short flight of about thirty-five minutes.

When the plane came in and I got on board, I found that it was quite full, but I had a seat to myself. It certainly was more comfortable than the DC 3. There was even a stewardess who made an announcement over the loud-speaker as soon as we were airborne. I was the only American on board, but speaking first in English for my benefit, in a sing-song voice she said what I understood to be that our plane would be making a detour to Canton before proceeding to Mandalay. This really shook me up. Canton was in China and the previous week a plane from Canton had been hi-jacked and had disappeared. I got out my map and could hardly believe that we would ever get to Mandalay if we went to Canton first. It was at least a thousand miles away.

When the stewardess finished her announcement in Burmese, she brought around the same delicious hot drink I had had on the DC3. I showed her my map and asked her to point out our route. She put her finger on *Kentung*, a small town in the remote eastern part of Burma. known as The Golden Triangle. I could see that it would take at least an hour to get there, but I remembered that Ruth Inchbald came from there which at least gave it some identity for me, and it was a lot closer than Canton!

Side trip to Kentung

"You are enjoying a rare privilege." These were the words delivered to me in a stern voice by the pilot of the plane as he and I stood in the shade of the plane's wing on the airstrip at Kentung. No other passengers had been allowed to get off the plane, but he had sent the stewardess for me to come out and stand with him.

He spoke perfect English and after his opening words, his tone softened. "This is an unscheduled stop," he said. "To tell you the truth, even our nationals are not allowed to come here and the security is very poor. We are here because we had to bring a mechanic and a motor for another aircraft. This is the 'frontier' that is bordered by the North Shan States, China, and Laos. The insurrectionists are in the Shan States, and through Kentung passes all the smuggling of money and opium. It is a particularly dangerous part of the country."

Because I was not a Burmese national, he had let me get off the plane, but I was not so sure just how privileged I was! He was obviously jittery about having to stay so long on the ground, and he made me jittery too. He kept sending someone to find out how things were going because we had to take the mechanic back with us. We had to wait to be sure that the motor was properly installed

before we could take off.

Finally the work was finished, the mechanic got on board and we took off. Altogether, what had been a scheduled flight of no more than thirty-five minutes took more than three hours, but then I had been privileged to go to Kentung! When we got to Mandalay, the pilot came back for me and carried my bag to the taxi-stand where he got me an English speaking driver in a new jeep. That made me feel *really* privileged.

Mandalay

The driver of the jeep was named Kenneth. He spoke perfect English, and was very articulate and "with it." He told me that he was saved for American visitors and drove Barbara Tuchman around Mandalay when she was there. She told him she was interested in Stilwell but she never told him who she was. He found out later, he said. He immediately put me into the same category as an historian when I told him I was interested in Stilwell too. He would be glad to be my driver while I was in Mandalay, he said, which was fine with me. He later took me to lots of places I would never have been able to find with another driver.

He took me first to the Mandalay Strand hotel where the manager of the Rangoon Strand had also made a reservation for me. After I checked in, Kenneth drove me to the Hospital where, at my request, he told someone that I was there to see Ma Graung. She was one of the Seagrave nurses and was a Matron, or Head Nurse, at what turned out to be a hospital for lepers. I told Kenneth I would be about an hour and he said he would come back for me.

Ma Graung came out to greet me, very shyly at first. She was tiny, but very much an authority figure in her uniform and stiffly starched wide-winged nurse's cap. We sat out on a shaded verandah where it was terribly hot, but there was something peaceful about the surroundings. There were lots of flowers everywhere and there was a little Buddhist shrine on the lawn in front of us. As we talked, the lepers walked slowly past, stealing surreptitious glances at me. Some of them looked fairly healthy but others showed the ravages of the disease in their shrunken limbs, and with blotches of white all over their bodies.

Ma Graung spoke very haltingly. She said she hardly ever spoke English any more, but she was most endearing. She wanted me to tell her about all the other people I had seen. By then I could tell her quite a lot. She was particularly interested in George Parsons. She said that he and she had been girlfriend, boyfriend on the Walkout, a phrase spoken as if it were all one word. She added with a giggle that when she married, she named her first son George.

**Ma Graung, age 16
Nurse, Seagrave Unit**

Ma Graung was just a little girl but she was a splendid nurse.

"I grew up in the Shan States," Ma Graung said. "I am a Kachin and all my family were Baptists. I went to American Baptist school and then I go in training in the nurse's school at Dr. Seagrave hospital. I like to be a nurse, to care for patients like a nurse did.

"When the war came along, Dr. Seagrave didn't *tell* us we have to go with him, he *asks* us, 'Who wants to help the country and your own relations, who wants to work for your country?' and so I choose to do so.

"At that time I was quite young, I was sixteen years old. They called me 'Baby.' I had not seen much of the world. We went to the front and we worked with the Chinese wounded and then we joined General Stilwell.

"We started out of Burma, but we didn't know at first if we are going to India or China. We simply go along with the Seagrave unit and when we reach the jungle we don't have any jeep or truck. At first it's a little bits worrying. At first I was afraid of the Japanese, but I thought we are going away from them so I am not afraid."

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After my interview with Ma Graung, Kenneth came back for me. Before going back to the hotel he took me on a sight-seeing trip. We went first to one of the markets which was in a huge shed. Besides fresh fruit and vegetables and canned food, there were all sorts of dry goods, cloth for *longgyis* and *inggyis*, furniture, carved ivory knick-knacks, baskets, and Shan bags, a sort of shoulder bag of colorfully woven material. I bought one of these and carried it for years. We went to a Buddhist pagoda where I had to take off my shoes when we went in. The altar was ornately carved with a statue of a reclining Buddha above it. The steps were crowded with beggars chewing some sort of tropical nut and the floor was spattered with their spit.

When we left the pagoda, Kenneth said he had an errand to do at the American Consulate and that was lucky for me. I would have a chance to present Ambassador Martin's card to Carl Taylor, the U.S. Consul in Mandalay. He was a charming young man from Vermont, looking forward to his leave after two years in Mandalay. He had been stationed in Jakarta and he too had known my cousin, but he did not know Bob Belknap.

When I told Carl I had been to Kentung that very morning he did not believe me. He said he had been trying for two years to get there, but like Ambassador Martin, he had been unable to get permission from the Burmese government. He loaned me a splendid guidebook for Mandalay, most of which he had written himself, he said. He also gave me a card to a friend of his in Maymyo, Professor John Moonie.

Even though it was so hot, Mandalay was a pretty city with lots of parks full of "Flame of the

Forest" trees. They were shaped somewhat like Japanese maples and had a spray of brilliant red blossoms on every branch. On the way back to the hotel as we passed several parks, I saw something that was the most wonderful thing I had ever seen in a tropical country. In each park there was a big square raised stone tub filled with water. I saw several people step up onto a ledge around the tub, unwrap their *longgyis*, and step into the tub. They slipped into the water, splashed it over themselves, stepped out, wrapped their *longgyis* back around themselves, and walked off, obviously refreshed. How I would have loved to do the same thing!

Right across from the hotel there was a wall. When I asked Kenneth what was behind it, he said, "I will show you." He drove to a gate in the wall, spoke to a guard, and quite against the posted regulations, we drove in and around the grounds of what had been the palace of the ancient Ava Kings of Burma. These were the Kings who had ruled Burma for centuries until, in a series of wars against them, the British acquired Burma during the late nineteenth century. There was nothing left of the palace now, it had been destroyed by Japanese bombing in the battles for Mandalay in 1942 and 1945, but I was thrilled to at least have seen the site.⁴⁰

The "Manly" Strand, as it was pronounced locally, was less prepossessing than either of the two previous Strands. My room on the ground floor was quite stark, also with a slatted bed. There was a hand basin and a window air-conditioner which worked fitfully and not very successfully. But the bathroom was great. It was just a small stone-floored room with a sink, a toilet and a shower-head in the ceiling. When the water was turned on, it sprayed over everything, including the toilet and the toilet-paper. But the best thing about this funny little room was that there was a faucet in the wall beneath the shower at the right level to turn on to wash just your feet. That was the first thing I did when I came in, and I let the water run over my feet for long minutes, rinsing away the accumulated filth of the day. It was wonderfully refreshing.

There were some Burmese men having dinner in the dining-room that evening, but they did not talk to each other or look at me. The room was not air-conditioned, but the windows and doors were open and it was not too unpleasant. This time my dinner was pigeon stew. It was not as good as Lulu's, but I had not had anything to eat since morning and I was hungry. Kenneth told me that he could not take me to Maymyo, so after my meal I asked the manager, again an English-speaking Indian, if I could have a driver take me there in the morning. He said that he would be glad to arrange it. I asked him about some of the names on my list of "Mechanics Oriental." He told me that there was a very old lady in Mandalay who might know something about Douglas Surin and Donald MacPhedran. They were among the "Mechanics Oriental" on the Stilwell roster who drove and looked after the Staff cars and trucks in Maymyo, and subsequently went on the Walkout.

No breakfast in bed for me the next morning. When I went to the dining-room, it was airless. All the windows and doors were shut. A young man, little more than a boy, was eating his breakfast. He stood up and addressed me in English. "Good morning, sir. Your saloon has been prepared for

you. How long will you be in Maymyo? You will have a box lunch, it is being prepared for you. It will be an egg sandwich, banana, bottled soda. I will follow you. You will pay extra for your lunch. We will move from here at eight hundred hours."

This young man turned out to be Aung, one of the hotel houseboys. I asked him to open some windows and as he did he explained that there were no English speaking drivers available. Because Aung spoke English, if a somewhat World War II version, the manager had given him and two other house-boys the day off to go with me. One of them brought along his wife and little girl. When my "saloon" appeared right at eight o'clock, I got in beside the driver and the others got in to the open bed of what turned out to be a pick-up truck..

This was by far the most decrepit of all the vehicles I had yet been in. I think it was a 1948 Ford. The driver was another wild looking fellow but every time the door on my side flew open--which it did every time we went around a corner, just as had happened on the road to Taunggyi--he jumped out, ran around to my side and slammed it shut. Somewhere along the way he found a piece of string and tied it shut again, just like the driver of the Taunggyi taxi.

We drove out of Mandalay along one of the dikes I had heard and read so much about. This was a built up road between rice paddies with deep ditches alongside. I felt as if I knew every mile of the way. This was the road travelled by the General and his staff back and forth between Maymyo and Mandalay, or to the front, in their jeeps and staff cars. Most of the jeeps I saw in 1972 were of World War II vintage, just as most of the cars were. It was easy to see how the thousands of refugees, bullock carts, and other transportation would have shoved and jostled for position and were ruthlessly pushed off the road into the ditches by the Chinese troops as they fled from the Japanese in 1942.

From the plain we began to climb up through dense forests with beautiful teak trees close beside the road, then up a twisting mountain road full of hairpin curves, and I was glad my door was tied shut. The engine boiled over several times as we climbed, the gears moaned and groaned every time the driver shifted. Whenever we encountered another car on a hairpin curve, the drivers got out and argued about which side of the road the other one should be on.

After we had been on the way for about an hour, we came to a road-side stand with a big sign in English saying, "Stop Here! We Have Rice!" Actually, they did *not* have any rice, but we stopped anyway. Everybody got out, the group had a drink of some sort, and I had a sip of my bottled water. The driver got a can of water to take along for the next time the engine boiled over. In this way for two hours we made our way up the fifty mile mountain road to Maymyo. I loved it all!

Maymyo

In Maymyo we went straight to the address Tun Shein had given me for Koi, one of the Seagrave nurses I had come to see. She lived in a stucco house in the part of town where the British

came for their holidays. It was where Flagstaff House, the British Residency during the period of the Raj, was located, and where there was a nice little nine hole golf-course.

Tun Shein had written Koi that I might be coming. She greeted me warmly and introduced me to her husband, U Bo. While I talked to them, I sent Aung, the houseboy, and the rest of the gang off to see if they could find Professor Moonie. They were to present the card Carl Taylor had given me and ask Professor Moonie if I might see him.

It turned out that Koi's son had been tutored in English by Professor Moonie and so had Jeanette Thaw, Ruby Johnson's sister. Koi would try to find her for me after we talked. Koi of course also wanted to hear about all the people I had seen. Ruby had told me that Koi was Bill Duncumb's girlfriend on the Walkout after Bill Brough had to be sent out to India. She was eager to hear about both of them, as well as about everybody else. This was so much fun for me, I loved being able to tell the people as I met them about the others. It made me feel almost as if I were part of the Stilwell group.

Koi asked me if I enjoyed my ride up the mountain road. I told her I certainly had, but I thought the road was not in very good shape. She agreed. She said the British kept the roads in far better condition in 1942 than the present government did in 1972.

Koi was no longer in nursing, she had given it up to run her own clinic in her home. When I told her that it was just thirty years since she had walked out with General Stilwell, she said she had not thought about that. "Too busy with the present to think about the past," she said.

Miss Koi, age 22
Head Nurse, Seagrave Unit

We were too young to be afraid.

"My home town was Namhkam and I went to the American mission school there and in to the Seagrave nursing school, naturally. I had stopped school at Seventh Standard when I was fourteen. I was not clever and at that time in Burma girls went into training at an early age. I became a Head Nurse when I was eighteen.

"We did not know the war was coming until Dr. Seagrave told us about it and told us what would be expected of us and what we must do. We had no idea about it.

"He choose who would go with him to take care of the Chinese wounded soldiers, the wounded who would be fighting the Japanese attack. We like it, we are glad to be chosen, partly because it was our duty to help people and we like to help people.

"I was the only Head Nurse chosen to go and I learned to drive a jeep like Big Bawk and Little Bawk and Ruth. When the retreat began we went up to Shwebo then started out in the trucks. Then we came to the clearing where we had to throw away all our clothes.

"When we had to throw away our clothes. . . well, at that time we were pretty young. Actually

we didn't think much, we were just happy to be in a group. And when General Stilwell told us we have to walk, we just had to obey, that's all. You see, we rely on him, he have to lead us so we have to obey him. We have to believe in him so we just did whatever he told us. We trusted him, we could never have survived without him.

"When we throw away our things, I had left one bottle for water and two *longgyis* and two *inggyis*, and that's all I carried. At first we took one blanket and so on, but as we travelled, we were tired. We just kept on throwing away the extras.

"We were too young to be afraid, we had a good feeling of being together. Sometimes we had a good time but sometimes we had our troubles too, like the first day when you got tired, when you were hungry and such matters. Our feet were tired. I got sore feet and blisters. But we didn't get depressed. We just didn't think much, I think! "

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Aung and the driver returned to Koi's and told me that Professor Moonie would be happy to see me. I told Koi that Ruby Johnson had asked me to get the calendar from her sister Jeanette on which their father had kept a diary during the war. So while I went to see Professor Moonie, Koi went to find Jeanette.

John Moonie was a very cultivated gentleman who, like Sein Bwint's husband, had retired three years before when he became fifty-five. He kept himself busy tutoring students in English and writing a weekly column for the Working People's Daily, the Government newspaper. He lived in the house he had lived in all his life. The temperature was cool and pleasant as we sat out on a screened porch and he told me what it was like when Stilwell and his staff were in Maymyo in 1942.

"When the war came," he said, "my parents flew to India. I was unmarried, I was just twenty-eight years old then.

"I'm a graduate from a Rangoon University, the American Baptist Mission College which existed there before the war. It was known as Judson College. Most of the money came from Rockefeller, actually. My contact with Americans dates back to 1932 when I first went to college. I studied at the University of Chicago just after President Robert Hutchins left. He came back for a Commencement and I was honored by being introduced to him. Because I wanted to study under different professors, I spent some time at Harvard. I wanted to study American literature under {F.O.} Matthieson, he was the man there then. I knew Professor Whiting too, but I stayed as far away from Anglo-Saxon as I could! I also spent some time at the Palo Alto campus, Stanford University.

"I came back to Burma and taught English at Mandalay University. Mandalay in those days was a small place and we were a small outfit, it was a college then. When the war came I was with the British Army here in Maymyo at that time, encoding and decoding messages to and from HQ in India. The supply system had broken down and the British themselves didn't know what they were

doing. The retail merchants, the traders, most of them were Indians, and they were on the run.

"I personally did not see too much of General Stilwell when he came. Most of the time he was on the move, up to Lashio, down to Toungoo on one side, up to Pyinmana on the other. General Stilwell had his Headquarters near where you were today. You should go to see it. I'll tell your driver how to take you there. It is still intact even though it was bombed the day Chiang Kai-shek was there. The Japs had the intelligence, but they missed him. They missed what they were after though they did a lot of damage round about. That's always the case in war, war is that way. If we could have killed Hitler at the first, there wouldn't have been any trouble at all!

"Most of the staff Stilwell recruited locally were Anglo-Burmese and they knew me either in Mandalay or here in Maymyo. They spoke English fluently and they could drive and repair cars. They were not attracted to the British Army, the pay was so low, but they liked working for the Americans. When Stilwell wanted something, they would come to me. They had the money for liquor and women that the normal British servants, shall we say? . . . did not have.

"I'm a Maymyo boy and I knew the people. For instance, if Stilwell needed help in finding something they urgently needed--at that time paper was scarce and they needed some paper--I knew where I could lay my hands on some. Because I am Indian and most of the merchants were Indians, I could find it. If the staff wanted liquor, I knew where to find it. Stilwell needed tires for his cars and of course with the war on, tires were scarce, but I found some for him. That time I met him face to face and he thanked me.

"I gathered that he had a very difficult time with the Chinese generals. Some of them were generals in name only, they were not military men at all, just given stars so the ones who spoke English could *liaise* with the Americans. Nine cases out of ten they were busy saving their own skins rather than fighting a battle.

"Sometimes General Stilwell wanted to send a message back to Lashio and the Chinese said they couldn't get through on the telephone. So someone came to me and asked me if I would handle it. 'Nothing simpler,' I said. 'I'll just go down to the telephone exchange. I may have to wait half an hour, but the message will get through.' On one occasion I had to wait until eleven o'clock at night. But you see, the Chinese would not persist that way, they were lazy. I helped out that way several times. Sometimes Stilwell may have been short-tempered with the Chinese but I didn't blame him, the circumstances he had to work under with them, the way they were dragging their feet.

"Yes, my father and I knew [Major "Beaver"] Barton before the war for the simple reason that he was one of those people who gravitated toward people who had a little intellectual interest. I knew him very well in the thirties. He could talk about anything and he could be brilliant. I would think that he and Stilwell would hit it off. Nobody can find him now. He had a brilliant academic career with a First in Geography. He was in the Survey Department which had its headquarters in Maymyo, and he was a Major as well. He was a bachelor and lived in an apartment on the top floor

of a department store near the bazaar.

"He was a Sinologist, he knew a great deal about China. He could write and speak Chinese. He had a long black beard and he wore very strong glasses that changed color all the time. I mean, they were dark glasses and one day they would be blue, the next day they would be black, on another day they would be amber, or just plain white. He was very eccentric. And a man who knew about Mao Tse Tung even in those days was a man to be reckoned with.

"The last I saw of him was in March 1942 and I know he was in the Indaw area just before Stilwell walked out. He got to India, that much is certain if he walked out with Stilwell. He got straight out of the Army after the war, no pension, no record of him at Cambridge after the thirties. But he was one of those mysterious characters who may have gone off on the limb somewhere."

Moonie studied my list of the British military and looked at a picture of them that Bob Belknap had given me. He did not recognize any of them specifically by name, but he provided interesting clues as to how to connect them with what he and I knew about them. He could tell the insignia of the officers, he identified one who might be an Officer Cadet by the peaked cap he wore, and he could say which were already in Burma before the war because they were wearing shorts. "All British men in Burma, including those in the Army, wore shorts and *topis* before the war," he said. "The British did not have many troops in Burma before the war started, only about fifty thousand. Very few additional troops were brought in, only a tank Regiment which never functioned, just got there in time for the retreat. The ones in the picture wearing slacks could have been some of these brought in at the last moment."

At this point in our conversation Koi arrived with Jeanette Thaw. Jeanette was carrying her father's calendar. She reminded Professor Moonie that he had tutored her in English a few years before, and she showed him the calendar. He was intrigued by her father's cleverness in keeping his diary on the back of it.

I could have stayed for hours listening to Professor Moonie. He was very stimulating. No wonder Carl Taylor liked to go up to Maymyo to see him. Some months later Carl sent me a column Moonie had written about me for the Working People's Daily! Unfortunately it was quite obvious that I talked more than Professor Moonie did, but then whom did I know who had ever been written up in that particular paper? (See Appendix D)

Now it was time to leave. Professor Moonie told the driver how to get to Stilwell's Headquarters. It was a Baptist Mission rest house, a two storey building with white columns, and was surrounded by bouganvillea. Whatever bomb damage it had suffered had been repaired. It was closed for the summer but Aung found a care-taker who let us in. It was cool and looked to me like an ideal place for a Headquarters. I could visualize the General and his staff sitting around the big table that was still there, the table some of the staff dived under when the bombs fell.

By then it was time for me to be on my way, and I reluctantly said goodbye to Koi and Jeanette.

Koi told the driver how to get to the place I chose to eat lunch and off we went on the road to Lashio.

Lashio was where the Americans landed when they flew from Chungking to get to Maymyo. There I was on the same road. My choice of a picnic spot from Carl Taylor's guide-book was perfect. There was a little clearing off the road in a grove of trees beside a stream. Over the stream there was a narrow bamboo bridge with rope hand-rails and there seemed to be nothing on the other side of the stream but forest. I could easily imagine myself in the clearing in the jungle on that long ago morning when Stilwell gathered the group together before they walked out.

The crew from the hotel all splashed about in the stream while I sat on a rock and ate my cold fried egg sandwich and banana. In a little while we headed back for Mandalay. We stopped in Maymyo for the boys to buy roast corn--a great delicacy, they said--but it was so tough I could not eat it. I asked Aung to cut me a piece of the durian fruit, highly regarded for its aphrodisiac properties, but it was so bitter I had to spit it out, which made them all laugh uproariously.

They filled the back of the truck with durian fruit, pineapples, and other fresh fruit I did not recognize. Aung told me, in his bizarre version of English, that he and the other houseboys were government employees and had to go wherever they were sent. They preferred the bright lights of Rangoon (!) where they could spend their money, to the quiet of Mandalay where there was nothing to do. They were delighted to have this day off to accompany me, and to be able to spend some of the money they saved by living in Mandalay.

While all this activity was going on and the boys were loading the truck, I had a chance to observe the scene around me. It must have been much the same thirty years earlier. The buildings were of a soft rose colored stone with white trim, and there was an arcade over the sidewalk. Men and women and children and dogs wandered casually in and out of the shops under the arcade. They were dressed in *longgyis* and colorful shirts or blouses. They looked far more cheerful than the people of Rangoon. There were a few cars and jeeps on the street, but the most popular vehicles seemed to be the *tongas*. A *tonga* was something like the stage-coach of American westerns. Bearded Indian drivers, some in turbans, sat on a high seat in the front of a painted coach drawn by a spirited little horse. I saw people hailing them as one hails a taxi-cab.

Going down out of the mountains from Maymyo I was really re-living the past. I was actually "on the road to Mandalay" at last. This was the same road travelled so often by Stilwell and his staff. How scary it must have been at night, lights blacked out, the driver fearful of a wire stretched across the road, an ambush with *dacoits* ready to spring from the trees on the side of the road. I was glad that it was daytime and that I could take time to enjoy the view. I made the driver stop as we came to an opening in the trees from which I could see to the west the Irawaddy river in the distance. It was so wide that it looked like the sea. To the south was a sacred mountain, the "Chanapahta," or buffalo, whose spirit inhabited it still, I was told. It was a huge hump-backed mountain that did look like a buffalo. It was fiercely fought over by both sides in the second Burma

campaign because of its strategic command of the terrain below.

When we came down on to the plain approaching Mandalay, I was even more vividly reminded of 1942 when the refugees in their bullock carts or carrying their worldly goods on their heads were trampled on or shoved off the dikes by the Chinese troopers and left to die in the ditches. We too saw the crumpled body of a dead man lying in one of the ditches, but Aung told the driver to keep going, it was not our "mission" to do anything about it. Perhaps I was getting callous, but I felt a sense of relief, for surely there was nothing that I could have done about it.

This was the only incident that marred an otherwise perfect day. I was tired but happy as we got back to the hotel just as the sun went down as fast as it came up.

The next morning I wanted to see Sarah Amelia Cole, the old lady the hotel manager told me about who might be able to tell me something about Douglas Surin, listed on the Stilwell roster as one of the "Mechanics Oriental." Kenneth was tied up with a newly arrived American businessman, so when I ordered a taxi, this time I got a beat-up Land Rover with a ragged canvas top. It was driven by a cheerful young woman named Alice who spoke relatively comprehensible English. The engine stalled when we stopped, but Alice said, "Not to worry!" She jumped out, hailed somebody on the street or from another car, that person gave us a push, and off we went again. This happened several times but it did not really matter much, I was enjoying myself with these cheerful and obliging people.

While I visited Mrs. Cole, Alice went off to see if she could get the car fixed. Mrs. Cole was ninety-three years old and bright as a button. She had been brought to Burma from Ireland by her parents when she was six weeks old and had lived there ever since. Her father worked for the Irawaddy Flotilla, the British steamship company that controlled all the shipping on the river.

She said she would like to make me a cup of tea but "they" would not let her have a fire, "they" were afraid she would burn the house down. So we sat on the porch of the little house which belonged to her daughter Esme and her husband, Douglas Surin's brother.

Amelia's husband had also worked for the steamship company and when the Japanese invaded Burma, he helped destroy and sink all the steamers and their cargo. It was a terrible loss, she said. She and Esme and Esme's three children fled to Amarapura, not far from Mandalay, where a timber trader gave them a hut to live in. She said they lived very carefully and the Japs never bothered them. One day some British soldiers came by and said they were lost. They asked her for directions to get to India and gave her some money when she told them to head west. For some reason she added that Manchurians were very rude and coarse people.

Douglas Surin had stayed in India after he walked out with General Stilwell, Amelia told me. He married there and died there several years later. She remembered that after the war Donald MacPhedran worked for Burmah Oil. When I wrote to that Company at its London office later, my letter was forwarded to an address in Scotland. In due time it was returned to me marked, "Gone Away." But at least Amelia's good memory helped me to find out what had become of two

members of the Stilwell group.

When Alice came back with the Rover she assured me that the stalling problem was fixed, so I asked her to drive me over the Ava bridge across the Irawaddy at a distance of about a mile outside of the town. This was the bridge that was blown after the Stilwell group and the British troops got across to prevent the Japanese from using it.

I could see women and children bathing and doing their laundry in the river as we drove across the beautiful new bridge that replaced the old one. In reply to some comment from me, Alice said that everyone in Mandalay drank the water from the river without boiling it because it was so much sweeter if it had not been boiled. I decided not to argue with her about it!

We were on the road to Shwebo and I wished I could have driven all the way to the town where General Stilwell refused to be flown to India, and where the others had been flown out. There was not quite enough time because I was leaving for Rangoon that afternoon. We did drive far enough for Alice to show me a famous pagoda built in the shape of a woman's breast. The husband of a beautiful woman had it built in that shape to honor his beloved wife, it was said.

On the way back to Mandalay we stopped at a roadside stand so that I could taste a wonderful little pastry recommended by Alice. It was called *khaia mon* and I think it was the most delicious pastry I had ever eaten.

When I checked out of the hotel, my companions of the day before came out to wave good-bye to me. This was a purely friendly gesture. All gratuities in the hotels were included in the price of the room, so guests were told not to tip anything extra. It spoiled the servants, we were told.

On the way to the Airport I stopped by Carl Taylor's office to return his guide-book. He was so pleased that I saw John Moonie and had such a good time in Maymyo.

On the flight back to Rangoon we landed at Magwe. The A.V.G.--General Clare Chennault's American Volunteer Group, the "Flying Tigers"--had their main base at Magwe during the first weeks of the Japanese invasion. They were in fact the *only* air defense of the country that there was. They were enormously successful against the Japanese airforce at first, but the Japanese eventually had far more planes than the A.V.G.. On one terrible day when the unreliable air-raid warning system completely failed, more than half of the A.V.G. planes were destroyed on the ground at Magwe. In frustration and disgust, the Americans flew the few planes that remained intact back to their base in China. Several of the pilots returned during the second Burma campaign in which the R.A.F. and the U.S. Army Airforce participated in joint action.⁴¹

After Magwe our flight passed over a desert and the town of Pagan. In the desert I could see the dozens of sand mounds whose origins are a mystery to archeologists. These mounds are a big tourist attraction but I was just as happy to see them from the air. It looked hot and dry down there in the exposed desert.

My flight touched down in Rangoon right on schedule, just before dark. The taxi that took me

back to the Strand was a shiny new yellow jeep and the driver spoke English. I arranged to have him take me to the airport two days later when I was to leave Burma.

I ate early in the air-conditioned dining-room that evening at a table by myself. The big table was set for other guests who were expected later, I was told. After dinner I was standing in the front hall reading the notices on a bulletin board. A well-spoken Indian came up to me and introduced himself as Mr. Seymour, the Catering Manager of the hotel. He wanted to know if everything was satisfactory on my trip. I assured him that everything had been fine, the staff had taken good care of me in Taunggyi and Mandalay, and I told him about my day in Maymyo.

Then I brought out from my handbag the Stilwell roster that I always carried with me, and asked him if he recognized any of the names of the British military or Mechanics Oriental. He studied the list a moment and said, "Yes, I know who Dennis Thompson is. He was a driver for the Stilwell staff. You know, when the British were here, they could not always pronounce Burmese names so they Anglicized them. Dennis Thompson's father was British so he was given a British name. He is now U Tin Gyi, Colonel Tin, Chairman of the Burmese Government's Raw Materials Board."

I told Mr. Seymour that I would very much like to see Colonel Tin Gyi and he said he would see what he could do. He disappeared to make a telephone call and in a few minutes he came back and said it was all arranged for ten o'clock the next morning. He would take me there himself. He was very pleased for me, he said. Colonel Tin was a very important person. Then he added, "You know, Madam, you were followed by the secret police when you came here the first day. They knew you were with U Tun Shein but when you came to stay at this hotel they knew that you were just a tourist and that was all right. So it is all right that you should also be going to see someone in the government."

Well! This was a shocker. The "Burmese noseys" had been after me after all. It was probably just as well that I was leaving the country before I got into trouble.

Next morning Mr. Seymour was waiting for me with his tiny car that he called "The Bug." It was a spotless 1940 Austin A20 and in perfect condition. He drove very carefully to downtown Rangoon, saying that the reason his car had lasted so long was because he took such good care of it, he loved his little "Bug."

The office of the Raw Materials Board was in one of the sad-looking faded green buildings I had seen before. Mr. Seymour bowed me to the front door where a solemn young clerk was waiting to escort me up a short flight of stairs to a room on the second floor.

It was a huge room, airy and light. It was filled with desks at which clerks who had been bowed over their work, stood up and came to attention as I entered the room. At the far end of the room there was an elevated platform on which, behind a beautiful teak desk, stood a gentleman in full military uniform. The clerk led me the length of the room and announced me as Mr. Thompson.

The Colonel invited me to join him on the platform where there was a chair for me beside his desk.

He then proceeded to interview me. In very clipped British accents he asked me why I was in Burma, who were my friends, what was I trying to do. I replied as discreetly as I could and he wrote down all my answers. I apparently convinced him I had nothing to do with the British government nor was I interested in over-throwing his government. He relaxed and became quite affable. But after such an interrogation I hesitated to use my tape-recorder. Instead I asked if I could take notes and he readily agreed. He turned out to be a great admirer of General Stilwell, and had been perfectly confident that the General would get them out of Burma safely when they started to walk.

Dennis Thompson, age 23
Mechanics Oriental

Thompson was far better educated than the other mechanics and drivers.

"Although I am listed on General Stilwell's roster as one of the mechanics, that was not my chosen career," the Colonel began. "I wanted to be a Civil Servant, to pursue a peaceful career.

"I grew up in Maymyo where my father was a British soldier and my mummy was Burmese. In Burma the responsibility of the parents is to see that their offspring are educated and so I attended the British schools. I was brought up in their custom. I dressed as the British boys did in shorts, not in *longgyis*, as the Burmese men wear. I was very active in Boy Scouts. I used to swim--I was a good swimmer--and I boxed. I was the school champion in my weight.

"My family were Baptists so when I reached university level, I entered Judson College in Rangoon, the American Baptist missionary college there. The war was a very unexpected event. I never expected it to happen like this and cut short my career. Judson College closed its doors indefinitely on December 7, 1941. When Rangoon was evacuated in the month of March, 1942, I went home to Maymyo.

"General Stilwell had set up his headquarters there in the Baptist Mission compound. The American missionary who was in charge of the compound wanted drivers for the cars of General Stilwell and his staff. Since I could drive a car and spoke English, I was taken on as a driver. That is how I got involved with General Stilwell's party.

"I did not drive the General but there were some foreign people who came occasionally, like Madame Chiang Kai-shek, and Chiang came too. They were staying at Flagstaff House, the British Headquarters, and I drove some of the British authorities. I was at the Headquarters the day the Japs tried to bomb Chiang Kai-shek and I hid in a trench in the garden.

"I knew nothing about General Stilwell before that, but the people with whom I talked said he was very strict and short tempered. But he had good discipline, which I liked. I had no personal contact with him, he never spoke to me that I remember, but I used to see him knocking about because we had our cars in a small wooden bungalow next to the main bungalow where he was

living.

"When we evacuated Maymyo, I drove one of the staff cars until it broke down and then I rode in one of the trucks, a three-tonner Chevrolet. When we had to abandon the trucks, I went along in one of the jeeps until we came to that clearing.

"When I heard General Stilwell speaking that morning, I knew we were in good hands. I was young so it was not a hardship for me to walk. I was not afraid, I had already assumed that we were going to have to walk.

"I had little to carry, just a shoulder bag, what we call a Shan bag, with a change of clothes and only one pair of socks. I picked up a water bottle and a canteen with a small plate and a knife and I wore these on a G-I webbed belt around my waist. I had on pants so I cut off the legs to make shorts of them. I found a Warrant Officer's cap and I wore that. I had no arms to carry. I felt well prepared for whatever was coming and I was quite content to be doing just what I was doing."

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The Colonel remembered several of the mechanics on the roster. One was Trevor Sterling who came from Rangoon and sometimes boxed with Paul Jones. He was also friendly with Edward Henderson who had been in charge of maintenance of the way-stations along the Burma Road before the invasion. I would try to find others that he mentioned when I went to Singapore and Malaysia later.

We conversed about trivial matters for a few moments before I left. The Colonel was an avid golfer with a 12 handicap, but he was so busy, he said, that his golf was suffering. We commiserated with each other about the frustrations of golf. When I stood up to leave, the clerks all stood at attention again while the Colonel led me to the door. He handed me over to one of the clerks who then escorted to me down to the front door of the building and immediately took off down the street. Within seconds all the other clerks came streaming out. I did not realize how late it was. It was after twelve o'clock and I felt terrible that I had cut short their lunch hour.

Again I took a trishaw to Tun Shein's where I had a salad lunch this time and Lulu sat with us. They were anxious to hear all about my trip and were so happy that it had been such a success. After saying goodbye to these kind people after lunch, I took a taxi to the Embassy and reported to Ambassador Martin. He too was anxious to hear all about my little trip and also pleased for me. He was surprised to learn that I had been followed the day I arrived and he was as glad as I was that nothing bad had happened to me.

When I got back to the hotel I reported to Mr. Seymour on my visit to Colonel Tin Gyi and he seemed not only pleased but quite proud of himself and *me* that he had been responsible for my seeing such an important person in the government. That made me important too. I was pretty pleased and proud of both of us myself.

The taxi I ordered for the next morning showed up right on time and I was off to the airport

as the sun came up like thunder for the last time for me in Burma. I went through Immigration and Customs with none of the unpleasantness of my arrival that I expected, and with just the briefest glance at my passport. I can not say that the officials were particularly charming but I was not asked to show my "jewels" or my money or my tape-recorder or my camera. Somewhere along the chain of command I had been "cleared."

I waited in the so-called "Duty Free" shop until the plane departed. I was the only person there, there was not even a sales-person. This was not too surprising. The only duty free goods that were on display were some jars of Johnson & Johnson's baby oil, the pathetic evidence of the poverty of that beautiful but stricken country.

With the exception of my unpleasant arrival I had had nothing but kindness from the warm and hospitable people I met. Once past an initial shyness, they were generous and forthcoming in answering my questions. The women were caressive and almost motherly, much like Filipino women. I pitied them for what had happened to their country. I did not know then how much worse it would become for them. They never received the pictures I took, and when I sent them copies of my book when I had it privately printed in 1980, only those sent via Diplomatic Pouch reached them.

When I boarded the 727 for the flight back to Bangkok, the same steward was on board who had been on the flight the week before. As I went to my seat he said, "Last week when you flew with us, you were wearing pink dress, very pretty color. Today you are wearing green dress, also very pretty." What a nice thing for him to say! I was quite touched by yet another example of the kindness of the ordinary Burmese people.

Again there were few passengers on board but one of them got up from his seat and asked if he could join me. He said that he was at the table in the Strand Hotel the evening I arrived but he did not speak, and I did not notice him. He said he thought all those other men were terribly rude to me but there was nothing he could do about it. He was an Australian and he did not want to get mixed up in the conversation. He said he had been in Burma to buy " 'orses for the courses." Burmese horses made wonderful race-horses, he said, and he bought several to be shipped to Australia for racing. I told him about the peppy little ones I had seen pulling the *tongas* in Maymyo and he said that that was where the best ones came from.

The view from the plane on this flight was quite different from that of the week before. The land below was all gray and white and the rice-paddies in the plains looked as if they were covered with ice or snow. The monsoon season rains had begun in earnest. They had held off for me during my week in Burma in 1972 just as they had held off long enough for General Stilwell to get safely to India in 1942. I too was profoundly grateful.

In Bangkok I changed to a KLM flight for Manila. The plane did not take off at the scheduled time. We sat at the boarding gate but were told that we could not get off because we might leave at any moment. That moment turned into seven hours on the ground. There was no air-conditioning

because the engines were not turned on and it was horrid. Everyone complained but the purser was adamant. We were all furious because there were other flights we could have taken to Manila but we were virtually prisoners because we were told we would not get our money back if we left the plane. When we did take off on what was a three hour flight to Manila, we were served the lunch we should have had hours before!

My husband met me in Manila and said that when he called KLM to know when the plane would arrive, he was told that it would be seven hours late, so at least he did not have to sit around the Manila airport all that time waiting for me. No one ever explained the cause of the delay. This experience was about the worst one I ever had on my many travels. Even worse, there were no free drinks to make up for the delay as there had been on the flight out of Philadelphia during a bomb threat.

Chapter Six

Far East and Homeward Journey: July to October 1972

Three Months in the Philippines

The next three months were spent at Fabrica on the island of Negros in the Philippines where the Company's lumber mill was located. I had a lot of transcribing to do of the tapes I had made since I left Jenkintown. It was like re-living all the great experiences of my search. The pleasure I got from listening to the tapes was enhanced when I received the pictures I had taken in Burma.

I had many thank-you letters to write and I was still sending out enquiring letters. To my surprise I also received a second letter from Brigadier O. C. T. Dykes dated August 10, 1972. Miraculously we had established communication between South Africa and the Philippines. The letter read as follows:

Dear Madam,

I am so sorry to hear of the death of Davidson-Houston; our paths never crossed since those days. I am afraid there is little information that I can add. However, herewith, such as it is:

1. Photo: This I remember taking myself. The photo was taken just short of Imphal, when the civil authorities had run up bashas pending Stilwell's arrival. From there, Army lorries transported the party the following morning to Imphal--in pouring rain. In the group that I can definitely identify by name are Davidson-Houston, Captain Singh, and Major Haigh.

2. About the British in the party: D-H, with me as assistant, were sent down from the British military mission in Chungking for attachment to Stilwell, to assist in his dealings with the British and Chinese. By the time we found him, (Mandalay ?) the situation had somewhat deteriorated. The Chinese by this time were out of touch and I gathered doing more or less as they wished. The 17th Division and Burma Corps were carrying out an organized but much harrassed withdrawal. There was nothing now that D-H could do to assist, so we "snooped" around on our own. Quite by chance, we met Stilwell again at Indaw, having travelled there by the last train before the Ava bridge was blown. He very kindly allowed us to continue our exodus with him. How or why the other members of the British party arrived, I do not know. The situation was a bit disorganized at this juncture!

Castens, (not in the photo,) was in the Burma Forestry Service and had done his best to organize supplies of rice, etc. for the refugees en route to India. Barton, (also not in the photo) was, I seem to remember, a man of independent means who spent his time looking for pandas in China and such like. He wore a large beard and had a Chinese boy who looked after his needs.

3. As to ourselves, D-H and I having by now no job or responsibility, felt ourselves fortunate but somewhat guilty in not being with the troops who were having a pretty tough time. However, nobody wanted our services and I suppose it was a case of *saue qui peut* . Looking back now, I find our time with Stilwell was a not unpleasant episode, perhaps because I remained as fit as a flea. Certainly much better than in a

number of campaigns on the Indian Frontier pre-war, and the 1944/45 Burma Campaign.

Self: Born 1902. Royal Marines 1920-28. Transferred 6th Gurkhas, old Indian Army. Mostly service on Northwest Frontier. Staff College Quetta, India, and Minley Manor, U.K., Mesopotamia with D-H 1941, War Service: Chungking, India. Burma. London. British Army Staff, Washington, D.C. Burma, second campaign. Retired 1948 on partition of India.

I am glad to hear you enjoyed your visit to Burma. I am sure it has all changed considerably since the days of the Imperial Regime. The only ones who seemed to deplore the departure of the British were the Karens, Shans, Kachins, etc. who inhabited the hill Tribal horseshoe enclosing the Irawaddy Valley.

My last job was the military command of North Burma, H.Q. Maymyo, a delightful place and not too knocked about. I handed over to Ne Win, the eventual and present dictator, a pleasant chap. Since then we have wandered about, mostly earning one's living in South Africa, Northern Rhodesia, (Zambia) England, Spain, England again, and again South Africa.

I must apologize for the length of this rambling and probably quite worthless reply, but it is the best I can do. With best wishes."

Far from being worthless, both letters from Dykes were to me as if I had struck gold. They tied together loose ends and provided little bits here and there that delighted me, particularly the phrase, "fit as a flea," a new one to me.

Actually, General Stilwell was in command of the Chinese troops in Burma but in a sense, Dykes was right, it was Chiang Kai-shek who kept countermanding Stilwell's orders, and the Chinese generals obeyed him, not Stilwell.

From what I saw of Burma in 1972, Ne Win was no longer the "pleasant chap" to whom Dykes handed over in 1948. He had indeed become a dictator, just as Dykes said.

My next correspondence was with Dara Singh. It was time to follow up on the invitation he had extended to me to stay at his club in Serembam, Malaysia. I would tell him when I expected to be in Kuala Lumpur on our way home when we left the Philippines and we could make arrangements for me to see him.

Our son came to visit us for three weeks while we were in Fabrica. After he had been there a while he confessed that he had a new perspective on his father. He was not--as my son had vaguely imagined him to be--the heartless colonial imperialist who exploited the country and its people. My son was also surprised to learn that the company was one of the very few that paid the minimum wage to its laborers, unlike the Filipino sugar plantation owners who truly exploited their own people and were the wealthiest people in the Islands.

When it was time for my son to leave, I flew up to Manila to see him off. We had the bad luck of arriving at the onset of a typhoon. The streets were so flooded that cars could not get through. We were transported to the hotel in a bus commandeered from a work-force at the airport. It was full of laborers being taken home from work. The passengers from our flight piled in, all of us laughing as some of us had to sit on the workmen's laps. We made it to the hotel all right, but no planes came in or left Manila for two days. My son was stuck.

The water rose so high in some of the low-lying areas of Manila, particularly in the slums, that the people were clinging to the tops of trees. And so were the snakes! There they were stranded. Our American Ambassador Henry Byroade took it upon himself to order U.S. helicopters that were stationed in the Philippines to pick the people off the trees and fly them to safety. He was widely acclaimed by the Filipino people for this humanitarian act, but he was rebuked by President Nixon for what he said was an unauthorized use of American military equipment!

My son eventually got out and I stayed on in Manila for a few more days awaiting the arrival of my daughter and her two little girls who also came for a visit. We returned to Fabrica which she had visited with us when she was fifteen. She renewed her acquaintance with the friends she had made there when she had been persuaded to sing in the choir at the little local Baptist Church.⁴²

Everybody loved her and the two little girls but my daughter raised havoc in the household. The cook was a Chinese named Ah King who had been the *amah* for the manager's children when they were little. When they grew up and went away to school, Ah King was promoted to cook and she ruled her domain with an iron hand. My daughter could not understand why we never had any fresh fruit or vegetables. Everything was canned or frozen.

Because I was actually a guest in someone else's house, I was too cowed by Ah King to do anything about it, but not Anne. She insisted on going to the market with Ah King and the houseboy, and they brought back mangoes and avocados and kalamensies and bean sprouts and beautiful fresh fish and all kinds of things that were perfectly delicious. Ah King grumbled but bowed to Anne's wishes and we ate better than we had eaten there for years! When she and the girls left, I dared to insist that we continue as Anne had done, though I did not go to the market myself.

When the time came for my husband and me to leave toward the end of September, I went up to Manila for a few days ahead of him. The day before he was to come to Manila, President Marcos of the Philippines declared Martial Law. The staff of the hotel were all terrified. They remembered the war, or had heard enough about it to be certain that shooting and bloodshed were about to begin. The next day was Sunday and the streets were empty except for military vehicles patrolling the streets. The television gave no news, just showed a documentary about whales over and over all that long day. An announcement was made at the conclusion of each showing that the President would speak at any minute. It was just like waiting in Bangkok for the KLM plane to take off. At least the hotel was functioning normally and there was plenty of food and drink.

Finally the President came on. Curfew had been imposed, all internal flights and telephone communications were suspended as well as overseas calls. Overseas flights, however, were not affected. Fortunately the Company's office in Manila had radio communication with Fabrica. The next morning I received a message from my husband telling me to go out on the flight on which we were scheduled and to wait for him in Singapore. He would get there when he could. I did what he

told me to do and was able to call our families from Singapore to let them know the situation.

It was a very unpleasant and frightening time. We had no idea what might happen in a country as volatile as the Philippines. It was a relief when my husband was able to get to Manila a few days later, and could join me in Singapore.

Homeward Journey: September - October, 1972

While we were in Singapore once again I called on "Buck," Mr. B. C. J. Buckeridge. There was no ride in the Rolls Royce that day. It was gone forever, he told me with a wry smile. When Yuan Kew Lee became President of Singapore, he ordered Buck's car off of the streets as a menace to public safety. So Buck shipped the Rolls back to England and sold it for an astronomical price, he said with some satisfaction. So instead of driving around Singapore, we sat on the cool shaded verandah again and he told me another fantastic story about the war.

Before the war his wife was the head bookkeeper at Robinson's, a famous department store in Singapore. Robinson's carried everything from household furnishings to gourmet foods, wines, and spirits. On the day the Japanese occupied Singapore, they locked the employees in the store and posted guards at every door. Knowing that they would be carried off to prison the next day, the employees opened up the best foods and drinks and had a sumptuous meal. They took sheets and pillows from the shelves, made up the beds, and had the last good night's sleep they would have for the next four years. Under Mrs. Buckeridge's watchful eye, every employee signed a "chit" for whatever she or he had consumed or used. When the war was over, every employee from Robinson's who survived honored those "chits," and they made good those of their fellows who had died.

Robinson's was the first store to open after the bomb damage it suffered had been repaired. Mrs. Buckeridge, who had held on to the "chits," was suitably rewarded by the management. Buck took me in a taxi to Robinson's where his wife was still the head bookkeeper. I had a good chat with this admirable lady.

There was another gentleman in Singapore I wanted to see. He was Dr. Ho, whose name was the last one so far of a Chinese network that was still intact all the way from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to Kuan Yoo in Malaysia. My introduction to this network came from the postcard Barbara Tuchman had sent me when I asked her before I left Jenkintown in the spring for some clue to General Tseng. General Tseng was the Chinese general in charge of the Chinese troopers on the Walkout. Mrs. Tuchman suggested that I write to Colonel Thomas S. Arms, Jr. who had known Tseng in the C.B.I. theater during the second Burma campaign. Colonel Arms wrote me that Tseng graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1925. My letter to that institution was answered by Mr. E. Jackson Tice, Alumni Secretary, who said that Tseng had died in Singapore in 1966. If I wanted to know more about him I should write to Mr. Sung L. Yao of Morris Plains, New Jersey.

I *did* want to know more about Tseng even if he was dead. I thought that through some of his acquaintances I might find out something about the officers and troopers who had been with him on the Walkout. Also my brother graduated from the V. M. I. in 1926, the year after Tseng graduated. He had a copy of the 1925 issue of The Bomb, the Institute's yearbook. In it was a picture of Tseng and under the picture was what Tseng had written about himself, translated from Chinese into English, an excerpt from which reads:

"He is a man full of wild thoughts and daydreams, and he likes to study history and worship heroes. Besides the serious side of his fancy, he often amuses himself in the theaters to see the vaudeville, the leg show and other different dances."

Somehow that self-assessment appealed to me. It was not something one generally ran across in Year Books.

Mr. Yao replied to my next enquiry by saying that he and Tseng had been class-mates as boys in China. He also said that Tseng had written a letter of recommendation to the Admissions Committee of the V. M. I. for the son of a friend of Yao named Dr. K. L. Huang, of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. I telephoned Dr. Huang who then invited me to his home for lunch.

So I drove to Bethlehem and had lunch with Dr. Huang and his wife. They were charming people, both Professors and teaching at Moravian College in Bethlehem. Their son had been accepted at the V. M. I. and graduated with honors. They were very grateful to Tseng.

Dr. Huang had a resumé of Tseng's career. Just as Professor Moonie had told me, he was a General in name only, given the stars to enhance his prestige when dealing with foreigners. He came from a wealthy family and attended Tsinghua University in Peking, the Chinese equivalent of West Point. He did so well that he was sent by the Chinese government to the United States for advanced education.

He attended Norwich Military Academy from which he transferred to the V. M. I. From there he went to Cornell and took his Master's Degree in Military History and followed that up in Belgium with intensive study of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. For ten years he was a Professor of Military History at Sun Yat Sen University.

When Japan attacked China in 1937, he joined the Military Commission of Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking and was given the honorary title of General. When the United States set up the Magruder Mission in Chungking, Tseng became a Military Secretary, interpreter, and Liaison Officer. After General Stilwell arrived, Tseng was given the assignment to accompany him to Burma. He continued to serve with him in the second campaign in Burma, but when the war was over, he was exiled from China by Chiang Kai-shek because of his loyalty to Stilwell,

He spent the rest of his life teaching history in schools in Malaysia, among them the high school in Serembam where Dara Singh lived. Dr. Huang told me that during those years Tseng became a friend of Dr. Ho, a schoolmate of Dr. Huang's in Singapore. Dr. Ho might be able to tell me more about General Tseng.

This was how I happened to find myself drinking coffee with a Chinese gentleman in a café in Singapore.

Although Dr.Ho could tell me nothing about the officers and troopers who had walked out with General Stilwell, he gave me the name and address of a lady in Johore Baru who might know more. She was also named Huang. I rented a car with a driver and was driven about twenty miles from Singapore to Jahore Baru. We drove over the causeway that crosses the narrow strip of water that separates Singapore from the mainland of Malaysia. I could understand how easy it had been for the Japanese to reach the island of Singapore from that direction. All the British military preparations for an invasion had been made facing the sea on the other side of the island.

Mrs. Huang was a dear little Chinese lady who had recently lost her husband. He had taught at the same school in Jahore Baru where Tseng was teaching when he was exiled from China. Mrs. Huang knew that Tseng was buried in the Chinese Chamber of Commerce cemetery in Kuan Yoo, not very far out of Johore Baru. We drove there to get directions to the cemetery.

The driver had some difficulty finding the cemetery because the entrance was very inconspicuous. The graves, which actually were mounds, were almost overgrown with weeds. On simple headstones were the glass-enclosed photographs of the deceased. Dr. Huang in Bethlehem had written out the Chinese characters for Tseng's name for me, and after some difficulty, the driver found his grave. Under a photograph that resembled the picture of him from the V.M.I. yearbook, Tseng's name was written in Chinese characters, and under that was written in English, "Tseng, Hsi Kwei, 1901-66.." In what was little more than a pauper's grave, I had found the final resting place of the man of "wild thoughts and daydreams." For a moment I silently paid tribute to a man whose loyalty to Stilwell had brought him there.

After a few more days in Singapore we flew to Kuala Lumpur and I finally got to see Dara Singh. When I told him about my search for General Tseng, he said, "Why did you spend so much time finding a dead man when all the time you could have found a live one. . . ME !" That was a hard question to answer except to anyone who knows that in doing research, one cannot rest until all the loose ends are tied up.

To see Dara Singh I could have flown to Serembam. Instead I took a train. It was truly First Class. It was air-conditioned, but otherwise reminiscent of the days of the Raj. The seats were armchairs with a cushioned foot-stool. White-coated Malaysian stewards wearing the red fezzes of Muslims brought a cool drink at the tinkle of a real little bell on a table beside the chair. Lunch, which was a delicious hot curry of lamb, was served to each person at his or her own table. The tables were laid with white tablecloths, real glasses, dishes and silverware. A luscious ripe mango was the dessert. What a pleasant change this was from the customary airline food and service.

At Serembam a man as huge as Castens recognized me at once; I was the only European getting off the train. He apologized for his ancient car but I said it was positively modern compared to those in which I had been riding. He set off at top speed for his club which was called the

"Sungyi Ujong," meaning "at the bend of the river." He had a job as Public Relations for a Chinese contractor who was building a housing project, and he had to return to work. After he introduced me to the manager of the Club, he said he would be back with his wife for dinner, and tore off.

The Club was in a beautiful setting close to the river which looked like a trout stream. It was dark and deep, and tropical trees spread their branches out over it. I sat out on a verandah and enjoyed the cool of the late afternoon.

Presently I could hear men's voices in the bar and the sound of slot machines. I saw no women as I passed by on my way to my room to get ready for dinner. At eight o'clock Dara and his wife Cynthia arrived and we went into the bar. She told me that she never came to the Club except on Christmas day, nor did any of the other wives. From the way she said it, I guessed that it could get pretty wild, and my guess was right. This was a very mixed group of men; Indians, Chinese, Malaysians, and a sprinkling of Scots and British. Dara introduced me to everyone who immediately accepted me as Dara's friend and pressed drinks on me. Following Cynthia's example I confined myself to beer, but Dara and the others were into something harder. There was no dinner as such but at intervals a waiter passed around delicious hot hors d'oeuvres.

As the evening progressed, the decible count from the men and the sound of the slot machines, which never stopped, rose to such a pitch that I could hardly hear what Cynthia was saying. She did tell me that I was lucky that it was not Saturday night, for that was the big night for roulette and the place was *really* wild then. Around eleven or so, Cynthia said she was going home. She invited me to their house for lunch the next day and after she left, I went to bed. I could hear the noise from the bar for quite a long time before I finally went to sleep, wondering just what I had gotten myself into. I was reminded of what Castens had said about the clubs in Burma before the war where the men had heard each others' stories so often that there was nothing left to do but get drunk.

The next day Dara came for me at noon, showing no after-effects of the evening before. He drove me to their house, a comfortable and cool bungalow, and I spent the afternoon with him and Cynthia.

Dara had not been on the Walkout but he had been General Stilwell's personal body-guard during the second Burma campaign and I wanted to hear his story.

"My father was a Sikh in the Indian Army on the Northwest frontier and received the Victoria Cross for gallantry," he began. "He was sent to Malaya to quell the riots between the Chinese and Malay States Guides. I was born in Taiping, in Perak State in 1914. Since Malaya was under the British, I was a British subject. My mother left my father and me and when he died, I was adopted by a Chinese family.

"I went to the British grammar school in Taiping and then to King Edward VII High School

and I was on every sports team available, soccer, football, swimming, boxing, the lot. I passed the Cambridge University level examinations but I did not want to go on. I was no student.

"I went into automobile engineering and later the motor-car business. I drove a taxi for a while. When the Japanese invaded China in 1937, the Chinese government sent out an appeal to all over-seas Malay-Chinese to give one day's pay a month to the fund for Chinese relief, and I did that.

"In 1939 I volunteered for service in China. I could speak four Chinese dialects, English, and a Punjab dialect. I was the only non-Chinese among the three thousand seven hundred who went into the Chinese Army transport system, south-west division. I was in charge of the lend-lease trucks being sent into Rangoon, assembled there, and driven over the Burma Road to Kunming. I was often reported dead in the hometown newspapers; there were hundreds of accidents on the Burma Road and a great many of the volunteers were killed. I was injured once myself and was sent home to recuperate. At that time I had to give speeches and stir up enthusiasm for the Chinese effort. After one speech, an article in the Taiping newspaper about me read, '. . . and he screwed up his speech by saying the morality of the Chinese had doubled since the beginning of the conflict!'

"When we had to evacuate Rangoon I went north through Burma. Near Tounghoo I met an American soldier sitting by the side of the road. I was anxious to know what the situation was and I stopped to ask him. The soldier was General Stilwell. He told me that the Chinese were retreating after the battle of Tounghoo and that he had a lot of wounded soldiers with him. He asked me to take some of them to the Seagrave Hospital Unit and I did."

Dara did not say how he got out of Burma when the retreat began. He only said that he had become disenchanted with the corruption of the middle level of Chinese officials during the campaign and volunteered his services to the British in India. There he was posted to Ramgarh where General Stilwell was training the Chinese troops for the second Burma campaign.

"I worked under General Stilwell in training the troops by making them do all kinds of physical training," Dara continued. "Make them tough, Dara,' the General said to me.

"More than fifty-three thousand Chinese troops went through the center and re-entered Burma in the three pronged attack mounted by the Americans which consisted of Merrill's Marauders in the east, the Chinese with General Sun Li Jen under General Stilwell's command in the center, and the British to the west under General Slim. I was selected by Stilwell in 1944 to be his personal body-guard along with Paul Gish, Brown, and Bauer."

Here the "prepared mind" took over and I sat up with a start. Sergeant Paul Gish had been on the Walkout with General Stilwell. Dara had become his good friend and was able to give me his address in Wadsworth, Ohio. I got in touch with Gish when I got back to the States and was able to see him later.

"Before the second campaign started I had to have all my teeth removed," Dara continued. "I was in the hospital and General Stilwell sent me a letter. It was just like him. To me he's the grandest man I've ever known. I'd follow him to the ends of the earth. (See Appendix E)

"While we were in Ramgarh," Dara continued, "The Lord" came to see General Stilwell. That was what I called Lord Louis Mountbatten. I drove him around in a jeep to inspect the camp. One day he asked me to let him drive the jeep himself. He took the wheel and we came to a wooden bridge. As we went across, one of the boards snapped and a splinter flew up and hit him in the eye. I rushed him back to the camp where he was given first aid treatment. Then he was taken to Ledo where he was treated by the famous Philadelphia eye surgeon Dr. Sheie who was there with the Pennsylvania Hospital Unit, and his eye was saved. Before he left he stuck a bottle of Black and White whiskey into my knapsack.⁴³

"Henry Byroade, your Ambassador in Manila now," Dara continued, "was a Colonel of Engineers at Ramgarh and I met him too. Dean Rusk, who was an officer in the U.S. Army in Delhi, came up to inspect the camp too. Later when he was Secretary of State and I was Game Warden of Segamat, I saw him in Kuala Lumpur and gave him a pair of elephant's feet as a souvenir. He wrote me a very nice thank-you letter.

"General Stilwell was responsible for my meeting my wife. In Ramgarh we used to listen to a program called 'The Voice' on All India Radio. It was a program of news and music and I fell in love with that voice. General Stilwell gave me leave to go down to Delhi and I met her. After the war I went back to find her. I found her and on January 1, 1946 we were married.

"After 'The Troubles' in Malaysia in 1969 when there was practically a civil war between the Malaysians and Chinese, I got out of government service. I have a nice income from investments in Singapore real estate and I have enough money in the bank for Cynthia to live on the rest of her life if necessary."

Dara was writing his autobiography and we talked about his manuscript. He showed it to me and we talked about it for a while. I suggested that he should try to find an editor to tell him how to revise it so that it might be published. While I was in Kuala Lumpur I would see what I could do. At this point his daughter, also named Dara, and her little girl Karen arrived. After chatting for a while, Dara Singh and Cynthia took me back to the Club. We had dinner in the dining-room where, for some reason, there was hardly anyone else. The carousing must have done in the noisy group of the evening before.

The next day Dara took me to the train for Kuala Lumpur. I telephoned the Oxford University Press which had a branch there, and with whom I had had dealings before. Prior to another trip, Dr. Eva Reich, the daughter of Dr. Wilhelm Reich and a friend of mine, had given me some tapes of her father's lectures which she wanted distributed to various institutions in the Far East. I went to the Oxford University Press in K-L for advice and met an editor named Mrs. Lee. She was able to give me some good suggestions about that matter. When I called her about Dara's manuscript, she graciously agreed to see me and Dara and said she would look at the manuscript.

Dara came down to K-L a day or two later, we saw Mrs. Lee, and he left the manuscript with her. I heard no more about it from Dara.

For the next few days in K-L while my husband was looking over possible logging sites in the province of Kalantan, I tried to trace some of the Asians who had been on the Walkout. Dennis Thompson, [Colonel Tin Gyi] had told me that he and Lee Fo, another mechanic, had been friends on the Walkout and he might be in K-L. Lee Choy might be there too, he said. Lee Choy drove the truck in which Thompson had ridden after the staff car Thompson was driving broke down. Tommy Lee had told me that Ah Kong and Ah Fu were Hainanese and had worked with him on the docks in Rangoon. He thought they too went to K-L after the war. Fred Eldridge had also told me about Ah Fu. He was an excellent driver, Fred said, and the best of all the mechanics. He wore G-I shoes, shorts, and an American officer's cap on the Walkout. He had muscular bow-legs and "a spectacular set of gold teeth."

I thought with so many clues like these I ought to be able to find some of these men. Through one of the houseboys at the hotel I found an Ah Kong in a bicycle shop. He was a wonderful laughing Chinese gentleman with spectacular gold teeth just like Ah Fu's, I thought, but he had not been on the Walkout. He said he did not know anyone else who had been. He also said that I might as well stop trying to find anyone by the other names I asked him about, there were probably dozens of Ah Kong's, Lees, and Ah Fu's in Kuala Lumpur or in any other city in the Far East.

There was one more name on my list, however, that seemed slightly more promising. One of the nurses had told me that Lieng Sing, an orderly in the Seagrave Unit, was a Chinese Malayan. He wanted to go to dentistry school in the States after the war. Captain Donald O'Hara gave him a letter of recommendation but apparently he did not go. He might, however, be living in Singapore or K-L. On a previous trip I had not been able to find him in Singapore but now I called every dentist in K-L. One nice lady dentist named Dr. Tam said she thought there might be someone of that name living in Ipoh, a town too far for me to get to before we had to leave K-L. All efforts to trace him there by telephone came to nothing, and again I was told that his name was a very common one.

I was disappointed because so far in my research I had found that Chinese networks were widespread and strong. Reluctantly I had to admit that though I had found out something about each of these Walkout participants, I could not trace them.

During those few days in Kuala Lumpur whenever I had a chance I wrote to the people whose names Brigadier Calvert had given me in connection with "Beaver" Barton. The answers to these letters began coming back to me in Jenkintown a month or so after we got home.

On October 6 my husband and I left for Copenhagen. Between October 6th and 10th, we flew from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore and spent the night. From Singapore we flew to Bangkok, and spent the night. From Bangkok we flew to Copenhagen with a stop at Tashkent for refueling. Two days later I flew to Paris where I spent the night and flew back to Copenhagen the next day. I can hardly believe it! Seventeen hours of flying time according to my log of that trip, and to think of how far I went, what a diversity of nationalities I saw and talked to, what different food and drink I

consumed!

. On our stop-over for the night in Singapore, my husband's economy of baggage that we could carry almost came to grief. At the airport there was a long line of passengers waiting for taxis. My husband, ever impatient, jumped the line and went out in the street to hail one before it got to the line. I was standing obediently in line when he suddenly waved and shouted at me to come on, he had a taxi. I raced off and jumped in and we headed for town. The drive from the airport is a long one, and also one of the most beautiful ones in the world. It is a one-way "carriage-way" lined with beautiful trees and flowers, and with no turning-off place. Half-way along, I said, "Oh, my God! Where is your brief case?" He did not have it and neither did I, and we could not get out to see if it was in the trunk. The brief-case of course was my responsibility, but in my haste to get into the cab, I must have left it on the sidewalk at the terminal. Well, I nearly burst in to tears, and we went the rest of the way in tight-lipped silence. When we got to the hotel, I checked in but he kept the taxi and went back to the airport. When I got to the room, I telephoned the airport and sure enough, a porter had picked up the brief case and taken it to the airline office. So I could relax but I could imagine how my husband was swearing at me as he rode back to the airport. It all turned out all right and he was very nice about it when he finally got back to the hotel. What was funny about the whole episode was that he had not been upset at losing any business papers, but far more concerned that he might have lost all the puzzles from the Guardian, the British newspaper that he saved up to do on these trips. You can be sure I never forgot the brief-case again.

On the flight from Bangkok to Copenhagen, we flew north along the west coast of Thailand over the Gulf of Siam, then turned toward the northwest as we crossed diagonally over Burma. I could see Rangoon and the numerous branches of the Irawaddy river that empty into the Bay of Bengal, and as I thought about the people who had been so good to me in Burma, I felt homesick for them. I could also see the thin line of the Chindwin River which, far to the north, Stilwell and his group had crossed before they began their walk up and over the Naga Hills, and I too was glad I did not have to walk out over them.

Shortly after crossing over the multiple estuaries of the mighty Brahmaputra River, the plane made a sharp turn due west as if we had come to an intersection. We headed along what I called the Avenue of the Himalayas. It was just as if we were driving along a street with a fantastic view of the mountains for hours, their snow-covered peaks on display just for our pleasure. It was early morning and the sun was catching up with us. It was just reaching the tips of the highest mountains, turning them pink. Mt. Everest gradually came into view as it towered above its neighbors, and the whole scene was absolutely glorious.

Toward the end of the Himalayan "Avenue," we made another sharp turn, this time to the north to avoid flying over Afghanistan whose airspace was interdicted at that time. On previous flights we had flown to Teheran for refueling but this time I got to go to Russia, if only briefly.

Shortly before we reached Tashkent, the pilot announced that when we got there we would fly

around the airport one and a half times before we landed. He said that this was called a "recognition approach" so that the Russians could make sure what airline we were and that we were friendly. The airline was Scadinavian Airlines Systems, (S. A. S.) and we were approved for landing.

The air terminal in Tashkent was a wonderful shabby mansion left over from the days of the Czar. It was funny to see the heavily built Russian women in Communist uniforms selling vodka and caviar in the Duty Free gift shop in the ballroom that still had crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. There was no problem with exchange there, the sales women happily accepted American Express checks or the "hard" currency the passengers paid out, myself included.

When we arrived in Copenhagen, it was midnight according to the time we had left Bangkok that morning, but in Copenhagen it was only five o'clock in the afternoon. I was eager to find out if there was any mail for me at the Danish agent's office. I telephoned on the chance that there might still be someone in the office and there was. Lars Bjørner, a rather shy young Dane whom I knew, answered the telephone. Sure enough, there was a letter for me from Jack Belden, post-marked a few days earlier from Paris.

I asked Lars to open the letter and read it to me, which he did. When he came to a certain passage in the letter, I could almost feel him blushing as he skipped over something. The gist of the letter, however, was that though Belden saw no reason why he should have to dredge up his soul for me, he agreed to see me. Trying to find Belden had been almost as hard as trying to find Castens, but it seemed now that in both cases my persistence had paid off. (See Appendix F).

The next day I called Belden in Paris at the small hotel where he was living. He did not have a telephone in his room and it took a long time for him to come downstairs to a telephone at the front desk. We arranged that I would come to Paris the next day and spend the night and he said he would make a reservation for me at his hotel. He sounded cordial enough, which was a relief in the light of what he had said in his letter, implying a certain amount of nerve on my part.

When I arrived in the afternoon of the next day at his hotel in a modest quarter of Paris, I was effusively greeted at the door by a wonderful French *concierge* in the traditional stiff black dress of all French war widows. She told me how happy she was that someone had come to see M. Belden. He had no friends, she said, and he seemed so very *triste*. She took me to my room located discreetly one floor above his, then led me down to meet him in his room.

The room was quite small, furnished with a narrow bed, a huge *armoie*, a desk, and one chair. After we had shaken hands, he offered me the bed to sit on, and took the chair himself. A huge French window was open to the street noises just below so that sometimes I could hardly hear what he said. When I explained that I was not there to make him bare his soul, as he had said in his letter, he became friendly. I asked him to talk about anything he wanted to. His opening remarks came as a relief after the not very flattering remarks he had made in his letter to me. He agreed

with me that the Walkout was a unique and historic event, and he understood my interest in trying to find the participants.

**Jack Belden, age 32
War Correspondent**

Jack was a handsome fellow and he had a fine head of black hair. But he had a voice like a Brooklyn taxi driver!

"You're damn right it was unique that Stilwell was in Burma and that he walked out with all those people," Belden began. "That's why I was there. I was a war correspondent and I went down there to cover the story. You know," he said as he went on, "this was the first time in history that the U.S. War Department had permitted an American General to command foreign troops on foreign soil, and the first time Chinese soldiers had been commanded by a foreigner since the days of Genghis Khan. That was what was so unique about it, but Stilwell lost the battle before he even got to fight it. Yes, it was part of history but in all fairness to the British, the Americans in Burma at that time were nothing, absolutely nothing. It was not they who were doing the fighting and getting killed. And of course the Chinese troops he was supposed to command ran out on him. I wasn't too surprised at this. I had been living in China for the past nine years and I was used to seeing them retreat.

"I was living in China because when I got out of college during the great depression, America and my own life so depressed me that I went to sea as a deck-hand on a round-the-world freighter and when we got to Hong Kong, I jumped ship. When I look back on it, I think that was one of the bravest things I ever did. I was broke and alone in a totally foreign country and all I had was a spare pair of socks in my pocket. I didn't even have a passport, you have a seaman's passport when you ship out on a freighter. I knocked around all the big cities like Shanghai and Peking and Hong Kong, and I was poor and hungry and lonely, very lonely, a lot of the time.

"After a while I taught myself the written language by memorizing the characters on flash-cards and I used to have terrible nightmares with all those characters jumping around. I learned the speech at night school and I took any kind of job I could get in a country where the poverty and misery were far worse than anything I had experienced at home. I came to identify with the people because so many of them were poor and homeless like me.

"After about three or four years I got a job as a string correspondent for a Shanghai paper and when the Japanese invaded China in 1937, I went through the Chinese lines and began following the fighting. The Chinese warlords were so busy fighting amongst themselves that the Japs were chewing them up piecemeal. The Chinese were always going to 'bao' the Japanese and I knew that that meant 'to surround,' but it was exactly the other way around. The Japs were 'baoing' the Chinese and they would retreat, not just small retreats but great huge routs for scores and scores of

miles. The Chinese had no planes and the Japs were dive-bombing the civilians who were trying to flee from them in the open fields.

"It was during this time that I met Stilwell, he was a Colonel then. He was the U.S. Military Attaché at Hankow and Dorn was with him as assistant Attaché. They'd been living in China for years, the Stilwell children had all grown up in Peking. It was part of Stilwell's duty to observe the fighting between the Japs and Chinese and I made several trips with him into the interior. I formed a close personal relationship with him.⁴⁴

"He went back to the States and I was sent down to Chungking. By then the Japs had sealed off all the major seaports and were threatening the big cities, so Chiang Kai-shek, who was now Generalissimo of the Nationalist Chinese government, set up his capital down there where he thought he'd be out of the reach of the Jap planes. By this time I had made a connection with two London papers, the Daily Mail and the Daily Herald, and I was working for them when Pearl Harbor happened.

"Originally Stilwell was to set up the invasion of North Africa and he'd drawn up all the plans for that, but then all that was changed. Ike got the assignment and Stilwell was sent out to Chungking. He was to be Chiang's Chief of Staff and he was to take over the Magruder Mission. That was sort of an advisory group we had set up much as we were going to do later in Viet Nam. He was to supervise the Lend-Lease shipments that came out from the States by boat to Rangoon and then were transported over the Burma Road to China's backdoor at Kunming. And he was to command the C. B. I., the China-Burma-India Theater which didn't actually exist yet.

"He got out there about the beginning of March, 1942. But while he had been putting together a staff in Washington to go to China with him, and while they were on their way out to China, the Japs swept over most of southeast Asia and in January they invaded Burma, the last obstacle remaining between them and what was believed to be their ultimate objective, the conquest of India. The British had only skeleton forces in Burma at that time and they were almost wiped out at the Sittang River when the Japs attacked, and they sent out a call for help.

"The nearest available Allied forces were the Chinese, but for complex political reasons neither the British nor the Chinese wanted the other one commanding their troops. So Stilwell, when he arrived in Chungking, provided the solution. He was an American, he was a Lieutenant General--a rank sufficiently impressive to command the respect of both Chinese and British--and having lived in China for so long, he understood the Chinese and spoke their language, so Stilwell was given the assignment.

"Stilwell and his staff were flown down to Burma early in March and set up the American headquarters in a Baptist Mission house in the town of Maymyo, about four hundred miles north of Rangoon. And when I heard of his assignment I was overjoyed. I thought, 'Thank God! At last America is going to do something about this war.' And naturally I wanted to go down there and get

the story.

"But I needed an American connection. There was a Time Magazine string correspondent in Chungking and I asked him to wire them to take me on and they said 'all right' even though I was completely unknown to them. So when I got everything squared away I followed Stilwell to Burma, flying out as it happened with General Harold Alexander who was about to take command of the British forces there.

"So I went to Burma as a correspondent for two London papers and for Time and LIFE magazines. I arrived to cover the war in Burma in my white linen suit, wearing a pith helmet and white buckskin shoes and carrying my typewriter!

"When it was all over and the retreat began about the end of April, as far as I was concerned it was a relief when all the fighting and blood and crap came to an end and we could leave it behind. I could have flown out on the plane that was sent in to take Stilwell to India. The pilot of that plane, by the way, was Caleb Haynes who later wrote God is my Co-Pilot. But when I learned that the General wasn't going to let them fly him out, I made up my mind to stick with him"⁴⁵

At this point, Belden and I took a break and went out for dinner at a cheap little restaurant around the corner, "Le Cozy Place." As in all French restaurants, no matter how inexpensive the menu, the food was delicious. But Belden ordered something soft because he said his teeth were bad and he could not afford to go to a dentist. He needed glasses too, but they were too expensive and he could not afford them either. He had quit drinking and smoking, he said, because they cost too much. His once fine head of black hair was now a thinning and shaggy gray. I paid for the dinner as a gesture of appreciation for his having let me see him and he did not argue. I was saddened by how different this man's life had become from what it had been when he was considered to be one of the ablest of all war correspondents.

After our dinner we took a walk through the Luxembourg gardens and he told me how exciting it had been when Paris was liberated in World War II. The French were at their best that day, he said. The entire civilian population was out on the street, throwing flowers at the soldiers, hugging and kissing them, even climbing up to kiss General LeClerc when he came through riding on his tank.

When we returned to the hotel, I asked Belden to tell me what his reactions had been in the clearing when General Stilwell told the group that from there on, they were going to have to walk.

"I wasn't particularly surprised," he answered. "It had been rough going for the past several days and nights. I'd been driving one of the jeeps and we'd been bumping and bucking along through terrible stuff. The cars and trucks had been breaking down one by one, so when we came to the clearing we were glad to stop. The idea of walking didn't bother me a bit. After all, I'd been walking hundreds and hundreds of miles covering the war in China for several years.

"When he told us to get rid of everything except what we could carry ourselves, it didn't take

me long to get ready. I didn't have much, just my typewriter and a few odds and ends. I looked around me and what impressed me was the *color* of the scene, all these people from different countries, how they were reacting and making their preparations.

"The girls, the little Burmese nurses, were throwing away all their belongings, their colorful skirts and silks, tossing all their garments up into the trees, laughing and having a good time. Someone put a typewriter on the tail-gate of one of the trucks, took a picture of it and left it there. An old Indian servant found two pairs of long winter underwear discarded by one of the American officers, and put them both on. Things like this created a sense of romantic adventure in me, or anyway, an *adventure* about to begin."⁴⁶

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My adventures around the world were over for the time being. The next day I returned to Copenhagen for a few days and by Columbus Day we were back in Jenkintown.

Chapter Seven
The U.S.A.: October 1972 to July 1973

Jenkintown

During the last months of 1972 I continued to transcribe my tapes, I caught up on household duties and an accumulation of mail--which was considerable after so much travelling--and I got ready for Christmas. As it happened, it would be the last Christmas that our entire family would be together in Jenkintown, and I remember it well.

I also began getting answers to the letters I had written in Kuala Lumpur regarding Major "Beaver" Barton. These letters had been written to the men whose names had been given to me by Brigadier Calvert in his letter of the previous May. From these letters I discovered an "Old Boy" network as interesting as those I had found among the Americans and Chinese, the difference being that their names were sprinkled with OBE's, MBC's and MC's. Several of them suggested further names of people who might be able to help me.

Major-General D. T. "Punch" Cowan, now retired, had recaptured Meiktila in the second Burma campaign. He remembered that he had met Barton once or twice but really knew nothing more about him. Lieutenant Colonel Denis C. Herring, OBE, MC, had last seen him in the Chindwin area after the Walkout.

Colonel Peter Buchanan, OBE, said that he had walked out of Burma with many others along a route which at times nearly converged with the route taken by General Stilwell. He had never met up with anyone in the Stilwell party, nor had he ever met Major Barton.

Mr. Leo Handley-Derry said he vaguely remembered Barton. Perhaps if he and Calvert put their heads together they could come up with some more ideas that might give me a lead.

Colonel R. C. Scott wrote that the last news he had had of Barton was when he was in the Chinlevies after he walked out of Burma. But, he added, Barton was mentioned in a recent book by Harold Braund called Distinctly I Remember.⁴⁷ He did not give the publisher's name but he gave me Braund's address in Australia. I found the book with no trouble at Hatchard's on Piccadilly, but when I read it I was surprised to find that it contained several errors of dates and places. Someone named Barton was mentioned in it in passing, but with no elaboration. When I wrote to Mr. Braund to ask for more information about Barton, he gave me an address in Knebworth, Herts. U.K. A letter to that gentleman was answered by A. S. Barton in which he said, "Madam: I am afraid I cannot help you, as I have never been in Burma. Yours sincerely."

Better luck came from two other sources. Lieutenant Colonel L. H. Purton, ex-Burma Rifles,

wrote extensively. He said that he knew Barton fairly well during the years 1937-41. From what Purton said I gathered that when Barton went to Sumatra with the Royal Observatory, he stayed in the Far East and eventually came to Maymyo where Purton got to know him.

"He lived in a flat in the main street," Purton's letter went on, "and seemed to be employed by the government in various matters to do with China. He told me that he had spent a year living with a Chinese family in Yunnan province and as a Chinaman. During that year he acquired a fluent knowledge of Yunnanese. As you probably know, he was outstandingly good at languages. He was the only European able to converse in the Wa language and had been twice into Wa territories on missions in behalf of the Burmese government. I have more knowledge of him during the years mentioned which I will be very happy to write to you about, should you like more. He is certainly one of the most outstanding men that I have ever met."

I planned to write to Colonel Purton for more information, but in the meantime I received another wonderful letter, this one from Lieutenant Colonel G. D. F. Dunlop, OBE, MC, as follows:

Dear Madam:

Thank you for your letter from that old haunt, Kuala Lumpur. I remember "Beaver" Barton well, but alas can tell you little or nothing you are not likely to know already. I last heard of him in Calcutta after we left Burma.

"Beaver" was a character all right. I took the few opportunities I had of talking to him to find out more about him. I gather that he spent many years in that little-known world where the headwaters of the Irawaddy, Salween, and Mekong rivers run close to one another. He appeared to be an authority on the languages, customs, etc. of the tribes up there.

"One session I had with him took place when he and I and his servant camped out together just north of Shwebo on the day the great Ava bridge was blown. "Beaver" knew how to look after himself and I'll never forget eating wild strawberries with him in the sweltering heat. He had just come from Maymyo when the strawberry season was coming to an end with the hot weather. He was outraged that the American Medical officer at H.Q. insisted that the berries be boiled before they could be eaten!

"Other things I noticed about him were his way of filtering the muddy water which was all one could get to drink. He siphoned it from one bowl to another through a wet towel. The clear product was then treated with iodine rather than with the strong tasting Army issue of chlorinating tablets. This gave it a better taste.

"Later, after we got to the Imphal area, after leaving Stilwell he rejoined us at our little camp in the rain. It was cold and damp and we had nothing to keep us warm. "Beaver" very kindly lent me an American Service Dress jacket--winter weight--which I returned to him on leaving India. Later I got a message from him from Calcutta asking for it back. He must have lent it to someone else, because I certainly didn't have it.

"Apart from the memories of an interesting and--to me anyway--generous man, I can tell you little more.

I do remember the row he--a pure volunteer and then approaching fifty years anyway--had with someone at Headquarters of IV Corps over his beard. British Army officers weren't allowed beards! "Beaver" threatened to resign his commission and was allowed to keep the beard. Few of us liked the particular Staff Officer concerned.

"There is one man--Robin Stewart--who served inside Burma later in the war who might be able to help. If I can trace him I will let you know. He was an "elephant" man too. Meanwhile, good luck. G. D. Dunlop
P.S. Beaver would be an old man now.

What a wonderful letter! I wondered if perhaps Robin Stewart was one of the Johnnies. Perhaps Castens would know. I felt that Colonel Purton had confused Barton with Castens, or

perhaps both of them had refused to shave their beards, because I knew that Castens had refused. I felt so hopeful about finding Barton when there were still so many people who knew something about him. It hardly seemed possible that he had completely disappeared.

Unfortunately my hopes were soon dashed. General Cowan had written to Colonel N. G. Whitehead, MBE, and the last letter I was to receive about Barton was from Miss Y. E. Veness, Secretary to Mr. Whitehead. She wrote, "Referring to your letter to General Cowan, it was forwarded to Mr. Whitehead. I am writing to you on behalf of Mr. Whitehead who suggested I get in contact with one of his friends. I did this and in his reply he told me that to the best of his knowledge, Major Barton died several years ago."

Not only was this a disappointing answer but it was not entirely satisfactory. In the first place, I hated to accept the fact that Barton was dead, and in the second place the information was at best second-hand. But there was little more that I could do. I like to think that Professor John Moonie was right; Barton had gone off "on the limb" after the war, and was still hunting pandas in the Himalayas, learning more exotic languages, and changing his tinted glasses according to the weather.

Having reluctantly given up on Barton, I had to change the direction of my search. I was anxious to start tracing more of those listed on the roster under American military personnel. I began with Kenneth Chow--a Chinese interpreter on the Walkout--because Dick Young had told me that Chow had accompanied Stilwell to Ramgarh when the General was training the Chinese troops for the second Burma campaign. Dick had seen Chow in Shanghai in 1947. He also told me that Chow was a graduate of Cornell. The response to my letter to the University informed me that Chow's real name was Kenneth Kuo Chun Chow, class of 1922. They gave me two addresses, one in Shanghai, one in Hong Kong. My letters to both of those addresses were returned marked "Undeliverable." Perhaps this was another euphemism, and Kenneth Chao had "gone away" for good. Other than some beautiful postage stamps, I gained nothing from my search for him and finally had to give up.

With information that I had already acquired but had not had time to follow up on previously, I sent out more letters of enquiry. First I wrote to Major General Franklin Sibert, whose address I had obtained from the General's Locator months before. His answer came from Destin Beach, Florida, yet another coincidence. When my husband was stationed at Eglin Field during the war, Destin Beach--only a few miles from the base--was an unbroken stretch of beautiful white sand along the Gulf of Mexico.

There was a simple beach house that served as an Officer's Club. We went there every Sunday to swim and sunbathe and hunt for rare sea-shells. I gathered from General Sibert's address that condominiums had taken over this once unspoiled spot. Later I learned that it had become just like Miami Beach.

In response to my enquiries about his views of the Walkout, General Sibert's reply was very brief. About other participants, he gave me an address for Major Felix Nowakowsky in Ferndale,

Michigan. He said that Nowakowsky had been his Aide, had retired as a Colonel, and had changed his name to Novack.

Major General Franklin Sibert, age 51
U.S.Army--Infantry

Don't ever get in a card game with Sibert, you'll lose your shirt!

"I went on General Stilwell's mission to China and then to Burma as an advisor on Infantry tactics. During the General's absences it became my duty to take command of the outfit.

"When I learned we were going to have to walk out, it was alright with me, I had been in the Army all my life."

Enclosed in his letter was a gracious note from his daughter who lived with him. She invited me to come for a visit. She said that her father had had a very interesting military career, but that he would never talk about it. She thought that I might be able to draw him out better than she could.

This was a tempting invitation. I also had obtained Colonel Frederick McCabe's address from the General's Locator. He had retired as a Brigadier General and lived in Sarasota, Florida. Perhaps I could fit in a quick trip to Florida and interview the two Generals. When I telephoned General McCabe to ask if I might come to see him, Mrs. McCabe answered. She said that she was afraid that that would not be possible. He had just gotten out of the hospital after a severe stroke. That put an end to planning any trip to Florida. My brother, who also lived in Sarasota, told me later that General McCabe died shortly after my telephone call. A friend of my brother's bought General McCabe's house. Here was another little connection growing out of my search.

When I wrote to the Air Force World Wide Locator, they gave me an address for Captain Donald O'Hara, now retired as a Colonel. The address was simply Rte.1, Cochise, Arizona. Having an address, however, was not all there was to it. It was a long time before I got any answer to a letter sent to that address. When I did, it came from a trailer park outside of Phoenix. O'Hara had no telephone, he said, but if I would send him an address where he could reach me, he would get in touch with me. He would be delighted to see me, he added.

Some time before, in response to my notice in the Ex CBI Roundup magazine, I had received a letter from Dean Chambers in Bonham, Texas. I now wrote to him asking when it would be convenient for me to see him.

I also wrote to Sergeant Paul Gish whose address had been given me by Dara Singh. He said he would just *love* to see me any time. In answer to my questions about other American military personnel, he told me he thought Private Short lived in what he wrote as "Merian," Oklahoma. Once again, the "prepared mind" came to my assistance. I remembered that Jack Belden, also a collector of interesting place-names, had mentioned in his book that someone on the Walkout came

from a place called Meridian. On the chance that Merien, Oklahoma and Meridian were the same place, I called Information in Meridian, Oklahoma and hit the jack pot.

In 1972 it was still possible to talk to a telephone operator, and if you got a friendly one, you could find out a lot. This turned out to be the case with the operator in Meridian. "Sure, I can tell you about Lawrence Short," she said. "I knew him when he was a kid. We grew up together. He's a doctor now and he lives in Anadarko. Wait a minute and I'll give you his number."

Oh, for the happy days of friendly Information operators who would talk to you instead of giving you a recorded message from Directory Assistance! I not only had a number for Dr Short but I had another unusual place name--Anadarko--for my collection. I promptly telephoned Dr. Short. I told him how I had found out where he lived and he laughed. I have forgotten the name of the telephone operator now, but he remembered her. He said he would be glad to see me any time.

All I had to do then was to get in touch with Colonel Novack. He responded enthusiastically to my request for an interview. I could now plan an itinerary that would fit in with my husband's business trip to San Francisco scheduled for February 1973. I would go with him and we would see our son at Berkeley. From there I would make a swing around Arizona, Arkansas, Texas, Michigan, and Ohio to see these five men. Little did I realize then that that particular swing would find me at times in parts of my country more foreign to me than the Far East. At other times I would feel that it was I who was the foreigner.

In November I held a little Burma "reunion" at my house. Ruby Johnson and her husband and the Chesleys with their son Patrick came for lunch. To my delight, the Chesleys brought Hla Sein, the Burmese nurse from Margaret Hague Hospital in Jersey City who had previously said she did not want to see me.

I showed everyone my pictures from Burma and answered all their questions about their friends, and told them how wonderful they had been to me. After lunch Hla Sein cheerfully agreed to go out on to the sun-porch with me for a little interview away from the others.

Hla Sein, age 22
Seagrave Nurse

Hla Sein had a beautiful voice.

"I went to British and American schools where I learned English when I was a child. I always wanted to be a nurse so when it was time, I applied to several nursing schools and Namhkam was the first one to accept me, so I went there.

"When we learned we had to walk out with General Stilwell, we were thrilled. We thought it would be just like a picnic. And I was glad to get away from all the Chinese wounded. All that I remember that I took with me was a knife."

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I learned some months later that when the Seagrave Unit went up to Ramgarh with General Stilwell, Hla Sein was attacked by an Indian who had gone berserk. She still had her knife with her and she killed him.

My interview with Hla Sein was the last one I conducted in the very exciting year of 1972. My search so far had exceeded all expectations, and I had enough material to keep me busy for years. I began trying to organize it as best I could, but there was still more to be done in the coming year, and I was looking forward to it.

A Foreigner In My Own Country

In February of 1973, as planned, I flew to San Francisco with my husband before taking off on my journey across country by myself. The first of the culture shocks I was to experience occurred at a business brunch to which I was invited. It involved a twenty minute flight in a private plane owned by a prospective customer of my husband's company. He was interested in building houses out of Philippine mahogany, so my husband said we had to accept a bizarre invitation from him. There was a pilot and a co-pilot on the plane who flew us to a landing strip somewhere between San Francisco and Sacramento. There were lots of other expensive looking private planes parked there. We were met by a miniature train which carried us for a mile or so to a restaurant called "The Nut Tree" where we were to have brunch. We were immediately served champagne but we were told that we could have any other beverage we wanted. There were mountains of fresh fruit, and we could help ourselves to tables laden with food ranging from scrambled eggs to Delmonico steaks three inches thick. It was all quite revolting, and so were the other patrons, all in various stages of drunkenness. I have to say that this was a life-style entirely foreign to me and my husband. "Brunch" finally ended some time in the mid-afternoon. We were flown back to San Francisco and from there I flew to Phoenix, Arizona, leaving my husband to cope with the potential customer and violent indigestion.

I had sent the name of the motel in Phoenix where I would be staying to Donald O'Hara, now a retired Colonel. There was a message for me when I arrived that he could see me two days later, so I spent the next day in the sun and took a taxi to Avis to rent a car. Here came the next surprise. Just as with the bank teller in Burma, but for a different reason, Avis would not accept an American Express check. Neither would they take cash. They said that the last time they accepted cash for a rental, the car turned up some months later in Honolulu. I found this hard to believe but I learned for the first time that in this country if you are without plastic money you are nothing. I felt distinctly a foreigner when I could not use my own country's currency in what *was* my own country.

At that time I had no credit card other than one issued by Bell of Pennsylvania for long-distance telephone calls. Finally the Avis agent accepted it, although we both knew that Ma Bell would never make good on the rental if I absconded with the car. My records for renting that car show that it cost me \$16.00.

When I got back to the motel, I decided to go for a walk. In the space of ten minutes and even at my age, I was propositioned twice by rather seedy types. I beat a hasty retreat back to the Motel and when I told the desk clerk, he laughed and said, "Nobody walks anywhere in Phoenix. Even the Mexican housemaids have cars!"

Next morning I set forth along the Benson Highway toward Tucson to see O'Hara. About twenty miles out in the desert I came to a giant sign that said "Welcome to Turfside Paradise," and beside it was a smaller sign that said "Sierra Court." It was the right place but once again I was surprised. I stopped at the gate-house to get directions to O'Hara's "street." As I drove in to the complex, there was a grandstand and a race track on the left. Men and women with horse-vans and horses were milling about. This must have been the "Turfside."

On the "Paradise" side I could see nothing but row after row of R.V.'s--recreational vehicles--covering the landscape on parallel streets as far as I could see. These vehicles have become much more common now than they were in 1972, but at that time I was appalled at the sight of so many of them in such bleak surroundings. There were no trees, no shrubs or flowers, not even any human beings in sight, and the hot desert sun bleached out all color. I knew that a lot of people travelled around in these vehicles, even made their home in them, but . . . "Paradise?"

Colonel O'Hara greeted me at the open door of his "house" and immediately said, "Call me Mac." Mrs. O'Hara apologized for the fact that the air-conditioner had broken down; only a little wall fan stirred the hot air around. I felt as if I were back in Burma.

The O'Hara's were friendly and easy-going, and they both smoked little brown cigars. Mac was very relaxed as he talked and Mrs. O'Hara occasionally added helpful reminders to him. The more I heard about how they lived, the more I could appreciate that they had found a life-style that, though it was so foreign to me, was exactly what they wanted. When Mac had retired, he said, they got tired of owning a house and paying taxes. They bought this home on wheels and could travel all over the country following the sun.

They could visit their son and see old friends without imposing on anybody. "Courts" such as the one we were in had all the hook-ups for water and power, and facilities for garbage disposal, as well as showers and laundry facilities, and a place to dispose of the contents of their chemical toilet. There was a hook-up fee, of course, that varied from place to place, but on a year 'round basis it was a lot cheaper than maintaining a house, and a lot more fun to go wherever you wanted to whenever you wanted to. When he got too old to drive he would buy a trailer home, Mac said. He told me all this with great enthusiasm and Mrs. O'Hara agreed that it suited her just fine. They had been roaming around America for the past ten years ever since Mac had retired from the Army. His last four years in the Army had been spent at Eglin Field, Florida, he said.

There was the unexpected connection again. I was really surprised when Mac went on to say that Eglin Field had become a Cold Weather Research base. How extraordinary that the Army

would put that kind of an installation in one of the hottest parts of our country! Of course we had to have some conversation about how the Army always does things "bass ackwards," as he said. Eglin had changed a great deal, obviously, and he confirmed what I had heard, that Destin Beach indeed was just like Miami Beach.

I showed him my pictures from Burma. He was delighted to see them and to talk about how wonderful the nurses were. He said that he had seen Sein Bwint and Ruby Johnson when they came to America on Fulbright fellowships after the war.

Captain Donald M. O'Hara, age 36
Medical Corps, U.S. Army Reserve

We had never seen a white man stripped to the waist before and with all that curly hair on his chest. We nicknamed him "Uncle Bear."

"When an officer in the U.S. Army as high-ranking as Stilwell gets an assignment overseas," O'Hara began, "a certain number of staff has to go with him and with his staff of forty or so, he must take a dentist. I was a dentist, an oral surgeon in the Reserve Officer Corps, and I was the one chosen to go with Stilwell.

"So I went to Washington where he was assembling his staff and after a while we flew out to India and on into Burma. I wasn't exactly in the 'Palace Guard,' but I knew a little bit about what was going on. It was being written up in Time and LIFE that Stilwell was going to China, so I sent a clipping from one of them to my wife, and she figured out that I was going with him.

"We were divided into several groups. My group went across the Atlantic in one of those flying boats and later in Cairo we changed to a smaller plane. We had an accident somewhere in Arabia and came down in the desert. Nobody was hurt and soon along came some British officers in a Land Rover and took us with them to some British outpost. It was just like the old movies; a white fort, the barriers, just like the movie of Beau Geste. That was the first time I had ever gone by compass in a car, it was just like being on a ship. We started off so fast--no road--straight across the sand dunes at about eighty miles an hour I thought, 'til I found out it was kilometers, and I thought 'Oh boy!' The driver was going along just by watching the compass and he's talking to me and not even looking where he's going. You'd go over a dune and all four wheels would come off the ground. That was quite a ride!

"After we got to India we headed for China in a DC3, but on the way we stopped in Bhamo in Burma. There were about twenty of us on board and they made a list of those who were supposed to get off and I was one of those. So I got off and after the plane started down the runway, some guy in our group said, 'Hey, there's supposed to be ten of us and there are only nine.' So we started checking the list and just about the time we got to the tenth name on the list, that plane . . . phhht . . . crashed, burned up and killed everybody on board. Now if that tenth guy had heard his

name, he'd have been alive. You can't ever tell when your life is going to end." Fate had intervened once again, I thought.

"It did kind of shake me up when I learned we were going to Burma instead of to China, particularly when I was told to join Seagrave and the Baptist Mission. I thought, 'Hell, the way I like to drink and smoke and swear, I'll just get along with the missionaries like that!' I was just sick about it. I asked if there was any way I could get out of it and they said there wasn't and I went down there as unhappy as the devil.

"Then I saw the outfit and met Seagrave and he opened his desk drawer and offered me a drink! Then I met the nurses and all of a sudden I took a liking to the whole bunch. I got interested in them, they were doing good work. Some of the nurses were smarter than the MD's. They could talk to the patients, for one thing, and they knew all the local fevers, and they had a better idea of what was going on than the American doctors.

"At that time they had no ambulances, so I said to Pinky Dorn, 'Since they're doing such good work and they're working for us, let's give them something to work with. They don't have too much medical equipment and nothing to haul it in.' I don't know how he did it, but one day Pinky showed up with some trucks and ambulances.

"Then this Quaker outfit comes along and I talked to their boss man. They had been working with the Seagrave outfit helping with the wounded and they needed more trucks and ambulances. They couldn't believe me when I told them we'd get them some, and we did. That's when the Englishmen joined us, all good hard-working fellows, and we became a Unit with them. They were the British Conscientious Objectors, the FAU boys.

"We would set up the hospital somewhere behind the fighting front and Captain John Grindlay came down from the Magruder mission in Chungking. He and I did the surgery on the wounded that the boys brought in. Of course I wasn't a regular surgeon, I was an oral surgeon, but I began doing the broken jaws and things like that and I converted myself into a surgeon. That's what we did until the retreat.

"We had to keep moving the hospital back all the time and it was back-breaking work. We used to get sixty and seventy patients at a time. Fred Eldridge used to hold an acetylene lamp for us sometimes when we were working at night. It was hot as hell and we all worked stripped to the waist.

"I remember Grindlay working on a guy with a gaping hole in his abdomen. Grindlay was catching the blood in a jar and the nurses were feeding it back into the guy in a transfusion and by God, that fellow lived!

"The A. V. G., the American Volunteer Group, had an airstrip down there somewhere. They were General Chennault's Flying Tigers, volunteers who had been out flying for China before America got into the war. They had come down from China to help out the R.A.F.

One day I saw a jeep coming along and you could tell that they were Americans, they were

bearded and they were armed to the teeth. They told us they were heading *north* and boy, were they *mad!* The Chinese were supposed to warn them of any air attack and nobody had sent them any message and most of their planes had gotten wiped out on the ground at Magwe. Their planes, the P40s, were the only planes left in Burma by then and they had done a fantastic job against the Japanese fighters, but now they were through. I said to them, 'You're supposed to stick around and get intelligence for Stilwell,' and they said, 'The hell with Stilwell!' and off they went! They went back to China where Chennault had organized them originally.⁴⁸

"Not long after that we pulled out too. We moved on up to Shwebo and waited for the General and his group to come up from Maymyo. Then we went north and then to the clearing where we started to walk.

"When Stilwell gathered us all together and told us where we'd be going, I thought, *Oh boy!* Nobody will be with us and no food. I'd been sick, I'd eaten too much pork. I love it and it always makes me sick at my stomach, and it's always two or three days before I can eat anything. Here I was already hungry and with not much prospect of anything to eat ahead of us. I suppose I didn't dread it any more than the rest of them did. If they could make it, I could. But it wasn't much fun to start out hungry and to know there wasn't going to be much to eat from there on."

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After my interview with O'Hara, I returned to Phoenix, turned in the car, and late that afternoon flew to Oklahoma City. From there I would drive to Anadarko, Oklahoma to see Dr. Lawrence Short. It was a lovely flight with the sun beginning to go down behind us as we headed east. Low hills and snow-covered plains were turned into a pinky brown, not as spectacular as sunrise on the Himalayas, but beautiful in a different way. The pilot told us as we neared Oklahoma City that there was snow and sleet all over the east coast and flight schedules were all messed up, but we would have no trouble getting in on time, he said. We did get in on time, and I was glad I was not going any further that night.

On the way to my hotel from the airport, the taxi driver took me past the state capitol building. He wanted to show me the oil derrick that stands in front of the capitol as a monument to the state's greatest source of wealth. Now I *knew* I was in a foreign country where "graven images" were honored, not human beings! I learned some years later that Oklahoma is the only state whose capitol building does not have a gold dome. Obviously oil *is* gold in Oklahoma!

After my experience with Avis in Phoenix, I enlisted the help of the hotel in renting a car for three days. I was even able to arrange with Avis that I could drop the car off in Dallas after I saw Dean Chambers in Bonham, Texas.

It was only sixty miles from Oklahoma City to Anadarko which meant I would have plenty of time to enjoy seeing this part of the country for the first time. As I headed out of town on the highway to Anadarko, I could not get over how barren the land appeared and how little traffic there

was. There were no trees, hardly any houses, just empty expanses of nothing as far as the horizon. It was a bleak and dreary landscape. The only thing of interest about it was that at some point I passed a sign saying that I was crossing the Chisholm Trail. It was hard to imagine that once there had been beautiful rich prairie land full of wild buffaloes where now there was so little. Then suddenly I was in a different world where oil rigs sprang up instead of trees. Here were the idols of this foreign country, their arms pumping up and down and making a curious kind of belching sound. It was as if they were asking for human sacrifices.

When I got to Anadarko, I checked in at the Black Beaver Motel. The receptionist was a sweet talking southern lady full of 'honey' this and 'darlin' that as she showed me to my room. I told her I was meeting some friends in the evening and asked her what there was to do in Anadarko that afternoon. She told me that there was an interesting Indian Museum that I ought to see.

I also asked her how to get to the street on which Lawrence Short lived, but I did not tell her why I wanted to know. After I had some lunch at a Steak House filled with "hard-hats" from the oilfield who looked at me with suspicion, I drove out of the downtown area to the street on which Dr. Short lived in what was obviously a wealthy suburb. A sign in front of a handsome low ranch-style house said "Dr. Lawrence Short." Next to it another sign said "Clinic." The property was beautifully landscaped, and sprinklers were watering a grassy green lawn even though it was February.

After that little exploratory expedition, I went to the Indian Museum. It was extremely interesting, and made even more so by another visitor who told me as we walked around that he was an Otoe Indian. He pronounced it O-Toe-ee, not O-toe, as I had always thought of it when I ran into it in a cross-word puzzle.

He came from another part of the state but he was a mine of information about prairie Indian tribes as he talked about the various exhibits to his girl friend and me. Plains Indians, the Kiowas of the surrounding Oklahoma region, did not bury their chieftans, he said. A platform was built out on the prairie and on it the body in all its finery was laid to rest. There the elements and birds carried the spirit of the Chieftan off to the happy hunting grounds.

The young man was very bitter about what the white man had done to the Indians. Oklahoma was known as "Indian Territory" after it became the home of the Indians forced west by Andrew Jackson in 1828. They were wealthy and brought their own slaves with them. This fact, the young man told me, accounted for the large number of Negroes still living in the Plains states. Gradually the white man had taken their land away from the Indians and the slaves were freed. He added that looking at the artifacts in the museum almost made him sick, and I could hardly blame him.

When I went back to the motel, I telephoned Dr. Short. He said that he and his wife would take me to dinner at the motel, which was disappointing because I wanted to see the inside of their handsome house, but no such luck. They arrived promptly at six o'clock, banging loudly on my door. Dr. Short parked a Lincoln Continental outside my room, and though it wasn't very cold, his wife had

on a caracul fur coat with a mink collar. The doctor on the other hand, had on a ten-gallon Stetson hat, jeans and a plaid jacket and he was wearing pointed high-heeled cowboy boots. As we walked over to the dining-room, he announced that they didn't smoke or drink, so I of course refrained. The dining-room was crowded and people came up to say hello to him all through the meal. They were patients who obviously loved him. He had a hard time getting his meal eaten as he introduced them to me and chatted with each one.

Since the Shorts had not invited me to their house, after dinner I asked them back to my room for the interview. Mrs. Short, whose name was June, plumped up the pillows on the bed and lay back. The doctor and I sat in the two chairs the room provided. Then came the big surprise of the evening. As soon as we were settled, Lawrence--as I was now told to call him--pulled a flask out of an inside pocket of his jacket and offered me a drink. I accepted and got the only two glasses there were in the bathroom. This was all right as it turned out that June did not want a drink. Such a startling development emboldened me to say that I would like to have a cigarette with my drink if it would not bother them. Here came another surprise. Lawrence said, "Fine, I'll join you," his wife again refusing. I got the distinct impression that she felt I was corrupting him. But after all, it was he who had brought out the flask when we were out of sight of his patients.

He had brought a photograph album with him. He had a lot of pictures of the Walkout that I had never seen before. He no longer had the negatives but he kindly let me take the album home so that I could have pictures taken of the pictures.

The interview was the longest one I had had so far. Short talked for four hours. I had to put a second tape in to the tape recorder and both sides of both were filled. June added a few comments every now and then for an hour or so, but I think she dozed off and on for the last couple of hours, and I did not blame her. I was beginning to get a little groggy myself.

Private Lawrence Short, age 22
U.S.Army--Draftee

What you do in the Army is you wait for somebody to tell you what to do.

"I was just a green kid from the country. I grew up on a farm in Oklahoma during the depression and times were tough, real tough. My father was a farmer. We had about a hundred and sixty acres and we grew corn and tomatoes and cotton. I peddled the corn and tomatoes in the summer. We had a little pasture land and we had a team of horses and we grew black-eyed peas to eat in the winter. I rode every day to a little one room schoolhouse, and after high-school I worked hard for a couple of years to get enough money to go to Central State college.

"I went into the National Guard in college and when the Guard got mobilized, I had to go. They just yanked you out and put you in the Army. We was mobilized for a year's trainin'. We set up some kind of Signals team, I was just a field radio operator.

"Then Pearl Harbor happened and they sent us out to Angel Island in San Francisco Bay where the Army was based. Paul Gish was in my company. Then one day the Sergeant comes in and says, 'Pack up, boys. This is just a dry run. We'll be back to-morrow.' And we get on this luxury boat, the Mariposa it was, and I haven't got back yet! The next land we saw was Australia. And boy, was I seasick! Those long ocean swells and the smell of cookin. . .'

"We didn't know where we was goin' but it seems to me it was Borneo. They'd made some plans in case Borneo fell and it *did* fall while we were on the way out, so from Australia they sent us up to Karachi in India. We was there for a while waitin' for further orders. That was a couple of months after we'd left the States.

"Then some of us was flown to a place in Assam. It was all tea plantations there, there wasn't any town. Then we was sent in to Burma from there. It was to Maymyo, I believe, to where Stilwell's headquarters was at. We hadn't been there but a couple of days when the whole headquarters moved out and we headed north. I never did see any fightin' or dead people. We went on up to Shwebo and that's where I seen the General for the first time.

"We stayed in Shwebo for a couple of days and then we headed north again. We travelled some pretty terrible roads and we was bombed a couple of times. We seen all those pitiful refugees and the vehicles began breaking down. I knew that morning when we come to the clearing that there was soon goin' to be an end to the ridin'. Even I had figured it out it couldn't go on much longer.

"So we come to a halt there in the middle of nowhere and we was told to wait. That's what you do in the Army, you wait for somebody to tell you what to do.

"And this time it was a Lieutenant General who was givin' the orders. I figured that anybody that high rankin' ought to know what he was doin'. I'd never heard of General Stilwell before I got to Burma and I'd never even heard of Burma 'til a few weeks before. I didn't know much about anything. That's why they take young kids into the Army, they're not *supposed* to know anything.

"Nobody was actually my commanding officer, all we had was little guys and big 'brass.' We had a Lieutenant General for a 'Company Commander,' and Colonel Ferris was the 'Sergeant' who was in charge of our 'platoon.' He was a wonderful old gentleman. He'd give out the rations and share the smokes. One time down in Maymyo he got some candy bars and cigarettes and he gave it all to us.

"I had no particular assignment, I hadn't been there long enough before they started pullin' out. I was definitely superfluous, and I could have wandered off into the jungle and nobody would have known the difference. Not that I was about to do that, no way. I knew enough to stick to the General. But it did seem kind of funny to me that an American general got flown half way 'round the world and he tried to save a little ole unknown country and the next thing you know, he's walkin' out!

"When he told us we was goin' to have to walk, I didn't have a worry in the world. I didn't

particularly want to be there or doin' any of this but it didn't make much difference to me really. All I cared about was gettin' out of there and goin' home. But it didn't worry me none, I knew I could walk it.

"I'd just come from hard times, I wasn't used to a great deal to eat and I was used to walkin'. I had a strong pair of laigs, the fellers used to kid me about how big my laigs was. I had a pretty comfortable pair of shoes I'd had all the way from the States and they was well broken in. I carried a .45 with five clips full and an M1 rifle with my pockets full of bullets. I had a mess cup and a canteen and a ground sheet. I'd never heard of a bedding-roll.

"I didn't have any clothes to throw away, so when I'd checked all my gear, I just waited for somebody to tell me what we was goin' to do next. That's what I was used to."

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After this philosophical outlook on a remarkable event that had taken place in a young farm boy's life, I left Anadarko the next day and drove down to Bonham, Texas to see Dean Chambers. The countryside was no more interesting than it had been in Oklahoma, but I ran into another foreign country when I got in to Texas, the land of the Easy Rider.

Like Lawrence Short, I always carried a flask of whiskey with me on my travels. Since this was all new country to me I wondered if there might be Blue Laws in certain counties. I had seen a liquor store somewhere along the way, but I was past it before I remembered that my own stock was getting low. I saw a sign telling me that I was entering Denison County, so I thought I would stop at the next opportunity to find out what the situation was. I came into a small town and pulled up at a convenience store. As I got out of the car I saw a group of men sitting on their haunches and leaning back against the wall of the store. They were wearing the usual jeans and plaid shirts and cowboy boots. Their Stetson hats were tipped back on their heads, and cigarettes dangled from their lower lips. At first glance they seemed harmless enough and I asked if there was a liquor store anywhere near. One of them replied, "Waal, lady, I dunno as a nice lady like you should be drinkin'," and he started to stand up. I suddenly realized that they were all leering at me and I became frightened. I mumbled something like "never mind," and got back in the car. I could hear them guffawing as I drove away. Obviously they could tell that I was a "foreigner." I certainly felt like one, and that they were going to have a little fun with me. Maybe they were just nice farm boys like Short had been, but somehow I did not think so. They were more like the "rednecks" who abused Peter Fonda in the movie.

I decided I would not try to find a liquor store. Instead I would invite Chambers and his wife out for dinner and I could have a drink then. But they insisted on taking me to dinner. Here came another surprise. As we sat down, Dean asked me if I would like a drink. I brightly replied that that would be nice. "What will you have," he said, "coffee or a Pepsi? " Here I was in a dry county after all, just as I had feared.

Chambers and his wife invited me back to their house after dinner and we had a wonderful

evening. They had read Tuchman's book and they treated me as if I too were a real historian. Chambers had his own plumbing business which allowed him time to get away when he felt like it. They had been to Europe and were very entertaining about their travels. They liked to collect the names of toilet manufacturers that are inscribed on the inside of the bowl. They had a great collection of these names that were even more colorful than my unusual place names.

Chambers wanted to know about all the people I had seen and he had so much he wanted to tell me about the Walkout that I went back to their house the next morning for breakfast. He continued until it was time for me to drive to Dallas to get my flight to Detroit to see Colonel Novack.

**Technical Sergeant William Dean Chambers, age 27
U.S. Army Signal Corps**

Sergeant Chambers, the radio man, really stood out. He continued doing his job when he was really sick, and never said a word about it.

"I grew up in Texas during the depression and we were poor, real poor," Dean began. "It was hard to get enough money for food. I used to pick cotton to get some cash. My parents separated and you know, when families break up, it does something to the kids. I wanted to get away from home so I went into the service in 1935.

"I got a lot of useful training in the Army. I had a natural aptitude for mechanics and I'd been an amateur radio operator before I went in, all of which came in handy.

"When they called for volunteers for the Magruder mission, I signed up and was just about to go to China when Pearl Harbor happened and my orders were cancelled. About three weeks later I was picked to go with Stilwell. I guess Colonel Eckert told them to pick me. I had served under him and he knew I had radio experience, was a mechanic, knew matériel, and had six years of service.

"So I went to Washington with Eckert and got shot up with cholera and all those inoculations. I didn't know Stilwell at the time. I'd heard his name but I didn't know that we were going to be assigned to his mission. Then we were told that we were going to China but we didn't know where exactly. I'd done well in geography in school and I'd been studying it ever since. I read Time magazine . . . it used to be good in those days. . . and the National Geographic. I just ate those up, so I knew a little about where we were going if not exactly the place.

"After about three weeks in Washington, about thirty of us flew down to Miami and went out on one of those big lumbering Pan-American flying-boats and it was all a wonderful adventure. They sure were comfortable planes. They had state-rooms and stewards and everything.

"We flew down to South America and I visited the Aviary in Belem and saw all those beautiful, exotic tropical birds. Then we made a night flight across the southern Atlantic.

"It was a beautiful clear night, full moonlight, and we flew low, right over the water looking

for U-Boats so we could pass the information along to the Navy. The U-Boats were running rampant at the time, but we never did see any.

"We never did gain any altitude at all, and boy, were we ever hot and sweaty! We were right down over the ee-quator, and that's one thing the plane didn't have, that was air-conditioning, and we all got airsick. We were glad when we flew in to Moravia just at sunrise and it was so beautiful!

"Then we went on to Lagos and went out of there on a DC3 up to Khartoum, Wadi Halfa, and Cairo. I was the only enlisted man on our plane and I was put up at Shepherd's Hotel right along with the officers. I had officer's facilities with a shower and everything, but my worst problem was I didn't have anyone to talk to!

"So it was real nice when Colonel Eckert asked me if I would like to go out on the town with him and see the sights. We went out and saw the belly-dancers at the Kit Kat Club and I *really* enjoyed that! The next day we went out and saw the pyramids where at King Tut's tomb there's a slit where the sun shines in one day of the year.

"When we left Cairo we crossed the Red Sea and we landed somewhere in the middle of the desert and it looked just like one of those old stockade forts you see in west Texas. Those tribesmen all had those big turbans on and they had those *long* knives and they looked *mean*, I'll tell you! They were Ayrabs.

"From there we flew down the coast of Arabia and it was just the most rugged terrain I'd ever seen in my life. I couldn't imagine what we would have done if we had had to set down. It was something like the mountains of the moon, nothing moving, no animals, nothin'!

"We went on to Karachi and then Calcutta. There they put me up with Colonel Eckert and we stayed there about three weeks looking over the armaments factories and matériel depots and where they manufactured cannons and rifles. We had a fine trip out to the Botanical Gardens there.

"This was about the beginning of March and all we knew about the war was what we could pick up from the Calcutta Statesman, which wasn't much. We heard that Singapore had fallen,⁴⁹ and then we heard that Rangoon had fallen too.⁵⁰ We still thought we were going to China but then we got the orders to ship out to Burma. We flew out to Lashio in a DC3, then drove down to Maymyo in a jeep to join General Stilwell. And oh! it was so beautiful driving down through those big trees, those wonderful forests of teak trees.

"Maymyo was a beautiful little town too. It was a hill town in the center of Burma, about fifty miles from Mandalay. It was where the British used to go during the hot season. They had a Headquarters there called Flagstaff House and we set up our HQ in a Baptist Mission in the town.

"As soon as Stilwell got there he started trying to pull things together. He consulted with General Alexander who had arrived to take over command of the British troops, and he consulted with General Slim too. Slim was trying to hold the Burma Corps together, the battallions of Burmese soldiers with British officers. They called them Burcorps. They were all waiting for the

Chinese troops to arrive.

"I was put to work there setting up the radio and establishing communications for Stilwell with Chungking. When I wasn't working on the set, I would work on the motor end of things. Stilwell wanted me to put stars on the trucks that had been assigned to us so that they could be recognized as American. I made a big stencil and we painted those big stars on the sides of the trucks.

"And I used to get sent out on errands. I remember I was sent over to get some weapons from the British one afternoon and I couldn't raise a soul, they were having their tea, and a war was going on. *That* was something else!

"Finally the Chinese troops began arriving, a few at a time. When we first saw them coming down the road in their bare feet and carrying their black kettles on their shoulders--that was their kitchen--we thought they were Cub Scouts on some kind of an outing. They looked just like little kids. Well, these were the troops Stilwell was going to command!

"I was sent down to Pyawbwe one night with just a little Chinese mess-boy with me. The brakes gave out on the truck and we just had the dim lights on on account of the black-out. Here was a bunch of Chinese right in the middle of the road carrying water on poles, and I hit one. The others came after me and it was only my little Chinese boy that saved me or they would have killed me right then. That's one time when I could have done with a whole lot of company--I was terrified. When Stilwell heard about it later, he went back to find out about the guy I had hit and sure enough, he had died. Stilwell did all the right things to appease the Chinese and he never blamed me, that's the kind of person he was.

"We used to get bombed plenty of times in Maymyo and at first that scared me. Then I learned to dive under one of the big tables like I'd seen the British do, and none of us ever got hurt.

"When we pulled out of Maymyo and went up to Shwebo, I saw one of the Chinese staff cars with a bunch of Chinese officers all sitting there dead. They'd been cable-strung in their car in an ambush by those dacoits, the bandits who were sabotaging anybody they could. There wasn't a mark on them.

"When we got to Shwebo I radioed for the planes to come in from India to take out the people who were being evacuated. The General was sending some of them out so that they could try to set up a Headquarters in India and a place to train the Chinese soldiers at a later date. That's when Stilwell refused to be flown out, and of course since I was the only radio man, I couldn't go.

"When we left Shwebo I was detailed to ride in a truck that was being driven by Lieutenant Belknap. I was supposed to stay in the back and guard the supplies we were carrying. But Belknap didn't know how to drive a truck, and I got tired and nervous. I climbed up front and got royally chewed out by Colonel McCabe and rightly so. . . the refugees along the road would have stolen anything they could get their hands on.

"Oh my, those poor people! They looked like they were just starved, something would surely happen to them before they got out. I knew they would starve. They were carrying what they could on their backs, they didn't have any organization, they were straggling along, lying down exhausted, looking like they would never get up. But we had to get past them.

"When we got up to Indaw, that's when we got into trouble. We thought we were going to be staying with the Chinese troops and that Stilwell would try to make another stand at Myitkyina, but it fell through. The railroad was blocked because some Chinese general had wrecked a locomotive on the line. Then the Chinese troops had more or less abandoned Stilwell, so that's when he decided to head west.

"I didn't know all these things for *sure*, but I was pretty well able to figure them out. I knew there'd be an end to the ridin' when we found that railroad blocked. I just sensed it that we were pretty soon goin' to have to walk and it worried me. But I was young and I wanted to get out whatever way we had to do it.

"We all gathered around the General in the clearing, and of course we were all ears. When it finally came down to his telling us that we were going to have to walk, I was apprehensive, to say the least. I didn't have any idea how it would be, whether there'd be thickets of jungle we'd have to machete our way through or what. I didn't dread the walkin' itself, just what it was goin' to be like.

"When we'd been down at Shwebo, a fellow named Hambleton who was going to fly out, had a whole bunch of those big heavy luxury bath-towels and he *sold* them to me. They were as big as I was. So when it came time for us to discard our excess stuff, that was all I had to dispose of and you can be sure that I did. I can't imagine how he happened to have them or why I *bought* them!

"After the clearing we got the jeeps across that bamboo bridge and loaded the radio onto one of them and took off for the campsite at Nanantun, It was a nice fairly open one.

"I was in charge of the radio, still thinking at that time that it would go with us. But when the General asked me that night what I thought about taking it along, I had to tell him that I thought it would hold us up. From the looks of the group and all the stuff that had to be carried and seeing that jungle and not knowing how far we had to go, I didn't see how we could manage it.

"The receiver itself weighed about a hundred pounds and we'd have to take a 55 gallon drum of gas to run the generator for the transmitter--we didn't have anything else to carry it in--and when I told him all that, he said, 'Tear it up.' I felt lost when I had to destroy it, but I did, I took an axe to it. But before I did, that, I set it up so that Dorn could send out a lot of last minute messages, and for that last transmission I sure wanted to have a decent antenna. The one I usually used was only about ten feet long. So I talked to Mr. Case, the missionary that was with us.

"You know, in the jungle they have these *huge* trees, they grow to about a hundred and fifty feet tall. I asked him if he could get two of the native boys to each climb a tree and put my antenna up. So he talked to them and they wrapped the antenna around their mouth and held it in their

teeth and they just climbed those trees in a split second, up at least fifty or sixty feet. They tied each end of it up there and boy! I had a marvellous antenna for that last time.

"I sent out about ten messages, all in cipher--Dorn did that--and I didn't know at the time that I was promoting myself and a whole lot of other guys. The messages had to go to Chungking and from there to New Delhi. Dorn was mad as hell when we tried to raise New Delhi and all we kept getting was a bunch of Indian dance music. Even if it had been the grandest symphony in the world, at that time it was for the birds as far as we were concerned.

"So when I finished sending, I told the operator in Chungking--I never did know who I was talking to--I told him, 'I'm taking an axe to it,' and that's what I did.

"That evening the General set up the rules for the chow line and delegated certain people for the firewood detail, mess officer, and such. I didn't have any particular assignment since I'd destroyed the radio and I was just as glad of it. A day or two before I'd been sent to get some water which you dug down in the sand and it would bubble up and it was the most incredibly clear water I'd ever seen, but we'd been told to boil it. But I couldn't resist the temptation and I'd been paying for it for a couple of days. In fact I carried dysentery with me right out to the end of the walk!"

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The time had come for me to be on my way. I hated to leave these good people. They had been so kind to me and so enthusiastic about what I was doing. I was no longer a foreigner and I felt energized by them. But I still had to get from Bonham to the Dallas-Fort Worth airport in time to turn in the car before my flight left for Detroit. It was about fifty miles and I would be getting into big city traffic.

It was not easy finding my way to the airport by the very complicated directions Chambers had given me. I got lost twice and started to panic, but I finally got there. I had trouble finding the Avis drop-off place too. It was the most enormous airport I had ever been in. Signs were color-coded for each building or airline, but there were so many of them I kept forgetting which color I was looking for. After several wrong turns I found the Avis building, and heaved a sigh of relief.

As I walked toward the gate to board my plane to Detroit, I could not believe my eyes. The plane was fire-engine red! In all my travels I had never seen such a plane before. The food service was equally atypical of American airlines--it was delicious. Even in Economy Class my lunch was served on real plates with real cutlery, and coffee came in very attractive pottery cups. Complimentary wine was served in real glasses with the meal. I guess this luxurious treatment of its passengers was why Braniff Airlines eventually went out of business, but I certainly enjoyed it the only time I ever flew on it.

Colonel Novack had described himself as "a dumpy little guy, about five foot six, and I'll be wearing a black hat and a car coat." At the airport in Detroit I identified him immediately. From the airport it was an hour's drive to the motel in suburban Ferndale where Colonel Novack had

made a reservation for me. He and his wife went with me to my room, saying that they wanted to take me to dinner downstairs, and we would go to their house afterwards for the interview. Colonel Novack wanted to order drinks sent up from the bar, but I had enough in my flask for all of us to have a drink in the room before we went down to dinner. Suddenly we were all old friends! I told Colonel Novack about my correspondence with General Sibert, and once again I brought out my pictures. They were thrilled to hear about my travels and the people I had seen.

After dinner, they took me to their house and the Colonel brought out liqueur glasses and *crème de menthe* which we sipped as he talked. It was a very attractive little house. The Colonel told me that it was his hobby. He had made all the kitchen cabinets, book-shelves, built-ins of every sort, and he had done all the plumbing himself. Between the kitchen and the dining-room there was a pass-through on which there was a television set on a little turn-table so that his wife could see it while she was cooking as well as when she sat down at the dining-room table. I thought that was particularly ingenious.

Major Felix Nowakowsky, age 38
U.S. Army, Adjutant General's Office

Among his other duties, Nowakowsky was made Finance Officer which meant that he had to carry about a hundred thousand dollars worth of rupees in a heavy metal box.

"I was a child of the slums," Novack began. "My parents were immigrants in Detroit, Michigan, and my mother never learned to speak English. We didn't have any money and right after World War I when there was a depression, I volunteered for the Army.

"I was only fifteen years old, I was five feet four inches tall and weighed a hundred and five pounds, but they took me. Right after a war, the Army has a hard time getting recruits and they take anybody. All they want is bodies, and I was one of those bodies!

"I took night courses to get my high school degree and eventually I got my commission as a Second Lieutenant. In fact, during my Army career, I held every rank from private up to General! I had a heart attack just as I was about to become a Brigadier and retired because of disability.

"Some time before Pearl Harbor I became an Aide to Colonel Sibert and when Pearl Harbor came along, he was made a General. He was chosen by Stilwell to go with him as Infantry Advisor on his staff and Sibert wanted me to go with him. So I went along on one of the planes to India and eventually to Burma.

"I was made the Commandant of the Headquarters at Maymyo and I was the Adjutant. When Dr. Seagrave offered himself and his Surgical Unit to Stilwell, it was I who swore him in to the U.S. Army Medical Corps. I'll never forget his excitement. 'ME? A *Major* in the U.S. *Army*!'

"We set up our headquarters in a building right next to where the Chinese HQ was set up under General Tu. If you ever saw General Tu! He looked like something out of Hollywood, one of

those villains with a scar across his face, a short stocky man and just as mean looking as you would ever possibly see. That was General Tu, commander of the 5th Chinese Army.

"We had no cook or any cooking equipment, so I got hold of an Indian in the town who seemed to be a sort of headman, and through him I got a cook and some mess servants. That Indian was a lifesaver. He was procuring meat and also charcoal for the British. So I registered with the British for rations for us. After all, we were there to help them, they could at least feed us. So they gave us rations and the Indian kept us supplied with fresh meat which they slaughtered every day just as they did for the British military post which was occupied by the First Burma Division."

I interrupted here when that comment suggested something to me. I wondered if Professor John Moonie, whom I had met in Maymyo, might have been the Indian who was so helpful to Novack. Novack did not remember his name but he said it well might have been Moonie because he was an educated man and was so knowledgeable. Novack then asked me to tell him more about Moonie, and he listened with great interest.

"Well," he resumed, "that was our beginning, and we were certainly grateful to him. I'll never forget, that place was just loaded with mosquitoes. We had to sleep with mosquito bars on our beds and the mosquitoes would even get inside the net!

"There were four of us in that echelon. General Sibert was liaison with General Tu, and Colonel Wyman was also an advisor on Infantry tactics. Then there was Haymaker who had also been brought out by General Sibert, and there was me.

"There was a squabble one day between the British and the Chinese and they wouldn't have anything to do with each other. So I was made liaison between British supply and Chinese supply. The British, who were also feeding the Chinese, would bring the rations to a certain point where I would be, they would leave, and the Chinese would come and pick up their rations. There the food would be, the British would walk away and the Chinese would then come. Just my being there made everybody save face.

"It was a weird time for us. We'd go down to the front sometimes, driving at night with the lights doused, going through the towns that were like ghost towns. The people were evacuating in their bullock carts and we could see the Chinese guards who had been left behind watching us silently, but they would let us go through. The troops had left and these guys would have left too if they could have.

"When we came close to the front lines the forests were burning. They had been set on fire by the Buddhist monks who had become spies for the Japanese. These priests, and a lot of the native population too, wanted the Japanese to come in. They were the same religion, they were Buddhists too. They were all over the countryside spying for the Japanese, and the Chinese would kill them whenever they could. They were different from the other tribes in Burma--the Shans and the Karens and the Kachins--they were the ones who were loyal to the British, and most of the ones

who walked out with us were from those tribes.

"There was a lot going on all the time. Stilwell was having conferences with the British--General Alexander and General Slim and also with the Chinese generals, Tu and Lo. It was Lo who wrecked the train on the line to Myitkyina which blocked the line hopelessly, and why we had to head for India when we got to Indaw.

"Once I had to go down to Meiktila for supplies. The Japs bombed the British supply depot and set the whole place on fire about fifty feet away from the hole I was in. Another time they bombed a market place and killed a lot of people. The ones who fled left all their dogs behind, and those dogs were roaming about wild and they were *fierce*. Once in Pyawbwe the wounded were being carried through on a train and the Japs were strafing the train and circling around our headquarters shack. We were all shooting at them with machine guns and rifles, but of course we didn't get any. That was the time the General stuck his head out of a window and told us not to let them knock him off the pot! He got a big kick out of our ineffectual shooting. The Old Man had a wonderful sense of humor.

"We knew by the end of April that the Japanese had far superior forces to those of the British and Chinese, and Stilwell, of course, didn't have any of his own troops there. We were just a small Headquarters group. All around us we could see that the British had lost confidence. They weren't getting any support from India. Wavell didn't give them any support at all, and they didn't have any airforce. We got the feeling that they'd given up on Burma and they didn't want to waste any more time on it. They'd been outmanoeuvred, outfought, and outspirited, and *they* decided to retreat, *we* didn't. It was just sensible for us to get out when they did.

"That's what it was like before we pulled out. I must say, I always had complete confidence in Stilwell, there was something about the man that made you feel that way. When he told us in the clearing that he felt we were going to make it, then I felt that I was going to make it too.

"It didn't bother me when we learned that we were going to have to walk. After all, I'd been in the Army over twenty years and I was an Infantry soldier and I had walked before. But I was worried about carrying all that money. It was in a steel box, so I put it into my knapsack, but even so it weighed at least twenty-five pounds.

"So I threw away everything else except my tommy gun and a change of socks. I cut off my pants and made shorts of them. Those and an Army shirt and my Army shoes were all I wore."

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Once again it was time for me to take my leave. The Novacks drove me back to my motel and said they would take me to the airport in the morning. I protested that that was too long a drive for them to have to do it again so soon, and I finally persuaded them that it would be all right for me to take the airport bus from the motel.

So that was what I did the next morning. It was another interminable ride with many stops to

pick up passengers, and through urban sprawl I had been spared from seeing the night before when it was dark

When I got to the terminal I discovered that my flight on Pan Am that was going to the Akron-Canton airport was on its way to London. I had my passport with me and I was sorely tempted to stay on the plane and go back to England to see all my Walkout friends once again. I resisted the impulse and instead saw Lake Erie frozen solid beneath me on the brief trip to Akron. So brief in fact, that no meal was served. By the time we got to Akron-Canton the weather was becoming terrible. I had caught up with the sleet and snow. We arrived a little bit ahead of schedule, but Paul Gish and his wife were there to meet me. Most of the passengers on the plane were going on to London, so there were not many people waiting at the gate and it was not hard to identify one another. Paul's wife Ginny said she was disappointed that no other planes had come in or taken off while they waited for me. There was much more going on at the Cleveland airport, she said. That's where she and Paul liked to go on Sundays, drive over to the airport and watch the big planes taking off and landing. For her the novelty of the Jumbo Jets had not yet worn off.

It turned out that it was thirty miles to their house in Wadsworth, which was much closer to Cleveland, and I was sorry my travel agent had booked me to Canton. On top of that, it was snowing and the road was getting slick, but fortunately Paul was a good driver.

When we finally arrived at their house, we were greeted by Paul's lively ninety-two year old grandmother, and their grown son and daughter who all lived with Paul and Ginny. Paul was a clerk in the Wadsworth post office, and had taken the afternoon off to see me. He had a lot of pictures and souvenirs of his years of service which I had not seen before, and he gave me some of them. I in turn showed them all of mine and told them about my travels. Paul of course wanted to know all about Short and Chambers and Chesley, the other enlisted men on the Walkout, and about Dara Singh with whom he still exchanged Christmas cards. We had a wonderful time.

He told me something about Ray Chesley that Chesley had not mentioned when I interviewed him. During the Spanish Civil war in 1937 Chesley had volunteered for the Lincoln Brigade and had fought on the side of the Loyalists until they were defeated by the Franco forces. Because of the McCarthy hearings and the scare in this country about Communists during the 1950's, even in 1972 Chesley apparently did not want to talk about it to me.

Happily for me, because I had had no lunch, Paul suggested that we go to a restaurant for dinner about five-thirty. An older brother of Paul's took his grandmother home with him, the son and daughter had other engagements. I took Paul and his wife out for dinner, and I insisted on paying. When I asked if they would like a drink first, Paul gladly accepted, saying that this was such a joyous occasion he would have an Old Fashioned. Mrs. Gish had a soft drink.

After dinner we went back to their house for the interview. I called the motel where Paul had made a reservation for me and they confirmed it. The son and daughter reappeared, saying they wanted to listen to their Dad. "He's the greatest!" the daughter said. "That's why I've never gotten

married. I could never find another man like him. He hardly ever talks about himself and I want to listen."

The grandmother did not reappear while I was there. I got the feeling that this family of four was very closely knit, and that they welcomed a time together when one of Paul's brothers took the grandmother for an evening. So we relaxed and Paul began to talk about himself and Burma.

Staff Sergeant Paul Gish, age 25
U.S.Army Draftee

Gish was one outstanding enlisted man. Stilwell selected him later to be in his personal body-guard during the second campaign.

"I grew up in Wadsworth during the depression," Paul began. "We were a big family and there wasn't enough money for me to go to college, so after school I went to work. I saved up enough money to buy a motorcycle and I toured all over the country.

"Then I got drafted and ended up in the Signal Corps. When Pearl Harbor came along, I was sent out to Angel Island, California where I met Short. We got shipped out on the Mariposa and we sure were seasick for the first few days.

"We went to Australia and then up to Karachi. Then we were flown in to Burma to join General Stilwell there at the Headquarters in Maymyo. Chesley and Chambers and Janes were already there."

I interrupted Gish here for a minute. This was the first time I had heard anything about Sergeant Jaynes, as he was listed on the roster, and I wanted to know what, if anything, Gish knew about him. All he knew, Gish said, was that his name was Charles M. Janes--not Jaynes--and that he became a Second Lieutenant after the Walkout and was attached to Colonel William Bergin, but he did not know what became of him after that.⁵¹

"I didn't know any of them," Paul went on after this interruption, "and I'd never heard of Stilwell before that, but after my first encounter with him, well. . . I thought, 'Here's a guy who knows what he's doin.' I felt that way about Major Frank Merrill too. I was only in Burma about a week when the retreat began and I went north with Merrill.

"When the plane came in to Shwebo to take the General out, Merrill and I had gone out in a jeep to see how things were up ahead. Merrill put me more in mind of a school-teacher than a military man. He was a real nice guy, low-voiced, not demanding, wore steel rimmed spectacles. I always thought it was remarkable that he was the fellow that led Merrill's Marauders back into Burma in the second campaign

"We went back to Shwebo and found that the General had *not* flown out and that's when I first met the Seagrave Unit. I had no idea what was going on, I just gathered what I could as we went along.

"But when we got in to Shwebo and saw all those hundreds of thousands of refugees all milling around and trying to get out . . . I don't know how to express it, but here were these people uprooted from their homes and they were just wandering around. Little kids and old people, and no provision had been made for them, and they were going through all this through no fault of their own. Somebody else had come in and torn things up. I guess *pity* would be the word to use about them. And it made you wonder what you were getting into, that you were going to be a part of all that.

"When we came to the clearing and had to abandon the trucks, we threw away all our superfluous gear. All we took was what we could carry on our back. I didn't have too much. I threw away my gas-mask and used the bag to carry my things in. I had some socks and shaving gear and a little Gideon Bible. I still had that right in my pocket when we got out. I had a gun and a pistol and a canteen and I kept my jacket. I know I kept that because I gave it to Chesley later when he got malaria. I had a pith helmet that had been issued to me in India. I cut off the bottom of my pants and made shorts out of them.

"I was all set, and like I said, I did have some fear about it, but still there was that feeling of adventure. Was I going to get out or not?"

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Paul took me to the motel after the interview. Because he had to work the next morning, he agreed that I should take the bus from the motel. Frankly, I was not at all sure I would get out the next day. The weather was getting worse and when I checked in, I found that because flights were being delayed, the motel was so full they had put me in an enormous display room. It was perfectly comfortable but I felt lonesome in a bed tucked away in a corner, and surrounded by empty display tables.

The weather was still terrible the next morning but a call to the airline said my flight would leave as scheduled. The drive to the airport over icy roads was not very pleasant, but to my surprise the plane did leave on time. The further east we flew, the better the weather became. By dinner time that evening I was back in my own familiar country.

Within a little over two weeks, fifteen hours of flying time, and two days of leisurely driving, I had criss-crossed the country. I had gone from Philadelphia to San Francisco to Arizona to Oklahoma to Texas to Michigan to Ohio, to points in between, and back to Philadelphia, having covered something over seven thousand miles. I had talked to Americans of many different backgrounds, I had consumed all kinds of food and drink and I had learned in some instances how foreign to me my own country could be.

As soon as I got back from my tour around America I began following up on what Paul Gish had told me about Janes. For reasons that I cannot now remember, I failed to try to get in touch with Colonel Bergin, mentioned several times by Tuchman in her book. Instead I wrote to the Office

of the Adjutant General again in Washington, stating that Janes had been a Lieutenant at some time during the war. This time I was referred to the National Personnel Records Center of the General Services Administration in St. Louis, Missouri. In my letter to that department I asked for any information they could give me about Janes, including his address. They replied that a Defense Department policy of protection of personal privacy restricted the release of addresses of former service men and women. They added that if I felt that my request justified special consideration, I could appeal this denial. To do so I should remit \$2.00 with a letter to the Assistant Director for military records at the same address explaining in full why I thought special consideration should be given. I found it interesting that previously the General's Locator had not had such consideration for personal privacy when they gave me the addresses for the Generals about whom I had asked, but perhaps because of people like me, the policy had changed.

In any event, I did just what I was told to do. I included the two dollars and enclosed a letter to Janes saying that I would like to get in touch with him because he had been on the Walkout. Two months later I received a letter from St. Louis saying that my letter to Janes had been forwarded to the latest address of record. Two months after that--by then it was June--I received an envelope from the Special Services Administration. In that envelope was another envelope from them on which had been written Janes' name and complete address in Campbell, California. So much for personal privacy! On the envelope in large letters was written, "Does not live at this address." Inside *that* envelope was my letter to Janes.

The telephone operator in Campbell told me that there were seven Janeses in Campbell, none with the right street address. I asked her to give me the numbers anyway, and that evening when the cheap rates went in, I called them all. No one knew anything about Charles M. Janes. Reluctantly I had to admit I had failed.

Though I was to be disappointed in this particular search, at least during the winter I began receiving responses from the nurses I had been unable to see when I was in Burma. Tun Shein and the other nurses I did see had given me their addresses and I had written to them after Christmas. One of the first replies was from Than Shwe, and others followed rapidly after hers.

Than Shwe, age 17

"I was the only one of the nurses who was truly Burmese. The others belonged to various tribes such as Karens, Kachins, Shans, and so on from the upland mountainous states. Though I was born in Lashio, I had my schooldays in Mandalay at the American Baptist Mission school there. After completion of eighth grade, I went up to Maymyo for one year especially to learn typing and piano lessons. After that I went in to nursing at Harper Memorial Hospital in Nambhkam under the reputed "Burma Surgeon," Dr. Gordon Seagrave. It was run by the U.S. Baptist Mission and from the very beginning they trained me to be humble and patient.

"In those days thoughts were not very advanced and most people regarded nursing as a dirty job. But as nurses were very rare, I was determined to become a nurse to serve humanity. And the other main reason was to serve my country.

"As a trainee I had to start at the dirtiest jobs. I never even had the right of touching a thermometer in my first year. In my second year I started doing nursing, and in my third year the war broke out in Burma.

"Less than a year before the war, I had an appendicostomy performed by Dr. Seagrave. I could not pass motion in the natural way and had to do so using plastic bags which were attached to my stomach.

"Nonetheless, when Dr. Seagrave asked who wanted to join him in the Surgical Unit, I was the first to put up my hand for voluntary service. Dr. Seagrave, who knew very well about my health situation, did not the least want me to join the group. Yet I did join in spite of my operation, and due to my stubbornness, he used to shout at me, 'You goddam woman!'

"At the front we had to spend night after night attending to the wounded soldiers. Those sweet FAU boys regarded us as their mothers. You can understand how I might feel to be regarded as a mother at seventeen!

"When we got orders to retreat to India on foot, I knew very well that it was not going to be a pleasurable trip with my appendicostomy, and moreover I was the only vegetarian who was so choosy about the diet. But I had the thought deeply rooted in my heart that if I die, I die for my country.

"To frankly tell you how I felt when we knew we would have to walk, I was thrilled! As I was young, I wanted to gain experiences to help me in the later part of my life and mainly because of my young age I knew I would be coming across boys . . . I mean bags full of adventures. In brief, I should say that I was very pleased! "

Esther Po, age 20

"I grew up in Bhamo and went to Dr. Seagrave's hospital for training because I was interested in nursing. When the war broke out, he collected the volunteers, about eighteen of us. Some of the other nurses went to India by plane one month ahead of us. When we have to walk out with General Stilwell, I was excited and thrilled to go right away."

Labanglu, age 16½

"I grew up in Myitkyina and from my school days I liked nursing, so I joined it due to my liking. That we had to walk out, I was too young to feel anything except enjoying the new places and adventures with all the friends."

Malang Kaw, age 20

"I grew up in a village only ten miles from the famous Seagrave Hospital in Namhkam and so I was drawn into nursing by the happy and congenial atmosphere between Dr. Seagrave and his nurses in the hospital and because nursing seemed to be such fun.

"When we were told that we should have to walk to India, it presented no problem for me because I was a mountain girl and walking was the natural mode of transportation in our part of the country."

Ohn Hkin, age 19

"I went into nursing at Namhkam hospital because of my inborn interest in nursing.

"When we have to walk, I felt as a nurse already dedicated to serve my Lord in this profession, no point in staying back when the future of Burma was so uncertain. With fellow Christians in the profession and with leaders we knew and trusted, I dared to walk to India. I loved and respected our leaders like Dr. Seagrave, Uncle Grindlay, and General Stilwell. I was full of gratefulness for our leaders."

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Family matters filled the next several months and I had little time to devote to my research. I typed up the transcripts of the latest interviews sandwiched in between trips to Elmira and to Maine. When the Watergate hearings began, I watched them on television while I ironed my husband's shirts. Like many other Americans, I got very little else done during those long, hot summer days of 1973.

Chapter Eight

The Last Half of 1973: Taiwan and the Far East

At the end of July, 1973 my husband suggested that I join him on a quick trip to the Philippines in August. Here was an opportunity for me to go to Taiwan and find out more about the Chinese officers and troopers who had been General Stilwell's honor guard on the Walkout. So I said that I would indeed like to go with him.

An article in the New York Times--which I have now misplaced--said that a program initiated in 1955 and largely funded by United States aid money, had been formed in Taiwan. It was called Ret-Ser which stood for "Retired Servicemen." Its purpose was to help the men demobilized from the Chinese Nationalist forces who had been swept out of mainland China by the communists in 1949 and 1950, and who were now being retired by the tens of thousands. The veterans, often without families and unable to find jobs, had become a social problem in Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek assigned his son--Chiang Ching-kuo--to see that the men were cared for.

When I had called at the Chinese Embassy in Manila the year before for a visa for Taiwan, I had been given the name of the Liaison Bureau of the Ministry of Defense in Taipei to contact whenever I went to Taiwan. They might be able to help me, I had been told. I thought that there might be some record of at least the two Chinese officers who had been on the Walkout if they had gone to work for Ret-Ser. One was a Lieutenant Sze, the other was a Captain whose name I did not know.

I wrote to the Liaison Bureau asking how to get in touch with someone at Ret-Ser. Not very long after that, I received a letter from Robert H. C. Hsieh, Chief of Public Relations for Ret-Ser Engineering Agency. He informed me that Colonel Yen, President of the Agency, was in Singapore. Hsieh had talked to him on the telephone that very morning, he said, and he reported that Colonel Yen would be back in Taiwan on August 13th and was very much pleased to have heard from me, and would look forward to meeting me in Taipei.

This was all very encouraging, so I set forth on what--for me--turned out to be a wild goose chase of the first order. Our reservations were for my husband and me to go as far as Tokyo together, he would go on to Manila and I would go to Taiwan for several days.

When we arrived at Haneda--the Tokyo International Airport at that time--it was absolute chaos. Three Jumbo Jets had arrived at the same time and we waited interminably for our bags. There was no opportunity to check into our on-going flights for the next day, and when we got our bags we went right to our hotel. The drive from Haneda to downtown Tokyo, unlike the one at

Singapore, was ghastly. It was evening rush hour through a hideously ugly industrial area from which the employees were streaming out in their small Japanese cars, cutting in and out and honking their horns, though that was against the law.

A telephone call to Pan Am confirmed my husband's flight to Manila the next day but due to "over-booking" there was nothing for me on Japanese Airlines to Taipei, even though my reservation had been confirmed in Philadelphia. Best thing to do, I was told, was to come to the airport in the morning and they would see what they could do.

Back we went to the airport in the morning. Again it was a madhouse, and it was terribly hot. My husband went right to Pan Am to check in, but the crowd was so great I could not even get to the Japanese Airlines counter. My husband finally found me in the crush and bid me goodbye, as his flight for Manila was about to leave. More than an hour later I reached the JAL counter, but there was absolutely nothing available for Taiwan the rest of that day. "Come back again tomorrow," I was told, politely but firmly. I made my way around to other airlines but the story was the same. By now I was tired of carrying my suitcase around the terminal and I was cross and hungry. During the course of this long and frustrating morning I had learned that there was an airport motel not very far away. I did not have to go back into Tokyo. I was able to get a taxi driver who understood the words "Airport Motel" and he took me there. It was scrupulously clean, had a good coffee shop--very important to world travellers--and above all it was an oasis of quiet after the airport.

After I had my lunch and a good nap, I decided I would have a massage to pass the time. A dainty young Japanese woman wearing a surgeon's coat, with her arms full of towels and jars and dusting powder, arrived in my room. After we had bowed back and forth to each other several times, she told me her name was Yo Nei Ko. She indicated that I should remove my dressing-gown and lie face down on the bed. She then kicked off her clogs, hopped onto the bed and placed herself astride my upper thighs. She then set about systematically, or so it seemed to me, to break every bone in my body. She was extraordinarily strong. When I protested, she said, "Oh, you don't like?" I vehemently said that I certainly did *not* like, and indicated as best I could that some oil and a little gentle rubbing would do just fine. She reluctantly gave in, but even then I really did not enjoy it very much. Finally I said she could go. She began putting her things together, slipped into her clogs, and I paid her. Then in a sing-song voice with an upward lilt, she asked, "You like a man now? Or maybe you like a woman?" It took me a second to catch on, but when I did, the implication of what she had said struck me. What a commentary on the international travel scene! I was totally taken aback but managed to say "No, thank you." After a few more bows, she left.

Later in the afternoon, I walked over to the terminal on the chance that something might have turned up for the next day. The crowd had thinned out somewhat but the story was the same. I could not be promised anything for the next day.

After a pleasant dinner in the Skylight Dining Room at the Motel, I went to bed. I had a hard

time getting to sleep. My back ached.

The next morning I went back to the airport and made my way to the JAL counter where I stood in line for an hour with a pleasant gentleman named Al Smith. When we reached the ticket agent, I showed him my ticket and Mr. Smith showed his. The agent was gone for quite a long time but when he returned, he was smiling. "I can not make any promises, but I think you will fly," he said.

Indeed, after another long wait we did fly, Mr. Smith and I to be seated together in First Class even though we had only paid for Economy Class tickets, But not before the agent told us that our flight was a particularly high-risk hijacking flight. The contents of my suitcase, my carry-on bag, and my handbag were spread out on a long table, carefully examined and neatly replaced. Then I was taken to a little cubicle behind a curtain where I was subjected to a not too gentle body search by a Japanese woman security officer. I think she must have been related to Yo Nei Ko, the masseuse. Mr. Smith had gone through the same procedure. He told me he had been to Taiwan before but had never gone through such a hassle as this.

We felt we had earned the good First Class Japanese lunch we were served, and we arrived in Taipei without being hijacked. Al Smith was staying at a different hotel from mine. When the taxi from the airport dropped me off first, Al invited me to have dinner with him at a Steak House where he said they had wonderful food, and I accepted.

As soon as I got settled in my room, I called the Ret-Ser Agency. Mr. Hsieh answered my call and said he would be right over to see me. Colonel Yen had not returned from Singapore, he said. He had gone to Saigon instead to help with the rehabilitation of that city after the Americans had pulled out. Hsieh arrived shortly carrying an enormous parcel. We sat down in the lobby and he told me that it was a gift from Ret-Ser because of my interest in retired Chinese servicemen and that I must open it immediately. I did. It was a huge marble vase, so heavy I could hardly lift it. It was the product of a modern marble plant set up in eastern Taiwan to put veterans to work recreating the ancient Chinese art of marble crafting. It was quite handsome but I was floored. How on earth could I carry it on around the world with me? I made suitable noises of appreciation. I knew I could not refuse it, I would have to work out some way to send it home.

Then Mr. Hsieh dealt me a stunning blow. He said Colonel Yen had been in the *second* Burma campaign, he knew nothing about the Walkout nor about any of the troopers who might have been with General Stilwell. He could not help me. I guessed that Hsieh had told Colonel Yen in more detail why I had come to Taiwan and Colonel Yen had told him to get rid of me. I should have known after I had found out what happened to General Tseng that anyone connected with Stilwell was *persona non grata* with the Nationalist regime. Somehow it had not occurred to me that after all the years that had passed since World War II, Chiang could still be so bitter about Stilwell that he could clamp down on Ret-Ser and keep me from trying to trace anyone from the Walkout. I

was wrong, and it was obvious there was no point in trying to find out anything more. I knew when I was licked. I told Hsieh I would leave the next day. Obviously relieved but full of expressions of dismay mingled with exhortations to me to stay and take a tour of their beautiful island, he said he would make all the arrangements. I said "no thank you" as politely as I could. Whereupon he said he would drive me right then to the JAL Office so that I could change my reservation back to Tokyo. I said that I would not go back to Tokyo, I would change my ticket to Philippine Airlines and fly directly to Manila.

So he drove me to the PAL office and came in with me. He obviously wanted to be sure that I was not trying to deceive him. When I had successfully made my reservation to Manila for the next day, he offered to take me back to the hotel. By then I was good and tired of Mr. Hsieh and I said I would walk back and look at the shops.

It was not a very interesting city; not as drab as Rangoon, but dusty and hot. It still showed signs of the years when Taiwan was Formosa and belonged to Japan. I bought a nice sweater in a department store called Shin-Shit which cheered me up, and went back to the hotel. There I enlisted the room clerk to help me get rid of the vase. He called a shipping company and for forty U.S. dollars I had it sent home. Four months later it arrived in Jenkintown and served as an umbrella stand for years.

I had an excellent dinner of the famous Kobe steak with Al Smith and told him why I was leaving. He was properly sympathetic but not surprised. He said the Nationalist Chinese were hard to do business with and that Chiang still kept an eye on everything that was going on.

I learned later that General Sun Li-Jen--the Chinese General so much admired by Fabian Chow as well as by General Stilwell--was under house arrest at his home somewhere in Taipei. Even Barbara Tuchman had not been allowed to see him when she went to Taiwan.

The next day I said farewell to Taiwan, feeling somewhat foolish, but at least I had a marble umbrella stand I would never otherwise have had! I joined my husband in Manila, we spent two weeks at Fabrica and then headed home.

We flew to Singapore and from there to Teheran for refuelling this time. From there we flew to Athens to visit American friends, Frank and Mary Walton. Frank was the Curator of the Gennadius Library, a branch of the American School of Classical Studies. He had been a Conscientious Objector during the war and had volunteered for dietary experiments being conducted by physicians at a camp at Big Flats, New York. He was extremely interested to learn about the role of the FAU in Burma.⁵²

We went out for dinner with the Waltons that evening to the best Greek restaurant in town, they said. We had some unidentifiable kind of meat wrapped in grape leaves, washed down with an awful drink called Retsina, and with Melina Mercuri music playing in the background. I'm sorry to say I did not think any of it was very good. As we drove around Athens after dinner, our friends apologized for the dimly lighted streets. There was a power shortage, they said, and we would not be

able to see the monuments illuminated as they usually were. Instead, it happened to be the night of the full moon, and for me this was a real treat. I got to see the Parthenon by moonlight in all its simple beauty just as the ancient Greeks had seen it.

As usual, we went to Copenhagen for a few days. When we left there in the morning, the plane stopped in London to pick up passengers, we flew to Boston, changed from a three hundred and fifty passenger 747 to a nine passenger Cessna on Bar Harbor Airlines, flew to Trenton, Maine and that night were in our own beds in Hancock Point. In three weeks I had flown around the world one more time.

After a vacation in Maine, it was back to Jenkintown. I got down to work again on my project. I began putting together some of the material I had gathered from unpublished sources. These were letters and diaries kept by men who had been on the Walkout but who had died before I began my search. With the permission of their widows who kindly provided me with the material, I have included excerpts from them.

One of these men was Colonel Robert P. Williams, General Stilwell's Medical Officer. He was fifty years old at the time of the Walkout. He was a career officer in the Medical Corps of the U.S. Army and was assigned to General Stilwell's staff. He accompanied General Stilwell on the mission to China and then to Burma. He was the "ginger-haired little medical officer" Davidson-Houston ran into at Indaw who invited Davidson-Houston and Dykes to join the Stilwell party.

Excerpts from his diary begin on May 1, 1942, the day the plane came in to Shwebo to fly General Stilwell to safety in India. Details in the letters do not always tally with those in other accounts, but the overall substance is the same, and they often provide fresh information that was written at the time rather than remembered many years later.

Colonel Williams wrote as follows::

"The plane came in on May Day. Jack Belden and I watched it take off and we were a little solemn. There went our last contact with the world. Incidentally, Jack sent out the whole story of what we have been doing to LIFE. If it gets by the censor, his article will supply all the details missing from my letters.⁵³

"A British Brigadier named Martin came up to us and asked if he could take a bath at our headquarters bungalow. He needed one, all right. In return I asked for supper for Jack and me. After supper Jack and I burned the headquarters bungalow with all the papers and maps and turned in in the other bungalow.

"My orders were to join General Stilwell in the morning, but about midnight we got some fresh news and I decided to go with Major Seagrave and Captain Grindlay, both Medical Reserve. We were in two jeeps and a Chevrolet sedan. All that night we drove along the top of a dike choked with traffic. General Stilwell had gone as far as the jeeps could go, according to all reports. We caught up with him just before dawn and the General decided to push on. We had a lot of transportation, which included the heavy ambulance trucks from Seagrave's hospital. The road was a

bullock trail, narrow, with deep ruts.

"Whenever we got hung up, the horn would bring help and off we'd go. We drove all that day, making no halts--just the stops that were forced on us. That was the day three of us made it through on the coffee candy Miss Saylor had given me before I left home.

"I started out in a Chevrolet sedan, got a blow-out and found the spare was soft. I abandoned that car and got into a winch truck. Some hours later it hit a stump and dropped its drive shaft, so I got into another Chevy sedan with Captain Eldridge. That was the worst car for that part of the trip, it was so low-slung. When we weren't on a trail in the woods we were crossing dry rice paddies with foot and a half high hard retaining walls every fifty yards. After a while the Stude refused to steer, so we transferred to Colonel St. John's Chevy. Looking back, I see that I drove three cars to their deaths. Is that the modern version of having three horses shot out from under you? Several times we saw small formations of Japanese planes. Once they bombed a village just ahead of us but apparently they didn't see us.

"The next day was more of the same except that we pulled out of the dusty, parched country into teak forests, and finally saw distant blue mountains--that always helps me. Late that afternoon we reached the place where we were to take a train up to Myitkyina. This seemed like an appropriate time to break out the Canadian Club, and we took our pictures *à la* advertisements. The whiskey was grand but the celebration was premature.

Next morning Captain Jones reported that the rail line was one long series of train wrecks. All the crews had left, so a Chinese general took over, ran the locomotive into another train, and both trains were abandoned, completely blocking the line.

"General Stilwell decided to go on in the cars--we'd already done eighty miles more than anyone thought we could do. We started in the afternoon and drove until late that night through teak forests. We forded several streams and crossed others on flimsy bamboo bridges. We were in elephant country and saw one herd of eighty of them. We rested in the middle of the night at a Forest Ranger's bungalow and had one of the best meals I've ever eaten--tea and five pounds of rice mixed with one tin of sardines.

"The next day was more of the same. Once we stopped for several hours to repair a floating bridge. Major Seagrave's Burmese nurses made chapatis--they're like rather heavy hotcakes, only good. That afternoon we reached a big town and one of the main roads. It was choked with Chinese troops and refugees. That night we camped right among them and I knew it would be a good test of our cholera vaccine.

"To get the jump on the crowd, our party got up at two-thirty a.m. and drove until mid-morning when we came to the end of any real trail. There was a clearing where there was a flimsy bamboo bridge that only a jeep could get across. General Stilwell lined us all up and said we'd have to walk and that he'd undertake to get us through to India.

"Our party had been increasing almost daily until we were now about ten or fifteen in our own group, about the same in Seagrave's hospital group, a British party led by Colonel Davidson-Houston of their School of Bush Warfare, (jungle fighting to us) a bearded giant of a Forestry Service officer, an ex-commander of a Commando Unit, a Mr. Breedom Case, formerly President of an Agricultural College in Pinyinmina and spoke all the native dialects, six members of the Friends Ambulance, the Chinese guard of a dozen men, our Indian mess-boys, and a sprinkling of civilians.

"After Stilwell spoke to us, we abandoned all the motors and trucks except the jeeps. I wanted to test the possibility of hiking during the noon hours, so Paul Jones and I did the eight and a half miles to the end of the jeep trail on foot. We couldn't have done another ten paces, due to the heat and humidity.

"Before we left, I packed a small box of medicines and dressings, and turned it over to Eldridge to take in one of the jeeps to the end of the trail. He did, but the next morning it was gone! It must have been appropriated by the natives who were wandering around everywhere at the campsite that night. That was a terrible loss, as from then on we had to get along with what odd bottles Captain Grindlay, Sergeant Chesley, and I had in our musette bags as reserves.

"Our campsite was a Forestry Service bungalow near a very primitive native village. Several of us went to the village and had a boy climb a tree and knock down some coconuts. We drank the milk and ate the meat. It was great--for several days we had been constantly hungry and thirsty.

"The Forestry Service officer had turned up a Chinese pack train--the wildest looking ruffians you ever saw--with tiny mules, and about sixty native bearers to carry our mess and bedding-rolls. This was a real break."

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When I saw Alan Lathrop in Minneapolis in January 1972, he told me that he had an address in Washington, D.C. for Mrs. Elizabeth Geren, widow of Paul Geren. Geren was listed in the Stilwell roster as a member of the Seagrave Mobile Surgical Unit. He had been killed in an automobile accident in 1969 while he was President of Stetson University in Florida, Alan told me, but I was hoping that I could see Mrs. Geren when I went to interview General Dorn and General Holcombe in Washington. She might be able to tell me something about her husband's impressions of the Walkout.

I telephoned her when I got home but she was going to be out of town when I was planning to be in Washington. However, she sent me copies of letters he had written to her and their friends in May 1942 and gave me permission to use extracts from those letters in whatever I might write. She also gave me a copy of his "Biographical Information" from his records when he was President at Stetson University.

He was born in 1913 in Arkansas, earned his B.A. at Baylor University, an M.A. in Economics and Business Administration at Louisiana State University, an M.A. from Harvard in Economics,

and a PhD from Harvard, also in Economics. He was a Member of the American Baptist Missionary Society and at the time of Pearl Harbor, he was a professor of Economics in Judson College of the University of Rangoon.

His letter of May 27, 1942 begins with the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor when Judson College closed its doors.

"The month of December I spent in Rangoon, digging air raid ditches, learning First Aid, and getting a fearful introduction to bombs in the devastating raids on Christmas Day and the two days before. At the end of December, Dr. Gordon S. Seagrave, American Baptist medical missionary, appeared in Rangoon with the proposal to mobilize a unit from his hospital in Namhkam for service at the point of greatest need in Burma.

"Two days later I was driving a big 3-Ton Lend-Lease truck up the Burma Road, having joined the Mobile Hospital Unit as ambulance driver and, as it turned out, operating room orderly, liaison officer, secretary, and general handy man. January we spent doing ambulance service on the Burma Road. In February we joined the British, doing surgical service for the Chinese Expeditionary Army as it arrived, the only surgery with western standards available for the 40,000 Chinese soldiers in Burma. We were made honorary officers in the British Army, I a Captain.

"In these days we learned something of the Chinese soldier. They are a good and a bad people, as good and as bad as we. One reason they have been able to resist the Japanese so long, I think, is their ability to have a good time as they go along, day by day. Every morning I saw them marching double quick and singing at the top of their voices as dawn began to light the hills. At the close of a day's march I have seen a few soldiers enter a villager's bamboo hut, harangue endlessly with the occupant and emerge triumphantly carrying a squawking chicken. They would then invite me to a feast which began with the greatest possible amount of noise, the execution of the fowl, and ended with a stew into which all of the chicken except the feathers had entered.

"On occasion they would come and make speeches of appreciation and extravagant praise to the nurses and me. I would reply with something suitable, even if not understood, and we would close by singing to each other--they Chinese war songs, the nurses and I with hymns.

"Toward the end of March the picture darkened. The Japanese having taken Rangoon, the British took a line on the Prome front, and the Chinese Fifth Army took a line along the Toungoo front. The Seagrave Unit were sent to the Toungoo front where we were later joined by an American Army doctor and eight of the noblest fellows I've ever met, members of the Friends Ambulance Unit, Britishers and Pacifists doing this as their war service. Let no one malign the real Pacifist! I cannot praise the heroism and genuine religion of these eight men in high enough terms.

"On our way to the Toungoo front, we stopped for further orders at Pyawbwe and found that the front had already moved north and we were to set up at Pynmana, forty miles north of the front. The members of the Friends Ambulance Unit and I would go to the front, fill our trucks with

the wounded, bring them to Dr. Seagrave and the nurses for surgery, then later evacuate them to a base hospital further back.

"Within three hours after we had set up somewhat outside the town of Pynmana, the casualties began to roll in, trucks filled with bleeding, groaning men, their uniforms sodden with blood and stench. The wounded waiting for surgery filled the yard and it was hard to get to and fro among them. To me, all terror is made more terrible by night: sirens, bombs, shell fire, the agony of wounded men, all these can be endured by day. In the night, I felt that a legion of spirits of the dark were at work. Through all the night and the next day this continued. I never cease to marvel at the stamina of the doctors and the nurses. The nurses were magnificent, working beyond exhaustion, yet constantly breaking into the strains of a hymn to show how far they were from defeat. We had to evacuate Pynmana as the bombing continued day after day, and all the days after that were the same, with an occasional respite for sleep.

"Whenever we had to evacuate and move back from the front, every venture onto the road with our trucks was beset with the peril of strafing from the air by day, by attack at night by Burmese who had joined the Japanese. Their numbers were few, but vicious in a fashion that offends even the bare remnants of principle left among two groups at war. They set on defenseless refugees, on Karen minorities, on Europeans, on Chinese, and finally on fellow Burmans.

"I have said that the Chinese are hospitable and genial. They are also brave and capable of unimaginable suffering, but they are singularly callous, I thought, where the suffering of a fellow is concerned. I have seen the well stand by smoking while the wounded cried for water; the lame denied stretchers by Chinese bearers if they could move their bodies by any other means, however excruciatingly painful. My comrades explained this on several grounds. As long as Europeans are about, the Oriental leaves everything in their hands. Another: if a Chinese does anything for a sick man, he thereby accepts responsibility until the sick man is restored.

"We lived in constant uneasiness these days because the Chinese treated us with the same lack of concern that they treated one another and themselves. One of our ambulance drivers was allowed to go straight through Chinese lines one night and was riddled with cross-fire from the Japanese, Bill Brough of the Friends Ambulance Unit miraculously escaping.

"The Japanese were constantly employing encircling tactics, and we thought our allies were not as careful as they might have been to apprise us of the situation. But again, they often left their own men encircled to get out as best they could. It was simply that we did not want the same disregard which they had for their own lives projected to ours!

"At any rate, we moved eight times in the Japanese advance from Toungoo to Shwebo, sometimes on a ridiculously few minutes notice, and every time with the knowledge that the Japanese were closing in on us.

"When the retreat began, the Japanese had cut off the southern route to India at Kalewa where they had engaged the British. We knew the enemy was at Bhamo and perhaps at Myitkyina,

cutting off the northern route to China. There was nothing left but a middle path to India which was the route chosen by General Stilwell, American Commander of the Chinese forces in Burma, and which the Seagrave Unit followed with him.

"We started out across a semi-desert, pushing our way along dusty bullock cart trails. When a truck broke down, it was abandoned. I regretfully left behind my beloved old Lend-Lease Chevrolet truck--campaigner from Rangoon to Lashio through many a hard place--stranded in a river that proved too deep for fording. One by one the trucks were abandoned, then the jeeps. When the last vehicle was abandoned, every man among us had to tear himself away from all his possessions except the clothing he wore, a blanket for sleep, and whatever small treasures he could carry in his pockets, saving his carrying capacity for food and weapons which assumed a value above all other things in view of the march ahead of us. I discarded what I had not already lost in Rangoon, leaving me with practically nothing of what I brought from America or had bought since. This was not an irreplaceable loss except my Harvard notes and my teaching notes. One feels he is wealthy beyond all estimate if he has his life and health.

"As we left the scene of the great abandonment, a friendly Burman marched his wife out and loaded her with our shaving kits, clothing, bedrolls, etc. and marched her off, not bothering to strain himself with a load. Strangely enough, he didn't bother to take Professor Parsons' 500 page Patterns of Social Action I had been lugging about!"

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When Alan Lathrop had told me that he was not going to write about the Walkout, he let me borrow Captain John Grindlay's diary. I copied it and returned it to Alan.

Grindlay was a graduate of Harvard University and Harvard Medical School, and was a surgeon at the Mayo Clinic. He was a Reserve Officer in the U.S. Army and he volunteered to join the Magruder Mission in Chungking before Pearl Harbor. He was serving there when Stilwell arrived and Stilwell made him a member of his staff. Several people I interviewed told me that Grindlay was a brilliant surgeon, he never claimed any credit for the enormous amount of work he did. He had an inner strength, self-confidence, he inspired respect. He was thirty-five years old, and he was good-looking and well built as well.

He died of a massive heart attack in 1967. I wrote to his widow, Mrs. Betty Grindlay, who was living in Colorado, and asked her permission to use excerpts from her husband's diary in whatever I might write. Like Mrs. Geren and Mrs. Smith, she readily agreed.

Excerpts from the diary begin May 1, 1942 when the Seagrave Unit was told to move north and join General Stilwell in Shwebo.

"Colonel Williams arranged to order movement as soon as possible. I took Eric, Ken Grant, Lieng Sing and Low Wang (2 Chinese boys) to do emergency surgery at Kyingyaung. The rest of the group was to go to Zigon. I went aboard a ship for dinner--there was a beautiful slim blonde

wearing shorts. She was the wife of one of the officers. We returned through Shwebo and I saw a stag elk. We drove along a dyke all night through low flat country and had trouble getting around Chinese six-wheelers parked in the middle of the single road for the night.

"May 2. We arrived at Kabu at sunrise just as the Stilwell party was heading north. The dikes gave out, the trail by the side of the road was terrible. Troops and trucks were stuck and stalled. There was bombing just behind us and it scared the hell out of me. There were deep gullies and ruts on a hot dusty road that looked impassable, with only ruts winding through paddie fields. There was little foliage and I got sunburned. The ruts were too wide for the jeeps and there was trouble climbing the paddy walls. There was no windscreen on the jeep and my hands and arms and knees got sunburned. The dust was choking and we were covered with dust when we arrived at Pintha for the night. Pintha means "beautiful fanny." Little Bawk came across Stilwell while he was stripped and she was scrubbing his back and giggling, but he sent her away. Villagers brought us small delicious bananas. I slept with the girls beside the trucks.

"At Indaw where we thought we'd take a train, General Lo had commandeered the train and cut off the last fifteen steel coaches. They rolled back down grade at 50 mph and crashed into the station killing and maiming a thousand Indian refugees. Then his part crashed into another train, killing many more and all rail traffic ceased from then on.

"May 3. We left Pintha at sunrise on the same road as yesterday. It was a harsh trail through rotten bamboo bridges that Chinese trucks had crashed through. We passed around them through a gully where we pushed and towed the trucks up the banks of wide steep river sandbanks. The truck with the ammo, the Bren gun, and the luggage of many of the officers, including Stilwell's, caught fire and burned up.

"There was a Department of Public Works track to Wuntho running toward the mountains to the west and the Indian border that we had been seeing all day. We were able to go thirty-five miles an hour on what Private Short called Oklahoma Highway 33. We camped at a town by a lovely river. The Americans who were already there had whiskey and we sat around and listened to St. John's stories and I had a long talk with Peter Tennant.

"May 4. I was called to a conference with the General. We were all to leave at 4 p.m. *en masse*--Stilwell, St. John, and I leading three groups. It's hard to remember the rest of the day. The heat, the sun, the lack of food and drinking water, the dust and fatigue, all blended together. The tree I slept under the night before had dripped on me and kept me awake, plus the S & W coffee I had had.

"Off to the north over a broad hot desert-like area over a hell of a rocky trail over a mountain ridge and again over a plain. We took a wrong turn and had to retrace our steps in the dark through a bamboo jungle and a huge teak forest, and we heard a tiger. Ruby was placed at the turnoff place on the trail by Tennant to tell people to go back. I found her there and took her in, a

tiger might have gotten her. She thanked me for my 'wonderful finding' daily for days. At midnight we arrived at a forestry bungalow and had rice and sardines at midnight by moonlight.

"May 5. Fabian Chow talked to the Indian servants as we were walking along. One of the refugees said no Englishman would do that. A Chinese convoy with arrogant soldiers and machine guns went through us. Colonel McCabe tried to stop them at pistol point. We came to where they had broken through an ant-eaten rotten bridge and had gone on. Stilwell paid the Chinks a hundred rupees to fix the bridge and it took three hours."

This must have been the bridge where General Holcombe had to stand by helplessly and watch a job being done which he knew so much better how to do. Neither he nor Grindlay specified who the "Chinks" were.

"When we got to Indaw and the rail line was blocked, we struck west. We picked up a party of British officers, Anglo-Indian engineers, and a Sikh officer under Colonel Davidson-Houston. The road was jammed with Indians and bullock carts, choking with dust. They were wearing all kinds of costumes and carrying loads on their heads. I had had no sleep since Wuntho; the girls had to keep me awake by singing.

"We camped that night along the Maya river in the dark. We had no food and the mosquitoes were terrible. When I heard the rumor that the Seagrave Unit was going to be dropped, I was infuriated. I decided I would rather be court-martialled than do this to them. I got drunk on St. John's last bottle of Scotch. I didn't have much but I was exhausted and I was reeling. A mechanic had to put me to bed drunk.

"May 6. Left camp about 3 a.m. St. John had to wake me with a bucket of water after one hour's sleep. I drove for a ways but had to ask Tun Shein to take over. I got in the back seat and slept on the girls' laps.

"We went through the village of Mansi and then about five miles further through terrible stuff until we had to stop where there was a clearing beside a small river with a bamboo bridge over it. There Stilwell got us together, told us to turn in all our food, abandon our stuff, and that he was taking everyone through. I abandoned my uniform and everything I couldn't carry. One of the group stole my camera. Disaster!

"From the clearing the jeeps took the food and as much of the gear as they could carry to the campsite for that night at Nanantun, about eight and a half miles away. I walked with the girls and carried some of their kits. Absolutely horrible heat, all of us had a hell of a time, there was little shade. The temperature was 130 degrees in the sun. The girls were picked up half a mile from camp. We arrived about 3 p.m., exhausted by the heat and fatigue. The Seagrave Unit was sent over to a Buddhist pagoda on a bank above the Chaunggyi River, the others were at a forestry bungalow.

"At our first chow line that night, Stilwell laid down the rules for the line, for second helpings, washing up, etc. Mr. Castens, the Forestry Service officer and Major Barton, a British agent, both huge men, bulky and bearded, joined us. Later a mule team pack train came through the

village and we engaged them along with some of the village men to carry our gear and act as bearers."

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Shortly after working on these diaries I received a reply from Ken Grant, the seventh member of the FAU who had been on the Walkout. Peter Tennant had told me that Ken worked for UNICEF, and in due time the answer to my letter to Ken in care of that organization arrived, postmarked Guatemala City.

It was simply a brief resumé of Ken's career which, he said, had an international flavor in 1942 and which had so continued. He made no comment about the Burma experience. He said that trips to Philadelphia to see his son who was at nearby Haverford College did occur, but he could not forecast when the next one might be. When it did, he would be pleased to get in touch with me, but I never heard from him again.

The next communication I received was particularly pleasing because it was the result of great persistence on my part. However, as I look back now at my voluminous correspondence with the retired officers at various ministries in London, I should add that they were consistently courteous and persistent as *they* tried to help *me*. It was not easy for them because, as Colonel H. R. D. Hart said, "records of that period are far from complete." They were either lost on the battle front, or destroyed in the fire at the India Office in London during the blitz. Nonetheless, through his efforts and those of the others at the Ministry of Defence at Stanmore and at Hayes, at the Ministry of Overseas Development, at the India Office, the Foreign Office and the Old Foreign office, and at the Imperial War Museum, I had tracked down "Bertie" Castens, "Beaver" Barton, Major Haigh, and Colonel Davidson- Houston. Through them I had also found out bits and pieces about some of the others on the list.

But none of them had ever come up with anything about J. R. Croft, listed as "Officer Cadet" on the Stilwell roster. The only clue to him that I had picked up was from Professor John Moonie in Maymyo. When I showed him the picture of the British military he had said he thought that a dark complexioned young man in an officer's cap was an Anglo-Burman and might be Croft.

Out of the blue--when I had almost forgotten about Croft--in the summer of 1972 I received a letter from A. J. Farrington of the India Office Library, India Office Records, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Mr. Farrington said that after some months my letter of enquiry had been forwarded to him. He suggested that I contact the Secretary of the Burma Star Association.

Then, almost as an afterthought, Farrington said, "I have an address for J. R. Croft in Shanghai as of 1948 which is obviously of little use, but the firm may know of his present whereabouts." The address for Croft was c/o Patons and Baldwins Ltd., P. O. Box 1524, Shanghai. Farrington's letter arrived just before I left for the Far East in June, too late to do anything about it at that time. It was not until I had been to Burma and was in the Philippines in September that I

had a chance to write to Croft at the Shanghai address.

Six months later, in March of 1973, my letter came back from Shanghai to me in Jenkintown. On it was a little sticker with Chinese writing and a box checked, "*Adresse incomplete.*" This was a set-back and I put my search for Croft's whereabouts aside for a long time. I was so busy that winter, first with my trip around the States, and the following summer which included my trip to Taiwan, that it was not until I was back in Jenkintown in the fall of 1973 that I could resume the search for Croft.

I assumed that Patons and Baldwins was a British firm and that it probably would have an office in England. At the main office of Bell Telephone of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia there were telephone directories for the major cities of every country in the world. The next time I went in to Philadelphia, I went to the telephone office and pulled out the equivalent of our Yellow Pages for London. In it there was an address for Patons & Baldwins (Sales) Limited, Darlington, County Durham, England.

I wrote to that address asking for information about J. R. Croft and added what I had learned about him from Professor Moonie. I received an answer from Mr. J. R. Thompson saying that he believed Croft's father had been an employee of the firm in Shanghai at one time but had moved to Australia. He would put someone to work on trying to find out more about Croft for me. This seemed to tie in with what Professor Moonie had told me. A letter to Croft's father might bring me information about his son.

Mr. Thompson's letter was followed very shortly by one from Catherine Kirkpatrick, Consumer Relations Manager of Paton's, saying that she was pleased to report that she had an address for Jack Croft's father in Melbourne, Australia. She continued as follows:

The exact whereabouts of Mr. Croft Jnr. are uncertain at present. He was last heard of running a home for old people somewhere in the hills above Melbourne.

I have been asked to point out that J. Croft is not Anglo-Burman, although very dark in colouring. He was born of Yorkshire parents in Shanghai while his father was the Technical Manager of our factory there. He himself worked for the company for a short time before it was taken over by the Communist Chinese in 1949. He left Shanghai with his wife, who was an Australian nurse, and his son, during the summer of 1948.

My colleagues who were able to supply this information would be very interested to know the results of your researches and wish you every success in your project.

Again, what a wonderful letter! I could not get over how often people had gone to so much trouble for me. I hoped that if I ever found Croft, I would remember to thank Catherine Kirkpatrick and her colleagues.

I sent off a letter to J. R. Croft in care of his father in Melbourne and two months later I received a letter, not from the father, but from his son, Jack Croft himself! He was living in Frankston, Victoria, Australia, not in Melbourne.

He said, "Twenty five years is an awful long time but some experiences stick in your mind

and the Walkout was one of them. I hope the few facts that I remember will be of assistance to you."

J. R. Croft, age 21
British Officer Cadet

I found the Walkout one of the most interesting phases of my life.

"I was born in Yorkshire, U.K. in 1921 and went with my parents to Shanghai in 1934. I studied at the Public and Thomas Hanbury Private College up to University level. I played most sports well, especially swimming, tennis, and cricket.

"I worked for one year for an Import-Export firm and then decided to join the Army. I was sent from Shanghai by the British Consulate to Maymyo and was attached to the Maymyo Military School for training. This was previous to the Japanese declaration of war.

"When the Japanese invaded Burma I served with the school until they were almost in Mandalay, having had various trips down to the front. Mostly I went along with other Officer Cadets trying to salvage what we could in the way of abandoned equipment, stores, etc.

"When things were really becoming grim, we had orders to move out and proceed to India or China as best we could. A party of British officers and a few odd-bods, as we called them, decided to move out and try to reach Homalin, cross the Chindwin river and head for Assam. We reached Shwebo and managed to get a ride on a train which took us as far as it could, and then the order was to walk.

"We started off in the general direction of the river, having in our possession one change of summer uniform, a blanket, and a ground sheet which was shared between my personal friend Hughie Campbell and I. We followed the general route of the people trying to stay one jump ahead of the Japanese.

"With regard to 2nd Lt. (or Sub/Lt.) G.Campbell about whom you also asked: Hughie was his nickname, confusing the issue. As you probably know, the term or rank "Subaltern" applies only to Army personnel, which further confuses the issue.

"Hughie was a civilian engineer with the Burmah Oil Company in Yenangyaung, Burma before the war. He enlisted with the 3rd O.C.T.U. (Officer Corps Training Unit) in Maymyo in approximately November, 1941. He was commissioned in the Burma Navy approximately February 1942. But by that time the Navy didn't exist as Rangoon was on the way out. He and I teamed up in Shwebo G.H.Q. As far as I know, he never contacted the Burma Navy since it no longer existed.

"As we were making our way through the jungle one morning we heard the sound of axes and grinding motors ahead of us. We thought perhaps we had run into the Japs. But then we heard the voices of men speaking English. We walked into a clearing and found a large group of American officers and other ranks burning equipment and stores which they could not carry with them.

"One remark which I remember was made by an American Lieutenant Colonel to the effect, 'Not more bloody Limeys!' This I took exception to, and told him that if he didn't like our company, we weren't too keen on his. We both cooled off and we were allowed to join the group. On the whole, the American soldier was a good chap, but the higher brass didn't seem to realize that we had to stick together.

"When General Stilwell said we were going to have to walk, we were under no illusions about it. That was what we had already decided to do before we met him.

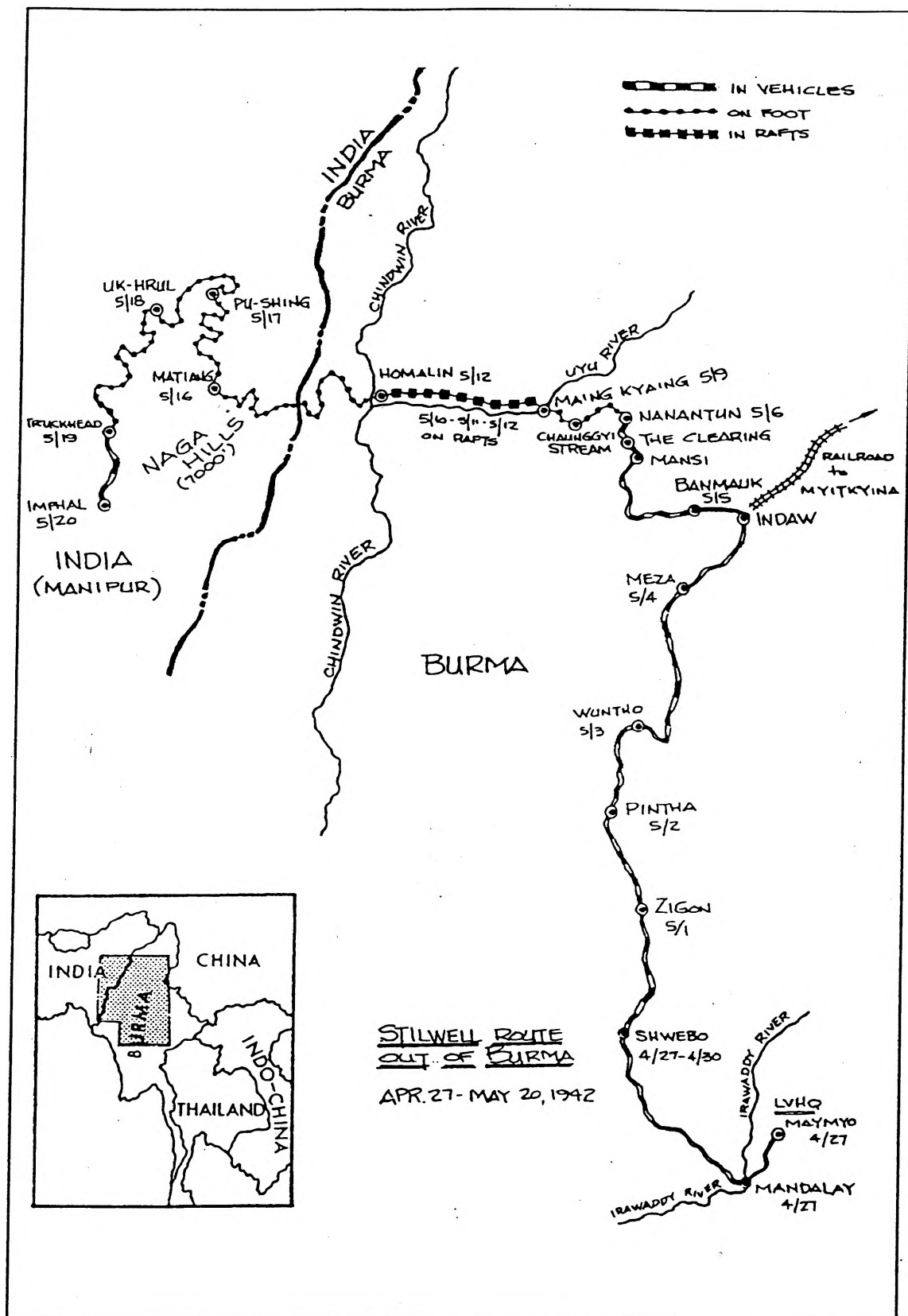
"My most outstanding memory of the event is of General Stilwell himself. He was a hard taskmaster but he was fair. The way he set the example was a tonic for his fellow men. I have nothing but the greatest admiration for General Stilwell."

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My correspondence with Jack Croft turned out to be the last "interview" I would have with the participants in the Walkout and those others who had had some connection with them. I had travelled the world for nearly three years and I believed I had found as many of them as it was possible to do. Now that the cast was assembled, it was time to let them describe how they managed to get off stage.

Part Two:
They Get off Stage as Best They Can

We were all interested in the same thing, and that was getting out alive.



Drawn by Henry M. Clews

Chapter Nine

From Nanantun to the Naga Hills

May 7-8-9: Down the Chaunggyi Stream

Oh boy! Nothin' could stop the General!

Captain Paul Jones: "The camp at Nanantun was a mess the next morning. We were all waked up about three-thirty, but it was hours before we got ourselves organized. The Boss was impatient and angry at the delay, missing the best part of the day, but finally about six-thirty we were ready."

Tun Shein, Seagrave Unit: "We were told to be ready to leave the next morning about five-thirty. We hadn't finished supper the night before until about ten o'clock. By the time I got everything cleaned up and prepared for the next morning, it was about one a.m. I got up at three a.m. to be ready with the breakfast and to have time to clean up and be ready to go, so I slept about two hours. But nothing seemed strange to me."

Lulu, Nurse: "We all helped cook and build the fires and make the rice hot in the rice pot. Tun Shein, he was very busy at the time, awake very early in the morning, three a.m., and start making food for our Unit, that's what he did, but God take care of him, that's why nothing happened to him."

"We made our way step by step and the first day we loved it, it was just like a picnic. But then some got tired and then we sing, and while we were walking, we mustn't stop until the General blow the whistle."

Captain John Grindlay: "The bearers and the mule team were assembled and shortly after daybreak we set off. Most of the American officers, including Stilwell, were carrying tommy-guns or Springfield rifles, all the rest carrying their personal packs. I carried a tommy gun and a full pack, the total weighing about forty pounds."

"But before we left, Stilwell lined us up and told us that somebody had loaded two bedding-rolls and all kinds of extra uniforms onto one of the mules and that anyone caught doing that again would be left to walk alone. It turned out to be Eldridge and he caught hell from the General."

"We started out on a little trail that petered out almost immediately at a stream and next thing, we were all going down into the stream. There was nowhere to walk beside it, the banks were

lined with bamboo and giant trees and boulders.

"So we went down into the primeval jungle river, the long undulating single-file column led by a yo-yo pole-toting, high stepping porter carrying the General's gear, and behind him the General carrying his tommy-gun.

"Behind him came the American officers and men, after them the British followed by the Seagrave Unit with the nurses and FAU boys. Behind them were the cooks and mechanics and odds and ends, and they were followed by the porters and the mule train. Last of all came General Tseng and the Chinese troopers, making sure that the porters and mule drivers didn't slip away with our supplies."

Captain Richard Young: "The most striking memory I have of the early part of the hike in the stream. . . let's see. . . the General walked number one, Dorn two, then I was three and General Sibert was behind me. And he cussed me out because I wasn't in step! Sibert said, 'Dammit, Young! *Stay in step!*'"

Captain Grindlay: "All the skin rubbed off my feet, so at some point I took off my shoes when we were in the water and I stopped to put them back on again when the rocks cut my feet. The rest of the train got ahead of me and along came Barton and Castens and we set off with one of the porters who guided us onto a shortcut along a forest trail.

"Somewhere in the gloom of the trail we saw a mahout riding an elephant and as we came back to the stream, on a muddy bank they showed me a tiger spoor. Then we came upon a lot of abandoned trucks and jeeps, and later we passed a lot of Burmah Oil people and an Indian refugee sitting on the rocky boulders along the stream.

"When we rejoined the group we found that Merrill had passed out with sunstroke. After we cooled him off, we inflated one of the air mattresses and the FAU boys towed him along on that. Then Tommy Lee passed out and we put him on a mattress too. Later Holcombe was overcome and the porters made a bamboo raft to pull him on and also one for Than Shwe who was having hard going.

"I felt like passing out too. I had pains around my heart and I was dizzy and exhausted but the girls kept me in line. Even the nurses got tired after a while and then they would begin to sing. This made everyone ahead turn around to see who it was. They couldn't imagine where the singing was coming from, they were all exhausted too."

Than Shwe, Nurse: "Having had my operation less than a year before, it was not easy for me to walk. I was hauled down the stream on the first day on an air mattress and so was Colonel Holcombe. But only for one day. I walked thereafter, full of spirits in my 'shorties.' I couldn't wear native dress because of my operation, but I was used to 'shorties' because I was a crazy tennis and

baseball player."

Colonel Holcombe: "I suffered greatly the first few days from the heat of the jungle and I 'fell out.' I had to be transported on an air-mattress down the stream. I did however improve enough to make it on my own finally, and I was much better when we got up into the mountains and the cooler air."

Lieutenant Tommy Lee: "I was just over-tired on that first day when I passed out. When I did, I was ordered to go on the raft, but for that day only. After that I was fine. My physical condition was good and my feet never played out and I had no problem with leeches."

"A lot of people got sore feet right away but Colonel St. John, when we'd been down in Rangoon, got G.I. shoes for us and he told us to fill them with castor-oil and soak them overnight and then put them on without taking them off for twenty-four hours and they were just like a moccasin, they didn't rub your ankles or heels."

Colonel Benjamin Ferris: "That first day in the stream, if we came to where we could walk alongside it, I sat on the bank and changed my socks right away, put on dry ones and put the wet ones over my shoulder to dry. That way I always had a spare pair, which helped a lot. I walked in and out of the water, but mercy me, I never took my boots off!

"Shortly after we started walking in the stream, Colonel Williams ran up to the General and said, 'My goodness, sir! We've got to stop and take off our boots and dry our feet.' The General exploded and said, 'The hell with that! We've got to keep going, we walk with our boots on.' So from then on you can be sure we kept our boots on."

"One member of the group was an ardent cavalryman, and a cavalryman loves his boots. That dumb cluck, of all things, started out that hike in a brand new pair of beautiful new riding boots, and he had the most terrible array of blisters you ever saw after those days in the stream."

"Sibert was about to cave in one of those days and Holcombe floated down the stream on an air mattress. I can see him coming along even now, Merrill too. We halted for a little respite near the stream and I brewed up some tea for him to kind of buck him up. He was sort of bleary and I didn't know whether he was going to die right there on my hands or not. Fortunately, he came out of it all right."

Dennis Thompson, Mechanics Oriental: "Walking along, that stream was shallow and the scenery was generally forested. Sometimes we would leave the stream to go through the jungle where troops of monkeys howled at us but we never saw any. You had pebbles and gravel in the stream. I was wearing leather shoes and at occasion I took them off and put them around my neck and walked barefooted. I could walk as fast as the General, but I think I walked so hard that I was tired--that is, I was tired enough just to fall asleep. The walking wasn't so much tiring, that is, but it gave you a

good night's sleep.

"I helped those people who hadn't been able to walk so well, and when Merrill fainted, I thought, 'Why should an American officer faint, hahaha. . .?' I did not know he had a heart attack, I thought he had just a faint."

Major Felix Nowakowsky: "Right at the beginning it didn't bother me but after walking all the morning and seeing Merrill keel over, it can have an effect on you. The heat was terrific and the glare from that waterway was really bad.

"Somebody wrote about me that 'poor Nowakowsky was pooped.' No wonder I was pooped, I was carrying all that money. We stopped during the hottest part of the day, and I made it through that first stop real good, but when we started wading through water up to our thighs, I pulled a muscle in my groin and it pained me a lot. I went lame, but I made it. When Stilwell found out I was carrying that extra load, he got a bearer for it the next day and that was a great relief. It had been really rough that first day and quite a strain to keep up that standard infantry pace of a hundred and five."

Sergeant Paul Gish: "Goin' down that streambed it took a good man to keep up with the General. He could really step out! But it put you on your mettle. He would stop for a rest period but not for long, maybe ten minutes every hour, and then you'd have to get goin' again.

"It was rough, real rough, startin' out walkin' at 105 paces to the minute. There wasn't any path, the jungle was so dense and it was on either side of the stream so close that you had to walk in the water and there wasn't any shade and the glare from the water was fierce. And it was *hot*, I mean *hot*! This was somethin' new. I hadn't done any marchin' like this since basic training. It was a little bit different all right from what we was used to. That first day was hard, that's when the three people passed out. You'd been wonderin' if you were goin' to hold out and then when you saw somebody like Merrill 'fall out' and have the heat get him like that, and a couple of others too, it really shook you up. This was somethin' different and after a while, knowin' that you were goin' to *have* to keep walkin', you began to wonder. But boy! nothin' could stop the General! "

Lieutenant Robert Belknap: "I walked in and out of the water along the stream and I think I finally decided to keep my shoes on. I'd always had sort of sensitive feet and the skin all disappeared from the bottoms. I was walking--you might say--on raw meat! I don't remember it as being unpleasant, they must have been numb. I kept my shoes on the whole time and I don't think I felt any pain. I only had one pair of socks and my shoes. They were just regular oxfords, plain old every day shoes. I didn't have *any* regular Army stuff."

Hla Sein, Nurse: "The first day we loved walking along and then some became tired and sore feet

and we threw away our things one by one. Then we would sing. It was wonderful. We were carefree and having a good time. And it was wonderful to get away from all the hard work we had been doing with the Chinese wounded."

Ruby, Nurse: "We found it hard to walk at first and I didn't like it much"

George Parsons, FAU: "We walked in single file and we stayed with our own group. It was a good stiff pace and I take off my hat to Stilwell for this because he was nearly sixty years old."

Jack Belden, War Correspondent: "Walking down that stream was very, very tiring, very hard on the legs pushing through the water, it was like a wall. But there too I got the impression of the color of the *scene*. I looked at the girls coming down into the stream, and then the people passing out, and then Stilwell. At about eleven o'clock we took a break and he's sitting there at the halting place, half in the water with just his underwear and his campaign hat on and he's saying, 'My God, I don't know what's wrong with you people! When I was twenty or thirty, if I couldn't do this before breakfast, I'd be ashamed of myself!' He was fifty-nine then and all these younger people were passing out and he'd had to stop. Colonel Williams had told him the people couldn't stand it."

Captain Fred Eldridge: "The FAU boys were particularly good when we started walking in the stream. They took rubber mattresses and hauled Merrill and Tommy Lee and Holcombe and Than Shwe all day, taking turns. They were a real heroic bunch.

"We walked in that stream all day and then we walked in pitch darkness in this dense forest and there was no moon and we came to this little cut in the river bank and that's where we made camp.

"I was errand boy for Pinky Dorn who was mess officer. I was already in the deepest kind of trouble on account of the bed-roll incident and we got up to this little place and the porters who were carrying the food disappeared.

"Suddenly the General appeared: 'Where are the porters? Where is the food?' and I said, 'I don't know, sir.' He said, 'Hell, you son of a bitch, if you lose one can of that food, I'll execute you, I'll shoot you down on the trail!' BOOM! I was terrified! The porters had in fact only moved a few hundred feet away to make their beds, thank God, but I'll never forget those words!"

Private Short: "Walkin' through the water that first day was a little bit different from the way we was used to walkin'. That day was the hardest, that's when the three people 'fell out' and it was purty rough. 'Course I didn't know how hot it was, but I can guess at their age I would have 'fallen out' too, 'cause I'm telling you, it was *hot*, it was rough just with all that heat and everything.

"I remember bein' surprised that night when we was walkin' along after dark, there in the

tropics the moon seemed higher than it did at home. We had all those different galaxies we wasn't used to, like the Southern Cross. But we couldn't find the Big Dipper and we felt kinda lost without it.

"When we got to where we was goin' to make camp that night, it was just a little cut beside the stream. Pinky Dorn was the mess officer and I remember I stepped over a log somewhere and he yelled at me and said, 'What the hell are you doin' in the kitchen?' Well, how could I tell that was the kitchen? So I got out of there in a hurry, I can tell *you*!

Tun Shein, Seagrave Unit: As far as the daily routine was concerned, every day was about the same timetable. We would start at daybreak and stop at eleven or noon, have something to eat, rest in the afternoon and start again in the late afternoon. By the time we stopped and ate and got ready for the next day, it would be one o'clock in the morning. Not sleeping more than a couple of hours every night, that's the part. . . I don't know, I didn't even feel it, but I *remember* it!"

Eric Inchboard, FAU: "Walking down that damn stream the first day after the clearing there were two schools of thought, whether to keep your boots on or off. But when you took your boots off the rocks cut your feet, and then you'd have to put your soggy socks and boots back on. We had a morning of this. I had new very stiff boots which cut my feet and gave me ulcers. Low Wang, who had been a Chinese trooper but had been posted to Seagrave as an orderly, dug into his musette bag and came up with a pair of gym shoes which he gave me and went barefoot himself the rest of the way.

"The nurses, when they set off, had these little flip-flop things. They were these little leather or wooden-bottom shoes, and they went into the jungle with these.. After we'd been walking in the stream a while, they said, 'We can't wear these things, these silly shoes, we'll do without,' and they threw them away. This irked Seagrave no end, he was afraid they would cut their feet.

"Even they got tired after a while and they began to sing, causing those ahead to turn around to see who it was. Everyone else was exhausted but somehow the singing made us begin to feel better.

"The stream was infuriating. Some places it didn't reach to our knees, in others it was over our heads without any warning. The shallow places were the worst because if the raft got stuck on the bottom, it was the devil to dislodge it. You would have to *lug* it over the sand. We were pushing Than Shwe on one of these and when it got stuck, it gave me the screaming dib-dabs!"

Tom Owen, FAU: "It was that first morning when we were walking down that damn stream that Merrill passed out and three other Americans got sick with heat prostration. Some fool had carried a rubber mattress around his body--it was an older man--and when Seagrave yelled for volunteers,

we said we would use that and we hoiked Merrill on that. We had a bamboo raft as well, so we we pushed and pulled those things and they would get stuck on the bottom. It was pre-monsoon season and the river wasn't full and you had to carry them over the sand-bars.

"We didn't know where the camp would be that evening though we had been told it would be somewhere along the stream. Pulling the air-mattresses along had made us fall behind everybody else and it was about three in the morning before we got to it. When it got dark, we had to have two or three men wading ahead with torches to show us the way.

"When we finally got there, one of the chaps came down to help us unload. I'd tied up my documents to keep them dry and was carrying them on my head because sometimes we'd be in water up to our shoulders. We'd been lugging our guts out heaving those damn rafts over practically dry land at times. This chap crashes into me and dumps all my documents into the stream and off they went! I never got them back--passport and all, all floating off down the damn stream--personal documents, everything, all gone!

"They gave us a meal, some sort of porridge, we went to bed, and three hours later, by half past six, we were on our way again."

Peter Tennant, FAU: "That first morning in the stream was the worst. It was a real struggle to keep up. They had waked us up in camp that morning after only three and a half hours sleep and that was not enough after the exhaustion of the day before.

"I fell behind as the sand got in my shoes and filed the flesh away. I began to feel that it couldn't be too bad after all if I ran into a party of Japs. . . but this was foolish. I hitched up my mind and went on. It was a good stiff pace. At the time Merrill collapsed, Dr. Williams sent me up ahead to get Stilwell to send somebody to manhandle Merrill and I had to *run* right up from the rear of the column to the front to attract his attention. Edging one's way past all those people on a narrow path was a difficult task and I was full of admiration for Stilwell's pace on that occasion.

"That evening after we had been pulling the people along on the rafts all day, we came in late to the camp. We asked the fellow in charge of the commissary if we could have a slight extra ration because we'd been doing this extra job. He said we could, and he brought out boxes of stuff we didn't know they had. It had been caried on the mules, much more than the porters could have carried."

Lulu, Nurse: "We made our way step by step and the first day we loved it. It was just like a picnic. But then some got tired and then we sing."

Big Bawk, Nurse: "In the jungle, as far as it lasted, we had a good time, always jolly. We could even sing, even when we were walking, always singing. I had never been camping or out in the jungle. It seemed like a dream."

Ma Graung, Nurse: "I think sometimes we very tired. First I knew, it was hard to have to walk. It didn't bother my feet and I didn't get sick but I got very thin. Most time we had plenty to eat but for about three days we had only a few potatoes. And sometimes we were thirsty but General Stilwell said we don't drink, we don't rest. just go, go on wallking, don't stop, go along treading to India. Sometimes we are afraid when we sleep in the jungle, strange noises I had never heard before."

Koi, Head Nurse: "We had our work to do and when we stopped we helped each other in cooking and so on. We just kept going because we *had* to. We never mixed with the Americans or the British or Chinese, we were only in our own group. But there was a British Colonel who had dysentery all through the journey. He was somewhere around forty years old, and he was very weak. I gave him an injection every day, but we didn't have time for much of anything else, just the walking.

"The beauty was just the same as everywhere else in Burma, nothing new to me. I had been out in the jungle before when I was a little girl but I had never slept there. I wasn't afraid. . . afraid of what? We were together. We were too young to be afraid, we just didn't think about it. We just didn't *think* much, I think! "

Martin Davies, FAU: "Tun Shein was the key chap, of course, getting us fed and keeping up our morale. He was a Karen who had volunteered to work with Dr. Seagrave and had become more or less the general factotum for the Seagrave Unit. He was quite aloof in a sense and yet he was one of us. He was the practical man who could turn his hand to almost anything and he and the nurses knew a lot about what you could eat in the jungle. He would send them into the jungle to get berries and things and we would mix them with the rice. He cooked up some marvellous things."

Captain Grindlay: "Before we finally came to where we were going to camp somewhere along the stream, it had become pitch dark and we could see luminous snakes in the water. When we got there, I had a swim which didn't really cool me off, and then we had some kind of rice slop. Then we finally settled for the night in what turned out to be an elephant grazing camp. We could hear their wooden bells jangling all night.

"The next day we walked through gorges of the stream with deep jungle on both sides and we heard the calls of long-tailed monkeys. We hauled those three men for six more miles. A Jap plane passed overhead but evidently didn't see us.

"I began to trail behind with my heavy pack and at some point I passed out. I was all right after a rest and we ended that day's hike in a village on the bluff of a river. Five of us slept under one net. There were mango trees and red ants. Our group had a native supper prepared by Tun Shein, the others had nothing."

Martin Davies, FAU: "On one of those days when we were walking down the stream, we were told

that there was an elephant with a bell on it. The General was worried that it might be wild and had caused trouble and that was why the bell was on it. So we were warned by the Americans to stay clear of it. They were all lined up in ranks with their tommy-guns and the General was standing there grim-faced, and along came Bill Duncumb.

"Being from London, Bill didn't know anything about rogue elephants. He was in a good humor and as he went by he shouted 'Hi-ya mate! How's your Grandma?', and a voice said to him, 'This is no joke, this is not a joking matter. Get on there!' It was Stilwell, and we all thought, 'those guys with all those guns. . . how ridiculous!'

Captain Richard Young: "The episode of the rogue elephant sticks in my mind very well. I was ready with my tommy-gun though I didn't know what good it would do against an elephant. All it had was .45 slugs and they wouldn't have gone through an inch of an elephant's hide. Who's kidding who!"

Dennis Thompson: "When we came near where that elephant was, the General ordered us, told us not to be frightened. I was too young to be frightened and you know, we are quite used to elephants in Burma. Anyway, I think he may have been tame,tame, tame, , . . ha ha ha!"

Private Short: "We heard there was an elephant around one day and it might be a rogue, so we went on guard with our guns in case he attacked us. As he went by the General, that elephant saluted! He raised his trunk at the General and just walked on away!"

Captain John Grindlay: The next day we had a long hike on land, by-passing a bend in the stream, and over a range of hills. My feet were giving me hell, legs ached from wading the day before, and feet a mess of bloody blisters with blood clots between the toes. I was still carrying my pack, though no one else was by then. An elephant with a metal bell on it glared at us as we went by. Stilwell and the others guarded it with guns.

"At the noon halt by a muddy stream we hollowed out 'bathtubs' and bathed each other. Feet hell, red ants also hell. In the afternoon we hiked across a long marshy plain and passed over a concrete elephant bridge. The girls had real trouble in their bare feet on the gravel.

"Sibert passed out just as we got to Maingkaing, the town at the junction of the Chaunggyi and the Uyu river. We camped there on a sandbank and had coconuts and bananas from the village for our supper. The others had no meal.

"There we learned that Case's messages had gotten through and some rafts were being built for us to go down the Uyu on to Homalin."

May 10-11: Building the rafts and starting down the Uyu river

We found that the Uyu was a very strange river.

Martin Davies, FAU: "The Chaunggyi stream led into the Uyu River. The General had sent some of his bright boys ahead to find it, and what the possibilities were for our going down it. The Uyu was a tributary of the Chindwin and the idea was to get down the Uyu and somehow across the Chindwin.

"Breedon Case, the Agricultural College chap, had sent ahead to make arrangements for rafts to be built for us. It's funny, I can remember being surprised that these rafts were well on their way to completion by the time we got there. I found it difficult to believe that any of our party had gotten ahead enough to get all that preparation done.

"Anyway, when we got there, we set to work and spent the rest of that day completing the rafts, lashing them together, cutting bamboo poles and so on. The nurses were absolutely wonderful building the shade fronds over them.

"Altogether there were four rafts. A small one carried most of the American fire-power and went ahead as a lookout. Then three much larger ones followed behind. We, along with the Seagrave unit, had one of these.

"General Stilwell and the American military were on the first one, the British and mechanics and most of the odds and bods were on the other. The Chinese troopers and some of the Americans went overland with the mules to see to it that the mule drivers didn't vanish with our supplies.

"The Americans worked liked beavers at roofing the rafts, the British military did little. Grindlay supervised making mats for the roofs, and Tun Shein supervised putting them up. All these hard workers won the admiration of the General and his appreciation, for without the roofs it would have been unbearable."

Colonel Davidson-Houston: "By the time we came to the Uyu River where we were to go onto the rafts, I had developed dysentery and was very weak. I could not help with the building of the rafts and lay in the shade.

"A compromise on how much Emetin to take was made. If not enough, I would have dysentery, and if too much, I wouldn't be able to move at all. The compromise enabled me to keep both powers of movement! The most compelling force behind me of course was the prospect of being captured by the Japanese."

On the Seagrave raft

Martin Davies: "The lowest point of morale--for me at least--was on those rafts. They were long rafts, eighty feet long and twelve feet wide. The thing to do was to keep them going--downstream fortunately--without hitting the bank. That night it really began to rain. The river rose rapidly

because it had been the dry season and we were very surprised at the rate it rose and the flood of water that came on and took us down the river so fast. This is what really got us worried because it was at night and it was practically impossible to keep the thing straight and you couldn't see where you were going. We were very tired because of the walking and pulling the people that we had done before. We got long poles and George and Tom and Bill and I took it in turn to keep it straight.

"It was my turn to sleep and I was just dropping off when the water began lapping around my shoulders and Lulu was shaking me and saying, 'Come on, you've got to get up. We're in trouble.' I really didn't want to get up, but she got very cross and made me. Then we all began to work to get the raft to go straight with the stream instead of across it the way it had been going. It would have broken up--which in fact it did do in the end--but this time we managed to get it to the bank and separate it into two parts. Then we could go on.

"Eric was furious one night when he had to get out of bed to help and had to go into the water to push. When he got back to bed he found Peter in it and he actually physically turfed him out!"

Captain Grindlay: "We all worked on roofing the rafts, then we loaded the food. We set off about eleven in the morning. I was with the Seagrave unit.

"That night it poured rain and drenched us and we were constantly whirled about and falling behind. One section of our raft almost came off. We spent our time poling off sandbars and snags. There was little time for sleep except for an occasional nap. There were buffaloes along the bank of the river and their excreta gathered in the water between the bamboo poles which made up the floor of the raft, so we were lying in dilute manure one inch deep. Koi looked after me and shared a blanket with me. On the other side was Little Bawk and Doc Seagrave. Belden joined us too and shared his blanket with us.

"In the dark it was hard to know which way was downstream and we wound up in a whirlpool and were there for two and a half hours trying to hold the raft together, but we finally got out of it. Then it was so deep the poles couldn't touch the bottom and we had to paddle with bamboo poles which was difficult and slow. Finally we got to a place where we could reach it in shallow water and turned in utterly exhausted. But the men on duty fell asleep and the current caught us and swung us out into the river again and we had a perfectly terrible struggle to keep it together. It was a nightmare."

George Parsons, FAU: "We found that the Uyu was a very strange river. In some places it was very shallow and swift with lots of sandbars, and in others it was very deep and still. There we would have to pole along and I remember that would happen mostly at night. Then the raft would run aground on a sandbank and would tend to break up, and we would all have to jump in the water and try to hold it together. Doc Seagrave had a jolly good flow of language when this would happen, or when a

tree stump would hit us in a vulnerable spot. I learned quite a few new words in that short space of time.

"It seemed pretty certain to us that when we reached the confluence of the Uyu and the Chindwin, which we estimated would take us about four days, we would certainly run into the Japs. Indeed, that was why the Americans were out front with their guns on the little forward raft.

"I remember thinking . . . four days. . . there's plenty of time to think about that when the time comes. You got this sort of fatalistic attitude toward things. It was 'just one of those things' you'd think about when the time came.

"We hadn't got much food and one of the things we were chiefly relieved about was that Tun Shein and Seagrave's nurses--knowing the country--were able to go into the jungle whenever we stopped to eat. They would pick berries and roots and things and stew them up for us to eat, which certainly helped to keep us going."

Tom Owen, FAU: "Actually we were in a perfectly good position as regards the food because the nurses knew about the edible food in the jungle. You see, the Americans would only eat good old American food, so they were stuck with rice and a little bit of bully beef, whereas we were a bit more adventurous and the girls found all sorts of goodies in the jungle. So we had a certain amount of vegetable balance to help us along and the others didn't. They refused to have anything to do with it. At least that was true about the Americans. I don't know about the others. We didn't have any intercourse with the other groups except that occasionally Seagrave would deal with some of their medical problems.

"We had one enormous plate of rice every night and one cube of corned beef plus whatever the girls brought in. We had enough to keep us going."

Eric Inchboard, FAU: "On the rafts going down the Uyu we were eating cooked food, Tun Shein knew what to eat. Some of the Americans were wondering why we were lighting fires on our raft. It was quite simple. Tun Shein was a forest bloke, he'd worked for the forest companies before the war. He built up a little platform, filled it with mud and lighted a fire on the mud. No kidding, we were cooking this lovely nosh and the smells were going back up the river to the other rafts and they were getting pretty cross because they were eating dry biscuits!

"We also had baked fish that the girls caught in their vests, and we had fresh vegetables and so on. Tun Shein taught me a lot about what you could eat, about survival techniques, how to use all the things that were growing along the river.

"We used to shave sitting in the river, this was a good morale builder. You have a shave, you feel clean. We didn't have much in the way of clothes, we had nothing but what we stood up in, just what we'd been stooging around in when we were driving the trucks. We'd give them to the nurses to wash during the campaign. They were greasy, filthy, and covered with blood many times. If we'd

let ourselves go, that's no good, so they washed them out for us."

Big Bawk, Seagrave Nurse: "The three days on the raft were beautiful and it was a good rest after all that walking. When the rafts came apart, all broken, the boys had to tie them up again. On the last day we fell in, but we were laughing, it's not so deep. During the daytime we enjoyed the raft, but not so much at night when we had to sleep under the water because the water was leaking up.

"We had no trouble to keep clean, we bathed and washed our hair in the river, but sometimes we had a hard time to find some privacy to go to the latrine. We would take off our *longgis* and make a screen behind which to go.

"It was very beautiful sometimes and one time--early in the morning--Hla Sein stood out on the front of the raft to sing. She had a beautiful voice and the moon was still up and the sun was coming up and it was very beautiful.

"We were running low on rations and we would go ashore and find berries and roots and ferns and Tun Shein would cook them for us. He made a little native hearth on the raft and only our raft had anything like that. The smell was so good, but the Americans and the others didn't have any. The FAU boys were with us, we knew them from the front and we like them, we were like brothers and sisters."

Ma Graung, Nurse: "I sometimes fell off the raft but the water's not so deep and we play like that and we are not afraid. I think we had a good time, I don't remember much now. I was the youngest one and they called me 'Baby,' I was only sixteen. Our group was happy because Dr. Seagrave and Tun Shein were looking after us.

"And we used to have a sing, sometimes by moonlight. Those FAU boys, they were just like brothers to us. I think I never see such honest men like them in my life and they were very good and honest to us too. We depended on them for the whole time of treading to India."

Jack Belden, War Correspondent: "When we came to the Uyu, sometimes I went on the Seagrave raft, I was tired of the military. The trip down the river gave a very special impression, the idyllic idea of floating down-stream on a raft and by moonlight. The moon was out, but it was a late moon, because I remember Hal Sein singing in the early morning up on the front of the raft and the moon was still up.

"These girls were young and charming and it was wonderful being with them, they were simple and sweet. I wouldn't call it naiveté, just innocence, simpleness. To me this is a very pleasant memory. The girls in their colorful clothes, the jungle floating by, the moonlight, the contrasts between the different cultures. Of course we had our troubles with the raft and I had to pole and sometimes get out and shove the raft along. But on the whole everyone was relaxed and at ease at this juncture."

Tun Shein, Seagrave Unit: "As far as the countryside, it only interested me for finding food and I didn't have time to notice the beauty. Heat and cold didn't bother me, I'd been through them all before.

"We hadn't been with any of the others in the group before, only the FAU boys, and they were taking it pretty well. Eric kept right beside me all the time, he was more or less the youngest of those boys. He wore a *longgyi* and he tried to wear it the way we did, but he couldn't, it kept falling down!

"The British didn't adjust as well as we did. They were in retreat, they were in want, and they had hardly anybody taking care of them as a group. We were three or four separate groups. . . the Americans, the British, the Anglo-Burmans, the mechanics and whatever and, of course, the Chinese troopers who didn't belong to the same group as the other Asiatics.

"In the Seagrave group there were some of the Americans, Grindlay and O'Hara, Geren--he came down with Seagrave from the hospital in Namhkam--and sometimes Belden, and the FAU boys, and Karens and Shans and all, and we were our own group. But all wanted to stay together in the whole *big* group all the way through.

"The monsoon coming didn't bother me so much, and I wasn't afraid of the Japs, we had left them behind. With the General planning it, the daily routine was all arranged. He knew about the monsoon and he was planning to get to Imphal before it started. I don't worry about it, we follow his plan. Somehow or other at that time I didn't worry about these things, I just kept my mind on the work to be done and did what I had to do from day to day."

Sergeant Chesley: "I was on the General's raft along with Chambers and Lilly--he had been with the American Technical Group in Rangoon and had somehow turned up with us in Maymyo--and Colonel Williams, Dorn, Ferris, Gish. Other than that I don't remember. I think I might have been responsible for when we got stuck. I kind of loused it up in a backwash. I had helped build the rafts as much as I could, but I'm sort of worthless at that sort of thing, so I wasn't much help. I had never handled a raft before, I wasn't much of a boatman. They don't have much by way of boats in Hopbottom, P. A.!"

Sergeant Chambers: "The first raft that was the scouting party had Jones and Merrill and Wyman and McCabe. I was on the second raft with the General, Dorn, Sibert, Nowakowsky, Lilly. Those are some of the ones I remember.

"I had never done any poling in my life, but it was all in the line of duty. You just took it as part of the job.

"I never conversed with the General as we were riding along except in the line of duty. The military protocol existed even on the rafts, at least it did for me. I was given my duty and I kept silent when I wasn't doing that, only if I was addressed.

"That first night the river got real shallow and we got a back wind and it blew us into a sandbar. It was early but the General said, 'We can't progress any further tonight, we'll set camp and have supper.' We had a good meal that night. The nurses got some fresh vegetables and Tun Shein supplemented our rice that time, and it was really wonderful."

Sergeant Gish: "I was on the raft with Colonel Williams. We were in the middle of the raft and we had to take turns with the bamboo poles in case we ran across a shoal and we'd have to shove off it. There was one very funny incident with him.

"We had hit one of those sand gravel stretches and were slowed down. Doc Williams was playing cards and he jumped up and grabbed a pole and ran to the side to jam the pole to the bottom to give us a push off. Just then the raft passed over the sandbar and he just followed that pole into the water. He had on his helmet liner and his glasses and he came up wearin' them both! It was so funny to see him follow his pole into the water because we had passed over the shoal and were in deep water again. It was *sooo* funny!"

Major Nowakowsky: It was a rest for me to ride down river on the rafts, it gave my groin muscle a chance to heal. But the rafts were hectic at night. I was on the General's raft and we were put on shifts to pole it, to steer it. One night we ran into a herd of elephants out in the stream and here came the rafts right down on top of them. We didn't know what to do and neither did the native pole man, but fortunately the elephants just moved out of our way.

"During the day we used to play a game called 'coon cat,' a card game sort of like gin rummy. We played with the General and Sliney and General Sibert and sometimes Belden. Sibert would knock practically before anyone else had even sorted his hand. Don't ever get in a card game with him, you'll lose your shirt!"

Captain Fred Eldridge: "Going down the Uyu River I was on the raft with Elbert Lilly, the fellow from the A. T. G. [American Technical Group] in Rangoon. *He* was a character. He was always smashed, he was a real sot, and Bob Williams was always raising hell with him for being drunk all the time. He had booze with him all the way out, I don't know where he got it. But he was a jovial sort of a guy, you couldn't help liking him even though he was always smashed. He told a story about meeting a girl at some dance and he said to her, 'You're going to marry me,' and she said, 'You don't even know my name,' and I told her, 'Never mind, you're going to marry me and tomorrow your name will be the same as mine, so it doesn't matter!'"

Colonel Vivian Davidson-Houston: "The rafts were completed. There was a small advance guard one, the remainder on four long rafts lashed together out of bamboo. I tore my leg on one of these and soaked it in the water of the river, from which I developed septic sores though the water seemed

so limpid and cool."

May 11: The Air Drop

To see biscuits coming out of a bomb bay door was one of the high moments of my life!

Martin Davies, FAU: "At daylight on the 11th of May we heard a plane. We took cover and tried to identify it through the trees. We thought really that it must be Japanese and then it dawned on us that it was a Wellington. What we had thought was the Japanese Rising Sun was the RAF red in the middle of the rings.

"So we ran out and waved at it and he did a number of circles around us. We realized that he must have come from India and that gave us a terrific boost because that meant they knew roughly where we were and they'd actually found us. They began dropping sacks of food out of the plane about us.

"We were told not to go out to pick up the food, that Stilwell was going to have the honor of picking up the first sack. He waded right out into the river in his drawers and vest and in great triumph brought back the first sack. I don't know if it was the kudos of it or maybe he just plain wanted to.

"After it was all brought in, we were allowed to take one tin each and I shared a tin of sausages with George or Tom and that was about the best meal I ever had. It was sort of a bonus, it was Stilwell celebrating. Obviously he had to conserve food, but he let us have some. He gave way to discipline that day."

Peter Tennant, FAU: May 11th was a red-letter day, there was the food drop from the plane. I don't know whether I had been more anxious than I had realized about our food situation or whether hunger had made my emotions more affected, but there I was, leaning up against one of the center poles of the raft in some sort of collapse of relief, feeling an awful fool while everyone else whooped with joy, waved to the plane, took photographs of it, and plunged into the water to retrieve the food.

"Perhaps this was because I felt no cohesiveness with the FAU group. Relationships were strained. I did get along with the nurses, however."

Tom Owen, FAU: "We had a marvellous feed the day of the airdrop. A lot of the boxes were split open and we had to eat it up. There was rice and condensed milk, cigarettes, and corned beef. If it hadn't been for the drop, we *would* have gone short.

"We came across some C-Rations. Ah, incredible C-Rations! A marvellous change from bully-beef, but you live on C-Rations for a week and see how much nicer a bunch of bull is. You can fry it, you can boil it, you can mess it about, and it's a heck of a lot more sensible than this supposedly nutritional stuff."

George Parsons, FAU: "The second morning on the rafts we were floating along peacefully and a plane came over. He flew over once or twice and we realized that it was a British plane. He dropped some packages on the side of the river. Some people suddenly appeared out of the jungle and started to pinch the packages, so the Americans on our raft opened up with their guns, and the people ran away. We got most of the stuff. It was condensed milk and biscuits and cigarettes, mostly.

"The strange thing was. . . it must have been two or three years later after I had joined the British Army and was up in China. . . I ran into some British Civil Service chappie. We were swapping our experiences during the war and we found out that we had both walked out of Burma. He told me this: 'One day we were walking down the river Uyu and a plane came over to drop us some supplies. When we went to get them, some Japs on a raft started to shoot at us and we had to leave them.' So I had to tell him, 'Sorry, that was us!'"

Captain Paul Jones: "I was on the Scout raft that went ahead. On the second day we heard a p coming. I stripped to my underpants in case we had to dive overboard to take cover. It came in very low, it had two motors. We couldn't identify it, it came right *at* us. We were a perfect target machine-gunning and I got a bit of a chill! Then after making a couple more passes it started dropping food on the bank of the river and into the river itself. There was corned beef, cigarette biscuits and dried milk. We all dived in after it and everybody got a big kick out of it. Even the in just his underwear carried a sack of the stuff out of the river."

Captain Fred Eldridge: "When we were going down the river on the rafts and there was that airdrop, there was one shot fired and that was into the air. It was Lilly, braced on board the raft with a tommy-gun, intending to shoot the plane down. Then we realized it was a British plane, anyway a tommy-gun against a plane wasn't very effective! That Lilly was a screwball."

Colonel Robert Williams: "One morning we had an exciting *ding-bao*. A medium bomber came low and right at us. Was it Japanese? No, when it was right over us we saw R .A. F. insignia but might be a captured plane and we were in for it. But a half mile past us it turned to come back lower than ever. It flew over a sandy shore, opened its bomb-bays and dropped sacks of bully-be crackers, Woodbine cigarettes and sugar. Only that morning we'd gone on short rations of sugar only calories we were getting."

Colonel Davidson-Houston: "We travelled down the Uyu on the rafts night and day. When a British bomber dropped food and cigarettes on our second day along, I envied its few hours flight to India versus the days or weeks of plodding along which lay before us with the threat of the monsoon and its attendant discomforts and dangers to movement."

May 12, Arrival at Homalin

There weren't any Japanese there, and there was nobody there to meet us.

Martin Davies, FAU: The day after the airdrop we came to the village of Homalin. By this time the nurses had thrown away their shoes, those little flip-flop things, and Doc Seagrave was very anxious about this. He was afraid of their treading on snakes or getting sores. So he told Tun Shein to go into the town and see if he could find some shoes for the girls, to pay anything he had to to get them.

"The town had been abandoned because the people thought the Japanese were going to come up the Chindwin and occupy the villages, so everybody had fled except a handful of people. One of them was the owner of a little shoe store. Tun Shein and some of the others bought up a whole load of shoes, and they were dished out to the nurses according to size. The nurses put on these awful civilized shoes and went through the motions of being willing to wear them, but it was quite obvious that that wasn't going to last too long. It was only a matter of a few hours before they too disappeared and the nurses were back in their bare feet which was really much more comfortable for them."

Captain John Grindlay: "On the river night and day meant little. But even though there were still snags and sandbars and much pushing and shoving, we went on down toward Homalin, picked up Lieutenant Belknap who was sitting on a snag in mid-river waiting for us. He had been left there to tell us where the pack-train was. We dried our clothes and bedding and many large cranes and herons were noted. We finally anchored when we arrived at Homalin about three in the afternoon, got off the rafts and abandoned them. We walked in to the village. Almost everyone had left and had taken all available boats with them.

"Tun Shein, who had been sent to find some shoes for the nurses, in typical style stopped at the first house we came to, kidded the Burman there and got him to guide us to one of the shops. They were all closed but this guy got the Hindu owner of the shop to open up. We bought a pair of oxfords, ten pairs of tennis shoes--Tun Shein knew all the girls' sizes--two cartons of cigarettes, (a thousand) and new flash batteries.

"There were lots of refugees in the town trying to get across the Chindwin. The high ranges on the other side looked horribly high, peaks scarred by bare rock cliffs.

"We found the headman of the village and due to Tun Shein's winning personality, he gave us Shan tea and coconuts. Then we caught up with the rest of the group and camped in a Buddhist monastery just at dark.

"Seagrave's unit was in the nunnery building. The nuns were few and old, and an old priest was bumbling about in the back room. There were two thrones, gongs, shrines, and calendars with Burmese pagoda pictures back of the thrones advertising a Dutch cigar company!

"There were many holes in the floor and under the building was an eighty foot long royal dugout canoe with beautiful upturned prow and stern. We had some biscuits and slops and went to bed."

Colonel Davidson-Houston: "When we came in to Homalin we were met by a mounted detachment from the Burma Frontier Force. We slept at a monastery with the monks and ancient nuns. The fireflies there twinkled like sudden stars among the palms."

Jack Belden: As we drew nearer to the Chindwin, there was a slight fear that the Japanese gunboats might appear and I used to have nightmares about them because of what I had gone through in China. I had seen so many people slaughtered by the Japanese with their bayonets, and I thought of them suddenly surprising us and we would have to retreat into the fastnesses of Tibet or something.

"But there weren't any Japanese there when we got there. In fact there wasn't anybody. There was nobody there to meet us, which gave a little unreality to it. The General had hoped that somehow the messages to India would have gotten through that we were coming that way.

"And I got depressed at the idea of having to walk again when I saw those mountains across the river, and they were just as bad as I had expected."

Colonel Robert Williams: "As we neared the junction of our stream with the Chindwin River we abandoned the rafts and reconnoitered to see if there were any Japs. That afternoon was a particularly hard hike. Franklin Sibert almost collapsed, but a rest and some fresh coconuts brought him round.

"We spent the night on the floor of a Buddhist temple. That night we saw the only snake of the trip. It was in the temple yard and it stampeded our coolies. It was all of a foot and a half long and very dead!"

Major Nowakowsky: "We stopped the rafts just this side of Homalin. The Uyu and the Chindwin joined there at Homalin. We were afraid the Japs might have gotten there before we did. Merrill and the men on the forward raft scouted and made sure there were none there.

"Jones and I were sent out in a dugout canoe to try to locate the mule train. The canoe was heavily loaded with us and a couple of natives to paddle it, and it was half full of water and we weren't too happy. But we got across to another village on the south side of the Uyu and we scared the daylight out of the natives there. They came running out and were very hostile and we had to draw our pistols and get out of there in a hurry. They were scared and they didn't know who we were and there we were hollering all over the place to try to get some response from the mule train. We went back and reported to Stilwell at the monastery where we were going to spend the night. We had to tell him that the mules hadn't turned up yet."

Captain Paul Jones: "Before we got to Homalin we made a couple of stops for information about the Japs and the reports we got were conflicting. The advice seemed to point to poling down the Chindwin for two days and then hike over the ridges to Imphal. The northern route was discouraged, but I was sure that we would go that way.

"When we got to Homalin, the Boss sent me off in a boat--a native dugout--to look for the mules. We heard one report that they had crossed the Chindwin. We spent until ten-thirty that night looking for them and decided to wait until morning.

"The rest of the gang left the rafts and headed for and through Homalin and when I got back I found them up at a Burmese temple. The Boss argued with the British for quite a while, but he had decided on the northern route *regardless* of what they said. They were telling him he shouldn't go out that way. They went another way and they all got killed. That was Major Martin's group, the Burma Frontier Force.

"The next morning I started out again in a dugout looking for the mules. This time Castens was with me. We found the mules right away where we had thought they should be the night before but they hadn't crossed the Uyu until very early that morning. We sent them north to join the others. On the way back through Homalin, Castens suggested we look for apricots and horses, but neither panned out.

"When we got back to the camp site we found that the crowd had crossed the Chindwin. We waited until the mules were across then started up the trail. We joined the others at the clear stream. A storm threatened in the night but it blew over and I had a fine sleep."

May 10-11-12: The Party That Went Overland with the Mules

I have full sympathy with anyone dealing with mules!

Captain Richard Young: "When we got to the Uyu River, a number of us went overland with the mule-train. Obviously they couldn't go on the rafts. The Chinese soldiers went along too, to see to it that the mule-drivers didn't take off with all our supplies."

Captain Donald O'Hara: "When we divided up at the Uyu, Stilwell told me to go with the mules overland but to start ahead of them, and they would catch up with me. He knew I wasn't feeling so good.

"So I was walking along slowly on this little trail. I had my tommy-gun but I was scared to death. All of a sudden I thought I heard somebody say, 'Yank!' Well, the Japs used to do that to trick the Americans, so I stopped and raised my gun real slow and I figured if anybody shoots at me, I'll get to pull the trigger at least once. I say, 'I'm just standing here. Where are you?' And a voice says, 'Back up twenty feet and you'll see me.' So I back up twenty feet and there's this tiny little trail. I'd missed it. There were two Britishers in there with their native bearers.

"They asked me where I was going all alone and then they asked if I would like a drink of beer. Well, I was feeling good by then, so I said okay. It was in one of those little round jugs, all neck, and I asked them how I got it out. They said, 'You take a straw and shove it to the bottom, then you pull it up about two inches and suck.' So I did, very cautiously, and boy, was that really good beer. I really inhaled that stuff!

"We went on up to the next point together and I caught up with the rest of the group on the rafts that night. The mules didn't come that way after all, so if I had waited for them I'd still be there, I guess!"

Private Lawrence Short: "When the others went on the rafts, I went with the mules. We walked thirty miles a day. I think we walked about three days while they floated down the river."

Lieutenant Robert Belknap: "When the mules went overland, I was sent with them. On the last day before we were to rendezvous at Homalin, I was left behind to spot Scagrave coming along on a raft and to tell him where we were. I waited out on a log in the river watching for the raft and when it came along, I was so excited I fell in! But I had a real dinner that night on the raft, some decent chow for a change."

British Officer Cadet Jack Croft: "When the party split up to go on the rafts down the river and the rest to go with the mules, I was in the mule party. We swam some of the mules across the river. Then we went back to bring the rest of them across only to find that the first darn mules were swimming back behind us. I have full sympathy with anyone dealing with mules!"

Lieutenant Robert Belknap: "Having walked all that way with the mules except for that little bit on the raft, I was pretty well bushed by the time we came in to Homalin. I knew I had a fever coming on, I'd drunk some water that I hadn't oughter. I was assigned to the firewood detail at this sort of temple where we were to stay for the night, and it started to rain. I had my blanket and ground-sheet that I carried with me and I spread them out on the floor of the temple and then went out to get the firewood.

"It damn near killed me getting that wood, the fever had really come on, and when I got back, here was my blanket and ground-sheet tossed out in the rain, and there was the guy who had thrown them out. He outranked me and I was just too sick and tired to say anything. So I just lay down on the ground outside and wrapped myself in my wet blanket and figured I was dead there in the rain. There was no other way for it. I knew I was delirious by then and I was absolutely certain that I was not going to survive that night, no way!

"It was raining hard but during the night I had the most wonderful dreams, I'll never forget them. They were very vividly pleasant and the next morning when I woke up, the fever was gone and

I was feeling better than I had the whole trip.

"Here I'd given myself up for dead and then I passed some sort of crisis, I suppose. The curious thing about it was the contrast between the bad and the good. I was so mad at the guy who had thrown my stuff out and then those dreams, those wonderful dreams. Most interesting."

May 13: Crossing the Chindwin

Stilwell looked like Moses leading the Israelites across the Red Sea.

George Parsons, FAU: "At Homalin there was the problem of getting over the Chindwin. It was the end of the dry season and the river was by no means full, and it seemed like miles across the sandy bed. It was probably only half a mile to the river itself, but it seemed like crossing the desert.

"I think it was Breedon Case who arranged with some of the locals with dugout canoes to ferry us across. On the crossing we had three canoes side by side and I was in the middle one. The technique was to try to hold the three together, squatting there holding both sides with your hands and it took quite a long time to get across. I got the most awful cramp in my knees. It was quite agonizing and I was very glad to be able to stand up when we got to the other side."

Peter Tennant, FAU: We crossed the Chindwin in long, narrow boats hollowed out of tree trunks. I learned then that General Stilwell could be rather short of temper. He was instructing us all to get in and we were told to sit down low in order to give stability to the boat. The boat was half full of water and I was just a little slow in getting my bottom wet. Stilwell flicked his stick down and said, 'You sit down!' and rapped my knuckles. I was very angry and nearly had a walk by myself."

Captain John Grindlay: We started out at daybreak and while we walked across a huge sandbar half a mile across, we could see the high mountains ahead with shining white scars and wreaths of clouds. We crossed the Chindwin in narrow native dugouts sitting on the bottom and getting our fannies wet. The nurses were frightened by the tipping. The native paddlers squatted on the bow and stern. In about an hour all got across and were led along the bank by Stilwell to where we waited in the hot jungle for the mule train to catch up with us. About two o'clock they joined us, led by Laybourne.

"At this point some Jap planes flew over us but somehow they didn't spot us. We learned later that they had been looking for our party all along, but their boats had not yet gotten up the river as far as Homalin."

Major Nowakowsky: "Natives in boats and canoes took us across the Chindwin. We were worrying about how we were going to get the little mule across that was carrying an incapacitated British officer, but Seagrave just grabbed that little mule by the reins and got into a canoe and the mule

swam right after."

Private Short: "The mule train joined up with the rest of the party after we got to Homalin and the next day we went across the Chindwin. We were gettin' ready to go across the river and the General was standin' there and his shoes were all dry and the canoe was out there in the water. I just picked him up and carried him out and I remember he hardly weighed nothin'. And Castens' little dog was sittin' there on the shore and the General whistled to him, and he swam out and scrambled into the canoe."

Sergeant Chesley: "We'd been told that the Japs might be running gunboats up the Chindwin to Homalin, and they might have some forces there when we got there, but there weren't any there. After that I don't think I felt we had too much to worry about, once we'd gotten across the river."

Captain Dick Young: "When we crossed the Chindwin, that was the turning point. There was no more fear of the Japs after that."

Sergeant Gish: "When the plane had dropped the food, we began to think we were goin' to get out after all. Each day that Chesley and Short and me was still there, we began to think we'd make it. But I don't think I began to feel really safe until after Homalin."

"Up 'til then I was just a little guy wonderin' if we'd make it. When I saw those mountains up ahead, we could see the tops of them. I wondered about goin' through the clouds. What were we gettin' in for? Because we were goin' into Naga country and we'd heard about the headhunters."

Peter Tennant, FAU: "Across the river we were getting into the Naga hills. We crossed the first water-shed and had a fine view of the hills toward India ahead of us where we were going, and of the plain behind where we had been."

Labanglu: Nurse: "After crossing the Chindwin at Homalin town and climbing the hill the whole day, we reached the top in the evening. The scene of Burma, especially the river with the boat playing in it, aroused an indescribable emotion in me."

Lieutenant Bob Belknap: Before we crossed the Chindwin, I was pretty well convinced that we were going to be caught by the Japanese. The day we crossed the river, I stopped worrying about anything. I reckoned the rest would be a cakewalk.

"I knew the lay of the land enough in that area to know that there was no reason why one couldn't survive if one had any sense at all, particularly with a fellow like Stilwell in charge."

"However, it turned out to be far from a cakewalk! It was hot at the beginning going up into

the mountains, and I know I sweated a lot. I got pretty 'high' after a while. I guess we all did, the nurses said so! But this particular day, we were going up through a forest that was full of monkeys and there were also some beautiful butterflies. Suddenly we came upon a clear cool pool in a little gorge, and we all bathed and shaved and washed our clothes and it was marvellous."

The Cool Pool

Captain John Grindlay: "Once we were all across the river and were all collected together again, we walked along a winding wood path through a teak forest, but it was very steep. It was a good stiff climb and we quickly got up into the mountains. We walked up through virgin jungle all morning to the top of a second and higher ridge. There were almost continual shouts of long-tailed monkeys all around us. Then we went down another very steep trail and came to a swift, cool clear river where we camped. We all had a swim and we sat under a waterfall made by a dam of boulders and it was lovely."

Major Nowakowsky: "When we got up in the mountains we camped by a little stream and it was beautiful. Everybody had a swim, we took showers under the waterfall. The girls were out there prancing around and singing, they kept up everybody's spirits. They were singing lovely Karen songs."

Lieutenant Colonel "Pinky" Dorn: "There had been some concern when we started walking out of Burma that the Chinese troopers might be unduly interested in the nurses. Such was not the case. At the rest stop where everyone bathed in the mountain pool, they observed the nurses from a respectful distance. I heard them murmuring amongst themselves, 'Very nice, very good, not like our women!' but they never got out of line. In fact, the Old Man said they were the best disciplined of the whole lot of us."

Colonel Davidson-Houston: "We crossed the Chindwin and going up into the Naga hills I was given a pony to ride. I took turns with someone afflicted with kidney trouble and another with worn out feet. The evergreens were cool and dripping with moisture as were the bamboos from recent thunder showers during which the porters would take huge banana leaves as umbrellas in the sudden violent downpours. There was thunder all around us but it didn't rain where we camped by a pool and a stream that looked just like a trout stream."

Chapter Ten
A Little Stroll Through the Mountains

It was just as bad as I had expected.

May 13: The Naga "Hills"

Captain Fred Eldridge: "Once we got across the Chindwin we started right up into the mountains and we could look back and still see the river for several days. But after walking up those mountains for a couple of days, nobody was interested in the scenery, nobody thought much about the beauty. In some places it was so steep you had to get down on your knees. It wasn't cold at first--it was May--but we did get chilled when it rained.

"It sure as hell wasn't any 'little stroll through the mountains.' It may have been seen as an adventure to some but anyone who thought that must not have had the slightest conception of what two weeks of heavy rain would have done to us. We never in the world would have gotten out alive. *We* didn't have any helicopters to come along and pick us off the mountaintops. It was hard work and the General felt very deeply responsible for getting everybody out of there alive, it was on his shoulders.

"At one point General Sibert was saying that he couldn't walk so fast and Stilwell took him aside where people couldn't hear him, but I overheard. Stilwell said, 'Well, goddammit, you *have* to walk that fast even if your legs do hurt or by God you're not going to get out of here, Si. . . you *are* going to walk that fast!' And after that, when we got the ponies, Sibert wouldn't ride. He was a Major General and he wasn't going to be put in the position that he couldn't keep up with the rest of us. In the end, his legs actually got better. That's how Stilwell held the group together, by his drive, his courage, his determination, and his singleness of purpose. Nobody could head him off."

May 14: Tim Sharpe

Captain John Grindlay: "The next day the trail was often along cliffs and huge blocks of sandstone, often crossing tumbling rocky streams and rivers with clear water, and others with pools in them. No signs of elephant dung today.

"This is the trail built in 1918 from India to suppress the rebellion of the Kuki tribes who revolted at being conscripted for labor in France in World War I. It had just been made ready to bring troops and horses out of Burma. There have been only six people out on it before us from

Burma.

"We halted for the noon rest from twelve to three by a lovely rocky stream and I had a nap by a waterfall. After the break we were on a very steep trail with alternate dense jungle and open dense tall jungle grass patches. We had a splendid view of the Chindwin and the Uyu entering it. For the last hour of a stiff climb we had a drenching tropical thunderstorm.

"Suddenly, at thirty-nine hundred feet--Homalin was four hundred and fifty feet--we came to a palm-thatched village of about six huts. A Mr. Sharpe, secretary to the Maharajah of Manipur, was there with eight ponies, having been sent there by the Indian government to meet us at the request of Major General Lewis Brereton. Brereton had received the last message sent out on our radio before it was smashed when we abandoned the jeeps at Nanantun! Brereton at that time was scheduled to lead the 10th U.S. Airforce based in India under General Stilwell.

"Sharpe had more ponies and bearers back along the trail, he said, and food at each halt for us. There was much rejoicing, particularly at the news that there were only five to eight more days of walking ahead.

"Two pigs were brought in by the Chin porters and were killed and the meal was started while we dried our clothes. It rained again and our crowd ate and slept in two huts, all thirty-nine of us! Five of us were under my blanket.

"Yesterday I found I had overt bilateral conjunctivitis, or pink-eye. Miserable with pus, sticking lids, and the smoke in the hut. I was put in charge of our group from now on to head our column."

Lieutenant Robert Belknap: "Once we were up in the mountains it was constantly up and down, down and up through terrible country, slipping and sliding as we got higher, and then it began to rain and get cold. I'll never forget the pace we had to do. We were supposed to do twenty miles a day, but actually up there, we were lucky if we made two miles an hour. But Stilwell was right to force us, and of course to keep going was better than not going and we *had* to get out.

"When we were met by a British District Officer--Sharpe was his name--he had some ponies and porters. But we still had to walk for a week or more, and that was the hardest part of it. It rained and the trail was so slippery and steep that we were crawling on our hands and knees.

"We went along through those mountains always thinking there were only a few more days to go. I remember coming up on to one of the highest hills and there was still jungle there and the next thing we came to was a little village just like something out of the Alps."

Colonel Davidson-Houston: "The day after we crossed the Chindwin, at six thousand feet near the top, we came to a village of grass huts where we were met by Sharpe. He was the assistant political agent of Manipur. Stilwell, his aide-de-camp, General Sibert, Castens, 'Beaver' Barton, and I dined

with him at the headman's hut.

"Case, the missionary, was given a suckling pig which kept escaping from him. He finally had to slaughter it himself when nobody else would."

Captain Paul Jones: "The next day after we crossed the Chindwin and started up into the mountains, we met up with a guy named Tim Sharpe. He was the Secretary of the Maharaja of Manipur. He had been sent out by the Indian Government to meet us.

"We were sure glad to meet up with him. The conversation went something like this: Stilwell: 'Why did you think we'd be coming out this way?' Sharpe looked at him and said, 'When we got the message that you were walking out and we were asked to do what we could to help, I asked your people down in Delhi what kind of a man you were. They said you were really smart and knew your stuff, so I thought if that was really so, this was the way a smart man would come.' Sharpe had made no mistake. He gambled and brought everything with him, and he hit us right on the button.

"I have the dubious distinction of being the one guy who got drunk on that walk! Sharpe asked four or five of us--Stilwell, Sibert, some others and me--(I don't know why he asked me) to have dinner with him that night in his bamboo hut. Sounds fancy, it wasn't really, but for us it was. To have anything to eat was fancy by then and one of the things he had with him was Indian rum. I had had Jamaican rum before which--in reasonable quantities--wasn't too strong, but this Indian rum was something different.

"The only thing I had to drink out of was the aluminum pan I carried, that was *it*. Like a puppy with his food dish, that was *my* dish. So Sharpe poured a large amount of rum into that dish and I drank it all. I didn't realize what the effect would be not having had much to eat for some time and I promptly got high as a kite!

"After we'd had supper it started to rain and we had to walk up a little hill to where we were going to sleep and I kept stumbling and slipping and falling down. All the Old Man said was, 'Slippery, isn't it?' He knew perfectly well what was the matter with me but he just laughed about it. Boy, everything happened in the jungle, got rescued and drunk all in one day! I had a terrible night and was drinking water from every stream we came to the next day."

Peter Tennant, FAU: "The day after we got up into the mountains we were met by coolies sent out by the Indian government to meet us and to help us carry our gear. From a psychological point of view, I experienced an interesting reaction. From here on, this was all going to be anti-climax. I had been rather enjoying the toughness, the slight uncertainty, and here we were with masses of people to carry our stuff, the British Raj was coming to the rescue. It would all be tame from then on! Relatively speaking, it was. I missed the challenge."

Tom Owen, FAU: "You know, it's amazing how far the British influence extended. This was British Burma and India, you know. This was *The Raj*, you felt that the Raj would keep you going, keep you from getting into trouble. Don't forget, we were British!"

May 15: Crossing into India

Captain John Grindlay: "The next morning it was seven-thirty before we got off. Now the Chin porters were all around us, about a hundred of them. Seagrave at the end of our column on one of the eight ponies led the way with the invalid brigade, mostly footsore older men and the two tired girls, Than Shwe and Esther. We went up a very stiff trail largely through jungle grass with a marvellous view of the Chindwin and Uyu valley. We could see our entire course of the past week."

Martin Davies, FAU: "We crossed the Chindwin and climbed and climbed for days it seemed. I can remember looking back and seeing the Chindwin still there below us and we could see all the way over into Burma. It was a very beautiful sight but it seemed as if we had made no progress at all."

Bill Duncumb, FAU: "Our last view of the river looking down from the top of the mountains was spectacular. I don't know how to put it into words, the beauty of it. It was something I had never come across before."

Fabian Chow, Chinese war correspondent: "One day when everybody was resting, I climbed to the top of a hill, a mountain that was not very far away. I was greatly rewarded at the top.

"It was sunset, beautiful clouds of different hue. I felt the magnificence of nature, the heavens so wide open like it opened your heart wide. I never saw such a beautiful sight in my life."

"I had never experienced this before in all my life and I have never had the feeling since. Everything was so wide open and we are so small with our troubles. We are nothing, we are a small piece of the whole thing.

"It lifts you up into the sky. That was really something. For that experience I am truly thankful. From that I gained something really which I will never lose and never gain again."

Colonel Davidson-Houston: "Once over the ridge we left the tropics behind. The Naga porters were like red Indians. The headmen wore red, white, and black blankets. They gave us all ZU to drink, a beverage made of rice and yeast.

"In these hills there would be the occasional break in the jungle which provided magnificent views of woody ranges rising above and around us and the last view of the green plains of Burma stretching behind us beyond the Chindwin.

"We came to open woodland with bracken and wild strawberries and white rhododendrons.

But we were drenched and shivering in the hut at night. It was cold, and damp on the mud floor so we built fires and dead banana leaves served as bedding. The stalks, where they had been broken off, gave off a faintly luminous light in the dark.

"In this wooden house an impudent fowl entered and interfered with the slumber of our member of the Burma Navy, Hughie Campbell. The fowl shortly thereafter perished of concussion."

Captain John Grindlay: "After crossing the shoulder of a mountain we came to a hot, sunny, and shadeless plain. We arrived then at a jungle grass-thatched village on a bare knoll and had the usual tea and crackers, but this time also some cheese and tinned milk. Since last night we have been on full rather than half rations.

"The village was full of bearers of the Kuki-Taunghul-Naga tribe. There were only a few women and boys, the latter nude. The men are tall and healthy looking. They have high narrow cheekbones and mongoloid eyes, and nose and hair is shaved about the sides with a lock behind. They wear wampum necklaces and bright Indian pattern woolen blankets, worn as ponchos, which give them an American Indian air. They have pierced ears with heavy agate balls in loops hanging from the lobe of each ear. We left our Chin bearers here and these folk strapped on the luggage in their fashion.

"In the next two miles we climbed the rest of two thousand feet, crossing the ridge at six thousand feet. On the other side, we entered India."

Ruby, Nurse: "I often could not sleep at night and in the mountains my lips were chapped from the cold and my legs swelled up so that I had to ride part of the time. Sergeant Chambers taught me to smoke cigarettes, he felt so sorry for me. When it rained, the mud was up to our knees and there were many leeches.

"We were hungry a good deal of the time but we were used to having less food than the Americans--no sweets, things like that. We bathed in the streams whenever we could, we did each others hair. But I never thought it was much fun and I didn't ever feel quite well.

"Since the officers were the only ones who had maps, we never knew where we were except when General Stilwell told us we were in India."

Ma Graung, Nurse: "Sometimes we very tired when we climb the hills, they not like Burma. It's very high mountains we had to climb on our hands and knees sometimes."

Malang Kaw, Nurse: "When we were very tired and climbing those hills, suddenly Hla Sein and Ruby would sing and we would forget our exhaustion. They were my closest friends. I remember many of our fellow workers; that is, I could recall their faces but I have forgotten their names."

Ruth, Nurse: "All the time we are walking, you mustn't stop until General Stilwell blow the whistle. We used to sing when we go down hill but when we go up, he would flag his white handkerchief to have us stop singing because he didn't want us to run out of breath. No one must drop out of the column. I didn't like the walking much but if you set your mind, you can do anything."

Than Shwe, Nurse: "The walk itself was very hard. We walked on jungle tracks that were not only muddy, but slippery and thickly infested with leeches, blood-sucking leeches that enjoyed a good deal of our blood. The scars of their septic ulcers are still intact on me.

"We girls found it hard to walk because we were used to open sandals. Sometimes we walked across skulls of refugees who had left Burma ahead of us. The sweet FAU boys and their sense of humor kept our spirits lively. O'Hara and Grindlay kept our minds off our difficulties with their amusing jokes. The nurses were always well respected and given first choice of the rations.

"They were golden days for me, they were unforgettable, they remain an eternal rock down the lane of my memory. But I would like to add one more of my personal feeling which brought tears down our cheeks. It was the time when "Uncle Joe," (General Stilwell) announced that we have reached the Indian border. It saddened the hearts of the Burmese girls that we had left behind "Golden Burma," our mother-land. We could not control our emotions and tears rushed out of our eyes."

Colonel Robert Williams: "Our bearers were a new type, fierce looking with a crest of hair down the middle of the head which was shaved on both sides. They looked like Navajos. All had long bladed *dakhs*, some had spears. Occasionally these men are headhunters. They had rice terraces running up the mountain sides and a head planted in a field makes a better rice crop.

"They carried tremendous loads suspended from small neck-yokes and woven forehead bands. As they went, they chanted low, like someone using two strings of a bass viol. They carried everything, musette bag, rifles, and tommy-guns, but we kept our pistols and canteens.

"When we crossed the border out of Burma we had a ration of British rum that night. . . OK!

"We kept the same bearers all through the mountains. It was much cooler so the noon halt was shortened to a couple of hours. As we went along, the headman or the chief of a village would suddenly appear in front of us dressed in his red blanket, with a spear in his hand, a bottle of rice beer in the other. He would select the right spot, spread his blanket, and his satellites would produce more beer and low bamboo stools. Then General Stilwell had to sit down with as many of *his* satellites as there were stools for, and everyone in the whole column had a mouthful of beer. Rice beer is milky white with an occasional kernel of rice in it. It's a sour beer and most refreshing but these beer halts became a damn nuisance--the farther into the mountains we went the oftener they occurred--and as they never came at our regular halt, they delayed us."

Sergeant Paul Gish: "It would really surprise me sometimes when we were walking along through those mountain trails and all of a sudden out of nowhere there'd be a bunch of natives. One incident in the hill country stood out. When we went through one of the tribal villages, they had this custom they would put out the red carpet for Stilwell as leader. It was a hot day and they had this rice wine and we all had some and I had too much. I remember thinking just this one little glass of wine in this hot weather won't hurt me, even though I'm no drinker. Suddenly I was lightheaded and I thought, 'My God, do you suppose I'm drunk?'"

Fabian Chow, Chinese war correspondent: "One morning they passed a jug around and I did not know it had rum in it. So I had one cup and my face turned all red and I felt all hot. I kept on walking and walking, feeling very funny!"

May 16: Village of Makiang

Sergeant Chambers: "When we got across the Chindwin and hit the highlands into India, the monsoon started and the trails were slick and sliding and muddy and it was rough. It had already gotten cold, hitting almost a frost area at seven thousand feet after being in the tropics.

"We walked and walked for days. We'd get over one range and look over and see another just as high ahead. We'd walk all one day and part of another before we'd even reach that range, and I felt like we'd never get there. It was real disheartening. I had no trouble keeping up the pace of 105, but that slowed down after a while, we couldn't do that in the mountains. That was really rough."

Captain Donald O'Hara: "It was a killing pace, I'll never forget it. An hour's walk then a ten minute rest. We were supposed to cover four miles an hour at that pace but I doubt if we ever did. It was a killing pace but Stilwell was right to force us.

"I didn't like it that we had to walk so many paces a minute. We were always getting backed up or having to wait for somebody, then hurry to catch up. It was hard work, no two ways about it and we were under tension to keep moving all the time."

Colonel Benjamin Ferris: We had a tough enough time in the mountains even without the monsoon. We'd go down a hill and there'd be another ahead of us higher than the one we'd just climbed. "Will this never end?" was the sort of feeling I had. But it was a question of survival and we just kept walking along."

Captain John Grindlay: "Down and down this morning, down the deepest chasm of a rocky river I have ever seen. Then up and up the steepest, longest, hottest, grinding trail to our noon halt. The men all nearly collapsed, several of the girls were very weary and I had to make them wait for the

ponies.

"Coming out on the trail were several villagers, two with bright red wool ponchos and holding a bottle each and offering a drink. These were the Naga headmen offering hospitality, rice beer. The British Raj gives these men a rifle and a red blanket, both highly prized.

"We stopped at a grass hut and they made tea, then Mr. Sharpe brought some other natives bearing a gourd of bubbling white rice beer. I got a bit of a jag on this with Jack Belden.

"That afternoon we camped in a narrow jungle gorge in four long thatched huts. We were crowded together onto platforms of rough branches, only five branches wide. The twigs and knobs on those branches were hell. We were all cramped and cursing. My eyes were still terrible."

Captain Fred Eldridge: "The ethnic groups stayed pretty much together and looked after each other. The Americans had the food and fed everybody. We had enough food, we never actually ran out though we were pretty close to it. I never felt hungry. Whenever we could we picked up food, a pig or two and some chickens. Once we butchered a caribou.

"Every time we stopped I had to get the cooks to get working. I was directly under Pinky Dorn and working under Pinky was not easy under the best of circumstances. So I never got a chance to buddy around with anybody. I was too darned busy keeping out of Pinky's way !"

Captain Richard Young: "At times there in the mountains when it was raining you would climb one step and slide back two. At times it was a little bit strenuous, but I thought it was a nice hike. It wasn't really all that bad. We didn't go all that far, maybe fourteen, fifteen miles a day for fourteen days. You did sometimes wonder how long it was going to take to reach civilization, but I wasn't *worried*, we just kept going on, day by day. The countryside was beautiful, the greenness of it and it was so beautiful looking back down from the mountains at the Chindwin down below."

May 17: Pushing; "The Flea Stop"

Colonel Robert Williams: "Once we spent the night in one of their villages. I went ahead to see if it was habitable, being mostly concerned about ticks which could cause relapsing fever. Four of the houses had been cleared for us, dirt floors swept clean. I couldn't find any ticks or bed-bugs. The hill-men were so friendly, had gone to so much trouble for us, and on top of that mountain there wasn't any other place flat enough for a camp. So I recommended that we use the houses and the General seemed delighted at the added experience.

"The houses were twenty by thirty feet square with hewn teak logs decorated with carvings of rows of geometric men six or eight feet tall. It looked like Alaskan carving. We were above the timber line but in front of each house several dead trees with their principal leaves left on were planted. Some of the trees were carved, representing offerings the head of the house had made to

various devils. These people are animists.

"As the column came in, the villagers arrived with armloads of dead grass, blades about six feet long. These were spread on the floor for sleeping. This was very thoughtful, only something--the grasses or the floor--was full of fleas. As usual, I didn't feel them bite but we were all covered with the marks and our bedding had fleas in it for several days. The only comment the General made about it in his diary was that it was a noisy night with bugs!"

Martin Davies, FAU: "A few days after we crossed the Chindwin we came to a Naga village and we wanted somewhere to sleep. It had been raining, it was really sloppy muck and we were cold and wet. Someone had gone ahead and gotten the hospitality of the village, which was a little bit daunting, because we had heard about their head-hunting and they'd all been turned out of their huts for us. We felt that it was a little bit of an imposition and they might not like it and they might come back in the middle of the night or something. But we were assured that it would be all right.

"Inside the hut we built a big fire. It was fantastic in a hut with a sort of peaked roof, and we settled down. Lulu and I stretched out in front of the fire, as near to it as we could, and we were really beautifully comfortable after the terrible day of walking in the rain. We settled down to a happy night, BUT the place was full of *fleas*! So we didn't sleep at all and it was not at all conducive to romance!

"Of course we had our attachments with the nurses and Lulu was mine and I was attached to her all through that time. But I think there was a side of me that was definitely naive. I was mature in humanitarian or philosophical development rather than physical, and in fact Lulu and I were still virgins at the end of it all."

Major Felix Nowakowsky: Rain! My goodness, it rained in one of the villages where we stopped after we met Sharpe. It rained us right out of those little huts, those little grass shacks they put us up in and we all got fleas. They'd get into the folds of your clothes and you couldn't find them. The next day Sibert and I took all our clothes off--I didn't have any underwear--and we spread them out in the sun and when the fleas got hot they jumped off.

"Then we came to a village that was right out of some weird story-book. The houses were made of thatch, they had totem poles out front and then in the entrance--a sort of hallway--there were skulls stacked up. They were animal skulls but there were spaces between them and maybe they had taken away the human heads from those empty spaces because they *were* headhunters.

"I had the fright of my life at that village. I had a call of nature in the middle of the night and I went outside. It was dark and something cold hit me in the wrong spot! It was a pig! They're scavengers, they were half starved and that pig just scared me to death!

"In one of the villages we had to sleep on a platform. The middle of the room had a fireplace

with a hole in the ceiling. You'd think you were in an Indian tepee. We slept on those platforms because--I learned later--the place was full of snakes. So you slept off the floor on the platforms covered with straw and that straw was also full of fleas, everybody got the fleas!"

Captain Fred Eldridge: "Sleeping in one of the *bashas* in a Naga village one night at about three o'clock in the morning we woke up and these Nagas had torches lit and they had their long Naga cross-bows and their dahs. They're like bolos. O'Hara came in and said, 'Jesus Christ! Let's get out of here, they're going to kill us all!' What they were doing was they were going hunting and they were still milling around getting their things. It was a little scary there for a while and O'Hara was sure they were going to kill us!"

Captain John Grindlay: "We climbed up steadily for hours and our trail of yesterday was easy to see, winding over the ranges behind. The trees here were mainly firs.

"At one of the villages the usual Naga delegation came out to meet us with rice beer. The village was on a knife ridge and ahead we could see the Salween-like gorge and the trail up the opposite side where it wound up to a peak, our trail for the whole next day.

"After the beer we went down a long descending trail to the bottom of a pit then up again on some stiff cliffs, rice paddies beginning to appear, tiny ones on the lower slopes. Then up and up through a pine forest where there were patches of corn being cultivated.

"We came to a village called Omphin half-way up a ridge from which we could see other villages and valleys and mountains, an Alpine setting with huge sheer mountain backdrops, thousands of feet high.

"This was about our most fascinating stop. The houses were of upright planks with straw thatch roofs. They were clean and dry. The front of the houses were bow-shaped, forming a sort of ante-room, the boards carved heavily with phalluses and women's breasts. In the front of the houses the trees were carved with much of the same. The trees were planted in rows to count the number of their big kills and the dead were planted in mounds in front of the trees.

"We were assigned in groups in the houses; British in one, Chinese in one, American officers in one, men in another, and our unit in one. There were short-coupled and rickety pigs. Chin dogs with cropped ears and tails were rampant, eating all feces and garbage. Eric had one brush his ass as he was behind our house.

"We bedded on grass or on benches. Five of us slept on a slightly sloping shelf and the others were rolled into me by morning. There were fleas and we were scratching all night! "

Jack Croft, British Officer Cadet: "In one of the huts where we spent the night, the chickens kept coming in. Eventually Hughie Campbell bashed one of them. Colonel Davidson-Houston was very

amused. He made some comment to the effect that he had never before seen an impudent fowl perish of concussion after daring to interfere with the sleep of an Officer of the Burma Navy!"

Peter Tennant, FAU: "Some of the places we slept were much more successful than others. One night everybody went to sleep in what I suppose would be a barn and it was full of straw and the fleas were *frightful*! I went outside very early on and slept out in the open on a hard polished wooden seat and got what sleep I could there without the fleas."

Tun Shein, Seagrave Unit: "In one of the villages we went into a house and there were *fleas* all over the place. I didn't sleep in there that night. Up in front of the house was a little plank shelf and I slept on that.

"When we got the ponies, they asked me if I wanted to ride, they thought I was tired. So I picked one of the big ones and got on it. It was early morning and the dew was falling and there was a nice breeze coming up. In a few minutes I began to feel drowsy, and I said, 'No, no, I'll fall off the pony if I ride. I'd rather walk!'"

George Parsons, FAU: "The hill people, the Nagas, had thatch-top huts in their villages. We used one one night for sleeping and afterwards we rather wished we hadn't. It had been raining and we built a huge fire and we were rather looking forward to the coziness. But it was absolutely full of fleas and they put an end to that. We were scratching for days afterwards."

Martin Davies, FAU: "Whenever it rained we became greatly troubled with leeches. Seagrave and Eric were badly affected. I didn't suffer much myself except that one night I got one on my back. You can't stop them bleeding and the back of my shirt was a mass of dried blood. You didn't even know they were on you. I was amazed at the way they travel. I always thought they crawled like worms, but they seem to go end over end, very fast, and they even disappear down the lace-holes of your boots."

Tom Owen, FAU: "Eric should have been down in the dumps if anyone should. He was terribly bitten by leeches, he had awful festering sores all over his legs and they let him ride one of the ponies because of his condition. And there was an awful place that was full of fleas and we got bitten by red ants too.

"We came to a village where there was a tree with heads hanging in it. They looked like Chinese to us. The story was that after the missionaries had worked so hard to get the natives off this particular gig, the British offered a reward of a few rupees for any Japanese heads they could get. The Nagas were having a hard time telling the difference between Japanese and Chinese!"

Captain Paul Jones: "Sharpe moved some of the natives out of their houses. We were under cover but that was about all. They were full of fleas which kept us from sleeping. The people were friendly and so were the chickens and pigs. We finally had to get bamboo poles to drive them out, they kept coming in all night, they were used to sleeping there. I can tell you we really itched for weeks after that, it was really something!

"But one night they had put up a brand new building for us. I went ahead with the coolies to get ready for the crowd when they would be coming in. It had brand new woven mats, not a mark on them. Here came Nowakowsky with his muddy boots and I asked him to take them off and he gave me hell. Then Sibert came in--Nowakowsky was his aide--and he fussed at me about it too, so I apologized to them both. About five minutes later here was Sibert ordering everybody to take off their boots before they came in! I guess we were all tired and a bit cross."

Paul Geren, Seagrave Unit: "Every time my aching legs pulled me up a steep ascent, I heartily nominated for somebody's department of understatement that euphemizer who named these seven thousand feet peaks "hills." The monsoon broke on us, catching us without shelter most of the time, and substituting cold and wet for the hot and dry agonies of the week before, as if discomfort wished to show how versatile she was.

"We awoke several mornings to find clots of blood on our bodies and clothing with great fat leeches fastened to us. Two nights we slept in the villages of the friendly Nagas who people the mountains on the Indian side, but one took fleas and lice for his bedfellows as the price for protection against the monsoon."

Colonel Benjamin Ferris: "The people in that part of the world live in little villages, each with a boss. Nobody trespasses from one village to another. Case would arrange for guides and bearers from one village to the next. We would have had a tremendous amount of difficulty without Case's arrangements. He knew everything, he looked after us, he arranged to pay for the food and the bearers.

"I didn't fear at any time, I was confident of getting out. There was excellent discipline. You did what you were supposed to do, you followed orders, that's what military training is for.

"I didn't suffer any physical disability. I stayed in good health though I lost about fifteen pounds. We all lost weight. Goodness, you perspired terrifically in those jungles. I was careful about what I ate, only vegetables that had been cooked, and I drank only boiled water. We boiled water every morning to fill our canteens. We never stopped for a mid-day meal, we had just two meals a day, morning and night.

"There were lovely jacaranda trees along the way but they have nasty leeches over there. You would walk along the damp places and these little things stand up--they're an inch or so long--and they wave like they're sensing for you. There are just hundreds of thousands of them, scads of them,

and people got them on their legs and would get what are called Naga Sores. They were just the devil, they wouldn't heal.

"At one delightful spot up on a hill, we were given a house for the night. There were hard bamboo beds there and the smoke was acrid and we just had our blankets and we slept in our clothes to keep warm. Before we went to sleep a pig came in and went to sleep under the bed. Chickens came in and roosted overhead and I never itched so much in all my life! The fleas from the pig got into my blanket, but I couldn't throw it away, it was all I had. There were just loads of fleas and bugs and ants in it and I have fair skin and they just *loved* me. We put our blankets out in the sun the next day to make them jump off. It makes me itch even now just to think about it! Outside of that I didn't have any trouble in the world. I was fortunate that I never got malaria or dysentery and that was because I was careful about what I ate."

Captain Donald O'Hara: "As for the leeches, you looked at the guy ahead of you as you walked along and you picked them off him and you hoped the guy behind you was picking them off you. Normally we stopped about every hour but one time we were told not to stop, THE LEECHES WERE COMING! They looked like blades of grass just waving with them, they were even falling off the trees, but you couldn't feel them when they hit you. They even went through the eyelets on your boots, but the scenery was so beautiful, I would like to have taken it slower so that I could enjoy it, but we had to keep moving."

Captain Paul Jones: "Between the villages our column was walking along strung out one after the other, it was one long line. Your contacts with anyone else were very brief in the morning and in the evening when you were pooped. You didn't go around socializing and there weren't any bars to go to! What little rest we did have was at noon. We were always stretched out in a line, even when we were eating.

"One bunch of bearers would go with us to a certain village then another bunch would take over. They would dicker through their chiefs on how much they were going to be paid and whether in opium or rupees. I guess we didn't have any opium on the Walkout, we paid them in rupees, but I used opium to pay the ones who were working for me on the railroad during the campaign.

Sergeant Chesley: "When we got up into the mountains, it was quite comfortable, neither too hot nor too cold. I had slept out often when I was a kid, but up in the mountains most of the time we didn't have to. There were these native *bashas* like sheds or lean-tos. We did sleep out one night, a beautiful moonlit night. But it wasn't just at night. Day or night this was a remarkably beautiful country. I found one of the most intensely striking things was the deep jungle with the flame-of-the-forest trees spread here and there, that was quite a sight. And there were strange butterflies with

long feathery wings. It was a paradise kind of country.

"I never missed too many things and I wasn't particularly troubled by leeches. But O'Hara had a tough time. He was allergic to rice and rice was about all we had to eat. I guess he would have starved to death if it hadn't been for the nurses who every once in a while would find some wild potatoes or something he could eat.

"Sometimes in the native villages we would see cases of so-called tropical ulcers on the natives and since we had plenty of medical supplies, I felt we could have stopped and cleaned up those ulcers and at least gotten a treatment under way. But Stilwell made us keep going and I suppose he was right. But idealistically it hurt me not to give medical assistance to those people. If I could have, I would have. I liked the people, they were sort of delightful people, almost childlike. In the mountain villages it was interesting how much like our American Indians they were, they even had the red blankets."

Captain Richard Young: "I don't remember feeling hungry though I lost weight, maybe ten or fifteen pounds. I didn't have much to lose, but I've seen pictures of us when we got out and I looked pretty skinny. But I stayed fit, I didn't get sick or have any discomforts, except one or two leeches.

"But Nowakowsky! For some reason he attracted them, and it was awfully funny watching him pull them off. *Every* time we would come to a stop, he had to pull those leeches off.

"There were a lot of different insects, so many different kinds. The General's pastime was catching these little insects and putting them in his matchbox after he'd caught them in his big white handkerchief. One of them had an almost circular wing and he'd take it out and study it over and over"

Tun Shein, Seagrave Unit: "Somehow I was struck by Dick Young, the way he stuck to the Old Man. All the time he was next to him and seeing to him. I think the General had a close feeling for him."

Eric Inchboard, FAU: "Along the way you remember things like sand-flies and all the noise, the noise of the jungle. It's surprising how noisy it is. One night when we stopped under shelter, the beds were made of branches . . . the sheer discomfort of that.

"We were too busy to miss things. We sang in the evening with the nurses and this did as much as anything to boost morale. Every night we had a song-service, just a little service at the end of the day and you got the distinct feeling that you were part of something."

Lulu, Nurse: "We had prayers in the evening but mostly we were playng and singing and joking with each other, that's why we don't worry about what's coming. All of us were like sisters together and each of us had a boy-friend. Those FAU boys were like our brothers and they look after us too. It

was jolly with them with their jokes and good spirits.

"If we reach a river we fill our bottles and wash our clothes and we washed the boys' clothes too. They were *very* dirty, they had been so busy bringing in the wounded to the Unit that they had no time to wash their clothes.

"We heard one time that one of the American officers didn't think that we nurses should be taken along on the trek out, that we would be in the way. But Dr. Seagrave say if the girls don't go, *he* won't go, so we went. Later in the mountains that officer got sick and one of the nurses took care of him. Later at Gauhati he sent us all clothes and presents!"

George Parsons: "Even after walking for several days, when we got up in the mountains we could look back and still see the Chindwin. My memory of walking after that is chiefly one of having "a merrie, merrie little time," and one of the people who did the most to keep our spirits up was Bill Duncumb. He was a great Gilbert and Sullivan fan and so was I. We used to go through the whole repertoire and do bits of H.M.S. Pinafore and get the nurses to be 'his cousins and his uncles and his aunts' and that was really great fun.

"We identified ourselves with the Seagrave Unit though we had a strong bond with the FAU, of course. Grindlay and O'Hara were very much a part of the Unit too. They belonged to the American military but they walked and ate with us. They felt more comfortable with us, that's where the fun was. Grindlay had considerable affection for Seagrave, having worked with him during the campaign.

"One of the difficulties was water. It was still the end of the dry season, the real monsoon rains hadn't started, and one day when it was very hot, we'd all run out of water. We came to a little mountain stream which we all drank eagerly and Barton, the big bearded chappie, said, 'I wouldn't swap this for all the beer in the world!'

"Somewhere along the way Tom Owen found one of those Swan bottles, those big glass bottles. He tied a knot in somebody's vest and he filled it and slung it over his shoulder.

"I didn't really suffer at all. It *was* hard work, but we were used to that, and in many ways it was a lark. Every so often I used to take time out from the everyday business of getting along to think how attractive the country was, what a very beautiful country. I hadn't known much about it before since we had supposedly been going to China. Burma was very much more the story-book mysterious East than China ever was. China was really a very prosaic sort of country."

Bill Duncumb, FAU: "It wasn't any Sunday school picnic going through those mountains, it was hard work and a trying experience. There was no time to sit down and yarn with folk, we were concerned to keep going. We didn't talk much, we saved our breath for climbing.

"We knew we were in danger. The monsoon was coming and General Stilwell was fully aware

of the danger of that if we should get caught in the mountains when it broke. I didn't know it at the time, but I learned later in India how devastating it would have been.

"We had no contact with the other groups, we were in our own little sub-groups. Most of the time we were going single file. Doc Seagrave was in charge of us and he was our contact with the higher-ups, right up to General Stilwell.

"Seagrave was a great character. He kidded folks and the nurses called him 'daddy.' He had his own way of doing things and we were part of that family. He had a strong personality and the FAU belonged more to him as personifying the whole Unit than to the FAU itself. I admired terrifically the way he kept going. He was just in terrible condition by the time we got out but he just kept going. Even though he was very tired and very ill, he shrugged it off and kept going.

"I didn't get sore feet or any other physical disabilities though I did develop some Naga sores and I was pretty hard to feed when we got out."

Major Nowakowsky: "Seagrave's feet were in terrible shape, he got terrible jungle sores. *I* didn't get any leeches, but I had pricked myself in the brambles and it went untreated and I got a jungle ulcer on my leg. I never did get dysentery and after those first two days of walking in the stream which were tough, I was in perfect condition all the way through. I was pleased and surprised that I never had any foot trouble like some of the others. My feet stayed in excellent condition, I never got any blisters, no pain, nothing. But I felt sorry for those who did, like Seagrave. He was in terrible shape by the time we got out.

"We weren't much interested in the scenery, we were more interested in putting one foot in front of the other. After a day's hike everyone was so tired they just laid down and went to sleep, that was it, period. Over all it was a strenuous walk, particularly for people who were not used to walking up and down mountains.

"I think the Americans came off pretty well, they weren't laggards in any way. And the Seagrave group, they were used to that kind of country, they lived in that country, they were used to the heat and mountains and climbing. The nurses, that was part of their life, so they came off better than we did. Those girls were all in excellent condition, except Than Shwe. I don't know how they got her through. I had little contact with the British. The only time we came together was at the mess.

"The Chinese troopers walked at the end of the column as a rear-guard to keep the porters in line and to see that neither they nor the mule-drivers took off with their loads of food and equipment. That was why they accompanied the party that went overland with the mules while the others went down the Uyu river on the rafts."

Tom Owen, FAU: "While we were walking along we used to sing blasted Gilbert and Sullivan. Bill

Duncumb led us in 'I'm a modern major-general,' and all this nonsense. The nurses sang Negro spirituals and honestly, it was marvellous for us. We taught them to sing 'Dan Magrew,' but we heard that Paul Geren disapproved because he said we were teaching them incorrect English!

"We saw some beautiful birds, we got very fond of them. One of them sang in a descending fall, another sang like the Colonel Bogey march. We learned to listen for these things. We heard a lot of monkeys though we never saw any. We were going through fantastic country where we saw some very feathery butterflies, ones that looked like down and had very beautiful white wings.

"Then there were the Naga porters in the mountains with their funny seats. They had little planks of wood that were fastened on with strings to a girdle so that when they sat down, these little seats swung into place automatically. They'd slap their backsides and sit down. It was neat!

"There was an awful tropical storm one night, terrible flashes of lightning, but we weren't really frightened. And we weren't frightened as we walked along. Of course we wondered how close the Japs were, though in fact they weren't close at all."

Lieutenant Robert Belknap: "One night we were given some huts to sleep in which turned out to be a mistake. They were full of fleas.

"Then going down a steep trail from there I spotted a huge snake in a tree right beside me at eye level though he was way up in the tree. The ground dropped off about a hundred feet below the trail. Those trees were somehow curiously surrealistic with dramatic lighting on them.

"It wan't all bad. For instance, there was the simple pleasure of something to eat on the rare times when there *was* something to eat, even though sometimes it was pretty strange food. Most of the time you put being hungry out of your mind, but when the food came you felt pretty hungry, all right. I know I lost a lot of weight. I went from two hundred and ten pounds to a hundred and forty.

"And there would be times when we sat around a fire in the evening and the nurses would sing and we would all join in. And sometimes we would just talk. Of course I never talked to Stilwell but on one of these occasions several of us were reminiscing and he joined in. He said he'd heard I came from Yonkers. By then he had found out about most of the people in the group. . . and when I told him my father's name, he said, 'I used to play football with him on the same high-school team. What was your mother's maiden name? Oh, was she Marjory Jackson ? I took her to dances at the Academy once in a while.' Both my parents were dead by then but I learned from my aunt later that in those days everyone in Yonkers called him Warren."

Private Lawrence Short: "We didn't visit too much with the other groups and we didn't associate with the Chinese soldiers, we couldn't talk to them. But we did visit with the Chinese General, General Tseng. He was educated and could speak English, even though he had an accent. We didn't pay too much attention to him as an officer--he was a general in name only--and I was asking him about his men and their discipline which was different from ours. Instead of him answering, General

Stilwell came along and *he* answered. I was quite abashed and I was afraid I had made some sort of mistake even though we was just jokin' with Tseng. I would never have talked to General Stilwell like that. Whatever I said he said it sounded like a good idea. He never put down anybody in front of others, but just the same I was abashed when Stilwell answered, I wasn't used to talkin' to real Generals!

"Of course I had walked all the distance so far because I had gone overland with the mules. Near the end, my arch gave out on me and my laigs cramped up on me and I said, 'I cain't make it, I cain't go any futher,' and the officer in charge said, 'That's tough!' So Chesley came back and bandaged my arch and rigged me up with a crutch and I made it. After a while my arch came back because it was bound up. I guess I wanted to stay alive, and so it came back. I didn't want to be left there. But I've never forgotten, 'that's tough'!

"Once in a while Stilwell would let somebody ride one of the mules and he come over to me and said, 'Short, do you want to ride a while?' He always called me Short, he knew my name, he knew everybody's name. I said, 'No sir, I believe I'll walk all the way, just for the record.' He tapped me on the shoulder and said, 'Damn right, you will.' You never knew what he was goin' to say. I admired him. I would have loved to stay with him."

Lieutenant Tommy Lee: "There wasn't much time to fraternize with anybody. We were too busy with our responsibilities and our thoughts were occupied with getting out. But one morning I did get talking with the muleteers in Yunnanese. Stilwell came up and listened. He could speak Chinese but he couldn't understand what we were saying, and his curiosity provoked him. He asked what we were talking about which was just where did they come from and what were they doing in Tibet before we found them. Stilwell never spoke Chinese on the Walkout but he was obviously intrigued that I could."

Jack Croft, British Officer Cadet: "In the mountains we were often hungry and we knew that we had to keep moving along. Hughie and I found it very interesting mixing with the American section and having discussions with them about their way of life and ours. Having had lots of American friends in Shanghai, Americans were no new identity to me. On the whole, the American soldier was a good chap.

"I had many good chats with Lieutenant Sze. Having both lived in Shanghai, we had lots to yarn about. He was the officer in charge of the Chinese troopers.

"As we made our way along I found that there was a general feeling for the better among the various groups. The British and the Americans and the Indians and others were finding that in a case like this we had better stick together.

"That Sikh officer who was the moaner was the one who, as soon as we received the extra ponies from the District Officer, developed a sudden pain and rode most of the rest of the way! "

Dennis Thompson, Mechanics Oriental: "I wasn't ever hungry though we were fed on a very frugal scale, not on American rations, they didn't have any. When we were checked off, everybody lined up to get the food from one central common place except the Seagrave Unit. They cooked separately. General Stilwell and us ate from one common cooking thing and we lined up sometimes the Americans behind us, sometimes the General may be behind us. We lined up the American way of the mess.

"I was not afraid the Japanese would catch us up for I thought that they were too far behind us. We all felt that we were in it together. It was well organized, there was somebody to feed you and since the General was doing that, that was the main thing. I always thought that I would make it. I don't think that I was so religious as to say that it depended on God, but on the other hand I did not abandon God also."

Fabian Chow, Chinese war correspondent: "I had no trouble walking at the pace the General set. I was in very good condition. I had no bother except that I got tired and my feet hurt, but I considered that as minor, it did not bother me. I was never sick, but I must have lost a lot of weight. But life had been hard in Chungking too, so this did not seem a hardship.

"I did cut my leg on some bamboo. It was okay while we were walking out, but it got infected near the end and very swollen, so I had to ride one of the ponies."

Martin Davies, FAU: "Once when we were going up a winding trail I realized that I could see ahead to where we were going to wind up. In my anxiety to get photographs I thought, 'Here's my chance, I can get ahead of this lot and catch them as they come up.' So I cut across some of the zed bends and went right ahead of Stilwell with my camera. As he came around a corner and up towards me, I took a picture of him. He stopped and said, 'What are you doing here?' and I told him. Fortunately he recognized me and said, 'You should not have been allowed to leave your rank. Get back where you belong and don't get out of line again. You've no business being ahead of me.' That was the message, so I waited and let the rest of them catch me up and I kept my place thereafter. But he wasn't really terrifically angry."

Eric Inchboard, FAU: "One time we saw some mangoes along the trail. Stilwell's instructions were that no one was to drop out of the column, but Tun Shein and I and some other blokes were up in this tree collecting mangoes for the nurses for a bit of a change. Well, Stilwell came storming back--he must have stopped somewhere up the trail --and he *blew*, he blew his top! Soooo, I said, 'Well, look here, old thing, it's quite simple. They're for the nurses.' 'Oh. Okay if they're for the nurses, but hurry up!' and he dashed off. Oh, yes indeed, he had a soft spot for the nurses."

Tommy Lee: "Once I sneaked off to eat some native food and the General caught me coming back.

'Where have you been?' 'I was hungry.' 'You're not supposed to do that.' He was angry at me, but I respected him. He was rough and hard but he meant what he said, he was a real leader."

Sergeant Chambers: "We used to go a zigzag course in the mountains and I cut across like the natives did a couple of times. Then Stilwell said something mild about it, and I knew I should quit doing it. Some of the other fellows did it too, Davies and Belden, and he made them stop too, not to get ahead of him.

"But one time while I was still taking the shortcuts, we'd been in this village where the Naga tribesmen had passed out the rice wine--I never did get any--and one of the little short porters had gotten some. He was all wound up on the stuff, he'd gotten more than his share. He was ahead of me on the trail--it was a steep grade--and he cut across. All of a sudden he lost his footing and he rolled down, pots and pans all over, he rolled down more than fifty feet and he got up just a-laughin' his fool head off. I'll never forget that. He wasn't hurt a bit.

"Once we came to a valley, a really beautiful lush valley. It looked just like there should be a river in it, but there wasn't any. It was somewhere in the dry uplands and there were temples and a bridge just sitting there in the middle of nowhere. It was a completely deserted place, yet there was a bridge sitting there, a perfectly built concrete bridge but no river!

"I noticed a lot of nature along the way and the chattering of monkeys, but only one snake. Other people got leeches but they didn't bother me. And there never was any worry for me about food. I had enough. I only lost five pounds. And I wasn't worried about my endurance."

Jack Belden, American war correspondent: "Sometimes I would go ahead with Stilwell when we were climbing the hills. He could climb the trail just like a monkey, way ahead of everybody. He was standing that trip better than anyone. Somebody didn't like it that I went ahead with him, so after that he told me to stay back with the others."

Major Herbert E. Castens, British Forestry Service officer: "I walked with Stilwell mainly, with the little group of American military he had immediately around him. If I didn't feel like that, I'd drop back somewhere else. I had no regular place in the column. Sometimes I walked with the Burmese nurses, they were all nice little girls. I don't suppose I'd recognize them if I saw them now, but they would probably remember me, they'd remember my beard.

"Actually I didn't know the area at all, it was completely strange to me. It was Case who really acted as our guide and also as interpreter. He spoke all kinds of local dialects. I had no responsibility, I was merely a passenger. In fact, I was rather bored."

Captain Donald O'Hara: "One day I asked permission to start out ahead of the group and go slowly. Stilwell said I could and that Chesley could go with me.

"Chesley had taken a liking to me and I liked him too, so away we went. We weren't supposed to drink any water that hadn't been boiled, but we came to an ice cold stream coming right out of the rock, I mean it was so cold you couldn't put your hand in it. Chesley said he was going to drink some of it and since he knew about these things, it couldn't possibly be contaminated. I said that if he could, then so could I. We both did and we made this solemn pact that we wouldn't tell anybody.

"Well, in a little while we hit another place with a spring and we decided to fill our canteens. We started digging with the canes we walked with and where Chesley was digging, damned if this skull doesn't turn up! Boy, my stomach went right down to here! It's a good thing we didn't drink that water.

"He and I used to bet on anything. We'd say we'd pay off when we got back to civilization, a dollar or a meal or some clothes, that sort of thing. He won so many bets I thought I should have won that one day he said to me, 'Tell you what. You make a bet . . . I don't care what it's about . . . and I'll take the other side so that you can win and that will make you feel better.' Well, we could hear this monsoon rain coming, I mean it was just like a freight train, just sort of roaring close by, heading for us. I said, 'I'll bet you the best dinner ever when we get to civilization in any hotel that you say that within five minutes we're going to get rained on.'

"So he said okay and the rain came just like this, right *at* us and twenty feet from us it stopped just like a water faucet turned off. We didn't get a drop! Chesley nearly died laughing and said, 'You'd just better never bet on *anything!*'"

Peter Tennant, FAU: Walking was a hardship and a struggle in those mountains, it was very tough. It was the first time I had ever been hungry on a sustained basis as we had been very well fed up to the time of our departure. One was certainly weakened by not very good nights.

"One of the things that worried me was being seriously harmed by thirst. One day we found a well filled with the most delectable water and we weren't quite sure if it was safe. I had gotten to the point where I wasn't worried about the risk. I drank and drank and drank and I had no ill effects. One began really to appreciate things like water and I appreciated the local knowledge of the nurses too. They knew all about the forest plants which they gathered. They really stood out.

"Right at the end my skin began to fall away, but otherwise I was all right. I lost a lot of weight but I had no after-effects of ill health. I don't think I ever believed we wouldn't make it. Stilwell gave me the impression of being in command and doing it rather well. I admired him except for that one occasion in the boat."

Martin Davies, FAU: "There were hard times indeed, but we were not downhearted. I think this was partly our age. We didn't mind, we knew we were in the middle of a war out of which we'd be

lucky to come out alive anyway. Walking out was just part of it, and that certainly brought us all together.

"Food was short off and on. I still don't know where it came from. Some we took with us, some we got from the villages. Someone who could speak the local lingo would go to the villages and buy rice or chickens or something. Of course the Americans were carrying a good deal with them.

"There was a thirst the first few days in the mountains. We came to a village where there was a well and we didn't know how polluted it might be. Doc Seagrave said he could see the symptoms of dehydration begining in a lot of us. Since he didn't know what lay ahead, he said the lesser of two evils was to drink the water. And so we did, and we didn't have any bad effects.

"We saw a tree decorated with skulls in one of the villages where the Nagas had all been head-hunters. That supposedly was a thing of the past but we weren't at all sure that it wasn't still the current social practice!"

Sergeant Paul Gish: "I got toughened up as we went along. I found it amazing that up and down those hills I was able to keep up. It was an accomplishment for me, I was proud of myself. It had been tough enough in the stream but this was even tougher, and it was something I wasn't used to.

"There was many a time when you were tired and hungry or too hot or too cold up in the mountains. It looked like fog when we walked through the clouds on top and you'd keep looking to see where you'd end up next.

"We had no flashlights once the batteries gave out, we had no lanterns, just the fires in the evenings. I used to enjoy the nurses' singing those times, it helped to keep your spirits up. We used to think if they could make it, so could we.

"But I don't think there was any night when I didn't wish I was home. What am I doing here? that sort of thing. I wanted to be able to get home so that I could tell them all about it. Then I would think how nice it would be if the folks back home could see it too, because it was so beautiful. Like when we could look back and see the river down below us for so many days. Then you'd go through pretty little valleys and other times it was really beautiful country.

"Then you'd get the feeling you hadn't gotten anywhere after you'd walked for days and you'd look back to see where you'd been and see the river still there. But you couldn't not keep goin' when you'd look back and see those little old nurses trudgin' along.

"I got a couple of leeches and one place we got into bed-bugs and lice. Other than that I didn't have any troubles. My feet held up and I didn't get dysentery. They gave us lectures about cleanliness. Of course we didn't have any latrines, we just went off in the bushes.

"All of us GI's stuck together but of course we knew who the officers were and why. Only Paul Jones was really informal, he didn't make you salute or go in for regulations or stiffness."

Private Lawrence Short: "It's been too long for me to remember what I was thinkin' about as we walked along, but we knew that all that was between us and the Japs was just the marchin' time. As we went along we knew the wet season was startin'. The roughest part was goin' over them mountains.

"We was gettin' short of rations--just ate twice a day--all we had was tea and willy beef. But I never was particularly hungry. I'd just come through the depression and I wasn't used to a great deal to eat. We got pretty tired, but not hungry, more like thirsty in the heat and all, but we wasn't overcome by it. I think I lost about ten or fifteen pounds, that's all.

"I thought it was beautiful country up there in the mountains, but mostly what I thought about was gettin' out of there. 'Course down in Burma I noticed how poor those people was, they was real poor. I thought *we'd* had it pretty bad back home in the depression, but I saw how hard up they was. They didn't even have any soap, they beat their clothes on the stones.

"All the time there in the mountains you could look back and see those little ole Burmese nurses, they was havin' a much worse time than we was. It was harder on the women than it was on us, they had no shoes. I remember their singin' but it didn't make any great impression on me."

Big Bawk, Nurse: "In the mountains we knew we must hurry up, the monsoon was coming, we must get to Imphal. Sometimes on the trail Tun Shein went ahead to a village and got something to eat like potatoes and rice and chicken and pork, whatever he can get. He was quite smart. But we almost starve within a day or two of Imphal. By the last day our food was gone, we only had two biscuits. But my weight always stayed the same and I never got sick."

Major Castens, British Forestry Service Officer: "I don't really know how we managed it. It was hardly the kind of First Class travel I was used to on my tours of the forests before the war. We were more or less dependent on the food we could carry which was a limited amount and shared with strangers. Near the end we just about ran out.

"Two or three days before the end I volunteered to go ahead and try to get relief supplies. I figured I could pull myself together for a couple of days, long enough to do that, but the offer was turned down. Stilwell didn't want to split up the party."

Sergeant Ray Chesley: "At one point, maybe two or three days before the end, things were sort of on the blacker side. Stilwell was greatly worried about running out of supplies. So I made the suggestion. . . I was still in good physical health at that time . . . that there were three or four of us younger men who were in good shape and why didn't he send us ahead. We could push ahead as fast as possible and try to bring back help.

"He refused, first of all because he didn't want to break up the group. If two or three of us

took off there was a fair chance that we'd get lost and then not only would we be *lost*, but there wouldn't be any help coming from that source. He had perfect confidence that help was coming, that it was on the way, that it was only a matter of a day or two. He simply refused to break up the group.

"I, being younger and considerably more foolish, got a little sore about it. He was right of course, but I didn't like it. But I had to take it and I think I grew up a little bit in recognizing that."

May 18: Ukhurul

Captain John Grindlay: "We got up in the dark and hit the trail by 5:15 a.m. going over a ridge that joined the main range and then zigzagged up and over it in a several thousand foot climb on the trail we had seen from the opposite side the day before. The last half was out of pine woods into a bare meadow. Finally rounded the shoulder of the top at seven thousand five hundred feet, then down the windswept other side. Forgot to mention that at the top after the bare stretch, the trail wound back through dense jungle of huge moss covered trees before it came back to the peak. On the other side we were soon halted by the headman of a village with beer. Then we went down and down, passing the village, only stopping to have the beer. Finally arrived at the bottom, banked with rice paddies with rushing irrigation ditches. Stopped on the other side for lunch of tea and biscuits.

"Then on again, up and up. Some could see Ukhurul at the top of the next ridge, the largest village yet. All the rest of the afternoon the trail was good. Outside the village we saw Indian cattle for the first time in the mountains. I talked with the British officers in the group about what we would do when we got to Calcutta.

"Finally at six thousand five hundred feet we reached the top where we entered a village after passing a Naga school. Then we came to a Gharawalli camp and a house, a red-roofed white stucco place. Gharawallis are excellent soldiers like Gurkhas, another hill tribe. They are short and wiry with pleasant faces, they wear a small black sailor-like cap. All the Americans and the British were put up in the house, the Seagrave unit in a rest-house.

"Finally the baggage arrived. The huge bearers were struggling more than usual as they had stopped for beer in their home village. I took a bath in an icy well and the girls washed clothes and dried them by a roaring fire in our house. We had a clinic for feet and we picked fleas off ourselves. We had barbecued steaks of our share of the two miffins that were killed. A miffn looks like a buffalo but it is like beef."

Colonel Davidson-Houston, British Military group: "Twelve to fifteen miles was all we could do this day because of the steepness of the hills. There were lovely valleys and wooded ranges, with oak and pine and at one point I heard a cuckoo. There were terraced rice fields and maize. We passed over wooden foot bridges protected by thatched roofs. The streams were filled with boulders and

there was a cold steady rain.

"When we came in to Ukhrul we were put up in a garrison of a Gurkha detachment. There I shaved off my curly fair beard which I had grown quite fond of!"

Captain Paul Jones: "A great incident happened to me at the town of Ukhrul. I was sent ahead with the bearers again, so I was the first military man to show up. Here were all the village dignitaries, the chiefs in their red robes, up on a bluff about ten feet above the road. I didn't realize who they were but they sure looked colorful from a picture-taking point of view, so I backed off a little way and took a picture of them. Then I bowed and they bowed back and I went in to the town.

"Then here came a detachment of Assam Rifles, about a dozen of them lined up in slap-happy fashion. They all had guns and as I came by, they came to attention and BANG! they fired a volley and I thought that was pretty strange, but I went on.

"When the Boss came in, I said, 'Hey, did you see the big shots up on the bluff? And how about that honor guard with the gun salute?' He said, 'Nope, there weren't any when *I* came through.' So *I* got the big salute intended for him and that really tickled him."

Major Castens, British Forestry Service Officer: "When we got to Ukhrul, the first big village, that was the first part of the rain. We were lucky, if it had come before we got there it would have been pretty shocking. Think of going on an eight hour march with no camping equipment, no tents, no shelter of any sort in a seven or eight inch rainfall for a day in the monsoon. It would have been hazardous in the extreme. There would have been a lot of sickness, many were already exhausted.

"The effect of plowing through those rain sodden jungle tracks would have been enormous. Mind you, I went over that part many times afterwards when I went back in with the Johnnies. The refugees had come along those trails and every single one of the trails had corpses. You could see that they would lie down and the next day be utterly incapable of getting up and going on. Corpses were on the trails and in the bushes, everywhere. The amazing thing was the number who *did* make it to India, got into the refugee camps, then just laid down and died."

May 19: The Truck-Head at Thoubal

Captain John Grindlay: "Up and off by 5:30. a.m. Very soon torrential rains started. Kept along a ridge for seven miles in clouds and rain and bitter cold. Then came down a very steep slippery trail then up another ridge and along it. Noon halt at this ridge in rain and clouds. A dry halt later where we had sausage and biscuit and a slice of last night's tough beef, but no tea.

"Then down and down again, a total of three thousand feet at least. The rain stopped and our clothes dried. I was getting absolutely exhausted for some reason. Finally completed seven miles in the afternoon, twenty-three in all today. Arrived about 4 p.m. at a narrow steel suspension bridge

over the Litan river. On the other side was the end of the motor road from Imphal.

"Stilwell lined us up and said he was expecting trucks but that we would camp there this night. The Seagrave Unit set up camp in a steel garage, an auto shed on the other side of the bridge after kicking the Indian refugees out.

"Then St. John came in very sick with malaria, Sergeant Chesley the same. Got both of them to bed and fed both.

"Then Arnold and Eckert arrived in a jeep and told how they had tried to find us. Brereton had gotten the message we sent out from Nanantun and this was the only information they had in Imphal. So they came up to meet us. They brought in a couple of bottles of whiskey and I had a sip. And they had a few cigarettes and some chocolate. *How delicious!*

"They told us the outside news, the most sensational of which was the bombing of Tokyo by our medium bombers under Doolittle. It was still hush-hush as regards take-off point." ⁵⁴

Sergeant Dean Chambers: "It was raining when we got to the truck head. Colonel Eckert was there and he seemed tickled to death to see me. He almost hugged me and I thought it was out of this world for a Colonel to hug me! That was a joyous occasion."

Major Nowakowsky: The last day to the truck-head was a twenty-one mile hike in the rain, slipping and sliding in the mud from here to God knows where. We were glad we had beaten the monsoon to that truck-head, that was somewhat of an accomplishment in itself. If we had got caught by the monsoon up in those mountains we would have had a miserable time. Somebody would certainly have died of dysentery or malaria. It was great that Arnold and Eckert were there to meet us."

Lieutenant Robert Belknap: "The last day we walked twenty-three miles in pouring rain and it was cold and miserable. That was tough but when we got there, it was a truck-head where trucks would come up to take us to Imphal the next day."

Colonel Robert Williams: "After seven days in the hills we reached the end of the trail--two days ahead of schedule--and the beginning of the road. That night Jack Eckert and Lieutenant Arnold found us. They were in a jeep. Trucks for us were coming along some miles behind them but they were stuck in the mud."

George Parsons, FAU: "Shortly after the 'flea stop,' as we called it, we came to the truck-head and were met by some people who were sent out to find us. They had a certain amount of food, some of those very long cheeses in tins, and boxes of raisins.

"The next day I remember going down to Imphal and sitting in one of their truck-ambulances that they had come along in. I was jouncing along with a handful of raisins in one hand and a big wedge of cheese in the other and it was absolutely marvellous."

Eric Inchboard, FAU: "Coming downhill the last day toward the truck-head, we just sat down on our backsides and slid on the mud! It was fun, we were *there!* When we saw the trucks, we were struck dumb--*wheels*--actual round wheels. We stroked them! No more walking, it was terrific.

"We slept in a garage that night, forty or fifty of us. We all got in there somehow. It was fantastic. It was a small garage for small cars and the rain got in there too. It was a bit wet around the edges but we went to sleep in the mud and rain. It didn't bother us; we'd had some fun, we didn't worry, we weren't afraid. But we weren't sorry it was all over!"

Indeed, the Walkout itself was over.

Chapter Eleven

To Imphal and Beyond

I was damn glad to get my gang out of the jungle.

May 20: To Imphal

Captain John Grindlay: "Slept late, all finally ready and off about 7:30. We were packed like sardines in half-ton trucks with Sikh drivers carrying the sick, the malaria cases, the Indian injuries, and also Seagrave with feet and heart problems, as well as about ten others.

"It was raining very hard. We were immoderately soaked. It was impossible to keep the truck in the ruts. We went down and down out of the mountains to the flat rice-paddy plain of Imphal surrounded by high mountains. The road became drier except for the last sixteen miles over the plain where the truck continued to slither, the back and front wheels seldom in the same ruts, going along dog fashion and requiring almost continual pushing to keep it in the road.

"About 3 p.m. we hit the rock-surfaced road. Lilly finally had to drive. We kicked out the Sikh drivers and we had no more trouble from then on. We made the last ten miles quickly. We arrived at the old fountain park in Imphal exhausted.

"The Seagrave Unit was put up in a grass and bamboo hospital. I took care of a couple of cans of Whitbread first, then the ugly necrotic sores we'd been getting. Then I went over to the British Residency where the agent was living in high style, and took care of Sibert's ulcer and edema. He gave me his kit and water to shave off my heavy red and white beard but I kept my moustache.

"The town bazaar had been wiped out by the Japanese bombing two days before. There were lots of holes in the roads and houses. I had a wonderful dinner with potatoes and milk in the officer's mess in their fort. I went to bed after putting mosquito nets over St. John and Chesley and fell over Mr. Chow in the night."

Sergeant Ray Chesley: "By the time we got to Imphal I was pretty well out. The malaria had caught up with me with a vengeance. I'd been walking for the past few days in a kind of fog and when we got to the truck-head, I got thrown in one of the trucks along with Tun Shein and the nurses. Of course it was very muddy and every now and then we'd have to get out and push.

"At some point we ran into some British officers and one of them reached up and tried to grab Tun Shein out of the truck. He grabbed Tun Shein by the throat and started to pull him out of the truck because he was a native. I can vaguely remember reaching for my gun and telling him I

was going to shoot him if he didn't turn Tun Shein loose.

"That's the extent I remember. Shortly after that I really went under and the next thing I knew I waked up a couple of hours later in Imphal with an I. V. going.

"They had a medical center there which they immediately turned over to Seagrave and the nurses. It took me about three days to recover, to get back on my feet again. I was skinny anyway so I hadn't lost much weight."

Colonel Robert Williams: "The trucks came up and we made the twenty-three miles to Imphal by mid-afternoon. We stayed at a British camp there where we bathed and shaved and slept and . . . faith! we needed all three!"

Colonel Henry Holcombe: "When we made the Walkout I was fifty-one years old and I weighed a hundred and sixty-five pounds. I was grateful that there was enough food, but I weighed a hundred and eighteen by the time we got to Imphal. Stilwell said I looked like Gandhi and I wasn't too pleased at that. It turned out that I had amoebic dysentery prior to the Walkout which Chesley diagnosed when we got to Imphal and I was successfully treated.

"The nurses were charming with their singing, their carefree walking along in their bare feet, and their shoes hung around their necks. Their laughter and good spirits inspired the whole group."

Colonel Davidson-Houston: "The monsoon broke during the night at Thoubal. On the other side of the river was the terminus of a dirt road to Imphal. Next morning we were loaded onto trucks and said good-bye to Sharpe who was later to be captured and killed by the Japanese.

"It took six hours to travel the twenty-four miles to Imphal as a result of the monsoon rains that churned the road into a quagmire. We got there in mid-afternoon. It was a town with hundreds of subsidiary hamlets around it. It was full of craters and ruined buildings from the recent bombings, yet there were snapdragons and marigolds in bloom.

Headquarters of IV Corps were just moving in and feeling as lost as we did. We messed with them and I remember developing a craving for Army biscuits which I devoured as if I could never have enough of them." ⁵⁵

Major Castens: "When we got in to Imphal we stayed with the British General Staff. I think Barton must have known somebody there."

Lieutenant Bob Belknap: "I felt no relief or disappointment that it was over. I was kind of anxious to get along with things then, to find out what was going to happen next. Such home as I had was in Calcutta and I wanted a week's leave to sort of let people know that I was alive again.

"I figured that I had walked about two hundred miles since I went with the mule team

overland when the others were on the raft. We were lucky the monsoon didn't really break until the day before we reached Imphal. A lot of people coming out behind us didn't make it.

"Imphal had been badly bombed and lots of the troops had disappeared. The bazaar was deserted but of all things I ran into the golf pro from the Club in Calcutta where I played. He had been with a British tank outfit and had come out via Kalewa.

"We were put up that night at the British Resident's house where we had *cocktails* with the British! "

Captain Paul Jones: "I was very happy when we got to Imphal. I was very tired and I lost a lot of weight on that little junket. I went from a hundred and sixty-five pounds to a hundred and forty. I had an ingrowing toenail that got infected along the way and it pained me a lot. Fortunately Doc Seagrave was able to look after it, and it did get better for a while.

"My immediate reaction was relief that it was over and that if I had done that, I could do anything. It would have been easy to fold up but nobody did.

"The British had chow ready for us when we got in and it was wonderful."

Captain Richard Young: "When we got to Imphal, I wasn't sorry it was over. It was a relief. We enjoyed the change of being able to sleep late, of having clean sheets. We took a bath and had a good meal. Carl Arnold was there and it was all arranged by him. He said he thought we looked great compared to what he had expected and we were *alive!*"

Captain Donald O'Hara: "Boy, I was sure relieved when we got to Imphal. We were glad to be back where there were *wheels!* I was glad it was over but something I'd always wanted to do was to go cross-country by compass. I've often thought since then that it would be fun to go over there and see if I could retrace that route. If you had more time you could really enjoy the scenery.

"I was pleased with myself that I had made it out okay. I was in good shape by the time we got out though I'd lost seventy or eighty pounds. I was lucky that my feet held up. If your feet hurt when you have to walk, it's murder.

"It was funny, though. When we sat down to a good dinner in Imphal, here they gave us a little steak about this big, and I thought, 'Why, you chinchy so and so's!' But I couldn't even eat all of that, my stomach had shrunk, I couldn't hold it. I usually could have eaten about five of them!"

Captain Fred Eldridge: "I was relieved when we got out safely, but it was sort of an anti-climax. We didn't know what we were going to do next."

Colonel Benjamin Ferris: "It never occurred to me that we might not be able to make it. I felt that I did exceedingly well under these trying circumstances. I was glad when it was over, but the

experience was such a thrilling adventure that it was kind of hard to say goodbye to it. We'd had a tough time and I wouldn't have done it by choice, but I was glad that I *had* done it."

Major Felix Nowakowsky: "Let's say that when we got out we were very glad to get out! There was a great feeling of relief when the thing was over."

Private Lawrence Short: "The wet season started just as we hit Imphal. Chesley came down with malaria just as we was gettin' there. When it was over I was glad to get out. I was happy to have the walkin' over with, I was *tired*. It was a hardship, all right."

Sergeant Paul Gish: "When the walkin' was over the only thing I felt was relief. I wasn't sorry it was over, but I wasn't really sorry it had happened, either. It was a relief. Here was a happening I just came through, that's all."

Tun Shein, Seagrave Unit: "I was neither glad nor sorry when we came to Imphal. I wasn't even thinking about it, only what I have to do next. I would do whatever I could, wherever I could be of help."

Ohn Hkin, Nurse: "I was thankful to God and our leaders when we got safely to Imphal. I felt very glad that we had come through so smoothly. I see the loving hand of God and I feel grateful and happy."

"My outstanding memory was the contrast between the harsh elements and our leaders. The elements were so hard on us, but our leaders were looking after us and taking care of us as well."

Malang Kaw, Nurse: "When we reached Imphal I felt very glad. It was a valuable experience for me because this was my first experience abroad and I could visit India. Also I experienced the deep sadness of defeat and later the elation of a military victory."

Esther Po, Nurse: "I was glad when it was over. We don't like to walk. But we enjoyed that we didn't have to work! We were quite tired but we could go back to work if we had to."

La Banglu, Nurse: "After being deprived of contact with civilization for so long a time, I was glad to reach Imphal and re-emergency to civilization."

Koi, Head Nurse: When we got to Imphal and the Walkout was over, mostly it was just like a dream. We had no idea what would happen next. We were just learning to take what comes. I felt neither glad nor sorry that it was over but I was glad that I didn't have to walk any more."

Than Shwe, Nurse: "My most outstanding memory of all was finding that my appendicostomy had

healed entirely. It was a miracle all observed when we reached Imphal. My deep faith in God and my determination to serve my country strengthened me morally and physically.

"All the boys were glad to greet us there, the officials too. I borrowed clothes from Bill Cummings as mine were all out of order. I looked like a clown in his pants and shirts and with my pigtails." ⁵⁶

Lulu, Nurse: When we reach Imphal, we felt hungry and thirsty at that time, and hot. So we were not sorry when it was over. When we got out we were glad to work, to have something to do again."

Big Bawk, Nurse: "I'm glad I did it and it was a rather interesting life and it was useful. It was natural to evacuate Burma at that time and we were lucky to get away. We were glad to be led by a General of the American Army, and I thanked God for saving my life."

Sein Bwint, Nurse: "It was a wonderful experience to have, that trek, because there were lots of different kinds of people. By day-time we walk together and night-time we rested and helped each other. When we got tired--if one got down--then someone else would lift her up. It was a wonderful experience being together, a sisterhood. But you owed your life to God, not to General Stilwell."

Bill Duncumb, FAU: "I thanked God when we got to Imphal. When Breedom Case fell to his knees, I felt the same way. It was very moving."

Sergeant Dean Chambers: "I'd done my share of praying on the Walkout. I had a religious faith and I prayed for the group and I prayed for my own personal survival and to be able to get back to the States. I felt like my prayers had been answered, I'd been saved."

George Parsons, FAU: "When we got to Imphal we went to a British Army camp and they said that they would feed us. They prepared a bully-beef stew in the open air in a great huge 'dixie' over the fire. We all stood around licking our lips at the smell and wishing it would hurry up and *that* was the most marvellous meal I ever had.

"I can well remember how I felt getting there. Very glad in one way but regretful in another that the adventure was over. We did what we set out to do; we lost no one on the way, we beat the monsoon, and we beat the Japs."

Tom Owen, FAU: "When we got to Imphal it was nice to have a good bit of food even though it was still pretty spartan. I never bothered to weigh myself, I was always skinny, but I wasn't grossly underweight.

"The British had a rest camp for all the soldiers who came out of Burma and we were shoved

into this place to wait for the train. It was an enclosure, a temple enclosure about a mile square, and it was literally littered with phallic symbols, figures at least fifteen feet high. This was the British idea for resting their soldiers who hadn't seen a woman for months. We laughed our heads off when we realized what these things were that were all around us!"

May 21: Beyond Imphal

Captain Richard Young: "Four of us were left at Imphal to contact the Chinese troops that did come out, Colonel Wyman, Jones, myself and one other. From Imphal we went to New Delhi. Later I went to Ramgarh. I was with Stilwell there while he was training the Chinese troops for the second campaign."

Colonel Robert P. Williams "The day after we got to Imphal we drove all day to a railroad. There too we left Seagrave and his hospital unit to take care of Chinese soldiers and refugees as they came out over the trails, that is, as soon as I can get equipment for him."

Captain John Grindlay: "The next day I learned second-hand from Seagrave and Doc Williams that I was to leave the Seagrave Unit and go to New Delhi with the American officers. The girls cried and hung on me when I got back. They told me they had talked about me all night. There was much fondling and weeping."

Lieutenant Robert Belknap: "The next day we were driven to Dinapur. Along that road we could see the wrecked lorries that had gone over the cliffs. Then we were flown out to Calcutta and on to Delhi. There I found out that I had been sent to Burma to blow up the oil fields at Yenangyuang. It was a good thing I got there too late. I didn't know a damn thing about demolition! "

Captain Fred Eldridge: "Next day we went on down to New Delhi and we just sat around. It was terribly hot and a sandstorm was blowing and the sand sifted right under the doors, into your eyes and ears, the food, everything.

"I found out that the fellows down there who had known me had been making bets on whether I would make it out or not. I had a bad back--sacro-iliac trouble--and I wore a girdle. After the Walkout I was tired of the damn thing. I threw it away and you know, my back never troubled me for about twenty years after that! "

Private Lawrence Short: "After we got to Imphal, we went down to Delhi and stayed at the Great Eastern Hotel with General Stilwell, a real ritzy place. We were just little country boys and we couldn't read a word of the menu which was printed in French. The waiter was kinda nonchalant about us until we fooled him and ordered it *all!*"

Colonel Davidson-Houston: "Next day I handed over the men who had been with me on the Walkout, as well as the Anglo-Burman mechanics, to IV Corps. Nineteen days after having left Indaw, Dykes and I puffed in to Calcutta, having taken a train and later crossing the Brahmaputra by paddle steamer."

Major Castens: "When we left Imphal we travelled down to Dinapur in the 'cipher wagon,' the lorry that carried the cipher machines. We were with some General and we thought that was the safest way to travel, but not when we saw the road! I could never have driven it in a car. Those fantastic hairpin curves! Something like one in five of the lorries went over the edge, driven down those gorges by inexperienced engine drivers. Everywhere you looked down you saw the derelict lorries that had gone over! "

Paul Geren, Seagrave Unit: In a letter to his wife from Gauhati, India, May 27, 1942.

"The next day after we reached Imphal a convoy of trucks took refugees and soldiers from our party to the railhead. To finish this journey, the train that brought us to Gauhati had a head-on collision and stood in one spot for twenty-two hours, reeking as only an Indian train can reek with scores of cases of dysentery.

"We set up in this beautiful town on the Brahmaputra River, intercepting a part of the flood of soldiers and evacuees in the cruel clutches of dysentery and malaria. How those twin devils have ravaged the people from Burma! What we shall do next I don't know. The Japanese will help to decide."

Tom Owen, FAU: "Next day we were put on a train with patients being dysenteric all over the place. We were wise in our generation so as soon as we got on the train we old hands immediately made for the luggage racks. I happened to grab one on the engine side and we promptly fell asleep. I woke up to an uneasy silence and wondered why we had stopped. We had been in a head-on collision and Martin had been hurled out of his nook!"

George Parsons, FAU: "Our inclination was to stay with Seagrave. He decided to head for Gauhati where the American Baptist Mission had a place and we went there with him.

"When we left Imphal we went down on a train to Dinapur and in the night there was a crash which didn't even wake me. I waked up next morning to find all was in chaos and we spent that day pushing rail carriages around to clear the line. I learned that the Chinese orderly sleeping in the luggage rack had fallen out onto Martin when the train crashed! "

Captain Paul Jones: "The Boss stayed another day in Imphal to arrange transportation. I had an interesting time driving around with Tim Sharpe. We bought fresh vegetables which were a real treat. The group staying behind stayed at Sharpe's place. They were Major Frank Merrill, Colonel

Willard Wyman, Lieutenant Carl Arnold, Captain Dick Young, General Tseng, Kenneth Chow, and myself.

"After we'd all gotten in to Imphal in good shape--thanks to Stilwell and Tim Sharpe--the Boss and I were talking to him. The Boss thanked him for all he had done and told him that if there was anything we could do for him to let us know. Sharpe said that if it was ever possible, he would like to have one of our automatic pistols. Since I had one on me, we took care of that request immediately. I gave my pistol to Sharpe.

"The Army has a rule that any weapons lost in a combat area are immediately charged off. That weapon had been in a combat area so it was charged off. A small price to pay for all that Sharpe and his crew had done for us. Sharpe was later killed helping the British fight the battle for Imphal."

Peter Tennant, FAU: "By the time we got to Imphal it was evident that I was not going to be able to shift the minds of the other FAU boys. They wanted to stay with Seagrave, to go to Gauhati or wherever. There was no particular point in my staying, the schism was too great. I felt that I must get to Calcutta and on back to China as soon as possible, which is what I did."

Dennis Thompson, Mechanics Oriental: "I was a little bit disheartened when we reached Imphal. At that time we were joining with the British, and the Americans said to me, 'We've got nothing to do with you. Sorry, we can't employ you any more. You better go work for the British, you belong to them.' It was St. John said this to me. He paid me and he told me that, and to all the mechanics.

"It's a disappointment, a little bit of disappointment that I had. All the way from Maymyo we had gone together; to Indaw, to Mansi, to where we abandoned the jeeps, then we came to Nanantun and walked down the stream, then we float down the Uyu River from Maingkaing to Homalin. At Homalin we crossed the Chindwin, and we came through the mountains to Ukhru and then we were transported to Imphal in trucks and ambulances. There was a lot of mud and slippery. I was expecting to be still employed by the Americans when we came to India. So I was very much disappointed. But I think I was glad the walking was over."

Jack Belden, War Correspondent: "I wasn't worrying about getting out particularly, I was kind of enjoying it until the final part. My ankles swole up and I rode a pony on the last day when the mountains got higher. I got a lot of sores that wouldn't heal and I lost a lot of weight. I was extremely thin and I had a pulse of a hundred and thirty-five.

"I was disgusted when we arrived at Imphal. It meant the crap of the world returning, the in-fighting, class distinctions, rank. On the Walkout everybody had been equal, Imphal was the sudden contrast.

"There were a whole lot of correspondents waiting for Stilwell when we got there and they

wanted something from him. He said, 'I'm not going to tell you anything. This is Belden's story and he was the only correspondent who was with me.' Then he got flown to Delhi and I got left behind.

"Of course he got to Delhi before I did and he was his *own* story. *My* story was censored and held up. I was beaten on it by the correspondents in Delhi who hadn't even been on the Walkout!"

May 26, New Delhi: General Stilwell to his wife: "I was damn glad to get my gang out of the jungle. Most of them now consider me more of an s.o.b. than ever because I made them all play ball, rank or no rank. We had quite a trip which I suppose will now be exaggerated--as usual--till it's unrecognizable."⁵⁷

May 30, New Delhi

Colonel Williams in a letter to his wife: "I've been through the greatest experience of my life, and made one of the most remarkable and most strenuous marches ever made."

Was this what General Stilwell meant by exaggeration? (For a comparison with other remarkable marches, see appendix G. For accounts of how other people walked out of Burma, see appendix H.)

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As I thought about what became of the Walkout participants immediately after they arrived at Imphal, the stories of three men stuck in my mind because I felt they were unjustly treated at the end of the Walkout. They are Peter Tennant, "boss" of the FAU in Burma, Jack Belden, war correspondent, and Dennis Thompson, one of the Mechanics Oriental.

When the Walkout was over, Peter Tennant went back alone to China. "The schism was too great," he said. "They (the other FAU boys) had fallen in love with Seagrave or his Unit and there was no use trying to persuade them to come back." There was a poignancy to me in the words of a conscientious man who was trying his best to keep his group together, and I wondered as I thought about his lonely departure from India back to China if perhaps the others had been unduly unkind to him.

Peter was several years older than the other FAU boys. He was nearly thirty, was married and already had three children when the war broke out. Probably because he was more mature or more serious than the others, he was selected to be in charge of the FAU group when they arrived in China whenever the titular head, Robert C. McClure, was absent, which was quite often.

The others were in their early twenties and unmarried. Despite the seriousness of their commitment to pacifism, and the danger of their tasks, they definitely had a boyishness about them that was conspicuously lacking in Peter.

Peter had made several trips back and forth over the Burma Road with Lend Lease supplies

for the Chinese, but he happened to be in China when the Japanese invaded Burma. He felt strongly that those who were in Burma should have returned to China to carry on with what had been their original mission, to help the Chinese in any way they could. When they chose instead to join Dr. Seagrave and bring in the British wounded from the battlefields to the Mobile Surgical Unit, and then followed Seagrave to serve under the American General Stilwell, Peter felt that they had betrayed their mission, even though they were now carrying Chinese wounded back to the Seagrave Unit.

He then did what one of the FAU described as "a nittish thing to do; he came barreling down from China. It just meant one more person to worry about and one more mouth to feed when rations were already low. He was our worst driver and Dr. Seagrave was furious when he wrecked one of the ambulance trucks by hanging it up on a stump. He caustically called Peter 'our hot-shot racing driver.'"

There was another factor that may have entered into the estrangement between Peter and the others. Peter came from a prominent family in British public life. His aunt Margot Tennant had married Herbert Asquith, later the Earl of Oxford and one time Prime Minister. His father had served with General Kitchener, First Earl of Khartoum, in World War I. By the rigid British social standards of the day, Peter was one of the Upper Class; one of the FAU even mentioned his elegant Edwardian trousers. Perhaps subconsciously among the others--one the son of a butcher, another a coalminer's son--the rest from comfortable middle-class surroundings, there was a feeling of resentment toward Peter based on class lines, which Peter surely unwittingly conveyed. This coupled with his criticism of their behavior may have been why they held themselves aloof from him.

When I was the Tennants' guest at "Invertrossachs," Mrs. Tennant initially conveyed that sort of British sense of superiority over me, but in Peter's defense I must say that he never did. He was unaffected and charming, with no trace of snobbishness toward me.

Jack Belden's bitterness at being left behind when Stilwell went to Delhi without him is quite understandable. Despite Stilwell's refusal to discuss the Walkout with the reporters at Imphal, saying that Belden was the only reporter with him and it was Belden's story, Belden was "scooped" on it by the reporters in Delhi who had not even been on the Walkout.

In talking to me Belden did not implicate anyone in a plot to keep him behind, but as I have thought about the terrible disappointment he suffered, professional and personal, I have concluded that there were those who saw to it that he did not accompany Stilwell to Delhi.

Belden had witnessed the whole sorry story of the refusal on the part of Chiang's generals to obey Stilwell in Burma, how the Chinese troops had deserted him. There may have been those in Imphal who feared what Belden might say to the media if he were questioned.

Or he may have been held back out of jealousy. Belden had known Stilwell for a long time in China, he had developed a close personal relationship with him. When on occasion he had walked with Stilwell ahead of the rest of the column, Stilwell had told him that others objected to it. He was

not an officer and it was seen as presumptuous of him. On top of this he was brash, he was aggressive.

The military hierarchy is as rigid as the British class hierarchy, and it is my guess that someone saw to it that there would be no room on the plane for Belden. Surely it was done without the General's knowledge. He was worn out and unwell and he left these matters to his staff. And this is what makes what happened to Belden even more poignant.

Equally poignant, perhaps even more distressing to me, is what happened to Dennis Thompson, one of the Oriental Mechanics. He was paid off by the Americans when they got to Imphal, he was told he was of no more use to them, that he belonged to the British.

This could be seen as a racist act on the part of the Americans. Thompson was after all an Anglo-Burman. At that early point of the war about the only "colored" men in the U.S. Armed Services were the Filipino mess-boys in the U.S.Navy.

On the other hand it might not actually have been racism. It was quite true that Dennis Thompson was a British subject, the Americans had no idea where they were going, or what they would be doing. Practically speaking, they literally did not know what they could do with him. This was not their country, they had no authority to do anything with another nation's nationals.

That does not make Dennis Thompson's story any less poignant. As he recited it to me, I followed him from the beginning when he went to Maymyo and was taken on by the Americans as a driver. When the retreat began he had endured every hardship without complaint, he had helped tow the invalids down the stream, and he had kept up the pace

The Americans certainly did not recognize Thompson's potential, witness his subsequent career. He was not like most of the other mechanics; rather than just being able to drive a car or truck, he was a college student, he spoke good English, and he respected authority. He would have made the best kind of enlisted man Stilwell so much admired. In my eyes Thompson would have made a splendid body guard for the General. It would have been an honor and a responsibility entrusted to him commensurate with his abilities.

Just as the Colonial British had lost an opportunity by suppressing the Burmese, so too the Americans, wittingly or unwittingly, had failed to take advantage of Thompson's possibilities. Now an important figure in his own Government, Colonel Tin Gyi--no longer Dennis Thompson, a lowly "Mechanic Oriental"--did not voice any of these sentiments to me, but I am sure they were there. It was I who felt he had been treated unfairly.

Perhaps because of their youth the FAU boys were unwittingly cruel to Peter. Nonetheless, it is my feeling that all three of those men--Tennant, Belden, and Thompson--were treated unjustly.

Chapter Twelve

Walkout Postscript

We took Burma back and that alone made the Walkout worthwhile.

The words General Stilwell said to the reporters in Delhi put in motion decisions that would affect the participants in the Walkout for the next three years. These widely quoted words were, "I claim we took a hell of a beating. We got run out of Burma and it is humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back and retake it."⁵⁸

After the Walkout Stilwell set up one Headquarters in Chungking and one in Delhi. The rest of 1942 was a dreary one for him in which he shuttled back and forth for endless consultations with Chiang Kai-shek and the British. From May to the end of the year the pages of The Stilwell Papers are filled with letters to his wife about his frustrations and disappointments.

Finally the decision was made by the allies to strike back at the Japanese in a joint attack by the British, Americans, and Chinese. General Stilwell proposed to use the nine thousand Chinese troops who had escaped from Burma to India as a nucleus of a well-trained Chinese force which he would command.

To this end a training camp was set up at Ramgarh in Assam, India. Thousands more Chinese troops were flown over the Hump from China to Chabua and Dinjan--the bases in Assam for the Hump flights--and then taken by truck to Ramgarh for training.

While facilities at Ramgarh were being prepared for training the Chinese troops as they arrived, Dr. Seagrave, his nurses, and several of the FAU remained in Gauhati, in Assam. In July they moved to Ramgarh and were attached to General Stilwell just as they had been in Burma. For the most part they continued to serve with him during the entire second campaign.

After the nurses' tearful parting with Captain John Grindlay at Imphal, everyone was overjoyed when he rejoined the Seagrave Unit. He became part of the 25th Field Hospital until the end of the campaign, performing as an essential and highly regarded member of the staff.

Most of the American Headquarters Staff from Maymyo also went to Ramgarh. They were joined there by General Tseng and his troopers and Dara Singh, the Sikh-Malayan who had picked up General Stilwell after the battle of Tounghoo.

Captain Richard Young: "I went back into Burma with Stilwell in the second campaign. We took Burma back and that alone made the Walkout worthwhile."

Lieutenant Carl Arnold: "When we set up the training camp for the Chinese troops at Ramgarh, some of them had never even used a wheel. But they could learn by observation. And they *did* learn, under proper leadership.

"Stilwell stressed this with his officers, pointing out that they were going to be *with* the Chinese troops when they went back in. Everybody got into the spirit of it and we gave them lots of recognition. We called it the 'banners and medals' campaign. We took lots of pictures of them and they loved it. And they really earned Stilwell's respect when they got trained."

Captain Donald O'Hara: "I stayed with Stilwell after the Walkout and went back with him in the second campaign. I didn't particularly want to go back, but I'd rather stay with Stilwell than be assigned to some other theater. I thought it would be easier than it was."

Sergeant Ray Chesley: "After the Walkout we flew to Calcutta and got re-outfitted with clothes, and then we went to Delhi. I was with Captain O'Hara then. I didn't want any part of a commission then, but in fact I was commissioned by Stilwell in the field later.

"I was up at Ramgarh where he was training the Chinese troops and when I learned we were going back into Burma, I thought it would be a good idea to know what kind of diseases we were going to run into. In order to do that it would be useful to have a commission. So I talked to Colonel Holcombe and he told me that I should apply for a direct commission, and I did. I told him I was a graduate of Sing Sing, Alcatraz, and Susquehanna Prison, and he signed the application! I guess that's why I got it. He was a great guy.

"I worked with Seagrave for about six months, then I went back into Burma with the General in the second campaign. I remember Bill Duncumb very well. He was with us then, it was still the Seagrave Unit. I worked on isolating a malaria strain and later I brought the animals back that we had it in and delivered them to the U.S. Public Health.

"I went on a month's leave while I was back. I went hunting and fishing. That was 1944 and it was the first leave I had had since 1941. I went back to Burma and was with the 5307th Combat group. I joined them at Shaduzup before we took Myitkyina." ⁵⁹

Captain Fred Eldridge: "I got pretty bored waiting around in New Delhi to find out where we were going, what we were going to be doing. I decided that if we were going to stay there, we'd better get a newspaper going.

"I had a lot of opposition at first until I got Stilwell to approve it. He said that if I could figure out a way to get paper and to get it printed, he'd find some way to pay for it. That's how I started CBI-Roundup. Several of the fellows who worked with me started Ex-CBI Roundup after the war. Neil Maurer is the publisher now." ⁶⁰

"When Stilwell went back into Burma, I went back with him in the second campaign. Later

he sent me to Kandy in Ceylon to be his special representative at Mountbatten's HQ. He made me a Lieutenant Colonel for that job. When I wrote to thank him, he wrote me back: 'Now you are a Colonel! As Pete Brown once said, 'It's no longer a title, it is an epithet !' He had a marvellous sense of humor and he was a fine writer too, a very sardonic one."

Sergeant Dean Chambers: "After the Walkout we went down to a railhead on a train and then we flew out to Delhi. The General had gone right on out to Delhi ahead of us with all the officers and the rest of them. Essentially the ones who had started out in Burma were there.

"After Delhi we set out for Ramgarh. I was off on a Cook's tour again! Again I was the only enlisted man with four officers. We drove in official cars to Aherabad, Agra, and Benares, another sightseeing trip.

"At Ramgarh the British still had a P.O.W. camp there for Italian prisoners. With my different uniform those prisoners really gave me the once-over. I had no duties, we were waiting for the camp to be evacuated and for the first Chinese troops to get there to be trained. So I struck up a friendship with a British sergeant and we played darts for drinks and of course I always lost!

"I was there from about August 1942 until we went back into Burma in June, 1944. I was then stationed in Ledo. By that time I was waiting for the rotation program to get moving. I was young, I had a girl I had promised to marry back in the states, and I'd been over there almost three years. I wanted to get back to civilization.

"Finally I got rotated. I went back to Ramgarh and from there to Bombay on the train. It took five days and boy, was it *hot!* I got my first bedbugs in a charpoy while we were waiting to sail.

"We set out for the States on an Army troop ship and it took thirty-three days. We went via Australia and I tell you, we had a heyday there! The women hadn't seen a man for years except elderly ones and what a welcome they gave us! Then we zigzagged across the Pacific to San Pedro and there they treated us royally, just like they did the POW's now. I'd never seen so much ice-cream and vegetables.

"I was given two weeks leave and then reported back for duty near home at Hot Springs, Arkansas. While I was there I was presented with the Bronze Star for the Walkout.

"There was already a Master Sergeant there and I was excess in grade, so I couldn't see how I could ever be sent overseas again. But there was a whole bunch of artillery men there who had been sent back from Adak, Alaska and they were being refurbished to go into Italy. I was put in with them and six months to the day that I had hit the States, I was on the train to the Port of Embarkation at Hampton Roads, Virginia. You couldn't get out of the Army!

"What they said about me was, 'He's single, fully qualified, physically fit, *ship him out!*' I never did get to marry that girl. And I was sick about having to go into another war.

"It was near the end by then. We were first in Italy up in the Apennines, more of my Cook's

tour. By the spring of 1945 it was over and I came home again."

Like Sergeant Chambers, other participants in the Walkout went briefly to Ramgarh. On journeys back and forth between his Headquarters in Chungking and Delhi, Stilwell inspected the training of the Chinese troops at Ramgarh. His observations were reported in letters to Mrs. Stilwell.⁶¹

Others had different destinations after the Walkout.

Sergeant Paul Gish: "After the Walkout I went to New Delhi and then to Chungking. Then I was sent for as a body-guard for General Stilwell in the second campaign. I was the only enlisted man to go back with the General. It puzzled me that the General sent for me and it always will. Dara Singh was another member of the body-guard.

"This was when the powers that be said that the General had to have a body-guard, so he said that he'd choose who he wanted. So I was flown back over the Hump to join him and stayed with him from then on. I stayed with him all the way 'til we took Myitkyina. It was our duty to deploy ourselves around him at all times."

Lieutenant Tommy Lee: "After the Walkout I was in the Quartermaster Corps in New Delhi. The sand there comes through the keyholes even! Then they sent me back to China where I was in transport, truck maintenance, things like that."

Private Lawrence Short: "In New Delhi I guarded a maharajah's palace and did code work, some kind of key-tapping stuff. Then in 1944 I got rotated home. I spent that Christmas at Casablanca and flew home after the New Year. I got out of the Army then. My father was ill and my family worked it to get me out on hardship grounds."

Lieutenant Colonel Frank Dorn: "Shortly after the Walkout I was transferred to China. Ultimately I became commanding General of 'Y' Force and had the satisfaction in the second campaign of preventing the Japanese from crossing the Salween River into Yunnan province."

Lieutenant Robert Belknap: "After the Walkout I was sent to China and spent three years building airstrips for the A. V. G., all but one of which the Japanese got! I was not in the Air Force. I had started out in the Field Artillery in R. O. T. C., was transferred to Ordnance, was commissioned as an Infantry officer, and then because I was a qualified Engineer, I went into the Corps of Engineers, which is what I was in in China. They wanted me in the Quartermaster Corps in the last part of the war, but that I refused.

"Nonetheless I was made Theater Petroleum Officer and also Chairman of the American Military Petroleum Committee for China which had to do with allocating the petroleum supplies that

went over the Hump.

"That was quite a responsibility. I had to try to keep Chiang and the Madame from pinching everything and stashing it away in the caves. Also to give a fair break between the Air Force units and the ground forces and all the other units that were using gas and oil.

"I was out of the States for seven years altogether and I requested leave to return to America. I got married as soon as I got home to a lady in the WAVES, we had a brief honeymoon, and I was on my way back to China again when Hiroshima happened."

Tun Shein, Seagrave Unit: "After the Walkout I went on up to Gauhati with the Seagrave Unit. I wasn't interested in what was going on in the outside world, the main thing was to come back to Burma and I would stay with Seagrave until we did.

"When we got to Gauhati we moved into the prisoner-of-war camp where the British had been keeping the Italian prisoners. We had to clean up the camp. Before we were ready the Chinese troop train came in, a train load, four or five hundred of them were to go straight into the hospital. We had to get the beds ready for them and before the nurses could even make up the beds the Chinese were in them already.

"I stayed there about a year, then Bill Cummings was asked by the U.S. Army to go back into Burma and set up Intelligence in preparation for the Second Campaign. He said he would do it if Seagrave would release me to go with him, which he did. I was made a Captain in the OSS, Detachment 101.

"So we walked back in to Burma. That was in fact harder than the walk out. We took the trail the refugees had used when they were fleeing from Burma. All along there were skeletons. It doesn't matter who you *were*, you ended up a skeleton. It was so pitiful sometimes the way you would see them. Some had dropped right in the main track, some had gone a way off, and some you could see was a whole family and the leader had shot them dead. They were all over, thick like that, phew!

"After a while I went back to India and worked with the nurses again and Lulu and I were married there in 1944. We had known each other before the war, we came from more or less the same place."

Lulu, Nurse: "I stayed with the Seagrave Unit until I left in the second campaign and went back to India. Tun Shein and I were married there in 1944. I did nothing there, he would not let me work any more."

Ruby, Nurse: "I never met General Stilwell on the Walkout but later I was with the first group to go back into Burma with him. He was so kind to us. We serenaded him on his birthday.

"I didn't really want to go back in the second campaign, I was afraid to see devastated Burma

and we did see those many, many skeletons of the pitiful refugees. We set up field hospitals as we went along and the wounded from them were evacuated to the 20th General Hospital in Ledo. It was manned by American doctors, among them the famous Dr. Ravdin and Dr. Sheie."

Miss Koi, Head Nurse: "I stayed with the Seagrave Unit after the trek out and went back into Burma with Dr. Seagrave. We saw many skeletons along the trail and we thought how lucky we were that we had gotten out."

Ma Graung, Nurse: "After trekking out we went to Gauhati and then to Ramgarh for one year. After that I went back into Burma in the second campaign with Dr. Seagrave. At that time we see so many skeletons of the refugees who had tried to get out of Burma."

Esther Po, Nurse: "I stayed with the Seagrave Unit and we stayed in India for nine months. There we met each other who flew from Namhkam and we made the camp for the Chinese and the American soldiers. We return to Burma and the battle of Myitkyina was my most outstanding memory of that time."

Sein Bwint: "I went back into Burma with the Unit in the second campaign but I became sick and was sent to India to recuperate."

Big Bawk, Nurse: "I stayed with the Seagrave Unit and went back into Burma with him in 1944. I was glad to get back to work."

Than Shwe, Nurse: "I dropped out of the Unit in 1943 and joined General Wheeler's 20th General Hospital and saw my first Negro. They took my little heart away, they have the most wonderful voices in the world.

"I became real smart and efficient there in the operating theater and I became a Nursing Sister. The Army men knew me as T. S. and fondly called me Top Shit."

Bill Duncumb, FAU: I stayed with the Unit in Gauhati until 1943 but then I resigned from the FAU and went back into Burma in the second campaign with Seagrave as an ordinary citizen. I liked him, I admired him, I wanted to stay with the Unit.

"We worked very closely with the military and I got along very well with them. It was never thrown up to me that I was a Conscientious Objector, we were in it together. We were under the same direction, under the same danger, you could hear the shells and the snipers. I had the happiest of relationships with the military folk. In fact at one stage I found them easier to get along with than the civilians."

Eric Inchboard, FAU: "We all went up to Gauhati after the Walkout and when the Chinese troops

came in to be trained, we went on doing ambulance work. We still had to wrestle the trucks and bury the dead.

"Afterwards my idea of fun was . . . I'm no aesthetic chap really . . . but my idea of relaxation was to have a jolly good bath, get really clean, then spend the evening listening to some music. We missed that sort of thing during the earlier months in Burma and of course we never saw a book until we got out.

"I went back to China after Gauhati and then was very ill with rheumatic fever and pneumonia and I was supposed to be invalided out but I didn't want to go home. I stopped off at Gauhati and decided to rejoin the Seagrave Unit. That meant I had to get out of the FAU. That caused a great *brouhaha*. I got a rude letter saying what was I thinking of? Stilwell happened to be there and I showed him the letter for a bit of a giggle, and he promptly wrote off a letter to London saying that I was indispensable to the war effort--a bit overdone!--and I got a nice letter back saying to carry on with whatever I was doing.

"But by that time I had left the Seagrave Unit and tried to join the Indian Red Cross and was told by them that *Americans* weren't taken in, so I joined the British Army. I went in as a Second Lieutenant and when I went in for a physical, four hours later I came out as a *First* Lieutenant!

"They put me in transport because I could cope with the Chinese drivers. I ended up as a Captain and in 1944 Ruth and I were married in Shillong."

Ruth, Nurse: "After the Walkout I stayed with the unit in Gauhati and went back into Burma in the second campaign. Much later, Eric and I got married. At that time he was very ill and Tun Shein said to me, 'You'd better think carefully before you marry Eric. He isn't supposed to live six months.' I said, 'Well, we're not supposed to upset him, you know,' and that's how we got married."

George Parsons, FAU: "When we got up to Gauhati with Seagrave we tried to hang on for a month or so but we sensed that there was no place for us there, there was no excuse for us to stay on there. Since we had come out to work in China, three of us flew back to the FAU headquarters in Kutsing.

"The idea there was that we would be formed into two sections. One would supply medical teams in various parts of the country, to work among the Chinese people. The other was to transport medical supplies. It became my job to transport the medical supplies from Kutsing to Luchiang, about two hundred and twenty miles from Chungking across the Yangtze. It used to take a week each way over the mountains and we had some real adventures on that.

"But all the while a feeling was growing in me and I realized that I was very unhappy with what I was doing and had been doing in the FAU. It gradually seemed to me that I couldn't compromise any longer.

"While we had been in Gauhati we spent some time with the refugees who had come out of Burma and I think that this had somewhat of an effect on me. Some of them were in a pretty dreadful state. Many of them had died like flies on the way out and the ones I saw were in such dreadful condition that I began to think about the Japs and what kind of people *were* they who could do this sort of thing.

"It began to seem to me that what I had been doing was a sort of compromise. We had been mopping up all that time after a thing that was being done of which I didn't approve. I wasn't the only one. Eric and Bill Brough for instance, and for precisely similar reasons, had decided to go into the Army. My feeling was growing that either you'd got to opt out or you'd got to be right in it. Either I had to leave the FAU, go home and *be* a C.O., or I had to join the Army and do anything they told me to. If you went into the Medical Corps, that was still a compromise, an equivocation.

"I had to get right into the Army and get this thing finished off. I didn't really see myself as a fighting soldier but one had to be prepared for that sort of thing if it became necessary. The thing I regretted most was that somehow I seemed to get at cross-purposes with Peter Tennant over this. I was very sorry about it because I admired Peter very much.

"Strangely enough I found it quite difficult to join the Army! It took about six months before I got in. There was an awful lot of correspondence between Chungking and Army HQ in India, but finally I got a direct commission as an officer about the end of 1943.

"For some time after I did join I was doing very much the same sort of work I had been doing in the FAU and that was running convoys of trucks up and down the roads of China. I didn't mind doing the same sort of thing I had been doing since by then it had emerged that transport *was* my interest in life and thus was the best contribution I could make.

"I was very much happier in my mind, I had resolved something for myself. The war was *there* and if there was anything I could do to finish it sooner, then I must do it and now I *was* doing something about it."

Bill Brough, FAU: "When I recovered from my illness I returned to China and did relief work with a Mobile Surgical Unit. Then I left the FAU and I went back to India and joined the U.S. Army!

"What happened to me was as follows: I think the position of a Conscientious Objector in a war situation expresses only a part of the problem. We are utterly convinced of the inadequacy of war as an instrument of political force. We're convinced of the insanity of it, but we have not yet found some adequate alternative process, so that whatever one does is wrong.

"As a C.O. there are so many situations for which this is an incomplete answer. He is so concerned with his own individual or philosophical or religious point of view that he loses sight of his responsibility to society. He is a part of it, and this is the dilemma of how he is to function in that society.

"I think I had some idea of the inconsistency of what I was beginning to feel. I was aware that I was unlikely to find anything that would adequately express *everything* that I wanted to express, but I wanted to be more involved in the struggle itself because I believed that in a post-war world those who had actually participated would be the ones to resolve the post-war problems. I was a bit ashamed of feeling that way and of course I now know that was nonsense, because C.O.'s were every bit as much involved in the struggle of the war and in the problems of the post-war world as any soldier who carried a gun.

"I was in a position to *know* that we were under fire *more* times and we saw *more* action and we were in *more* danger for longer periods of time than the average Commando unit. But I think I had some crazy notion at that time that we were not part of *The War* and I needed to be identified with the people who were actually fighting. By being a C.O. I had expressed part of my feelings and now I wanted to express the other.

"I think a lot of these things are irrational processes. You know, I am a psychoanalyst, I've been analyzed and I've spent many hours on the couch fighting the bloody war all over again. I don't know that I've got an adequate answer even yet to all this. Most of the reasons we do things, our motives, are unconscious.

"In any event, when I got out to India I could have gone into the British Army in India or the Indian Army but I was given the opportunity to join the American Army because of my work with the Chinese. Seagrave heard about it and invited me to come back with his Unit. I'm not quite sure how it happened but suddenly I found myself a private in the U.S. Army!

"By then Seagrave was down in the Hukwaung Valley and I walked back down there. On the twentieth day I was very nearly killed, along with a group of other people.

"We were in a sort of patrol group and the word came back for us to try to get in behind the Japs to pick up a wounded Chinese cook. We were actually right on the edge of a Japanese command post and when we tried to get in behind them through the dense undergrowth, suddenly there they were, just sitting there waiting for us. We were within spitting distance of them and they opened fire, but they were so startled--I think they were as terrified as we were--that they didn't aim properly, which was just as well for us!

"I worked for Seagrave for a while, I became his First Sergeant and I stayed with him until we got down to Myitkyina where I left him to volunteer for the OSS, the 101. I commanded three companies; first, the Kachin Rangers and we moved down to around Lashio and were involved in road-blocks and ambushes.

"Then while I was still a Sergeant, I was dropped in around Maymyo and told to take over a company of Karens. They had their own perfectly good leader, a Karen named Denny Tun, a Karen but with a commission in the British Army. It was really quite ridiculous. I was just a Sergeant and they didn't want me, I wasn't really a trained soldier, I was kind of a Boy Scout in the jungle.

Besides that there were about fifty Chinese soldiers there with whom I *could* deal, but here I had this Karen company and didn't know what to do with them!

"So I got in touch with the powers that be and told them it was a ridiculous situation and that as a Sergeant I was out of my depth. The solution was that Roger Hillsman flew in and took over command of the two companies and I was given a battlefield commission as a First Lieutenant. I took command of the Chinese which we called Company C, and Denny Tun stayed in command of the Karens, K Company, and that's how we finished the war. We operated between Maymyo and Lawsawk and Taunggyi. Curiously enough my second in command was an American sergeant named Vanarsdale who had been a Lieutenant in the British Army!"

Tom Owen, Ken Grant, and Martin Davies went back to China after a few weeks at Gauhati. They trained new members of the FAU as they came out from England until the war was over, then waited to be demobilized.

When the British began their preparations for the retaking of Burma, General "Bill" Slim was given command of the British forces that would be part of the attack on the Japanese. Under him was Brigadier Geoffrey Evans, commanding IV Corps.

Dennis Thompson, Mechanics Oriental: "After the Walkout I had two choices. One, to continue my studies in Lucknow University or two, to join the Indian Army. I chose the Army and they sent me to the Indian Military Academy. Just before I was commissioned in the Indian Army, the Burma Army found out and they said, 'He is from Burma, we want him.'

"So I joined the Burma Army in 1943 . They put me in the Burma Intelligence Corps. I stayed in the Army and finished the war in 1945 as a Captain under General Evans in the IV Corps."

It must have been gratifying to Thompson to find that he *was* wanted by someone after all, and that he did so well under the British.

Officer Cadet Jack Croft: "After the walkout I went to the British Army Headquarters and became a regular officer in the Indian Army. I served in the second Burma campaign throughout."

Major Castens: " Some time after the Walkout I joined the Johnnies. This was a group set up by the British Army, IV Corps, called the "Zed" force. We went back into Burma in teams of two as commissioned officers in the British Army so that if we were caught by the Japanese we would not be shot as spies.

"Someone wrote about us that we were 'the bravest men in any theater,' but I joined them simply from the shame I felt at the British defeat. I refuse to have anything to do with anyone who

wants to glamorize war and killing.

"We went in to penetrate behind Japanese lines to learn their movements and their strength and to report back to Headquarters for the planning of the retaking of Burma. They told me when I joined up that I would have to shave off my beard and I said that if I had to do that I wouldn't go, the natives wouldn't know me without my beard, so they let me keep it.

"We decided we must go back in with small groups of Burmese troops, proper Burma Rifles, the people who knew the country, who had lived there. Quite a number of them had come out with the Army. When we got organized I knew perfectly well that every bloody man in the patrol that I commanded was a far better man than I. They were all born and brought up in the jungle and I was just an importation. I hadn't got the reflexes and the eyesight that they had and the knowledge of the plants around and how to track people. All these things that they had I hadn't got. It makes you be humble.

"Our patrol did one of the longest and deepest penetrations but that was simply because that was in my area and I knew it all. We carried radios to send back information and we were supplied by airdrops from the R.A.F. Eventually the Japs had a price on my head, I came near to getting caught, and I was withdrawn."

I believe that Castens refused to talk to Lieutenant General Evans because he thought that Evans' book would glamorize war, and he would have none of that. Actually, The Johnnies was an absorbing account of a dangerous mission which certainly demanded courage of these men. But to me there was no effort made by the author to "glamorize" war or what the Johnnies did.

Part Three:
They Scatter Once More All Over the World

I have often wondered what became of those people who took that little stroll through the mountains.

Chapter Thirteen

The Americans

A man can if necessary do anything he sets his mind to.

Brigadier General Frank Dorn, U.S. Army, (Retired)
At his home in Washington, D.C. January 6, 1972

"Of course the Walkout wasn't really just a little stroll. It was a challenge, a difficult one. At least I thought so. After we got into it, it wasn't nearly as bad as I had expected and some parts I rather enjoyed.

"But I didn't consider it an historical event, it was only a tiny fragment in the mainstream of history. It wasn't what we were supposed to be doing, we weren't *winning!* I suppose that's why I've never thought about its effect on my life, probably because of a subconscious reluctance to do so since it was a defeat for the U.S. Army even though we had no U.S. troops.

"Over the years I've come to see its valuable side effects and frankly, it was an experience which I value. It gave me a feeling of confidence in the rest of my life that you can conquer it, lick it, whatever it might be. And you'd better be able to laugh--if you can't laugh you might as well quit. I felt tough and good, and if I came out of it I'd feel pretty pretty damn cocky. I *was* doing it, I found that I *could* do it, and I valued that knowledge of myself. I learned that about myself and about others too. A man *can* if necessary do anything he sets his mind to.

"I learned that you can get along without material possessions and with insufficient food. I lost forty pounds and didn't gain it back for some time, though once we got out I ate ravenously. I learned to shed the complications of life and gradually came to realize that I was still alive, still plugging along and not too badly off without all those things, and that I could live in a mud hut if I had to. But who wants to!

"It taught me that physical fitness pays off. I was fortunate in being fit, much better off than some of the older ones. But I learned even about them that man is the most resilient animal in the lexicon of creatures on earth. It was remarkable how many of the group did just keep plugging along without belly-aching or whining when they were actually having hard going.

"Of course the outstanding group was the Friends Ambulance Unit. They really had my admiration even if I didn't agree with their views. They worked like dogs at any job. Unwilling as they were to put on a uniform or carry a gun, the fact that they were willing to help anybody

impressed me. They were true Conscientious Objectors and sincere. I had to give them my respect.

"I retired from the Army in 1955--after thirty years I'd had enough--in order to do what I'd always wanted to do which was to write, to etch, to paint, to cook. I love gourmet cooking and have written several cook-books which have been published. I've also written other books, the latest being the one about the Walkout. A couple of other books are in the works, and I did the end papers and maps for Tuchman's book on Stilwell.

"When I first got out of the Army I found that I was *lost*. I was out from under those all-protecting wings and now I had to make decisions for myself. I drove across the continent by myself and by the time I got to California I had it all worked out. Since then I've done pretty much what I want with my life.

"I got married some years later and my wife and I have lived here ever since. We have a lot of friends here we keep up with and I give lectures on China and Chinese art and cooking.

"Stilwell was a controversial figure and I was part of that controversy. But he was unquestionably responsible for getting that group out in the Walkout and we were the only group that size that got out intact. It was solely due to Stilwell.

"Tuchman's book has done more to vindicate Stilwell than all the rest that has been written about him. It's remarkable, however, how little *has* been written about the C. B. I. theater. We were the stepchildren of the war. We were a long way away and we were a secondary theater. We were all a little paranoid about that." (See Appendix J.)

Brigadier General Benjamin Ferris, U.S. Army (Retired)
At his home in Center Lovell, Maine May 27, 1972

"We had a tough time on the Walkout, no two ways about it, but it was a worthwhile experience for me. I wouldn't have done it by choice but I was glad that I *had* done it.

"I don't feel I particularly owed my life to Stilwell, however. I had the feeling that Mr. Case saved my life. General Stilwell kept the group together, he was the leader and everyone respected him as they should, but Breedon Case was the backbone of the organization with his knowledge of the trails, the porters, the food, the language. He was a missionary there in Burma at Pyinmana helping the natives and he was known to the people as a good man. We never would have gotten out with the ease and comfort, little as they were, that we did, if it had not been for that great character.

"I don't mean to take anything away from General Stilwell, he was a great leader. But there were certain characteristics about him . . . he was very decisive, positive, and he never retracted a decision. He was no diplomat, far from it. His encounters with Chiang Kai-shek were indicative of his unchangeability. Perhaps if he had done things a little differently it might have turned out differently. Given a Division Command with fighting troops there was no superior. He would have been particularly outstanding.

"I lived a disciplined life in those years and I still do. I have had a rich life, a decent good

life, a delightful life, and my partner in life has been a great, great help. I appreciate it.

"I retired after thirty years in the Army with service in Europe after the Far East. Since then we move from Maine to Florida according to the season. I used to play golf and take walks to keep fit though I never was the fitness nut that Stilwell was.

"Nowadays I can't understand these 'long-hairs,' these 'hippies,' and I think these professors who stir up unrest on the campuses ought to be taken out and shot. I think Richard Nixon is a splendid man."

Major General Franklin Sibert, U.S. Army (Retired)
Letter from Fort Walton, Florida, October 17, 1973

"My memory of the Walkout was that it was a routine affair. We went through wild country, up and down a lot of hills. There were fleas where we stopped, there were leeches, and there were kilometer markers along the trails instead of milestones

"During my Army career I served in Hawaii, New Guinea, the Philippines, and Japan as Division and Corps Commander. After the Walkout I commanded the 6th Infantry Division in all of its World War II combat.

"I retired in 1946 and have lived in Florida ever since, spending my summers in Quebec and Acapulco."

Brigadier General Henry Holcombe, U.S. Army, (Retired)
At the Army and Navy Club, Washington, D.C. January 27, 1972

"Shortly after the war I retired as a low-grade Brigadier after thirty years of active service. I am content to be 'just retired'.

"The Walkout was a remarkable experience and I'm glad I did it. I was tougher after it and it made me realize that I had endured a remarkable and strenuous experience.

"It seemed to me that heterogeneous as the group was there was an *esprit* about it, that the common danger united us. Stilwell was undoubtedly responsible for saving our lives. Without his judgement in choosing the right route to India we would have been overtaken by the Japanese.

"I strongly feel that the Lord helps those who help themselves and I faced up to that experience and did the best I could. I believe that when your number is up, it's up.

"We suffer in this country now from too much affluence. You must work for what you get and you get pretty much what you deserve. I've been lucky. I have no worries and if that is what happiness is, then I'm a happy man."

Colonel Felix Novack (Nowakowsky) U.S.Army (Retired)
At his home in Ferndale, Michigan February 12, 1973

"I was satisfied with my part in the Walkout. I was there because I was told to be there and having been disciplined as a soldier for twenty years, that's what I did. The thing was that we *had* to get out for our own survival so that's what we did.

"I would say that General Stilwell was one of the finest, most sympathetic persons you would ever run across. As a matter of fact, he was a nice guy. I could never understand why they called him 'Vinegar Joe.' He was never vinegary as far as I was concerned, and he had a lot of humor. All the time on the Walkout I had complete faith in him. I thought he knew what he was doing. There was something about the man that made you feel that way. He was a leader and as long as he felt we were going to make, I felt that *I* was going to make it too. I don't think we ever would have made it without him. The group followed him, he inspired us.

"After the war my brother changed his name to Novack, so I did also to conform to his. I continued in the Army until 1951 when I had a heart attack and was pretty sick for two years. Then I retired. It's a pleasure to sit down in one spot. I've never had enough time to do all the things I wanted to do. I like to putter around the house and my wife is pretty proud of me. We've never had a repairman in this house since we moved in!

"We travel some, to see our children mostly. I've seen enough of the world, I don't need to travel any more. I read a lot and I spend a great deal of time keeping things orderly. I guess that's my biggest fault!

"Talking with you about the Walkout has brought back some swell memories of some swell people and I'm glad of it!"

Colonel "Mac" O'Hara, U.S. Army Medical Corps, (Retired)
At "Turfside Paradise" Trailer Camp, Phoenix, Arizona February 7, 1973

"Hell, it could have been worse! Sure, the Walkout was hard work but everybody else did it too, and nothing seems as bad when everybody else is in the same condition. Actually, that was a pretty doggone good bunch of people. We were all equal in it. I wasn't afraid at the time but afterwards they told us some of things that could have happened and we were damn lucky.

"I'd never been outside the United States before. I got interested in the people and the country of Burma and I learned a lot more about them by being with them than I ever could read in a book. If you're half-way friendly, they're more than half-way friendly, and I've been interested in different people and foreigners ever since.

"I always admired Stilwell. He used to tell us, 'If you do anything that is not covered by regulations but it is helping the man below you, I'll back you up, even if I have to go to Congress!'

"It was Stilwell's judgement that chose that route over the mountains. We would have been cut off on the other trails like those the British took at Kalewa, and because he pushed us along, we

got in ahead of the monsoon.

"I stayed in the Army after the war and a couple of years after Burma I was stationed at Amarillo, Texas. There I had managed to get into a rather unpleasant personality conflict with the commanding officer and I wanted to get transferred. One day General Stilwell came through on an inspection trip and heard that I was there and asked to see me. It was the first time we'd met since Burma and I nearly burst with pride as I marched up at full salute to where he stood. He asked me if I still liked rice and then he said, 'How would you like to go to Okinawa with me? I'm going to need a good dentist there.' Nothing would have pleased me more but nothing came of it. The war ended before Stilwell began the attack on Japan from Okinawa.

"After our conversation, Stilwell took off in his plane--he'd had it held up so that he could talk to me--and after it left, here comes my commanding officer, all agog. 'What did he say ? What didya talk about?' I just said, 'Why don't you just ask *him*, he has a phone on his plane and you can just ask *him* what he had to say to ole Doc O'Hara'! Not long after that I *was* transferred.

"I finished up my career after a long tour of duty at Eglin Field, Florida. Since my retirement my wife and I travel all over in our Airstream trailer. When I get too old to drive, I'll anchor it down somewhere and settle down. In the meantime I want to see as much of the country as I can."

**Fred Eldridge, at his home in Corona, California
February 18, 1972**

"Stilwell was a very remarkable man and he had some elements of real greatness. We would never have gotten out of Burma on the Walkout if it hadn't been for him. How he tongue-lashed us, shamed us! And he made us cover so much ground a day, and he was almost sixty years old. He held that group together by his personality, his drive, his courage and his singleness of purpose. I had a real sense of personal loyalty to him and I still do.

"I never dwell very much on the war. I'm not particularly introspective but I like people. I know I was one of the lucky ones. We were a secondary theater out there in Burma and India and we were all a little bit paranoid about that, but we performed a useful service. Basically, we tied up the Japanese in Burma in the second campaign and that meant there were fewer of them around for MacArthur to have to cope with. We didn't win the war, but in our own way I think we helped to win it.

"I was one of the lucky ones, very lucky. I got to go all over the world at the tax-payer's expense, usually living in the flesh-pots and getting to know all the big names. I couldn't possibly have learned as much about international relations if I'd been studying for a PhD as I did being on an Allied Staff.

"I finished up my Army career as general manager of The Stars and Stripes in Europe. Then when the war ended I worked for the L.A. Times again. Then I got married. and we moved here to Corona. I bought the local paper, The Daily Independent , and we've lived here ever since.

"It's a very conservative town and I've done the things I believe in, like supporting open housing, and I joined the World Federalists. I learned a lot from my wartime experience and it helped me later in dealing with people. I developed more sympathy for my fellow-man, more tolerance. I don't happen to believe that pacifism can work unless it's universal, but I do believe in world order and I've been very much involved with that.

"I don't do much any more. I had a coronary so I couldn't do the Walkout again and, in fact, I wouldn't want to, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world!"

**Paul Jones, at his home in San Rafael, California
February 19, 1972**

"There was no question that it was a rough journey and not one I would choose for a holiday. However, under better conditions and taking more time, it would be interesting to do again because the scenery was just unbelievable.

"It was very interesting to me that in the Walkout we were a party of more than a hundred people, we were all strung out in a long line, yet somehow there was a feeling of *unity*. Of course we were concerned about our own survival, of keeping on going to get out, but we seemed to belong to each other, there was a common danger that we were all in *together* . . . British, Americans, Chinese, whatever . . . there was no difference between us.

"And I loved the Burmese, I just *loved* them. I knew nothing about them, nor the Indians or Chinese either. 'The Road to Mandalay' was all I knew about Burma. I got acquainted with them--we couldn't speak each other's language but we communicated anyway--and I thought they were wonderful. They're an artistic sort of people too. They're expressing themselves all the time in everything they do, just as they did in the intricacy of the rafts and in the way they weave a pattern into the bamboo they make their houses out of. I found them delightful.

"And of course I learned more about international politics than I possibly could have any other way. It was a super-graduate course, a tremendous education for me, a coming of age.

"Considering all the bad things about war, it is nonetheless an experience shared with others that puts that group apart from all others. You develop a closeness with those who shared the experience that is like no other relationship, and the Walkout was a part of my overall war experience.

"It put a lot of things in perspective for me, the *value* of things. Even now I will often go over to the refrigerator to get a cold drink simply because I can. There were so many times in Burma when I wanted it, over and over, and there wasn't any. I embarrass people by eating everything that's on my plate. I cannot bear to see food wasted. This is a result of our scanty food supply on the Walkout, plus the starvation levels I saw among the people, particularly in India.

"And I really learned something about money. One time I was by myself and I was terribly thirsty. I came to a spring and the water looked good but it was difficult to get at. I was trying to

figure out how to get it out of the spring into me. A native came along, just one of the hill people, and he saw what I was trying to do. He took out his *dah*--those knives that they carry--and he chopped a chunk of bamboo and made me a cup. I was carrying a lot of rupees--my back pay--and I offered to pay him. He just laughed. He was doing somebody a favor and that was all the pay he needed. It made me think. He had no use for the money, it was worth absolutely nothing in the jungle, it was what he had *done* that had value.

"From the Walkout and the whole war experience I learned not only that money was not the really important thing in life, but I gained a lot of confidence in myself. It made me less insular than I might have been.

"I retired from the Army with reserve status and retired from the Reserves as a Colonel in 1952. I went back into broadcasting--both radio and TV--for a few years and then for twenty years worked for the Government on Attack-Warning systems. I have just retired from that and will probably get back into some form of broadcasting from now on.

"I have had a very interesting life, most of which has been enjoyable. There have been enough rough and tough times to make me appreciate the good times. I am just an ordinary guy and I envy no man. God has been good to me and there is no question in my mind that there is a God. I am a strong believer."

**Dick Young, at the San Francisco Airport Hilton
February 3, 1973**

"At the time, I would have said in today's jargon, the Walkout was 'no big deal,' but looking back on it I would have to consider it was one of the high points of my life. It is a good experience to look back on.

"I think the General saved everyone's life in that group. We would have been overtaken by the Japs or gotten lost without him. Of course, Breedon Case did a lot for our survival too, negotiating with the village elders for porters and food, and speaking all the local dialects. But it was the General who set up the disciplinary measures. It was overall a military unit and therefore there were prescribed procedures.

"You had your groups--they had to be in a certain order--each with its own leader. Survival, plus the fact that you were part of a group, made it cohesive. You performed whatever duties that were assigned to you--the duties of food, water, firewood, being ready--things like that. Even the others who were not the military had been associated with it long enough so that they could observe the discipline, do their part. It became a whole military unit for survival and *we were a good unit!*

"I stayed with the General after the second campaign until he was relieved of command in CBI. I was with him when he came back to this country, the time he said he felt like a prisoner in his own country. He was told not to talk to reporters, he was kept more or less under wraps.

"Then I went with him to Okinawa to prepare the attack on Japan, but Hiroshima happened

before we launched it. After the war ended I was separated as a Lieutenant Colonel and went to China with UNRRA, got married to a gal from Shanghai, and then worked in Washington with the Quartermaster General.

"In 1956 I started with Lockheed Aero-Space missile center as an engineer, working on the management of Polaris-Poseidon requirements. I am a peace-loving man and this causes a conflict in me. I have often asked myself, if that is so, why was I in the Army and now what you might call the business of killing, and I don't know the answer. I guess it is because it is the nature of man that he refuses to learn from what has happened before."

Robert Belknap, at his home in Hillsdale, New York
May 25, 1972

"I'm in better shape to do the Walkout now than I was then, quite honestly! But I'd never be interested in going back there, I've done enough jungles to last me the rest of my life.

"The whole war experience drastically changed my life and the Walkout was part of that experience. I had to learn to get along with all sorts of people. Before the war I had been sort of a playboy. I was unattached, I didn't know how to deal with people, how to manage them, and I learned that during the war. I learned how to take responsibility, not to be afraid of it, to welcome it in fact. But as for the Walkout itself, I just saved my own life.

"Looking back on it I would have to say that really Stilwell saved my life. I wouldn't have thought very much of my chances or those of anyone else's for getting out without him. I feel very strongly about that. And we were kind of lucky about the monsoon.

"Stilwell was the one who pulled the whole thing together. I don't think anyone else can take too much credit. It did upset me when we didn't stop to help that old man from Yonkers, and I resented Stilwell's attitude toward the British. He was rather rude about them. I was probably the only one in our party who had a real sympathy for the British and how they must be feeling. I had lived with them for four years in India, in fact I had been engaged to one of them at one time, and I don't think the Americans understood what the British were going through.

"But I had full confidence in Stilwell and the greatest admiration for how he pulled together that happenstance group of people who had been thrown together by Fate, if you like, and got them out of there.

"You know, we all got the Bronze Star some time afterwards. Well, when I was in China later I did a reconnaissance trip for six weeks all by myself except for a couple of Chinese engineers in a part of China where nobody had ever been before. It was dangerous and fairly critical, and I would say that that was more deserving of the Bronze Star than the Walkout was.

"When the war ended I got out of the Army and went back to Standard Oil. I served in Ceylon, England, Indonesia, and for twelve years in East Africa, doing very much the same sort of thing I had been doing in China. China was good training for me, working with all sorts of people .

"I retired in 1968 and have been teaching Business and Economics at our local Community College. My wife runs a day-care center for working mothers. We have three sons and life is full and exciting."

Tommy Lee, at his home in Hayward, California
June 17, 1972

"No question I owed my life to General Stilwell, without him we would have died. I had not known him before, but from my observation he was a real leader and he was not afraid. He was a rough man but I liked him, he made you stand up. Many a time I think about it. He was made of steel. I learned respect and responsibility under General Stilwell. He brought out the good, the inner discipline in people. Other leaders I served under after General Stilwell seemed incompetent.

"I gained from that experience how to survive in a tough situation, that no matter what the difficulties you may be in, you must work together, forget about yourself and help the other fellow. You get that feeling.

"It broadened my outlook toward other people. I mingled with people I didn't know before and realized what they were like. I travelled all over the world, I learned about people on the other side of the world, and those who haven't . . . well, you can't expect much of people who have never been out of New Jersey!

"General Stilwell had the complete loyalty of every American in the group, officers, GI's. and civilians alike. That was why he chose the ones he did to go into the jungle with him.

"When the war was over I went back with General Motors in Shanghai and then I *finally* got back to Manila to marry my wife. I'd written her a letter after we'd gotten engaged just before the war started to say when I would be back to get married. And do you know, she never got that letter for six years, just before I got back to her! But she was *very* faithful all those years, she waited for me.

"GM sent me all over the Far East and then they sent me to the States and we lived in New Jersey. I retired in 1960 and came out here to live on account of the climate, and for my garden. And we travel a lot."

Carl Arnold, at his music store in Oceanside, California
February 17, 1972

"In those years I got to know a man it was very easy to make an idol of. When you've got a piece of tungsten steel standing there, how can anyone else compare?

"Stilwell was brilliant in many ways. He was a natural linguist and he knew human character, but he had little patience with the shortcomings of higher-ups with whom he didn't agree. He was tough but he was terribly tired a lot of the time. Yet he never gave in, he was disciplined within himself.

"He was one of the most selfless men I ever met. He had no ambitions to be a hero or to take advantage of his position for his own advancement. Politics didn't matter to him, it wasn't his field. Many people didn't understand him because he wouldn't take time to be diplomatic. His mission was to fight the enemy, to win the war, and he was dedicated to the doughboy, the soldier, whether American or Chinese. He was humanitarian about his men, he always saw to it that his men got a fair shake of food or PX supplies or recreation. He always saw to his men first. He lived a frugal life, not to seem tough, but because if the troops had to live that way, that's the way he wanted it for himself.

"When it got time to get out, he'd done his homework. He proved his knowledge of terrain even though the maps he had were lousy. When we went in to Burma all he had was a map from the National Geographic. I'd observed that in him whenever I'd driven around with him during the campaign. He was always studying the terrain, looking at it from a military aspect. It was an analytical study of the area. For the Walkout he studied what the enemy was going to do, how to avoid the refugees and the fleeing Chinese troops, how to stay off the beaten track, and how to avoid the Japanese.

"In those days Stilwell appealed to the American public, sports-minded Americans. He was the underdog. Nobody had been able to stop the Japanese and the loss of Burma drove him into wanting to go back and retake it. Here was the underdog who had been licked, but by Glory, he wasn't going to give up! That was part of his reason for walking out, for not being flown out. He would go out like everybody else even if he did have to walk out.

"He was never uncouth as far as I was concerned, and I never heard him tell a dirty story. About the worst language he ever used was an occasional 'damn.' The Stilwell Papers shows him as vulgar and profane and I didn't like that. I don't think he ever intended that what he wrote out there would ever be seen by anyone except his wife Win and himself. It was a way for him to let off steam. He had no-one out there he could talk to about his real feelings.

"For the final stages of the second campaign, Stilwell had his headquarters in Ceylon. Dorn had gone with the 'Y' force and I became the General's Senior Aide. Now, he didn't approve of WAACs being sent overseas, they might get diseases that would ruin their lives. It wasn't that he was against women, he was thinking more of their welfare. The war wasn't a party, it was hard work and he wanted to get the work done and go home. He wanted to go home as much as anyone else. But he did have a WAAC secretary there, she was a Master Sergeant. What do you know? Later she and I got married!

"Dick Young, Bill Bergin--who had joined him for the second campaign--and I went back to the States with him when he was recalled in 1944, when he was more or less kept under wraps. He said he felt like a prisoner in his own country.

"It hurt, it really hurt, when he came back. It's the only time I ever saw the man really shook,

hurt inside. He wasn't just leaving a war, he was leaving those troops, those Chinese soldiers he had so hopefully molded into what he thought they could really be. It was just like somebody who had lost half his family.

"He was never invited to the White House, Roosevelt never said to him, 'Gee, Joe, what's your side of the story?' Then he died right after the war and never got a chance to defend himself from the criticisms that were made against him.

"After the war I was transferred into the Air Force and served at various posts in England, Japan on MacArthur's staff, Westover Field, Bowling Green, the Pentagon, and again in England. I retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1968 and since then I have run this music store in Oceanside. We live in Fullerton. Big Baw and Hla Sein visited us when they came to the States with Ruby and Sein Bwint on their Fulbright scholarships. I kept up a correspondence with Dara Singh for many years. He was in the General's personal body-guard along with Gish in the second campaign.

"In the years since the war I've gained humility. That's what the young of today have that we didn't have at the beginning of World War II. We had no reason to have any. We were the great powerful United States, we could do *anything!*"

**Ray Chesley, at his home in Teaneck, New Jersey
May 14, 1972**

"The Walkout was just something that *had* to be done, so with good leadership, we did it. The commanding General was there and things were well organized. Stilwell's bearing was always perfect, just what you would expect a leader to be. I think he was a tremendous commander, but trying to work with those Chinese troops in Burma in the first campaign was more than even he could swing. And I don't think we had anyone who could have done any better. It was too late. The course of the war had already gone the other way.

"He was a perfect General as far as I was concerned. He could have led *any* group he might have had out of there. He could have had a group of raw recruits and he would have gotten them out. We were one of the few groups to get out intact and it was due to the quality of the organization, the cohesion of the military discipline he imposed on us. He was concerned with each one of us as a member of the overall group and he had every man's loyalty. The tone of the group was set by Stilwell, and the people had to have character, he wouldn't have stood for anything else.

"He was lucky though, in a way. For the most part these were disciplined people. The Americans were soldiers, most of them regular Army. The British we picked up were soldiers too. So were the Chinese honor guard. And the nurses, though not militarily trained, might as well have been. In that Seagrave outfit, nurses' training was for all practical purposes a disciplined thing. They were trained as soldiers might be trained. These people all responded to Stilwell. There was never any doubt that he was the commanding officer and they obeyed his commands.

"I would say that about the time of the Walkout was when my character gelled. I've lived

pretty much according to those principles ever since. I hate to admit it but I think I grew up quite a bit during the war. Oh hell, I'm not sure I'm completely grown up yet. I suppose I'm an idealistic horse's ass! Maybe the most important thing in my life is to be able to do a little to help somebody else, to give service. That's the only reason for being around, isn't it? I never became a doctor but I *can* help a doctor make people well.

"I got out of the Army after the war, in December, 1945, after serving on an Air Force Medical diarrhea survey team. I met my wife while I was serving with the survey team. She was an Army nurse at Letterman Hospital. That's where Stilwell died, you know.

"I liked the Army very much but I didn't want to stay in. One of the main reasons I got out--you're going to hate me for this--was that once they started taking women other than nurses into the service, I thought the Army was no place for me! So I came back to work at Margaret Hague Hospital in Jersey City where I've worked ever since. I became Assistant Director of laboratories."

**Dean Chambers, at his home in Bonham, Texas
February 9/10, 1973**

"I have to say I kind of enjoyed the Walkout. It was a thrilling experience for me, a kind of adventure. Today there's not enough challenge, everybody has too much, and that destroys discipline. We all worked together at that time, not just for ourself but for all the group, and that was good. We were among the lucky ones to get out.

"I had a sense of accomplishment. I wasn't a drag on the party and I kept my end up. It was just something we had to do. We were all in it together and if we stuck together, we'd make it and we did. But of the hundreds of thousands of others who fled Burma, thousands of them died. In fact we were the only group of that size that got out intact. I felt that General Stilwell and Mr. Case saved our lives. The General cared about us all. We were under a born leader. My confidence in him lasted the whole way because I had so much faith in him and his judgment. I liked the way he was trying to get along with the situation in the first campaign when he didn't have the supplies or the matériel or anything to work with.

"And I thought he was a humanitarian, he had a genuine concern for his fellow-man. He cared about little people, he was a good man. He very much had a devotion to the Chinese soldiers, but he hated the 'brass' and the warlords, the bankers and lawyers who were made generals overnight.

"When the war ended they tried to get me to stay in the Army. I could have wound up a career officer with my knowledge of Chinese which I had learned at Ramgarh, but I didn't want any part of that, I'd had enough, I'd had enough. I was eager to get to work and make some money. Of course, on looking back, I could have done a lot better. I don't know why I didn't take up schooling on the G.I. Bill of Rights like Short did.

"But I went right to work with my brother in a dairy packaging firm and I travelled a lot. It began to get me down. All this was while I had an amateur radio and I used to talk to an uncle of mine over in Bonham. He told me one day that he had this attractive blonde over there I ought to meet. So I went over one day and I met her and we got married. I married the boss's daughter! I took an apprenticeship in plumbing and began working with him. Gradually as the old ones passed along, it became my business and I've been here ever since.

"I've had a good life but I'm not entirely satisfied with it. I wish I had had more schooling, particularly in mathematics."

**Paul Gish, at his home in Wadsworth, Ohio
February 13, 1973**

"I think now after reading all these books about the Walkout, I would say that it was a historical event, but at first I thought it was just an adventure. It was a good experience for me. I was interested in all those different people and how they did things. When we were building the rafts I got a good feeling of doing things together, that what's good for one is good for the others and that was a good feeling for me.

"The leadership of Stilwell held the group together. He brought out the best in people. He expected a lot so we gave him all we had. He demanded of himself what he demanded of the troops and the officers. I held him more or less in awe.

"But he could chew you out! I can tell you he chewed me out a couple of times. Once I deserved it, but the other time it was a mistake. I just stood there and said, 'Yessir, nosir,' and the next day he apologized. That's the kind of guy he was.

"It taught me to look at life a little different. From then on I was able to get along with anyone anywhere, and I made a lot of friends. It more or less brought me out of my shell because I was a little shy. There was generals down to privates and colonels and we was all gettin' along. It made me able to go out and talk to people no matter what their station in life was. A person was what he was, not what his rank or color or language was.

"After we took Myitkyina I was rotated back to the States and I got out of the Army in August 1945. I went to work for Sun Rubber Company. I met my wife then and we got married and I was making good money. I got up to being Assistant Traffic Manager, but that was as high as they would let me go because I didn't have no college experience. All of a sudden the bottom dropped out of the business and I was laid off.

"We'd heard about the beautiful sunshine out in Arizona so we decided we'd go out there and start all over. But we got disenchanted with it and decided to move back here after all. I started in as a Christmas helper at the Post Office and then there was a regular opening. I took the Civil Service exam and came out on top on that. They asked me if I wanted to stay outside and be a carrier or come inside and be a clerk. What I had to decide was whether I wanted to keep on

walking in the snow when I got to be fifty years old, so I decided to come inside and I've been at it ever since. I like the job, I've gotten to know so many people, and I enjoy the public so much.

"What about me? I'm just an ordinary little guy, happily struggling to get along in this world and I'm happy with the the life I've led. After two or three near misses in Burma, I decided that if I got out okay, I would enjoy the rest of my life and not let too much get me down. So far I have succeeded and I have a wonderful wife who helps me achieve that goal."

**Dr. Lawrence Short, at the Black Beaver Motel, Anadarko, Oklahoma
February 8, 1973**

"I didn't particularly distinguish myself on the Walkout. I don't think there really was any chance to, but I did what I was told. And I was proud to have been with the General, that high rankin' an officer. I learned later that most of the guys that flew out would have liked to be with us because it was so *unusual*.

"A lot of people got more out of the Walkout than I did. I didn't know nothin' about nothin', I was just too green. I'm sure it was the discipline of a man like Stilwell that held that group together. I admired General Stilwell. I would have loved to stay with him.

"When the war was over I went in to Medical School on the G. I. Bill of Rights. I never did finish college. I suppose Chesley had something to do with it, he used to talk about it a lot. He always wanted to be a doctor. I had no idea what it would be like, how much more training I ought to have, how little I had learned, how little I knew.

"I met my wife there. She was a nurse and she kept on working after we were married and helped me get through. Then an opportunity came up for me to buy a practice here and I did. We've been here ever since. We have four children and one grandbaby.

"I set up my own hospital here but I don't know how long I'm going to be able to keep on running it, there's so much Government interference. What's wrong with the country is all the eggheads who keep wanting to try this, try that.

"I don't think we learned anything from the war or that man will ever get along with his fellow-man. I don't think it's in his inherent nature. I'm a Baptist and I try to do good, but it's like the Bible says, the mind of man is evil. Don't you believe that my mind don't sometimes wander and stray!"

**Fabian Chow, at the Halekulani Hotel, Honolulu
June 20, 1972**

"Frankly I considered my walking out of Burma with General Stilwell an event of passing significance. It was quite an interesting experience, but it was at that time just one more event in the war. Now I think it was the most interesting part of my whole war experience. When you wrote to

me I thought I had forgotten about the Walkout, but now I find I remember far more than I thought I would.

"Of course, I only saw General Stilwell for a tiny bit of his life, that one event. It requires a larger experience to come to any conclusion about him, but from what I saw he was a clear-minded and upright person, and he was tops for that particular incident. Somehow I did get the feeling that there was some kind of political atmosphere around, but I did not butt my nose into this.

"When the war was over, the Information Bureau of the Chinese Government sent me to the States where I worked for some time in New York. At that time I met my wife who was a pharmacist at St. Luke's Hospital. She had grown up in Honolulu of Chinese parentage and after we were married I decided to enter her father's business in that city. I have remained here ever since.

"My wife has developed terrible arthritis. We went to Taipei at one time to try acupuncture, but I regret to say that it was only moderately successful."

**Jack Belden, at the Hotel St. Michel, Paris
October 9-10, 1972**

"I haven't too many unpublished facts to elaborate upon, but I often think about the Walkout nostalgically. But as for that, I never thought about it particularly as anything to be proud of personally that I had made it out, so had everybody else.

"Stilwell was criticized a lot for walking out when he could have been flown out. He would have been in contact with Washington and Chungking and Wavell and so on. But he didn't, he went out with a bunch of nobodies, and he went on foot.

"I think one of the reasons Stilwell walked out was because he was a plain ordinary guy with a sense of responsibility for the people who had been with him during the campaign. He thought it was his duty whether he had an army or not.

"And another reason was that the Japanese were already throwing out these ideological bombs in Burma saying, 'Asia for the Asiatics,' and if he flew out there would have been terrible propaganda about the General who deserted his troops, though of course it was the troops who had deserted him. It was a march of conviction on his part.

"He used to sound off to me, he used to talk to me, he felt close to me. I was somebody he'd known before in China. I was irreverent, I didn't like top 'brass,' and neither did he. Also I was a civilian, I had no axe to grind. I did come close to him in a personal relationship rather than as a correspondent

"I never had any question about his leadership. General Stilwell, though he was an Army man, with the exception of Castens and Barton, was more educated in a broader way than anyone else in the group, and he had determination. He was entirely responsible for getting us all out.

"Certainly the Walkout was a part of history, but it wasn't a big historical event. I guess that overall, for me anyway, it was an adventure.

"After Paris was liberated, I got married and had a son, took my wife and him back to the States and left them in Carmel while I went back to China and wrote a book about it called China Shakes the World.⁶² Later we were divorced, I married again, and then the curtain comes down for twenty years.

"Last year I went to China and it's funny, when I got there I couldn't remember any Chinese, all I could think of was French. Then I got sick there and they put me in a hospital and that was fortunate for me. I learned more about contemporary China from the nurses than I ever could have under the auspices of the Chinese Travel Bureau. I was grateful for that. Then I came back here to Paris and for a while I couldn't speak French. All I could think of was Chinese!

"I'm tired of travel now. I'm ready to look back over my life which has been, to say the least, colorful. I'm working on a book now. I've decided to be myself, not to worry. I was born in 1910, the last time of the appearance of Halley's comet, and I figure I've got a few more years left 'til it comes back in 1986. I live here in Paris because it's cheap and they're nice to me at this hotel."

Chapter Fourteen
The British: Military and Civilians

Frankly, I don't know how we did it.

The Military

Brigadier O. C. M. Dykes, (Retired)

Letter from Unkomaas, South Africa August 10, 1972

"The Walkout was an event somewhat overshadowed by subsequent events. After my last job in Burma when I handed over to Ne Win, we have wandered about, mostly earning one's living in South Africa, Northern Rhodesia, (Zambia) England, Spain, and now South Africa where I have retired."

Jack Croft: Letter from Frankston, Australia February 13, 1973

"As regards the Walkout, I found it one of the most interesting phases of my life. I was only twenty-one and being very fit, had no trouble keeping up. I felt sorry for some of the senior American officers who were obviously not up to this unexpected ordeal. But I must say that the way 'Vinegar Joe' set the example, if I might be allowed to call him that, was a tonic to his fellow-man. I had nothing but the greatest admiration for him. He was a hard task-master but fair. He was a tough old character who stood no nonsense.

"I feel it was very worthwhile and for a young man, very challenging. It was something I have found very useful, not only in my Army career, but also in my later civilian life.

"Major Seagrave, with the Burmese nurses, was another outstanding character. He and the nurses could not do enough for the other members of the party, and the nurses were full of life and really helped our morale.

"I think the main factor that contributed to our getting out safely was our determination to stay ahead of the Japanese so that we could come in again and finish them off. I was fortunate in being able to do just that.

"I stayed in the Army for ten years, finishing up as a Captain in the Infantry. I met my wife while I was in India after the war. She was a Nursing Sister with the British Army, having served in both Europe and Burma. We got out of the Army and came back to Melbourne where I now work for the Government. My eldest son was born in Hyderabad just before we left. We have two teen-age daughters in High School."

Later, Mrs. Winsome Nicholas in Australia wrote me that Lt. G. Campbell left the Burma Navy when the war ended in 1945 and joined the Inland Water Transport based in Calcutta. He had not been heard of since, she said.

**Colonel Tin Gyi (Dennis Thompson), in his office in Rangoon, Burma
June 29, 1972**

"The Walkout is something which was an event which had been and I can remember it very well after so many years. The little bit of hardship that we had and the organizing, I think that was a useful sort of experience and the example of discipline that the General demanded.

"I continued my career in the military up to 1970 and then I was posted to the Ministry of Mines. While in the Army I was sent to England to attend a senior officer's course run by the British Army for foreign personnel as well as their own. England was not very affluent then.

"I got married, we have two children and I am now Chairman of the Board of Industrial Raw Materials and my Burmese name is Tin Gyi. I am in good condition, I play golf, but now I am too busy to play every day and my handicap has gone down from 12 to 14. I have been through British colonialism, Indian Army, Independence, revolution, and People's Socialist Republic. I think my life has been a success. Up to now I have no disappointment, yet!"

**Herbert E. ("Bertie") Castens, at his home "Rockbottom," Woodbourne, East Anglia, England
March 30, 1972**

"After the war I went back to England and I suffered an anxiety crisis for a couple of years. I was petrified of people, restaurants, I couldn't even go in to buy a pack of cigarettes. I did consult a psychiatrist who told me that I needed a tranquil environment, but this was little help since one was not present for me. I could not go back to Burma since it was no longer under British rule. My marriage broke up, my parents had split up, and my mother had died.

"The only commodity I had to sell was teaching so I became a school-master. I taught chemistry for thirteen years in a modern school, and in a modern school, you know, you don't teach anything, just a lot of nonsense. It was a terrible experience. I didn't know what I was aiming at, I felt that what the school was aiming at was wrong, but I didn't know what was *right*. I had had no teaching experience but it was the only means I had of making a living.

"One of my few pleasures was to go to the Overseas Club in London and one night there I met my present wife. I caught her fancy and we were married. Some time after that she went totally deaf, nothing can be done for her. I had to shave off my beard for her to be able to lip read. Then I retired and we moved here.⁶³

"I don't have any outside interests now because I've got to get this property as valuable as possible for her before I die, she is unable to support herself. I keep trying to improve the garden where I grow flowers and vegetables.

"This is my full-time consuming activity. I made the choice and there is a certain amount of satisfaction in it though it has meant the denial of some of the things I wanted to do. But I don't think I could have done what I wanted to anyway, so it's rather stupid feeling regretful about it. I wanted to be in politics and my personality is wrong for it. I'm very outspoken and you've got to be

very, very brutal in politics and at the same time be insensitive to very fierce personal attacks, and I'm not.

"The great need in our world today is to make over our moral fabric. We have to introduce the child who is born anarchistic to some sort of discipline. We have to recognize that everyone is dependent on someone else, even if that person is unknown. Our culture is technical and interlocked and you have to look at the structure of mankind apart from a personal viewpoint.

"There is one hope for the world and that is that the young of today cannot stand the hypocrisy of war."

I think "Bertie" Castens named his place "Rockbottom" out of a sense of irony. It reflected the contrast between the First Class life he had experienced in the days of touring the forests by elephant with a retinue of servants, and the despair he felt when he returned to England with no job, his first marriage broken up, no money, no prospects.

Colonel James Vivian Davidson-Houston
U.S. Cavalry Journal, p. 34

"Summing up the Walkout: Mosquitoes were not numerous, there were only two cases of malaria, one of amoebic dysentery, two heat strokes. On the whole the health of the group was good. The generally troublesome afflictions were foot ailments and attacks of leeches. In spite of these conditions, every member of the party completed the journey alive.

"The nurses were cheerful little chatterboxes, not downcast by discomforts or by the disaster that had overtaken their country.

"When we completed our journey I handed over the officers and other ranks who had been put under my command by Stilwell to IV Corps, with the exception of "Sailor" Dykes who remained with me.

"The lesson learned from which one fact emerges strongly: land communications between Burma and India were inadequate for maintenance of our defensive forces in Burma, and conversely would not enable a strong Japanese force to invade India. The neutralization or re-occupation of Rangoon is essential for re-conquest."

Davidson-Houston seems to have overlooked the fact that one of the "cheerful little chatter-boxes" was nurse Koi who gave him an injection every day for his dysentery. And several of the nurses did indeed mention their sorrow at the loss of their beloved country, "Golden Burma."

The rest of Davidson-Houston's career is recounted in his well written and interesting books, Armed Pilgrimage and Armed Diplomat.

The information gathered from Davidson-Houston and from other sources as I engaged in my search accounts for the immediate fate of some of the twelve members of the British group. I was

unable to learn anything further about Lieutenant E. H. McDonald, Lieutenant G. B. Singh, Sergeant E .C. Green or E. Reynolds.

Of the others, I found Jack Croft who told me about Hughie Campbell. I learned only that Major Haigh and Lieutenant McIntyre had retired and had died before I started to trace them. Dick Young told me that he had run into Mr. L. Murray, whose first name was Lionel, in Singapore after the war, but no further information about him was available.

From a correspondent in Australia named Mrs. Winsome Nicholas who had been a little girl during the war, I learned that in 1948 she had met a man in Singapore named Harry Milner who had walked out of Burma with General Stilwell.

"He was a dark Anglo-Indian and at the time I met him," she wrote. "he was employed and living in Singapore, though his wife was still in Rangoon.

"He had attended Victoria School at Kurseong in the Himalays in the nineteen thirties. My father had been a student in that same school in the 1920's and knew about Harry. That's why I remember the name of Cpl. H. Milner you asked me about." She also told me that Lt. G. Campbell, Jack Croft's friend, left the Burma Navy when the war ended in 1945 and joined the Inland Water Transport in Calcutta. He had not been heard of since, she said.

Thanks to other information from Mrs. Nicholas I was ultimately able to trace Donald McPhedron as far as Glasgow in Scotland. A letter to him was returned "Gone Away." Winsome's story of her own escape from Burma as a little girl is told in Appendix H with the stories of others who also walked out.

Civilians: The Odds and Bods

The two Tibetan mule-drivers were paid off as soon as the Walkout was over and immediately disappeared.

The Asiatics who cooked for the Americans, and the two railroad workers were paid off and went to work for the British in India. The cooks and orderlies from Seagrave's hospital in Namhkam stayed with the Surgical Unit.

As far as is known, Case's and Barton's servants stayed with their masters, at least immediately after the Walkout. Case was swept away later in one of the floods that periodically occur in what is now Bangladesh.

Of the three refugees who were "picked up by the FAU," Mr. and Mrs. Hole did not return to Burma. They changed their names and went to live in Australia or possibly Singapore.

Alas, I do not know what became of Mrs. Hole's sister, the sultry Zeli Boller who, according to Belden and the FAU boys, was "quite a dish."

Chapter Fifteen
The Seagrave Unit

Every part of your life works together and there was some good in the experience of the Walkout.

Tun Shein and Lulu in their home in Rangoon, Burma
June 24, 1972

"In 1945 we went home when the war ended. By the time we got to my home town my family were all gone, all killed by the Japanese about the time we were walking out in 1942.

"I started right in working with a missionary named Swordas, going all over Burma sorting out and distributing the things that were being sent in by the Baptist Mission for the people. They needed help, they were looking to the missionaries to do it, so we organized the village pastors and set up committees. Swordas couldn't get over it that every place we went I had a relative or a classmate or a friend!

"Then they took me to represent Burma at the first Evangelical Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948, and I flew there and afterwards I flew to the States. Chesley and his wife came to meet me and we visited around. I saw Hla Sein and Ruby who at that time were working at Margaret Hague Hospital in Jersey City. In fact, Hla Sein is still there. Then a friend from my '101' days, (the OSS) drove me out to see Grindlay in Minnesota.

"When I returned to Burma in 1949 I became a full-time Secretary for the Karen Convention all over Burma. Things were almost back to normal when we got taken into custody for over a year. The Government was after the Karens for no reason. At first I was resentful, but then I thought, 'God sent me here.' There was work to do and it was one of my most rewarding experiences. I guess they put in jail anyone who had some position, some influence, because the Karens did not want to join the Union of Burma which had been formed after the war. After a while they let us go and after that I ran all the conventions, organized them.

"In 1960 John Rich came out from the States. He was helping raise money to rebuild the hospital at Namhkam and he suggested that I might be willing to help him. Seagrave was very short-handed, he couldn't possibly do the load of work he was trying to do, and he knew that if I went there he could leave the administration to me, leave everything in my hands. He could confine himself to the training of the nurses and care of patients, so we went back there to work with him for several years until he died.

"He *was* a good teacher and he deserved credit for getting the hospital built there. Even up

to the last, when he could no longer go to the hospital, he had the nurses come to his house to go on teaching them there.

"Then we returned to Rangoon. We had our five children by then. Since then I run the Burma Baptist Mission Fellowship here in Rangoon. The new trainees come here and sometimes their relatives stay with us. Lulu takes care of them at our house. She is used to having to entertain Burmese and Karens and Arakanese and the Namkham folks, and one year we had Fred Eldridge and his wife.

"When I look back, I don't know how I managed to get into all these things! Sometimes you sit back and think about it and I feel I have accomplished nothing much to show in the work I have done. But then again, taking this with the things that are going on in the world today, it may be something even if it doesn't show. I think about it and there seems to be a little glimmer of light here, a little glimmer of light there, and so it keeps you going."

Lulu

"When the war was over we came back to Burma and I had my babies. We both got the Bronze Star after the war but we lost them when Tun Shein was put in jail in 1948 for no reason except that he was a Karen, and I had to flee again. Tun Shein lost his home twice, once in the war and the Japanese bombings, and then in the 1948 revolution.

"Now we keep the new trainees for the Burma Baptist Mission and I take care of them at my home here. I like everyone, I like to help others.

"We very much like seeing Fred Eldridge and his wife when they came here a few years ago."

Ruby Johnson in her home in Warminster, Pennsylvania December 4, 1971

"When the war was over I was selected by Dr. Seagrave to go for post-graduate training at Margaret Hague Hospital in Jersey City. Hla Sein and I went there together. I hoped to return to Burma after my training there, but in 1949 civil war broke out in Burma and I never went back.

"Some time later Dr. Ravdin sent for me to work for him at the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. I worked there for several years. I became friends with Mr. and Mrs. John Rich at church and through them I met my husband and they gave the wedding reception for us when we were married. This was the same John Rich who had been raising funds for the Baptist Mission to rebuild the Namkham Hospital after the war.

"I continued working until two months before the birth of my twins. We saved enough money to buy some land and build a house here in Warminster and after the babies were born we moved here. There was a terrible snow-storm the day we moved in. I was nursing the babies in the car, we couldn't get to the house! We have lived here every since.

"We had a wonderful life here. All I cared about was my family and my home. I have no material wants, I don't drive a car. I don't buy a lot of clothes and I have never been a 'go-go' girl. We are members of the local Baptist Church and have many good friends, both black and white.

"Then our son died of leukemia when he was seven years old and for some time I was very broken up. I have now gotten control of myself and have gone in to part-time nursing now that our daughter is old enough not to need my complete attention at home.

"I am content with my life now, I have a good husband who doesn't drink, and I have my daughter and my home. Perhaps I survived the war and all those hardship because they were good for me. They have stood by me all my life to accept the hardship and to live day by day and to pray. My prayers were answered that one day I might come to America."

Little Bawk at her home in Taunggyi, Burma
June 25, 1972

"I continued in nursing after the war at Namhkam when Dr. Seagrave rebuilt the hospital. I met my husband there. He is Dr. Ba Win. We came here to set up our own clinic. He is the doctor and I am the nurse taking care of the patients."

Sein Bwint at her home in Taunggyi, Burma
July 25, 1972

"I believe that God saved me on the Walkout in order for me to go on living my life in service to others. I have had a happy life and thanks to God we are still here.

"After the war I received a Fulbright scholarship for one year at the Mayo Clinic where I took my post-graduate training along with Big Bawk and Koi. Since that time I have been nursing and training. My husband has retired and I go on as a Sister Tutor in the nurse's training school here. Sometimes it is hard work because we must teach everything in the Burmese language now and there are many medical terms for which there are no Burmese words. Having learned all my training in English, this sometimes makes a little bit of difficulty."

Big Bawk at her home at Sao San Htun Hospital, Taunggyi, Burma
June 25, 1972

"If I think about the Walkout at all now I think of it as a dream looking back. I have had other hardships in my life but I have never had any other experience like that. I'm glad I did it and it was lucky to be away from Burma at that time.

"When the war was over, through Dr. Grindlay, Sein Bwint and I received Fulbright scholarships to the Mayo Clinic to do graduate work. Sein Bwint was on the radio in New York when we were there. By the time we came back we have sailed the Seven Seas. Here is a picture of us on the steamer.

"I have been a nurse ever since. I was married after the war then got divorced. My children

are grown up and I have one grandchild and I am happy here. This hospital was built quite recently with Russian funds and I have worked here long enough that I have one of these houses provided for the nurses."

Ma Graung at the Leprosy Hospital in Mandalay, Burma
June 26, 1972

"When you come to see me it really surprise me and very glad and happy too. While we are talking of old time of treading to India, I am feeling like just woked up from bed and telling a dim dream to somebody else. I don't think about it for a long time but now I can remember when we talk about it.

"After the war I stay with Dr. Seagrave about one year in Namhkam, then I got married and lived in southern Shan States. First I was a Sister and now a Matron, transferred to this hospital where I am the head nurse. I have kept working and we have four children. The oldest boy is named George.

"I received the Bronze Star after the trek out but not by the hand of General Stilwell, by some other officer. But I do remember one thing only he said to us. When the war is over and everything settled, he would call us to America and have a . . . what do you call it ? . . .take a time to look up all the Americans who are living there who were on the trek, something like that. But he died, we never did."

Koi in her home in Maymyo, Burma
June 27, 1972

"I received a Fulbright after the war and went to the Mayo Clinic with Sein Bwint. I then returned to Burma and was midwife at the Namhkam Hiopsital. I helped Dr. Seagrave out for several years, teaching the nurses and so on. Tun Shein was there too, I saw him again.

"When I married I gave up nursing to take care of my family. Now that they are grown up I have a business clinic here of my own. My life has been what I wanted it to be and I thank God that I have many blessings, a nice husband, a boy, and a girl.

"One thing that I learned from the trek out, that it help us to face the difficulties of life.. It helped me in life later when things were hard. I could say, 'Well, I did *that!* Even now I don't feel like I have to have so many clothes, just to have them and throw them away later. And to get along with little. What you *are* is important, not what you have."

Hla Sein, at my home in Jenkintown
December 4, 1972

"After the war I received a Fulbright scholarship through the efforts of Dr. Grindlay. With Ruby I came to Margaret Hague Hospital in Jersey City to do post-graduate work.

"I have stayed here ever since and am now the chief nurse in the Nursery. We had in the past as many as thirty deliveries a day but the new abortion laws have cut down tremendously on the number of babies.

"I am very happy here in America and I have had a good life."

After my trip to Burma in the summer of 1972 I wrote to a number of the nurses I had not been able to see. while I was in that country. In the winter of 1973 I received answers from five of them. They show the same indomitable spirit, dedication to their work, and religious devotion as did those to whom I talked.

Esther Po from Namhkam Hospital

"We got back to our old hospital in Namhkam in December 1945 and I am still working there until now. This is the same old hospital Dr. Seagrave built. Even though he died, his hospital is still alive, thank God.

"I started my nursing work in 1942, you can imagine how long, it's not a joke! I enjoy my work very much. My husband is working as a clerk, he is a good mechanic too. He can repair a motor car and also a good driver, too. We have two sons and two daughters and they are all in school.

"Especially I think I am helping the poor in my country. Our people are very, very poor. At present there are one hundred and fifty to two hundred patients in the hospital. Please remember us in your earnest prayer."

Labanglu, Myitkyina Hospital

"The Walkout is something like a dream now. It was really a valuable experience for me because of the hardship, deprivation, and all the other suffering which has certainly affected the outlook of life for me.

"After the war I got married and divorced, then I joined nursing again. I have now remarried and we have seven children. My husband is a police officer and I continue nursing in this hospital."

Malang Kaw, (Mrs. Lawon) Myitkyina

"When I think about the Walkout now I think that over and above all our human endeavors our Heavenly Father was guiding and leading us out and away to safety and that we have been preserved according to His divine purpose.

"After the war I was married and have settled down to looking after my family, my husband, my two sons, and two daughters. Ours is a big household, comprising over a dozen members. Looking after them all is a full-time job for me besides church work and other social obligations."

Ohn Khin, (Sister Daw Ohn Khin) Divisional Hospital, Myitkyina

"The Walkout was a valuable experience for me for the rest of my life. It has become a famous military episode and I am glad I have taken part in it and shared in the glory. I never knew that it would be famous, but I went along as a natural thing because I was a nurse.

"I can be cheerful in any circumstances and people commented that I laughed a lot. I am a nurse and relieve sick people. So three years at the front line nursing and serving in big hospitals in India added a lot to my experience.

"I am married now and have twelve children, including twins."

Than Shwe, Lashio Hospital, Lashio, Burma

"I returned to Burma in 1945 and became attached to the Civil Service in my home town. I was married for the first and last time and separated in 1952 with mutual understanding.

"I have worked at this hospital ever since and I am now a *matron*! I help look after my sister's four children. I no longer play baseball and tennis, but instead I do embroidery work and read books."

Chapter Sixteen
The Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU)

Of course, the outstanding group were those Friends Ambulance boys.

Martin Davies, at his home in Leatherhead, England
March 12, 1972

"We were the *world!* The Walkout was a lark at times and our attachments to the girls made it fun, an adventure. It carried us through more positively than anything else perhaps could have done. There was an element of romance and excitement and it was all a bit of a thrill, I think. . .I *think!* What I think the *really* amazing thing about the Walkout is that all the one hundred and fourteen people who started out got out safely.

"After the war I was demobilized in 1946 and my life changed course. I had started out as an engineer but as a result of all my experience during the war, I realized that I had become much more attached to human beings than to machinery. I'd lost the thread of engineering, I wanted to do something else.

"I wanted to go into teaching, I felt I possibly had some philosophy to pass on. So I went to a Teacher Training College for a bit, taught a bit, and then got into college on a concertinaed program that was government subsidized.

"I had saved my FAU pocket-money--we got no salary of course--bought some clothes with that, then got married and went to live in Switzerland. We lived there for three years as house-parents in an International Children's Village. We had three children of our own by then. The idea of these villages was to collect the refuse of Europe's war orphans, to bring children of all nations together. It was a sort of double-headed ideal of living and being educated together in a home and to be an example to the world of how to do this. It was a successful experiment but after those three years we came back to England because we felt it wasn't really fair to bring up our own children surrounded by the underprivileged ones.

"I got a job teaching in a structured school, an authoritarian one, and it was salutary in a lot of ways. It was quite a different job from what one would have expected from my background which was rather informal and easy-going, but I quite enjoyed it and got good results.

"Then the job as Warden of Kingston Teaching Center came up and I have been doing that ever since. It had long been obvious to me that teachers lead much too insular an existence, they don't know what's going on in the next classroom, they don't know what's going on in the world. So

what I'm doing now is dealing with experiment, new ideas, new educational philosophy. And I am trying to get the teacher training program on a more long-term basis with government subsidy. At the moment it is voluntary, a bit haphazard and four o'clockish. For myself, what I miss is the close human contact I had with children in the classroom.

"My wife is a Quaker and I have been closely connected with them ever since the war, but I am unashamedly an atheist. I used to talk to my companions during those six years I was with the FAU and they had a religious philosophy and I did not. I would ask myself over and over could it possibly be that they were right and I was right too? Perhaps if we each twisted our views a bit we would meet in the middle with a common philosophy. I tried this many times but in the end I always retreated back to my own lack of faith.

"I've never been one who could take a black or white view about anything. I'm rather a gray sort of person really, but basically I'm happy."

Bill Duncumb at his home in Cirencester, England
March 16, 1972

"As far as the Walkout is concerned, I carried on in it, I lived within it as I intended to, by God's principles. As the day went by and you came to the end of it, you were thankful to God for it. With General Stilwell in charge I had confidence that we were being well directed and God's goodness carried us through.

"When the war ended I went back to England on a troop transport on which I was the only civilian with a boatload of RAF! After a brief vacation I flew out to Burma to work with Seagrave at Namhkam in administrative work while he was rebuilding the hospital there. After a year I returned to England once more. I went back into my old firm of chartered accountants and started reading for a business degree. But I was not happy, I was still unsettled and when I heard of a job as business administrator for the BCMS--the Bible Church Missions Society--in Kachwa, India, I took it.

"I was there from 1952 to 1971. I met my wife there, she was a lady doctor. We were married and had four children. We recently returned to England for the children's education.

"I have gone back into accounting. I am reading for a Chartered Accountancy which is appallingly difficult, everything has changed in those twenty years. It is not easy to start all over again at age fifty-five!

"It is true than man can do whatever he sets his mind to as long as it is God's will."

George Parsons at his home in Bourneville, England
March 17, 1972

"Of course what held the whole Walkout thing together was first of all the common desire to get out. And secondly I think it was Stilwell's example.

"He strode ahead in front and was very much the leading spirit of the whole party. I had considerable admiration for him though I can't recall that I ever spoke to him.

"When the war ended I was still in the Army in China and I made a very interesting journey. I took a convoy of a hundred and fifty vehicles right across China to Hong Kong. It was about three thousand miles and it took us three months. There were no roads and we sometimes floated the vehicles down rivers on boats.

"When we got there nobody seemed to know anything about me and I thought I would be going home. But suddenly the Land Forces HQ in Hong Kong found out that I was 'the Parsons from China,' said I was posted to them, and they told me, 'Here's the colony of Hong Kong. It's a shambles. Sort out the transport mess!' So I spent another year there and it was the most fascinating job one could possibly have dreamed of.

"Then they asked me to set up some form of permanent transportation as a civilian, but I just wanted to go home. I had been away almost six years and after a couple of odd jobs there and in Singapore, I did come home.

"When I came home I went to work for Mr. Cadbury but this time in transport. It had become obvious that what I was interested in was moving things about, so transport and shipping has been my career ever since. I am in the field I want to be in, the international end of things, and I have travelled a lot, mostly in Europe. But I would like to go back to the Far East some day.

"In some ways I think I have come to terms with life, though I sometimes think I ought to do more. But I had to find myself, it was part of the war experience that it taught me that if I did my best and it didn't work, it didn't cause me to have a heart attack. I've said to people the same age as myself on more than one occasion, 'Oh, it's just not that important, is it? Just think what we were doing thirty years ago,' or something like that. Everybody has laughed and things have gone better.

"Subconsciously war must teach you that some things are more important than others. I know that when the war was on, one thought that one's chances of coming through alive were not that great and then thinking on V-J Day, 'My God, it's over and I'm still alive!'

"After the war many people urged me to join the Society of Friends--I had attended Meeting all my life--but now it seemed inappropriate. After all, I *had* joined the Army, hadn't I? Fundamentally I still believe as the Friends do, but it was the way I felt at the time. I certainly never would have joined the Army if there hadn't been a war on, but I did what I felt I had to do at the time. What matters to a man is knowing what he believes is going to make him better off to himself."

**Peter Tennant at his home, "Invertrossachs," Callander, Scotland
March 25, 1972**

"What kept me going in the Walkout was that I wanted to get out! I didn't want to stay in Burma either. And I take off my hat to Stilwell for the way he managed to get us all out safely.

"I finished out my service with the FAU in China until the war ended, then returned to this country. Some time later I had the opportunity to buy nine hundred and ninety acres here in Scotland and we moved here and have lived here ever since. As far as you can see from here is ours.

"I raise and sell cattle and also sell the trees for lumber manufacture. I am active in something called 'The Lorries' which has taken the place of the FAU, and I am also something called a 'Samaritan'. I answer calls for help, any kind of help that is needed by people with personal problems.

"I have never been a Quaker but I do attend the local Quaker Meeting."

**Eric and Ruth Inchboard, at Old St. James' House Hotel, London
March 19, 1972**

Ruth: "You know, after the Walkout we said we'd never walk again, we'd always use transport. Well, when Eric and I first came to England after the war, can you believe what Eric wanted to do? We had a five week holiday walking through the Lake District hiking with a pup-tent! After a while I gave up carrying my pack, Eric carried both.

"I don't do nursing any more, just do housework and look after this 'gray hair,' Eric. *Of course* Eric's relations are coming to live with us, his father and his old auntie, that's why we are moving to a bigger house. Sometimes when we go to a party here people--English people--may be talking about 'colored people' and I say, 'Here! Here's one sitting next to you,' and they always say, '*You* don't count!' When they're screaming their heads off about immigrants coming into England and like that, I tap them on the knee and say, 'Watch it!' and they say, 'Oh, don't be ridiculous, this has nothing to do with you at all.' But it does, you know, they just don't see it. *I* don't think of people being different because of the color of their skins, I never did, but they do."

Eric: "I suppose we could have gotten out on our own without Stilwell because of Tun Shein and we knew what to eat. But Stilwell took the responsibility and we made it. The fact that the Stilwell group was the only one of that size to get out intact was because it was well organized and well disciplined. The leadership, the fact that Stilwell was dynamo-ing the whole thing. Crikey, he must have been one of the oldest people there--fifty-nine--he was no spring chicken. But he did radiate a certain something. He was a bit special in a big way, I admired him. I know he got hoofed out later and it was an abysmal stink. I felt very cross about it.

"After the war we returned to England and had hard times. Ruth went back to Burma for an extended visit. I finally got a job to go out there and we stayed for several years. After that we returned to England again and I have been working for the same firm of architects ever since. I build Hiltons and Intercons all over the world.

"Ruth hasn't done any nursing since, she's just a housewife and looks after this gray-haired old bloke. We have an adopted son, my father lives with us as well as my old Auntie. I'm lucky I

have Ruth. The average English housewife doesn't look kindly on having aged parents living with you, but this is what they do in Burma, you see.

"Experience during a war--it's an unfortunate thing--but it enables you to put other petty things which you come across afterwards in your normal life into their right perspective. You listen to somebody arguing over some petty point and you remember the number of people you've buried and it just doesn't add up to being important. It allows you to have a wider perspective on life in general.

"As for the youth of today, they're great. No war for them! The hope of the world lies with them and they say about the politicians, 'You can go fight your own flipping battles, we won't!'"

**Tom Owen at his home in Leighton Buzzard, England
April 7, 1972**

"As far as getting out of Burma on the Walkout is concerned, we didn't dismiss Stilwell's organization entirely. We gave him credit for that.

"When we got back to England after the war ended, the government was short of teachers, There was a thirteen month crash course and I got into that like Martin did. Then I taught in a primary school.

"Philosophically I was doing the sort of thing I had always believed in. It's the general tenor of one's mind. One wasn't looking for the job that paid well, one wasn't looking for the commercial opening, one looked for the socially useful job. That's how I got into teaching and I've been with it ever since.

"I like to be with young people. I've lived by my convictions in this teaching lark, I've done what I can, treating children as if they were people. My own feeling of success comes when I feel that I've done something for a kid in spite of his parents.

"I'm also tied up with local history. Our great triumph was remodeling an old windmill. Actually it is one that is mentioned in the Domesday Book. We also have a museum. This again is an off-shoot of the same kind of thinking, the socially useful effort."

Ken Grant: Letter from Guatemala City, October 20, 1973

"After the war I took home leave and then I returned to China to operate a mission hospital in Kunming. In China I married a charming young lady from New York State who was a graduate of Bryn Mawr.

We were in the evacuation of China when the communists took over Yunnan province and thereafter I spent twenty-two years of further international service through joining UNICEF.

"Currently I am a UNICEF representative for Central America and Panama. We have two sons and two dogs, one of which is a Lhasa Apso. My life has been one which had an international flavor in 1942 and has so continued."

**Dr. William Brough: At Claremont House, Newcastle, England
March 24, 1972**

"I came back to England after the war and went into Medical School. Here I was at age twenty-six, I'd been away from school for thirteen years, I'd had very little formal education, and *no* medical education, but I entered the University on what used to be called "Mature Matriculation."

"I think during the war--while I was still with the FAU--fairly early on I decided I wanted to be a doctor. In the period immediately after the war the educational institution was very sympathetic and accomodating to ex-servicemen who wanted to become educated. During the course of my training as a medical student, I knew that I wanted to be a psychiatrist. I felt that that was the most interesting and exciting part of medicine. It was a logical step in a series of steps to try to get people thinking right.

"I don't think I could be a psychiatrist if I wasn't a man of hope. I think the remarkable thing is that people *can* change and they *do*. They change when they're up against some impossible situation whether it's in their personal lives--which I see in my patients--or whether it's some impossible political or international situation. Things get resolved. I think we do learn. It would be a wretched, miserable, unhappy world if we didn't learn and change, oh distressing! Eventually things change, people understand that they've got to function, to live together, to work together.

"I think things are much healthier and more satisfactory than they were when I was a boy. We are leading richer, more varied, and more satisfactory lives. I had infinitely more opportunities to grow and to change than my father did. I was aggressive enough to move forward when the opportunity came. I'm an aggressive individual really, and there's a lot to be fought about. I think the opportunities are more readily available and there are more of these for our children to grow and develop than I ever had.

"As to General Stilwell, I had confidence in him and an affection for this man though there were frictions at times. The idea that he was called 'Vinegar Joe' later on seemed to me some sort of journalistic jingoism. One was rather disappointed that that became the picture of the character of the man. He wasn't that sort at all. He was very kindly, you know."⁶⁴

Epilogue

"To be alive passes every other fact and experience, yet even that joy is dimmed by the knowledge of the thousands of refugees, British Tommies, Indian sepoy, Chinese soldiers, and Japanese who are left behind forever in Burma."

From a letter written by Paul Geren to friends when the Walkout was over.

Conclusions

I began my search twenty years ago for the men and women who walked out of Burma with General Stilwell in 1942 because I believed that the Walkout was a unique and historical event. Dr. Lawrence Short--ex-G.I. and country boy from Oklahoma--convinced me that I was right when he said in his interview, "It did seem kind of funny to me that an American General got flown half way 'round the world and he tried to save a little ole unknown country and the next thing you know, he's walkin' out!" Unaware as he may have been of world affairs at that time, and trained to obey orders and not to think, Private Short accurately assessed the situation without understanding it.

The Walkout may have been, as General "Pinky" Dorn said, "... only a tiny fragment in the mainstream of history" about which very little is known today. But it is my belief that that tiny fragment is historically significant and deserves study.

In the first place, when General Stilwell was sent to Burma, it was the first time in the history of the United States that an American General was sent to command foreign troops on foreign soil. When he was unable to complete his mission to save what is *still* "a little ole unknown country," he would not be flown out to safety in India at the last moment because he would not desert the Chinese troops he had been sent to command, even though it was they who, for the most part, had deserted him.

The Walkout was unique because, of all of the hundreds of thousands who fled Burma at that time, Stilwell's group was the only one of that size that survived the journey intact; no one left the group, no one got lost, no one died.

General Dorn was reluctant to think of the Walkout as historic because for him it symbolized defeat. Yet Stilwell himself, when he saw the title of Jack Belden's book, Retreat With Stilwell, written immediately after the Walkout, acknowledged that it conveyed the truth of what had happened. Such an admission on the part of an American General, following as it did his announcement to the whole world that, "We took a hell of a beating," was in itself historic.

The Walkout was simply one more link in a chain of historic events. It became symbolic of Stilwell's determination to go back and retake Burma from the Japanese and to erase the humiliation of defeat. Thanks in large part to his determination, a few months after the Walkout thousands of Chinese troops were being flown from China over the Hump to Ramgarh in Assam for proper training. Because Stilwell had not deserted them he earned their complete loyalty; they became a superb fighting force under his command in the Second Burma campaign.

The defense of Burma in 1942 did little to impede the progress of the Japanese. It can, however, fairly be said that the eventual re-taking of Burma by the Allies tied up Japanese troops that would otherwise have been available to face the Americans as they fought to recapture the chain of Pacific islands that would lead them eventually to Japan.

Burma was retaken by the Allies when the Japanese evacuated Rangoon in May of 1945. A month after the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese surrendered formally for all of Southeast Asia on September 2nd aboard the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay. Stilwell had the satisfaction of being there. Two months later, for political reasons as complex as those for which he had originally been assigned to the C. B. I theater, General Stilwell was relieved of that command. He was recalled to the United States. The Walkout was forgotten.

Several of the participants in the Walkout saw it as an historical event at the time; Eldridge, a reporter, disobeyed orders to be flown out in order to cover the story of Stilwell's escape. Jack Belden, a war correspondent, wanted to follow the sequence of historical events that had begun with Stilwell's historical presence in Burma. Even Fabian Chow sensed the importance of the event. Whatever their views of the historical importance of the Walkout may have been, however, by the time they reached the clearing they and the other participants knew very well that walking was simply something they had to do if they wanted to survive.

They all knew they were in danger. They had witnessed the bombings and seen the fires raging throughout the countryside. Some had carried the dead and wounded from the battlefields, and they had all seen the hundreds of thousands of terrified refugees desperately trying to get out. Their reactions had been what anyone's would have been. "We were scared stiff;" "I was so frightened my knees were shaking;" "Those bombs scared the hell out of me." "Those pitiful refugees. . . was I going to be a part of that?" The Walkout--they hoped--meant that they would be getting away from all that.

None of them realized how hard it was going to be. They kept going because General Stilwell instilled in them a fear of the monsoon rains that was as great as their fear of the Japanese had been.

They told me how appalled they were when they realized later what could have happened to them if they had been caught in the mountains at the height of the monsoon rains. Hundreds of thousands of refugees came out after they did. Without leadership or planning, thousands died in the mountains from hunger and exposure. Their remains littered the trails. There was no doubt in the minds of the Walkout participants that they owed their lives to Stilwell, though there was one exception to this; Sein Bwint said she owed her life to God, not to General Stilwell.

Even the FAU detachment with their own inner discipline and their disrespect for the military, recognized that they were lucky to be with Stilwell.

As I listened to these men and women thirty years after the event, I discovered that the Walkout had meant more to them than just survival. Many of them saw it as having given them

strength to meet the challenges they faced in later life, to gain perspective on what was important and what was not. Dorn learned about himself and about others that a man *can* if necessary do anything he sets his mind to, and he valued that knowledge. He observed that even the older men proved to be more resilient than he had expected, tough as it was for them when they got up into the mountains. Many said that they considered it to be one of the most valuable experiences of their lives; if they could do that, they felt they could do *anything*.

It was a broadening experience for most of them. The Walkout meant learning about people of different nationalities and cultures, getting along with them, sharing with them, joking and communicating with them even if they did not know one another's language. They discovered that the Nagas in their red blankets and with their shaven heads and topknots resembled Navajo Indians. Yet even these so-called headhunters offered them the hospitality of their *bashas* and plied them with rice wine.

The indomitable spirit of the nurses with their singing kept them going when things were really tough. Even General Stilwell had a soft spot for the nurses, and he, who was not overly fond of the British, had lengthy discussions with Barton and Castens, or sat around the fire in the evenings chatting informally with those of lesser rank.

It was Belden who said that on the Walkout everyone was equal, there was no class or rank distinction. Colonel Holcombe recognized that heterogeneous as the group was, there was an *esprit de corps*, a sense of unity among them as they shared the common danger and hardships.

I found particularly charming the loving and caring relationships between the FAU men and the nurses, the sense of responsibility for one another that developed between them. I was touched by the fact that though the nurses had lost their beloved country, the Walkout meant that they would have an opportunity to visit India, to them a foreign country.

It seemed extraordinary to me that so many of the participants observed and commented on the beauty of their surroundings, despite their discomforts or fears. The country was so beautiful they would love to go back in peacetime to be able to enjoy it, they told me.

Also despite the hardships of the journey, there was the serendipity of the Walkout for three members of the group. General Sibert's weak legs improved when Stilwell forced him to walk at the regulation pace; the sciatica from which Eldridge had suffered for years cleared up and he threw away his girdle. And for Than Shwe it meant the miracle of her healing.

When the group reached Imphal, most of them were glad the walking was over, but there were those who regretted the return to civilization. For O'Hara--one of those who had most dreaded the walking--the Walkout had meant a challenge that he had successfully met, and he missed it. So did Peter Tennant. Despite the rigors of the Walkout, the arrival at Imphal was an anticlimax for Eldridge. Belden, for whom the Walkout had meant egalitarianism and *camaraderie*, saw the arrival at Imphal as the "crap of the world returning."

I concluded that the Walkout was an experience that the participants valued. They did not want to *have* do it again, but they were glad that they *had* done it.

My search for the participants in the Walkout meant a number of things to me. I discovered that the Walkout had *not* been forgotten after all, and I learned a great deal about an event about which I had known nothing at the time it occurred. The participants wanted to talk to me, to tell me about it. They welcomed me as if I were an author, an historian, and they wanted me to write about what they told me.

They were hospitable and outgoing and they shared their experiences and feelings with me. They told me things their families said they had never heard about, and the families were glad, not resentful. They listened as eagerly as I did.

I reminded them about people they had not thought about for years. Colonel Novak said that talking to me brought back some swell memories of some swell people and he was glad of it. Even cynical Jack Belden enjoyed what he called our "nostalgia trip." All of these things made my search enormously rewarding.

Each interview was an adventure, a challenge, and I found that I was getting better at interviewing as I went along. I learned to listen and to have a "prepared mind" so that chance would favor me, and it did. I experienced what Bloch called "the thrill of learning singular things," of making "connections," discovering a clue that led me to something else. I spent days "following the tracks," and I found out how much fun research could be.⁶⁵

In my interviews it was particularly gratifying when someone would say he had very little to tell me and then would talk for two hours. Sometimes it was I who had to close the interview because I had a train or a plane to catch.

About trains and planes and cars, which I seem to have mentioned many times; as with many people of my generation, I am fascinated by all of these means of transportation. As a girl I was given a ride in an open cockpit bi-plane. In the nineteen seventies, I flew across the Pacific in Jumbo Jets. The cars of the forties in which I rode around in the Far East made me nostalgic for those just like the ones I had driven myself in earlier days. As for trains, would that we had them back in this country. If I also seem to have been unduly preoccupied with food, I can only say that when one is travelling in strange countries, what one eats and drinks can make or break any given day.

Probably the greatest satisfaction I got out of doing my research was the reaction to the book I put together. The letters of appreciation I received from the very people who had made my book possible were my greatest reward.

When Professor Smith asked me recently what "all this" meant to me and how it changed my life, one answer is that though my search was not the *cause* of my divorce--that was something that was long overdue--it prepared me for *being* divorced, for being on my own after forty-three years of marriage. Among other things, I learned how to plan my itinerary, to make reservations,

how to get around the world without losing my passport. I obtained my own credit card. I found that things that had generally been taken care of for me by someone else, I could now do just as well myself, sometimes even better. I found out how much I enjoyed being independent, particularly not having to *wait* for somebody else all the time.

As I thought about what I had accomplished in my search, I felt like the participants in the Walkout who said if they could do that they could do *anything*. That enabled me to take what was for me the daring step of going back to college after a fifty year hiatus.

After graduating from Rollin's College in 1987, I returned to Maine to live and found that I missed the academic challenge, so I enrolled in a Master of Arts Degree program in History at the University of Maine. My long-delayed education has been enormously satisfying.

Now I have had the challenge of revising the material I gathered about the Walkout. I realize that for most Americans under forty, World War II is as long ago as the Civil War, but it is important to me that the Walkout as part of the loss and re-taking of Burma should not be forgotten. For those people who, like me, knew nothing about the Walkout at the time, or for those who even today know little about it, I hope that my work will provide some insight into what was a significant, if little-known historical event.

Endnotes

¹ Lewis Carroll. Alice in Wonderland. (NY: Random House, 1943). p.119

² Brigadier General Frank Dorn, U.S. Army, (Retired). Interview

³ Literally translated: "Go forward with brisk footsteps." The Burmese language and alphabet are unique. Very little is known about their origins. They are referred to as "Mon," a combination of Austro-Asian and Pali, the Buddhist language.

⁴ Barbara Tuchman. Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45 NY: The MacMillan Company: 1970). p. 295

⁵ Thomas Carlyle. Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 1925). Edited by P.C. Parr. p. 145.

The entire quotation reads: "In Books lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream."

⁶ René Radot, The Life of Louis Pasteur. (NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923). p. 76.

A correction must be made here. In a casual conversation with a friend a year or two ago, she used this phrase and I immediately asked her where it came from. She said the quotation was from something she had read by Santayana, but she could not remember the title. Nowhere in quotations from Santayana's works could I find it. An appeal to the Bangor Library yielded the information that Santaya had misquoted Radot in one of his works and that the correct quotation came from Radot's book. It is, in fact, from a talk given by Louis Pasteur to his students at the Faculté des Sciences in September, 1854 in which he describes an experiment undertaken by Oersted, a Danish physicist who discovered how an electric telegraph could be made. ". . . by chance you will say," Pasteur went on, "but chance only favours the mind that is prepared." I trust that Pasteur will forgive me if I misquote him too.

⁷ Jack Belden. Retreat With Stilwell. (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943).

⁸ Dr. Gordon Seagrave. Burma Surgeon (NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1943).

⁹ ----- Burma Surgeon Returns, (NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1946).

¹⁰ Theodore H. White, ed. The Stilwell Papers (NY: William Sloane Associates, Inc. 1948).

¹¹ Brigadier General Frank Dorn U.S.Army (Retired). Walkout: With Stilwell in Burma. (NY: Crowell Publishing, 1971).

¹² In one of the many coincidences that kept occurring during my search, my husband and I had recently met Dr. Ravdin. He was a prominent surgeon and his new house in Philadelphia was built of Philippine mahogany which was manufactured by my husband's company. We went to see it

when Dr. Ravdin kindly allowed it to be shown at an Open House to promote this product for uses other than furniture.

¹³ Cessation of the menses, (amenorrhea) was common among women under the stress of combat, lack of sleep and proper diet.

¹⁴ E. L. Ives, The Tape Recorded Interview. (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1980). Years later I would find Professor Ives as Director of North East Archives of Folklore and Oral History at the University of Maine, still another coincidence.

¹⁵ Fred Eldridge, Wrath in Burma. (NY: Doubleday, 1946).

¹⁶ Geoffrey Evans, The Johnnies. (London: Cassell, 1964).

Brett-James also told me that he and General Evans had collaborated on a book titled Imphal: Flower on Lofty Heights (London: Hamilton, 1970). The battle for Imphal in the winter of 1944 was a turning point in the war against the Japanese.

The Japanese had bombed this vital crossroads as early as 1942; the results were seen by the members of the Walkout group when they arrived there. When all resistance in Burma had been subdued by the Japanese, they began their all-out effort to capture India in the winter of 1944. They entered Assam in the north-east corner of India along much the same route that had been taken by Stilwell two years before. Imphal was under siege for several weeks before British reinforcements from India were air-dropped to support them.

The Japanese, with their extended lines of supply, were very short of food and ammunition and were forced to retreat. This attempt to take Imphal was as far as they would ever get in their drive toward India. It would be another year before they were finally driven out of Burma, but their failure to take Imphal was a critical loss from which they never fully recovered. General Evans, under the command of General William Slim, played a valiant role in the defense of Imphal for which he was later knighted.

¹⁷ The losses suffered by the British at Kalewa were 13,000 in killed, wounded, and missing. An account of the British escape from Burma is given in Slim, by Ronald Levin. (London: Leo Cooper, 1976). pp. 100-103, and in Defeat into Victory by Field Marshal the Viscount Slim. (NY: David McKay, 1961) Ch. 5.

¹⁸ Paul Jones was probably quoting the title of a book by John O'Hara, Appointment in Samarra (NY: Random House, 1934). On page 5 O'Hara cites a passage from Sheppey, a play by W. Somerset Maugham, (London: William Heinemann, 1933).

"DEATH SPEAKS: There was a merchant in Bagdad who sent his servant to market to buy provisions and in a little while the servant came back, white and trembling, and said, Master, just now when I was in the market-place I was jostled by a woman in the crowd and when I turned I saw it was death that jostled me. She looked at me and made a threatening gesture; now, lend me your horse, and I will ride away from this city and avoid my fate. I will go to Samarra and there Death will not find me. The merchant lent him his horse, and the servant mounted it, and he dug his spurs in its flanks and as fast as the horse could gallop he went. Then the merchant went down to the market-place and he saw me standing there in the crowd and he came to me and said, Why did you make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning? That was not a threatening gesture, I said, it was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Bagdad, for I had an appointment with him tonight in Samarra."

¹⁹ Who Was Who. (London: Adams and Charles Black, 1971).

²⁰ Kelly's Handbook to the Titled, Landed, and Official Classes. (Kingston, U.K.: Kelly's Directories, 1971).

²¹ Burke's Genealogical History of Peerage, Baronage, and Knightage. (London: Burke's Peerage, Ltd., 1967).

²² Noel Barber, A Sinister Twilight: The Fall of Singapore. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968).

²³ Francis Clifford, Desperate Journey. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979).

²⁴ Louis Allen, Sittang: The Last Battle. (NY: Ballantine Books, 1973).

²⁵ Standard & Poor's 500 Directory. (NY: Standard & Poor Corporation, 1972).

²⁶ India Forestry Service Records. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930).

²⁷ One of these conversations was with a retired U.S. Army nurse. Her car was parked next to mine at an apartment where I was living some years ago and the license plate on the car read "P.O.W. - WWII" She was getting out of her car when I came in one day and I spoke to her. Her name was Helen Shroeder. She had been stationed on the island of Corregidor in the Philippines when it fell to the Japanese in 1942. Though she was not subjected to the cruelties of the infamous "Death March" on Bataan as some of the nurses were, she was imprisoned for three and a half years with other nurses and American and British women at the Cabanatuan prison camp, where they suffered from malnutrition and harsh treatment by the Japanese. They subsisted on what they were permitted to grow in small garden plots and whatever loyal Filipinos could surreptitiously manage to get to them. Though Helen was never raped by the Japanese guards, this did happen to some of the other women.

²⁸ Colonel James Vivian Davidson-Houston, "Out of Burma With Stilwell." U.S. Cavalry Journal, March-April 1944.

²⁹ ----- Armed Pilgrimage. (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1949).

³⁰ ----- Armed Diplomat. (London: Robert Hale, Ltd., 1959).

³¹ The story of this disastrous defeat of the two British battallions at the Sittang River is vividly told by Louis Allen in Sittang: The Last Battle and in Desperate Journey by Francis Clifford.

³² Castens' description of life at a remote station or post in Burma was reminiscent of the same sort of society portrayed by George Orwell in his book Burma Days. (NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1934).

³³ British Rule in Burma by G. E. Harvey (London: Faber & Faber, 1967). gives a picture of British Colonial policy during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that confirms Castens' views. Harvey sees British policy as benevolent, dedicated to the advancement of the Burmese, but because of their ignorance, he says, they were unfit for any but the lowest ranks of the Civil Service.

³⁴ Brigadier Michael Calvert was a man whom I would love to have met. He had nothing to do with the Walkout but he had been involved in a group that was known as the Chindits, also referred to as the Chinlevies. The Chindits were organized by General Orde Wingate. These were the so-called long-range penetration groups, small guerilla groups of officers and men who went back on foot into Burma in 1943 to disrupt Japanese supply lines and to make attacks on enemy outposts. They were then to withdraw quickly. Unfortunately, they were not very successful. Their activities diverted supplies from the main forces, alerted the Japanese that an attack was imminent, and otherwise disrupted overall plans. Their supplies ran out when airdrops could not find them, they got lost, and many of them were killed. When Wingate was killed in an unrelated plane crash, the project was abandoned.

Additional sources for the story of these brave men:

Michael Calvert, Chindits: Long Range Penetration. (NY: Vintage Books, 1953).

Richard Rhodes James, Chindit. (London: John Murray, 1980).

Major-General Derek Tulloch, Wingate. (London: Macdonald, 1972).

³⁵ When Colonel St. John was transferred to another theater after the Walkout, he wrote an official Letter of Recommendation for Lt. Tommy Lee. Mrs. Lee kindly sent me a copy after Tommy's death in 1980. In this letter, among other things, St. John wrote: "When Lt. Lee and I joined General Stilwell in Maymyo, Lt. Lee became the Motor Transport Officer. He displayed exceptionally fine administrative ability and technical skill in keeping all the motors in working order under very trying circumstances. When the evacuation came, Lt. Lee evacuated the entire Headquarters. This was extremely difficult yet Lee kept the vehicles going regardless of the road and bridge difficulties and regardless of many mechanical breakdowns. He had such a thorough knowledge of motor equipment that he could improvise almost any piece of mechanism necessary to keep a vehicle going regardless of its age or lack of spare parts. His skill squeezed the last possible mile out of every motor. It is unusual to find an Officer of his class of ability who can, in addition, also handle administrative and executive work. His inherent qualifications as a superior Motor Officer in the American Army are outstanding."

³⁶ For the history of the importance of growing and marketing rice as a major industry in Burma, a definitive work is The Burma Delta by Michael Adas. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974).

³⁷ Stan Sesser, in the October 9, 1989 issue of the New Yorker magazine tells the heartbreaking story of the deterioration of conditions in Burma in the years since I was there.

³⁸ In an effort to eradicate all traces of the British, recently Burma's name has been changed to Myinma(r) and its capital is Ran Yong.

³⁹ Field Marshal the Viscount Slim, Defeat into Victory. (NY: David McKay Co., Inc., 1961).

⁴⁰ The colorful history of the ancient Ava kings is told in The Making of Burma by Dorothy Woodman. (London: The Cresset Press, 1962).

⁴¹ Other works which tell the story of this remarkable group:

Olga Greenlaw, The Lady and the Tigers. (NY: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1943).

Robert Lee Scott, Jr., Flying Tiger: Chennault of China. (NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1959).

Russell Whelan, The Flying Tigers. (NY: Viking Press, 1972).

Daniel Ford, Flying Tigers: Clare Chennault and the American Volunteer Group. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1991).

⁴² Curiously, in a predominantly Catholic country, there was a small Baptist enclave in Fabrica. Not only the church was Baptist oriented but the company's hospital was staffed by Baptist doctors and nurses. Consequently, when I went to Burma in 1972 I immediately felt comfortable with the Burmese nurses who were also Baptists. They were the same kind of gentle and compassionate people, and they smiled and caressed one in much the same way. There have been some terrible stories about missionaries in the Far East, but in my experience these stories did not apply. For the not so pleasant side of missionaries in Burma, see Helen Trager's Burma Through Alien Eyes. (NY: Traeger, 1966).

⁴³ Coincidence again here. Dr. Sheie and his wife were good friends of friends of mine in Philadelphia. From them I learned that after the war Lord Mountbatten came to Philadelphia for a check-up with Dr. Sheie and stayed with the Sheies in their home. I talked with Mrs. Sheie who told

me how much they had enjoyed his visit and I could tell her about the man with whom "The Lord" had had his accident.

⁴⁴ Many years later when President Nixon recognized Communist China, two of the Stilwell daughters, Mrs. Nancy Easterbrook and Mrs. Dorothy Cameron, remembered their happy childhood in that country. They began taking groups of tourists to visit China. In October 1991 Mrs. Easterbrook and her son John Easterbrook, attended the dedication of the Stilwell Institute to be opened in the General's old Headquarters building in Chungking. It is gratifying to learn that after so many years Stilwell's devotion to China has finally been recognized by the government whose troops he was not permitted to enlist in the defense of Burma against the Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942.

⁴⁵ Caleb Haynes was the pilot of the plane that came for General Stilwell but Belden was incorrect about the author of God is My Co-Pilot. It was written by Robert Lee Scott, Jr. (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944).

In the August 10, 1942 issue of LIFE magazine, pp.70-77, which I had not read at the time I interviewed Belden, there is an article by Belden about General Claire Chennault and the Flying Tigers in which he wrote extensively about the two outstanding pilots of this group. They were Haynes and Scott. This is probably why Belden mis-spoke when he was talking to me.

⁴⁶ Belden was amused when I told him that it was Robert Belknap who had taken a picture of his typewriter. Belden could sympathize with him, even though Belknap was not a reporter. Belden had also reluctantly parted with his typewriter in the clearing. He did not remember that Fabian Chow had picked it up and that Stilwell allowed Fabian to carry it with him, at least when they started walking.

⁴⁷ Harold Braund, Distinctly I Remember (Victoria, Australia: The Wren Publishing Party, Ltd., 1972).

⁴⁸ I told "Mac" that I had been to Magwe and that his story about the A.V.G. added a dimension to what I had read about the disaster to their planes that were caught on the ground. I could relate to that long ago event because my plane had landed on the same airstrip in Magwe in 1972.

⁴⁹ The story of this disaster is recounted in The Fall of Singapore by Lieutenant Colonel Frank Owen, OBE. (London: Pan Books, 1960), and in A Sinister Twilight: The Fall of Singapore by Noel Barber. (London: Fontana Books, 1971).

⁵⁰ An article in the June 8, 1942 issue of LIFE magazine, pp. 30, 31 with photography by George Rodger describes the last days of Rangoon.

⁵¹ Major General William Bergin joined General Stilwell to help prepare for the Second Burma Campaign and also accompanied him when the General was recalled by President Roosevelt in November, 1944. Carl Arnold told me that that was the occasion on which General Stilwell felt as if he were a prisoner in his own country.

⁵² The Gennadius Library in Athens was a renowned repository for the history of Greece, of Greek Art and Architecture, of Byzantine Art and Literature, and travel accounts. It contained more than 80,000 volumes, 366 personal accounts, 400 MSS, and 70 incunabula.

⁵³ In two issues of LIFE magazine, June 15, (pp. 94-106,) and June 22, 1942, (pp. 77-84) there are two articles by Clare Boothe titled "Burma Mission." Miss Boothe left the States with members of the American Headquarters group--Dick Young mentioned that he was on the flight with her --and spent six days in Maymyo, leaving Burma shortly before the retreat began. These articles give

a colorful account of events during that chaotic time.

In the August 10, 1942 issue of the same magazine there is a brief article titled "Flight From Burma" with pictures of the Walkout. There is no attribution for the material in the article. It may be a condensed version of what Belden wrote after the Walkout which was held up and censored, or possibly the work of a re-write editor at LIFE. There is coincidentally a long article written by Belden about General Clare Chennault and the Flying Tigers in the same issue, (pp. 70-77).

I have recently learned that to reproduce any pictures from these issues of LIFE costs \$250.00, so none are included in this paper.

⁵⁴ The eighteen planes--each with a crew of five men--that bombed Tokyo in May 1942 were modified B25's, the so-called Mitchell bombers. They took off from an airplane carrier lying off the coast of Japan. These planes had never taken off from a carrier before.

They practised on an airstrip set aside for that purpose at Eglin Field, Florida while my husband was stationed there during the war. A mock-up of a carrier deck was painted on the airstrip where the pilots made short take-offs and landings day after day. Personnel at the base knew that something very hush-hush was going on but no one was sure of just what the purpose was of their exercise. General Doolittle and the crews were sequestered in their own quarters at the field.

Everyone was astonished when the news about the raid came out later. We all felt we had had a part in it. The purpose of the raid was to show the Japanese that even after Pearl Harbor, we were not entirely helpless. The Japanese had no idea that we *could* do such a thing. The cost to the crews was heavy; some planes crashed into the sea before getting to Japan, others crashed in Japan and the crew were taken prisoner. The only plane that did not crash landed safely in Vladivostok where the Russians interned the crew.

That story, as well as other internments, is told in Otis Hayes, Jr.'s Home from Siberia: The Secret Odyssey of Interned American Airmen in World War II. (College Station, Texas, 1990).

A number of planes reached China where they crashed and some men were killed, but others survived. Word of the raid had travelled by "bamboo telegraph" to the area in which the planes came down. With the help of local Chinese peasants, guerillas and missionaries who risked their lives for the Americans, after many months the crew members were able to make their way to Chungking. The raid had a tremendous effect on the morale of our country.

The story of the raid is vividly described in a book titled Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo by Lieutenant Robert Lee Scott who was among those seriously injured. He eventually had to have one of his legs amputated.

⁵⁵ During my correspondence in 1972 with Colonel Holbrook in London, in one of his letters to me he wrote the following:

"I was with HQ IV Corps in Imphal and I remember the arrival of General Stilwell and his party there. I met Davidson-Houston after the war and the Walkout did not appear to have made any particular impression on him. I imagine he regarded it as an episode which had already been preceded by two and a half years of warfare and which was followed by a further three and a half years of eventful living."

⁵⁶ Bill Cummings had been a member of Seagrave's administrative staff at the hospital in Namkham. When Seagrave formed the Surgical Unit, Cummings, several nurses, and orderlies were left at the hospital to continue to serve the local community. When the Japanese troops began closing in on Namkham, Cummings, the nurses, and orderlies fled to the neighboring Chinese province of Yunnan. From there they made their way by plane to Dinjan in Assam, India, and joined the Seagrave group in Imphal.

⁵⁷ Stilwell Papers op.cit. p. 105

⁵⁸ Barbara Tuchman op.cit. p. 300

⁵⁹ Merrill's Marauders by Charlton Ogburn tells the story of the 5307th Provisional Regiment. (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1960).

⁶⁰ It was not until I interviewed Fred Eldridge that I learned that it was he who started Ex-CBI Roundup. I was happy to be able to tell him that I traced Lieutenant Robert Belknap and Sergeant Chambers through that magazine.

⁶¹ Stilwell Papers, op.cit. In an undated letter to his wife from his Headquarters in Chungking General Stilwell wrote about his staff at Ramgarh. "Bergin is a mainstay, Arnold has blossomed, Paul is a dynamo, Pinky keeps up a healthy hate for all hypocrites." (p. 165) On October 2 he wrote Mrs. Stilwell: "Paul Jones is to be turned loose on October 12. . . I want somebody around who appreciates the family. . . Paul makes good wherever you put him - running a railroad, warehousing supplies, driving coolies, or repairing trucks. I wish I had a hundred like him." (p. 156).

⁶² China Shakes the World (NY: Harper & Brothers, 1949).

⁶³ The Overseas Club was at the end of the *cul de sac* where my hotel in London was located. On one occasion I was taken there by a friend who was a member. It was a very pleasant place where a lot of British "exiles" from India and the Far east gathered after the war and exchanged stories of the glorious days of The Raj.

⁶⁴ Several years later when my daughter was on a sabbatical year in Oxford, I visited her and I held a "Burma Reunion" at her house. Peter Tennant had moved to Ireland to live and Eric and Ruth Inchboard were in Poland, but five of the people I had interviewed in the United Kingdom came; George Parsons, Bill Duncumb, Bill Brough and his daughter, Tom Owen and his wife Fergie. The high point was when Martin and Celia Davies arrived in a jeep Martin had just built from a kit!

All those mechanically minded and now middle-aged men had a field-day examining it and talking about assembling the trucks on the Rangoon docks. They had kept in touch but some of them had not seen one another for years and it was a wonderful evening.

⁶⁵ Marc Bloch The Historian's Craft. (NY: Vintage Books, 1953.) p.5

⁶⁶ Eric Sevareid Not So Wild A Dream. (NY: Athenaeum, 1976). Ch. X

Appendices

Appendix A
Acknowledgements: 1971-74

First and foremost of course my thanks go to each one of the participants in the Walkout with whom I conducted interviews twenty years ago; obviously, without them there would have been no Walk a Little Faster. They are listed in the order in which I interviewed them.

Ruby Thaw Johnson	Warminster, Pennsylvania
Brigadier General Frank Dorn (retired)	Washington, DC
Brigadier General William H. Holcombe (retired)	Washington, DC
Fred Eldridge	Corona, California
Paul Jones	San Rafael, California
Martin Davies	Leatherhead, England
Bill Duncumb	Cirencester, England
George Parsons	Birmingham, England
Eric Inchboard	London, England
Ruth Inchboard	London, England
Peter Tennant	Callender, Scotland
Herbert Castens	Woodbridge, England
Tom Owen	Leighton Buzzard, England
Ray Chelsey	Teaneck, New Jersey
Bob Belknap	Hillsdale, New York
Brigadier General Benjamin Ferris (retired)	Center Lovell, Maine
Tommy Lee	Hayward, California
Fabian Chow	Honolulu, Hawaii
Tun Shein	Rangoon, Burma
Lulu	Rangoon, Burma
Little Bawk	Taunggyi, Burma
Sein Bwint	Taunggyi, Burma
Ma Graung	Mandalay, Burma
Miss Koi	Maymyo, Burma
Colonel Tin Gyi (Dennis Thompson)	Rangoon, Burma
Brigadier O. C. M. Dykes (retired)	Unkomaas, S. Africa (corresp.)
Jack Belden	Paris, France
Hla Sein	Jenkintown, Pennsylvania
Ohn Hkin	Myitkyina, Burma (corresp.)
Malang Kaw	Myitkyina, Burma (corresp.)
Labangtu, Nurse	Myitkyina, Burma (corresp.)
Than Shwe, Nurse	Lashio, Burma (corresp.)
Esther Po, Nurse	Namhkam, Burma (corresp.)
Dick Young	San Francisco, California
Colonel Donald O'Hara (retired)	Phoenix, Arizona
Dr. Lawrence Short	Anadarko, Oklahoma
Dean Chambers	Bonham, Texas
Colonel Felix Novak (Nowakowsky) (retired)	Ferndale, Michigan
Paul Gish	Wadsworth, Ohio
Jack Croft	Melbourne, Australia (corresp.)

Major General Franklin Sibert (retired)	Fort Walton, Florida (corresp.)
Ken Grant	Guatemala City, Guatemala

I would also like to thank the following people who, although they were not on the Walkout, were closely connected to the Stilwell group in some way.

Carl Arnold	Oceanside, California
Dr. William Brough	Newcastle, England
Mr. W. C. T. Buckeridge	Singapore
Dr. Ho	Singapore
Dr. Kai Loo Huang	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Professor John Moonie	Maymyo, Burma
Dara Singh	Serembam, Malaysia
Jeanette Thaw	Maymyo, Burma

I am particularly grateful to Ruby Thaw Johnson with whom I conducted my first interview. I thank Ruby for getting me off to such a good start. Ruby's "Burma connection" was the first of many networks that were still intact after thirty years. I want to thank Ruby's sister Dorothy for supplying me with a choice of several Burmese versions of the title of my book, one of which appears in the frontispiece of this work.

I would like to thank Mrs. Nancy Stilwell Easterbrook, General Stilwell's daughter, who provided me with an introduction to the American military network in the person of Paul Jones. Paul not only shared with me his more than five thousand photographs of his weeks in Burma, but gave me names and addresses of others on General Stilwell's Headquarters staff in Burma.

Mrs. Easterbrook arranged an appointment for me with her mother, Mrs. Winifred Stilwell, General Stilwell's widow, and with Mrs. Robert P. Williams, widow of Colonel Williams, General Stilwell's Medical Officer. Mrs. Smith sent me a copy of her husband's diary-like letters written from Burma, and gave me permission to include passages from them in what I was writing.

For more information about the American military I appreciate the responses received from Mr. Avery and Edwin R. Flatequal of the National Archives and Records Service, from whom I received Stilwell's War Diary. The Office of the Adjutant General was very helpful in providing me with information about numerous other government departments. These included the General's Locater in Washington, D.C.; the Officer Personnel Services Branch in Falls Church, Virginia; the Enlisted Personnel Support Center, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana; and the National Personnel Service Center of the General Services Administration in St. Louis, Missouri.

Personnel at the Air Force World Wide Locater in San Antonio, Texas and of the Paymaster General in Denver, Colorado were also helpful. Thanks to all of these agencies, I became familiar with where a considerable amount of the tax-payer's money goes.

For the definitive work on Stilwell's role in the C. B. I. theater I am indebted to Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland. Chapter IV of that section of United States Army in World War II, Volume II, is essential background material for any understanding of the events leading up to the Walkout. In addition I would like to thank Mr. Sunderland for an entertaining chat we had on the

telephone one day when he was summering at Bar Harbor. He volunteered the information that he was a Republican and an Episcopalian, and invited me to join him in a martini, a tempting invitation I was unfortunately unable to accept.

My thanks once again to Eric Johnson of Germantown Friends School, a member of what I call the Network of Friends. I am grateful to every member of this network; Bronson Clark, Executive Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia, Mr. Ronald Joynes at Friends House in London, and Peter Tennant of Callander, Scotland. Peter not only gave me the names and addresses of all the members of the Friends Ambulance Unit who had served in Burma, but he advised me to get in touch with Alan Lathrop, Curator of Architectural Manuscripts at the Library of the University of Minnesota, for which I am extremely grateful.

I am more than a little indebted to Alan for all the help and advice he gave to a beginning historian. Through Alan I was able to obtain Captain John Grindlay's diary which his widow, Mrs. Betty Grindlay, kindly made available to me for inclusion in my work.

I would also like to thank Mrs. Elizabeth Geren who permitted me to include extracts from the letters written from Burma by her late husband, Paul Geren.

Again, thanks to Alan Lathrop, I was able to get in touch with Antony Brett-James, Chairman of the Military History Department at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, Camberley, England, and thus discovered the farflung yet closely knit network that still existed within the British military after so many years. Brett-James gave me an introduction to Lieutenant General Sir Geoffrey Evans, for which I am very grateful.

I would like to thank General Evans for the enquiries he made before I met him in response to my letter explaining what I was doing, and for his supportive comments in encouraging me to write a book. In addition, through him I met Brigadier Hobson, Royal Signals Regiment Association. Thanks to General Hobson I met with, talked to on the telephone, or corresponded with numerous officers serving at various branches of the Office of the Adjutant General, Ministry of Defense, Stanmore, Middlesex.

I cannot say enough for the unflagging efforts of these gentlemen in helping me trace the British military participants in the Walkout. Among them were: Colonel Derek E. Holbrook, CBE, and Colonel A. B. Dacre, AG 11, Signals; Colonel H. R. D. Hart and Lieutenant Colonel John W. M. Stevens, MBE, AG 7, Royal Engineers; Colonel N. J. Price, (Retired). A. G.17, Intelligence Corps. Lieutenant Colonel D. F. Hickson, of the Officers Documentary Office at Stanmore was also very helpful.

Thanks to the suggestions of these gentlemen, I also became indebted to Mr. Potts at the Public Office Records in Chancery Lane, Mr. Farrington at the India Office, Orbit House, Blackfriars Road, and to the staff at the Office of Overseas Development, Bland House, where the India Army Records were kept. The staff of Health and Social Security at Elephant and Castle tried their best to help me but expressed regret that since I had so little information about the people I

was trying to find, they could do nothing for me. A kindly elderly curator of Army Officer Records in the Old War Office in Whitehall seemed as grateful to me for seeking his help as I was for the help he gave me.

I must thank Mr. Lamb of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, a minor branch of the Foreign Office at Riverwalk House. He sent me to the Foreign Office where the efforts of Mr. Michael Roberts, desk officer for Southeast Asia at the Foreign Office were extremely productive.

Among the other sources of information given me by the Stanmore officers was "Mr. Checkit," a nameless individual at the Army Records Centre. "Mr. Checkit," with some difficulty, tracked down Brigadier Michael Calvert at the University of Manchester.

I would like to thank Brigadier Calvert for sending me the names of seven of his fellow officers, the "Old Boy" network. I am grateful to each one of these gentlemen who troubled to answer my letters of enquiry. Among them were: Lieutenant Colonel Denis C. Herring, OBE, MC; Major General D. T. "Punch" Cowan; Colonel Peter Buchanan, OBE,; Mr. Lee Handley-Derry; Colonel N. G. Whitehead; Colonel R. C. Scott; Lieutenant Colonel L. H. Scott, who wrote extensively about his acquaintance with members of the Stilwell group in Burma, as did Lieutenant Colonel G. D. F. Dunlop, OBE, MC.

From other clues I picked up as I went along, I became indebted to Mr. Ross of the British Legion, Mr. Thomson of the Cadet Force Association, Mr. A. E. Creighton, the Honorable Secretary of the Burma Star Association, and Mr. Taylor of The Old Pals Corner. Again, my presence seemed to be welcomed. I shared many a cup of tea during these excursions around London.

There were many librarians I would like to thank. Mr. Stevenson introduced me to the wealth of resources at the London Library, Mr. Janes at the City of Westminster Public Library was enormously helpful, as was Mr. Lee at the Central Reference Library. I am particularly grateful to the staff at the Imperial War Museum; Mr. Rigby, Deputy Librarian, Miss Watson, and Mr. Lucas. Mr. Lucas, when he learned to nature of my search, not only gave me extra paper to scribble my notes on but also volunteered to tell me that he had never thought much of conscientious objectors until a member of the Friends Ambulance Unit saved his life during the fighting in Italy.

I am also indebted to Mr. J. A. Swindale, M. A., Senior Bursar of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

On both sides of the world there was a Chinese network that stretched from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to Johore Baru in Malaysia. Thanks to Colonel Thomas Arms, mentioned in Tuchman's book, I made my way to Mr. Tice at the Virginia Military Institute, to my brother John S. Wise, to Mr. Yao, to Professor Huang in Bethlehem, to Mr. Ho in Singapore, to a Mrs. Huang in Johore Baru, and eventually to the grave of General Tseng. To all of these people I offer my thanks.

One of the most enjoyable of my pursuits of the British military came about because of the indefatigable Miss Mary Kelly of Burmah Oil Company in London. Several of the Anglo-Burmans

listed on the Stilwell roster as Mechanics Oriental had worked for Burmah Oil in Burma before the war. Thanks to Miss Kelly's efforts I was able to interview one of them, learned the whereabouts of another, and was put in touch with a friend of Miss Kelly's, Mrs. Doherty from Australia. Mrs. Doherty gave me the name of Dr. Lusk who had not been in the Stilwell group but had also walked out of Burma. Mrs. Doherty also gave me the name of a lady in Australia with the beguiling name of Winsome Nicholas. The letters Mrs. Nicholas wrote were as charming as her name.

A different sort of network that exists around the world is that of the diplomatic missions, whose members were consistently courteous and helpful to me. In our own country Mr. Eugene Martin, Desk Officer for Thailand and Burma, and the Honorable U San Aung, Ambassador from the Union of Burma to the United States, both expedited my getting a visa for Burma.

Mr. Ascalon of the Philippine Consulate in New York gave me some useful information about Burma, as did our Ambassador to the Philippines, the Honorable Henry Byroade. My friend Dan Bjørner, who had recently been in Burma, was very helpful.

At the British Embassy in Manila, an Assistant Secretary gave me an introduction to a delightful gentleman in Singapore, Mr. B. C. J. Buckeridge. Though he could not help me in my search, "Buck" was a font of information about pre-war Singapore.

At the Republic of China Embassy in Manila, Mr. William Sun, Commercial Attaché, Colonel William W. L. Chang, Chinese Airforce - Armed Forces Attaché, and Mr. Chang of the Nationalist Chinese Press Bureau all helped me get a visa to Taiwan.

Before I went to Taiwan I corresponded with Mr. Hsian-Yi Chow, Editor of the China Daily News in Taipei, Colonel Chih-chang Shah CA Deputy, L-1, Liaison Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense in Taiwan, and with an Assistant editor of Asia Press, Ltd. in Kowloon, on mainland China, all of whom did their best to help me. When I did go to Taiwan, Colonel Yen, President of Ret-Ser, and Robert H. C. Hsieh, showed me every courtesy.

Mr. Jaffa, Information Officer at the Malaysia Embassy, and Mr. Peres at the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore provided me with names of people to see in their respective countries. In Singapore I saw Mr. Mathew Mendis, Information Attaché at the Malaysian High Commission and Mr. Menning at the British High Commission. In Kuala Lumpur I was advised to see Dara Singh, the Game Warden of Segamat, in Serembam.

When I visited Burma, I called on our Ambassador to that country, the Honorable Edwin W. Martin who, for security reasons, was not allowed to leave Rangoon, but who gave me a card to Carl Taylor, Jr., United States Consul in Mandalay. I shall always be grateful to Carl for giving me an introduction to Professor John Moonie in Maymyo. Not only was he an invaluable source of information, but he turned the tables on me by writing an article about me for publication!

To the manager of the Mandalay Strand who advised me to talk to Sarah Amelia Cole, aged ninety, I owe my thanks. She provided information about Burmah Oil Company which led to the success I was to enjoy in my correspondence with Miss Kelly in London. I could have listened for

hours to Amelia's stories about the 'old days' in Mandalay.

I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Seymour, Catering Manager of the Strand Hotel in Rangoon. He arranged for me to interview Colonel Tin Gyi, formerly Dennis Thompson. Again the tables were turned on me; the Colonel interviewed me before I could interview him!

My eternal gratitude to all the friendly telephone "Information" operators around our country who, twenty years ago, were not recorded "Directory Assistance." They *responded to my questions*, and helped me to locate various people.

To the many others who contributed so much help in my search and who may have been omitted in my thanks, please accept my apologies and attribute my omissions to the passage of time.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

National Archives and Records Service

Washington National Records Center

Washington, D.C. 20409



November 10, 1971

Mrs. Henry S. Thompson
1086 Mill Road Circle
Jenkinville, Pennsylvania 19046

Dear Mrs. Thompson:

Per your telephone conversation with Mr. Avery of our staff, we have made a search of the records in our custody for a listing of the members of General Joseph Stilwell's party that marched out of Burma during the early part of World War II.

We have enclosed electrostatic copies of extracts from a document from the records of the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations, which is described as "General Stilwell's Diary." This diary, which appears to be handwritten by several different members of Stilwell's party (as indicated by the different handwritings), covers the date period March 16-June 16, 1942, and lists as part of an entry for May 8 what we believe to be the members of that march. Many of the names are not complete, and we have been unable to locate any additional information.

The Office of the Chief of Military History informs us that the book Walkout, which you inquired about, was published by the Thomas Y. Crowell Company, and a copy may be available by writing to: Ex-CBI Roundup, Laurens, Iowa 50554. The cost we are told is \$7.95.

We hope this information will be of help to you.

Sincerely,

EDWIN R. FLATEQUAL
Acting Director
General Archives Division

Enclosure

Keep Freedom in Your Future With U.S. Savings Bonds

May 3 Sunday
Gen Stilwell, Gen Sibert
moved by rail (car) to
Wentho. Motor column
continued under Col Wyman

May 4 Monday
Left 3:00 pm with
entire group for Indaw
traveled all night.
Group now includes Maj Seagraves unit

May 5 Tues
Arrived Indaw
with group 3:00 pm. A
11 trucks, 12 Jeeps, 3 ordons.
Possible presence of
Japs at Bahmo dictated
movement out of Burma -
via Imphal
Movement continued
to west with night
cannon stream 5 miles

NW Banmark (~~Manantun~~)
Lt Col Wyman

May 6 Wed
Movement continued to
a point on the Chagy
7 miles NW Manasi
(Manantun)

May 7 Thurs
Left motor and
used - bearings and a pack
train. Marched 14
miles along Chagy to
the west. Col Roberts, Lt Lee,
Maj Merrill left out
from here at exhaustion.

Distance covered 14 miles.
March made in two stages 4 hrs AM
3 hrs PM
May 8 Fri. Continued movement
to west via Saung Mo
for umphlet.

Air planes passed over
at 100 pm.

31	Party now consists of	"
Americans	✓ Brinknap	British
✓ Stilwell	✓ 1 McCabe	Col J.V. Davidson - Houston
✓ Wary	✓ 1 Pas-e	Maj W.D. Haigh S.O.A.E. Burma
✓ Young	✓ 1 Chambers	Capt E.H. McDonald cipher
✓ Sibrot	✓ 1 Fagnies	" J.M. McIntyre "
✓ Nowakowski	✓ 1 O'Neill	" J. Campbell Dem. Army
✓ Wyman	✓ 1 Gish	" Jg B. Smith cipher
✓ 1 Harris	✓ 1 Short	Sgt E. Green
✓ Williams	✓ 1 Miller	Capt H. Milner
✓ Shing	✓ 1 Belding	Cadet J.R. Coatt cipher
✓ Holcomb	✓ 1 F. Chow	E. Reynolds & D.W. Apple
✓ 1 Merrill	✓ 1 Ketchum	Mr. T. Murray
✓ 1 of John	✓ 1	Mechanics Operator
✓ 1 Lee	British guides	Douglas Surin
✓ Eldridge	Maj Barton	Lee Fo
✓ O'Hara	Maj Causton	AH Hong
✓ Grindley	GEN. TSENG, 2 CRIS.	AH Fu
✓ Sengrave	{ 18 Pte. 2 Body-guards	Dennis Thompson
✓ Laburn	(CHINESE.)	Lee Choy
✓ Jones		Donald MacPhedran
		Trevor Sterling
		Edward Henderson

Appendix C: General Stilwell's "War Diary" Roster

<p>38</p> <p>Mobile Surgical Unit</p> <p>Gordon S Seagrave Maj. M.C. USA.</p> <p>Paul Gerca } Amb. "</p> <p>Tun Stein }</p> <p>Miss Koi Head Nursing Staff</p> <p>Miss Estler</p> <p>" M.T. Bank</p> <p>" Roth</p> <p>" Sein Buiat</p> <p>" Than Shwee</p> <p>Miss Mao Bank</p> <p>" Ruby Sein</p> <p>" Hla Sein</p> <p>" Kait Mau</p> <p>" Maing Karo</p> <p>" Family</p> <p>" Ma Guang</p> <p>" Maran Lu</p> <p>" Ohn Hkin</p> <p>" Roi Tsai</p> <p>Nurses</p>	<p>Miss Daisy Nurses</p> <p>" Lulu</p> <p>" Kobanglu</p> <p>Mr Liang Sing orderly</p> <p>" Lou Wong "</p> <p>2 Chinese army orderlies</p> <p>2 Cooks</p> <p>Friends Ambulance Unit</p> <p>Mr Peter Tennant</p> <p>Mr Martin Davis</p> <p>Thomas Owen</p> <p>Eric Inghoood</p> <p>Henrich Grant</p> <p>William Duane</p> <p>George Parsons</p> <p>Mrs Z Boller } Refugees</p> <p>" J.P. Hale</p> <p>Mr J.P. Hale</p>
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Appendix C: General Stilwell's "War Diary" Roster

Appendix C Continued: The Roster
Revised by the Author

The roster in the Stilwell "War Diary" for May 8, 1942 only lists 104 individuals. However, as I interviewed the participants I picked up ten "odds and bods," (other than the native porters) who were not accounted for in the Stilwell roster. These additional names bring the total to 114.

The Stilwell roster lists Major Seagrave twice, first under the Americans, then again in the Mobile Surgical Unit. This extra number however is balanced out by the omission of Major O. C. T. Dykes from the Stilwell list of British military.

American Military 25

Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell
Major General Franklin Sibert
Colonel George Sliney
Colonel Benjamin Ferris
Colonel William H. Holcombe
Colonel Frederick McCabe
Colonel Adrian St. John
Colonel Robert P. Williams
Colonel Willard Wyman
Lieutenant Colonel Frank Dorn
Major Frank Merrill
Major Felix Nowakowsky
Captain Richard M. T. Young
Captain Paul Jones
Captain Fred Eldridge
Captain Donald M. O'Hara
Captain John Grindlay
Lieutenant Robert J. Belknap
Lieutenant Gene Laybourn
Lieutenant Thomas Lee
T. Sergeant W. Dean Chambers
T. Sergeant Ray Chelsey
S. Sergeant Paul Gish
Sergeant Charles Janes
Private Lawrence Short

American Civilians listed with above group 3

Jack Belden, War Correspondent
Elbert Lilly, American Technical Group (ATG)
The Reverend Breedon Case - Dean of Agricultural College, Pinyinana

Chinese Civilians listed with above group 2

Fabian Chow, War Correspondent
Kenneth Chow, Interpreter

British Guides 2

Major Herbert E. Castens
Major George Eliot Barton

Chinese "Honor Guard" 13

General Hsi Kuie Tseng
1 Captain
Lieutenant Sze
2 corporals
8 privates

Mechanics Oriental 9

Douglas Surin
Lee Fo
Ah Hong
Ah Fu
Dennis Thompson
Lee Choy
Trevor Sterling
Edward Henderson
Donald MacPhedran

Odds and Bods Mixed Asiatics 10

(Mess servants:)

Daniel
Jimmy
Ti
Peter

Barton's Servant Sam
Case's Servant

(Railway Workers:)

Nathan
Phillips

The two Tibetan mule-drivers

British Military 12

Colonel J. Vivian Davidson-Houston
Major O. C. T. Dykes
Major W. D. Haigh
Lieutenant E. H. McDonald
Lieutenant J. M. McIntyre
Lieutenant G. Campbell
Lieutenant G. B. Singh
Officer Cadet J. R. Croft
Sergeant E. C. Green
Corporal H. Milner
E. Reynolds
L. Murray

Nurse Emily's brother Gilbert started out with the group but left them when they were near his home village.

The Mobile Surgical Unit 38

Major Gordon S. Seagrave
Mr. Paul Geren
U Tun Shein

American Baptist Medical Missionary
Assistant to Major Seagrave
Administrator (Karen)

Nurses:
Miss Koi

Head of Nursing Staff

Esther
M. T. Bawk
Ruth
Sein Bwint
Than Shwe

Head Nurses

Maro Bawk
Ruby
Hla Sein
Kaw Naw
Malang Kaw
Emily
Ma Graung
Maran Lu
Ohn Hkin
Roi Tsai
Daisy
Lulu
Labanglu

Orderlies and Cooks (Malayan, Chinese, etc.)

Lieng Sing
Low Wang
Lao Lu
Shwe Ni
Ko Ny Unt
Pang Tsze

Friends Ambulance Unit (English)

Martin Davies
Bill Duncumb
Kenneth Grant
Eric Inchboard
Tom Owen
George Parsons
Peter Tennant

Refugees (British and Eurasian)

Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Hole
Zeli Boller

Total 114

The writers craft

Last week I had a visitor. A complete Stranger, a foreign, middle aged lady came with an introduction from a very good friend. It turned out that she was a writer, visiting Burma to gather material for a book she was writing.

Lest I give the impression that the one week visa was to make her an expert on Burma and the Burmese, let me hasten to explain that her project was not *about* Burma, but *dealt* with Burma.

About a year back, Barbara Tuchman, the American Historian, published a book on General Stilwell. While reading it, my visitor had become interested in the section which described his march out from Burma during the allied retreat in 1942.

General Stilwell's group comprised 140 odd people. It was the only group which reached India without a single loss of life, though they took one of the toughest routes out.

The 140 odds and sorts that comprised the General's group were, his own US Army staff, his locally recruited motor car maintenance staff of drivers and mechanics, officers and men of the Chinese Army attached to the General, Dr Seagrave (the *Burma Surgeon*) and his surgical unit of Burmese nurses, and an odd group of British officers and ORs who had attached themselves to the group. Pathfinders and guides were a couple of Anglo-Burmese lads and a British Major from the Survey Department. The oddest group imaginable.

My visitor, after reading this section, had wondered how many of those that took part in that evacuation were still living, where they were now, what they were doing, and what was their point of view of the whole affair. This, she thought would be rich material for a book.

General Stilwell had already published a book in which he gave his own version of the debacle. Dr Seagrave had also given his point of view in *Burma Surgeon*. One of the US Army staff officers

John Moonie

had also written his own impressions in a book; as had a British officer, who formed one of the group. But these were major figures among the 140 odd escapees. What about the minor figures, the common military man or civilian?

In the hour and a half she conversed with me, she gave me a rapid sketch of her method. The first obvious step was to study the Pentagon records to find out about the US Army group and the Chinese group. The US personnel were easy to trace. The Chinese group was a more difficult job. They had become as widely dispersed as Taiwan and Hawaii. But trace some of them out she did, and taped interviews with them.

In the Pentagon she had made photocopies of the relevant documents, Stilwell's diaries, and the final report to the US Army HQ. These provided details which published books had omitted. She had also made copies of photographs taken during the 'trek' out so that recognition would be easier.

The next step was a trip to England to study the War Office records to trace out the British personnel, talk to them, record their interviews. In the intervals, she typed out her records on cards for cross checks and references.

The locally recruited personnel from Burma were more difficult to trace. No official records were available, since they were not enrolled army personnel. Presumably they had drifted into the British Army or the Indian Army on reaching India, and tracing them out was almost impossible. But the Chinese were more easily traceable, since they were a semi-military cadre, and the lady had travelled as far as Hawaii to record the interview with one of them.

The Burma Surgeon group required the ingenuity and imagination of a detective to trace. Seagrave's own diaries and his assistants provided information, and the lady was eventually able to trace a Kachin nurse who had married and settled down in the United States. She provided information about her colleagues who had been with her on the march, and with

this information the lady had come to Burma.

One of the Burmese men in the group she found in Rangoon. After interviewing him, her next address was in Maymyo. Here the ex-nurse happened to be a person known to me, married, with children at the University. She was interviewed and the writer had to return to Mandalay. Her ambition to travel the same route as Stilwell was physically impossible.

In the little while she chatted with me, I discovered that patience was the first requirement for writers who presented factual narratives. Patience in digging up records, and people. Patience in checking and cross checking data and information. Patience in research. Patience in getting answers to questions. And voluminous notes—in notebooks, on tape, on cards. The writer's task is not an easy one.

As a student of literature I had access to the notebooks and source notes of the novelist Henry James. They comprise closely written pages in hundreds of notebooks and foolscap sheets filling two library bookcases. Typewriters were a novelty in his days, and card indexes non-existent. Material had been gathered painstakingly, and sorted out later into plots and characters.

A Burmese writer whose methods I have personal experience of is Daw Ahma. Daw Ahma in her biography of Shweman Tin Maung depended largely on information provided by those who had known him and worked with him. Interviews, cross checking, following up slightest clues, consulting any available written or printed records, collecting photographs—are all part of the craft of presenting factual narratives in deep reportage. Ludo U Hla follows the same technique in his 'I' series.

The writer's task in this type of 'Where they were then—Where are they now' reportage is not easy. Patience is not the only requisite—the pocket is perhaps just as important. Otherwise it is a far cry from the US home base to Taiwan, UK, Hawaii, and Burma.

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES
CHINA BURMA INDIA

A. P. C. 879,
18 September 1944.

Mr. Dara Singh,
U.S. Army Headquarters,
A. P. C. 689, Theater.

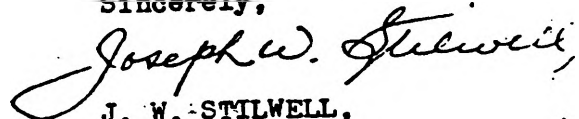
Dear Dara,

Thank you for your kind letter.

I am glad that you are having your teeth completely
overhauled, because I hope we will some day be going in
the right direction so fast that it would jar anything
but a perfect set right out of your head.

Best wishes and good luck.

Sincerely,



J. W. STILWELL,
General, U.S.A.
Commanding.

Hotel Ste. Michel
19 Rue Cujas
Tel: 033-4798

Dear Mrs. Thompson.

1. been china six seven months. 2. been sick and hospitalized. 3. sympathetic to but not overly excited or approving of your project 4. unemployed broke twenty years no fund gather material while you seem amply equipped to traipse around world. more power to you, i do not resent you, but the general condition. 5. I'm a writer; at time of walk out nobody else was (save possibly Born) so have different outlooks. 6. I already undergone five years war before Burma and underwent wars and revolutions afterwards, so probably not so hipped on this experience as others who may have led more sheltered lives. 7. I've not too many unpublished facts to give you, so what it would get down to is dredging up out of my soul what I think about all this. why should you live on my soul? About four years ago, a film producer said wanted make film out of my book asked me some details I wrote letters answering his questions---maybe 10,000 words. perhaps some indiscreet. I asked for letters back; he refused. I'm fed up.

Alors! Howsomefucking ever, if you wish to see me I shall wait at the above address on Oct. 10 (?) or actually I'll be around most of time--best time get in touch with me is early morning.

excuse grammar, mandarin and hasty typing.
thankyou for your interest...jb

Appendix G

A comparison of the Walkout with other remarkable and strenuous marches.

May 30, 1942 New Delhi: A letter from Colonel Robert P. Williams to his wife:

"I've been through the greatest experience of my life, and made one of the most remarkable and most strenuous marches ever made"

Knowing little more about Colonel Williams than that he was General Stilwell's "ginger-haired little medical Officer," as Colonel Davidson-Houston described him, it is reasonable to accept that for him the Walkout was indeed the greatest experience of his life. We can readily believe that he, at that time fifty years old, found it strenuous. And there is no question that it was remarkable; and the uniqueness of such an event motivated me to undertake my search for the participants in the first place.

With all due respect to Colonel Williams, however, it should be pointed out that remarkable and strenuous as it was, the Walkout cannot be compared with the truly great marches of History. To name some of the best known: between 218 and 202 B.C.E., Hannibal--the Carthaginian General in the second Punic War--somehow managed to lead his troops and elephants from Carthage to Spain, to southern France, and across the Pyrenées and the Alps to do battle with and defeat the Romans at Cannae. To be sure, it took Hannibal sixteen years to achieve his goal, and we have no record of how many troops and elephants were casualties. It was nonetheless an extraordinary accomplishment.

We also know that in more modern times--in October 1934--Mao Tse-tung led about one hundred thousand Chinese communist men and women on what became known as the Long March, as they retreated from the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek. One year and six thousand miles later, eight hundred survivors of that march formed the nucleus of what would later become the Communist Chinese party. This was the party which would eventually drive Chiang Kai-shek out of mainland China to the island of Formosa, or Taiwan, as Chiang Kai-shek renamed it.

The story of this historic march is dramatically recounted in The Long March: The Epic of Chinese Communism's Survival by Dick Wilson. (New York: Viking Press, 1971), and in The Long March by William Styron (New York: Random House.1975).

General Stilwell was quite aware of the strength of the Communist party when he lived in China before World War II. He was never a Communist, but he admired the fighting capabilities of

Mao's men and women. He saw that they were far better disciplined and trained than were those of Chiang Kai-shek. It was for this reason that he sought Roosevelt's permission to enlist them into his forces to defend Burma against the Japanese. He never received that permission, however. The Nationalist Lobby in Washington, headed by T. V. Soong--Madame Chiang's brother--prevailed with the President, and Stilwell found himself inextricably linked with Chiang. It is useless to speculate now on what would have happened if Mao had teamed up with Stilwell, but it is nevertheless an intriguing idea.

Far closer in time and place to the Walkout than either of the above events, a terrible forced march took place on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines in April of 1942. Even as Stilwell was taking up his assignment to Burma, his good friend from West Point days, General Jonathan "Skinny" Wainwright and his troops were being mercilessly pounded by Japanese land guns and from the air as they sought to defend the Bataan peninsula and the island of Corregidor in Manila Bay.

Weak from hunger and decimated by disease and the Japanese attacks, the troops on Bataan were overrun on Easter weekend, 1942. Those remaining on Corregidor were able to last for another month before they were forced to surrender.

On April 9, 1942, on Bataan, Major General Edward P. King, Jr. surrendered thirty thousand American and Filipino troops, including five thousand Marines, to the Japanese. Many of these troops were forced to march ninety miles without food or water to their first prison camp. Suffering as they were from malaria, dysentery, starvation, and the merciless tropical sun, hundreds died daily.

Three and a half years later in August, 1945, when the Americans retook the Philippines, of those prisoners in the Philippines and those who had been shipped to Japan, about four thousand survivors were finally freed. The atrocities committed by the Japanese on the helpless troops are vividly described in Death March, the Survivors of Bataan by Donald Knox. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), and in Stanley L. Falk, The March of Death. (New York: Norton, 1962) as well as in several privately printed memoirs.

The numbers of participants in the examples of historic marches given here were far greater than those on the Walkout, so it follows that their casualties were far greater. Hardships had to be endured for a far longer time. Yet, despite the overwhelming differences in the circumstances, similarities do exist. General Stilwell can be compared to Hannibal and Mao Tse-Tung in his determination to succeed, and the same determination to survive against seemingly impossible odds can be seen in all those who took part in these marches.

Despite the "no big deal" attitudes expressed later by some of the participants in the Walkout, was not General Stilwell's determination matched by those members of his group who, also against seemingly impossible odds, also succeeded? I have often wondered how the British soldier on crutches managed to get up and down the slippery trails; how Than Shwe, with her bizarre physical condition made it; how Dr. Seagrave with his ulcers and weak heart survived; or even how Jack

Belden, with his pulse of one hundred and thirty-five lasted the distance. But they *did* survive and that in itself certainly made the Walkout remarkable.

In thinking again about what Colonel Williams said, it is perhaps fair to say that the Walkout *was* one of the most remarkable marches ever made for the very reason that the Stilwell group was the only one of that size to escape intact from Burma. They accomplished what they set out to do; no one got lost, no one left the group, no one died.

Consideration must also be given to what Ray Chesley wrote me some time after I interviewed him. Not to take any credit away from him, Chesley pointed out that Stilwell really was lucky. Heterogeneous as the group was, most of them were used to military discipline. They accepted the orders of a higher authority without question. The American Headquarters staff, the Chinese troopers, and the British officers and men under Colonel Davidson-Houston, comprised nearly half of the group. The nurses in the Seagrave Unit, though they had not been militarily trained, might as well have been, Chesley said. They were used to obeying their superiors and to doing their duty, and that was what they did.

I can but agree with Chesley that this certainly contributed to Stilwell's success. As Tommy Lee said, Stilwell demanded the most of them and because they respected him, they gave him all they had. Even the FAU boys, disrespectful of the military as they were, obeyed because they recognized Stilwell's ability to get them out.

Those who returned to Burma during the second campaign saw the trails that were lined with the skeletons of the thousands of refugees who, without the discipline of Stilwell's leadership and planning, had died from starvation, disease, or despair. As one thinks about the stories of the Stilwell group, remembering the contrasts between heat and cold, broiling sun and ice cold mountains, the slimy mud, the fleas, the leeches, the red ants, sparse food supplies, and all the other discomforts that the Stilwell group experienced, it *is* remarkable that they all survived.

Appendix H

How Others Walked Out of Burma

Gratifying as it was to know that the 114 participants in the Walkout made it to India safely, there were others about whom I wondered. How fared the lady with her servant seen sitting under the umbrella and who gave the FAU boys a cup of tea on the day they left the clearing and began walking to Nanantun? What became of the old man from Yonkers with a broken leg and for whom Stilwell would not stop, and to whom Belknap gave his gun? How about the group of British survivors with an Indian mahout and elephant that Captain Grindlay saw on the first day down the Chaunggyi stream? How was it that they were never encountered again?

Those questions remain unanswered, but I was able to obtain the stories of some other people who walked out of Burma. Their stories are included because they provide a comparison between the Walkout and the experiences of others who walked out or who were taken prisoner by the Japanese.

Among the first of these was an English woman who did in fact make her way out successfully, and who kept a diary of her journey. Her name was Mrs. Oliver and I heard about her from Major William A. Barnes. Major Barnes was a retired British Army officer whom I met over a card table at the English Speaking Union in Dartmouth House one year when I was in London. He had served in Burma before the war and had met Mrs. Oliver.

She was the wife of a British officer in Rangoon who was engaged in fighting the Japanese. With her children and servants, she walked out of Burma along much the same route as that followed by the Stilwell group.

Major Barnes let me see a brief excerpt from her diary which read as follows:

"We came to a big Burmese village which was deserted. The food dump, which had been filled with rations of all kinds by the Forestry Officer of Katha and which was meant for the refugees, had been looted by the Burmans and there was not a grain of any foodstuff to be had.

"This Forestry Officer must have been with the evacuees ahead of us, because signed by him and nailed to a tree was a notice stating that once the hill section was reached, no food would be available for at least ten days ahead.

"Our plight was parlous indeed."

Though this excerpt unfortunately does not give the rest of her story, it does confirm that Castens--the Forestry Officer--had done his best to stock the trails with food before he left Katha,

and subsequently joined up with Barton and General Stilwell. Apparently Mrs. Oliver was aware that the Stilwell party was ahead of her.

Another one of my bridge partners, Mrs. Gertrude Warshaw, told me that her son had also served in Burma and had escaped on foot. His name was Marcel Warshaw and he kindly allowed me to interview him briefly one afternoon when he came to pick up his mother. I found that his story provided point and counterpoint to those of the participants in the Stilwell Walkout. On the one hand there was the difference between how the young men of Great Britain and the U.S. faced the possibility of war, on the other it pointed out that under battle field-conditions there was little difference between them.

Marcel Warshaw's Story

In the summer of 1939 Marcel Warshaw, who was twenty years old and unmarried, was conscripted into the British Army. His machine-gun regiment was posted to France where it remained throughout the "phony war." When the German Blitzkrieg drove the British and French forces back to the sea, Marcel was among those who were evacuated at Dunkirk.

Back in England he became an Officer Cadet. At an Army post at Mill Hill he was training "other ranks" in machine gun warfare. Dismayed and disheartened at what had happened to the British Army, he longed for action. When the "Indian thing," much like the "China thing" for the FAU men, came up, he and his fellow Officer Cadets volunteered, and all were accepted into the Indian Army. This consisted of British Officers and native Indian troops; Pathans, Punjabs, Gurkhas, and Sherpas, among others.

In February 1941 he and eleven hundred other Officer Cadets were shipped out on the Highland Chieftain, a meat boat from Argentina. The men hung their hammocks from the meathooks. The journey around the Cape of Good Hope and across the Indian Ocean to Bombay took eleven weeks. It was bitterly cold, those without hammocks slept on or under tables, they had to queue for the Mess and for the latrines. The ship stank and they stank. It became an eleven week bridge game for the young cadets, interrupted between hands when they had to make daily rounds with the Captain.

At more or less the same time the F.A.U. boys were being shipped out to Rangoon across the Atlantic in assorted ancient vessels through the Panama Canal and across the Pacific. Instead of playing bridge, they received lessons in Chinese every day. A few months later the American G.I.'s who had been drafted were transported to the Far East on a luxury liner.

When Marcel's group arrived in Bombay, they travelled on a freight train to Bangladore, on the Northwest frontier of India. The train was filthy and lousy as well, but being Officer Cadets they were not supposed to complain! In Bangladore they were taught Chemical Warfare and "tactics" from maps drawn in the sand by a tough Scottish Sergeant Major from Inniskilling. When they had completed their training they were commissioned as Second Lieutenants. Marcel's commanding

officer had been his junior at prep school in London. He had gone on to Sandhurst and was now a Lieutenant in the British Army.

During the summer of 1941 they set to work to raise their own forces from the Punjabs, described by Marcel as rogues, but honorable. The British brought up light tanks and field guns, broke the millstone of the village headman, paraded through the village to show the flag, and to show who was boss.

Thus the PIFFers--Punjab Irregular Frontier Forces--were raised. The Punjabs could no longer wear their *chaplis* or heavy sandals, and were issued regulation Army boots which gave them blisters and which they bitterly resented until they got used to them.

From Bangalore the PIFFers were pulled down to Rawalpindi where they expected to be sent to the Middle East. Instead they were sent to Calcutta and on to Rangoon where they arrived on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941. Apparently the British Staff officers had begun to realize that something might happen in Burma. The Frontier Forces regiment was brigaded and made part of the 17th Division. They were stationed in Mandalay where the Officer's Mess was bombed by the Japanese. The bombing knocked out all their supply of drink and Marcel reported that they took a dim view of that. On Christmas day they paraded through the streets on motorcycles and Infantry track vehicles.

After Christmas, Marcel, who was a machine-gun officer, was sent down to the Tenasserim, the long narrow southern "tail" of Burma, with six hundred men and two machine guns to a point below Moulmein. When Marcel and a small group of men actually found some Japanese, they panicked and fired their guns into the trees. Fortunately, the rest of the battallion moved up and they all turned around and went back toward Moulmein. They kept the lights of their vehicles turned on as they passed through a group of Japanese infantry. This fooled the Japanese into thinking that Marcel's group were their own men.

From Moulmein the British went on up to the south bank of the Sittang River where they took up defense positions. In the end they found themselves firing at their own troops who were trying to get across the bridge. By a tragic miscalculation, the bridge was blown up after Marcel's brigade had passed over, leaving two other brigades on the other side at the mercy of the pursuing Japanese. Marcel's brigade continued retreating, or marching backwards, as Marcel described it, as far as Prome. There they found General Harold Alexander, General "Punch" Cowan, and General Slim directing traffic. From there on, Marcel's brigade was under the overall command of General Slim. Marcel, like thousands of other British soldiers, developed a sense of hero worship of Slim, despite the fact that they were fighting a delaying action under terrible conditions. There were no luxuries, no cigarettes or food other than tea and biscuits. Slim's only hope was that the monsoon would break and the Japanese would be bogged down and be denied the country. Marcel laughingly commented on how testy he became during those weeks without cigarettes.

The monsoon did not break, the Japanese continued to advance and the British forces walked north. Marcel was put in command of British troops, an experience that was completely new to him. When, in late April, the decision to withdraw from Burma was made by Generals Alexander and Stilwell, the British proceeded north to the Ava bridge where Marcel was ordered to shoot a refugee who had smallpox. They crossed over the Irawaddy before the bridge was blown, and from there proceeded to Shwebo, just as Stilwell would do. From there General Slim chose to head west to Kalewa where a great many of his troops were massacred by the Japanese.

Though he did not describe the march of the survivors from Kalewa to Imphal, Marcel told me that he had brought his two machine guns out despite all that he and his men had been through. He also felt that it was Slim's leadership that brought the miserable remains of the 17th Division safely to Imphal. He went on to say that the treatment he and his fellows received at the hands of the permanent staff at Imphal was despicable.

The hero-worship of General Slim that was engendered in Marcel Warshaw and thousands of British soldiers was very much like that of the Walkout participants toward Stilwell.

Marcel and the debilitated British troops were sent to hospital in India to recover from their ordeals. When Marcel was fit again he was posted to Headquarters in India where he took a Staff Command course. He then was sent to the defense of Imphal in 1944 and successfully commanded thirteen thousand men accompanied by their six hundred mules in the battle of Kennedy Peak, described in Slim's book, Defeat into Victory, and in the Evans and Brett-James book, Imphal.

Marcel did not tell me whether he had received any recognition for what seemed to me to be an outstanding record, he merely said that he was a Major when he resigned from the Army at the end of the war.

One of his comments reminded me of what so many of the Walkout participants had told me. Marcel said that while he was in Burma, he said to himself, "As long as I survive this, I will remember Burma as the most beautiful country I have ever seen, and I will come back some day." When I met him he had not yet gone back, but he still hoped to.

When Marcel told me that the Punjabs would not wear the mandatory heavy British Army boots with their uniforms unless they were threatened with court-martial, I was reminded of what became known in the nineteenth century as the "War of the Boots."

When the British first occupied Burma in 1846, they billeted their troops in the Burmese pagodas. Furthermore, they kept their boots on when they entered their billets. To a society that had never worn shoes of any kind, and certainly not in their pagodas, this behavior was seen not only by the priests but by the rest of the Burmese as desecration of a sacred place, and they were bitterly offended. Finally, when a riot was about to break out over this issue, a compromise was reached; if the Burmese would wear shoes in public, the soldiers would take off their boots in the temples.

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As a spinoff from my search for Jack Croft, the indefatigable Miss Mary Kelly of Burmah Oil in London told me that at a dinner party she had met one or two people who had worked in Burma before the war. She thought they might be able to help me in tracing some of the people who had walked out of Burma with General Stilwell. One of these was Dr. J. W. Lusk, O.B.E., M. D., formerly a civilian medical officer in the Royal Navy.

Dr. Lusk's Story

In reply to my letter of enquiry, Dr. Lusk wrote that he could tell me nothing about the participants in the Walkout, but he had gone over his notes written after he got out of Burma in 1942. I have included part of his letter which was written January 18, 1974.

"I knew little about General Stilwell, though he was a well-known name. He operated mainly with the Chinese in the north and north-eastern area of Burma. I worked in Rangoon, and as a civilian retreated from Rangoon on the 20th of February, 1942, moving up the western side of the country through Prome and the Yenangaung oilfields to Mandalay, where I remained for a time. There I came in contact with and joined the organization trying to arrange help for the Indian refugees trying to get out of Burma across the Naga hills. I left Mandalay a day or so before the Ava bridge at Mandalay was blown up, and then travelled by road to the Shwebo area as far as Tantabin where the road to the north ended. We then were able to get on a train and reach Naba, the junction for Katha.

"There I encountered General Lim, a Chinese who had been my Professor of physiology at the University of Edinburgh. He was trying to assist in the escape of the Chinese soldiers who had been wounded.

"It was while I was at Naba that the final complete collapse of the civilian organization in Burma set in. The trains, with civilian drivers, stopped running. We set out for India on the 5th of May with three of General Lim's ambulances. We were making for Homalin on the Chindwin River. The roads were poor, semi-motorable even in dry weather. On the way to a village called Banmauk we had to cross through a small river by a ford and there I saw General Stilwell pass in a car followed by one driven by Major Gordon Seagrave, a medical missionary in Burma who had been caught up in the war.

"We continued on our way through Pyinbone to Mansi and Mansigone. We attempted to drive down a small river, the Chaung Gyi, which merely means big stream or river. There are dozens of Chaung Gyis in Burma. We had to abandon our cars in a gorge and continued down this river to a larger river, the Uyu, which we went down in rafts to the Chindwin. We could see Homalin up the river but we had been advised not to go there because of cholera.

"We continued down the Chindwin as far as Tonhai, where we landed in the dusk. It was held by a Chinese unit who said the Japs were only two miles away, and they advised us to get moving. This we did, and the Japs took Tonhai the next morning. We made our way west to Laipok

and Imphal.

"General Stilwell and his group and the Chinese had cut across directly to the Chindwin a week or so before we did, and went through Tonhai."

Dr. Lusk travelled a route with which I had already become familiar when he started off across the Ava bridge at Mandalay. He went on to Shwebo and Naba, possibly another name for Indaw. He then went on to Banmauk, Mansi, the Chaunggyi and the Uyu, just as Stilwell had done. Perhaps the presence of cholera in Homalin occurred after Stilwell had spent the night there, for there is no mention of it in any of my sources. At that point, however, Dr. Lusk and Stilwell parted company, and it was disappointing that Dr Lusk disposed of the part of his journey across the mountains in that one brief sentence: "We made our way west to Laipok and Imphal." I have included his story, nevertheless, because it points up General Stilwell's wisdom in forcing his group to walk as fast as they did. Within a week the Japanese had reached the point at which Stilwell crossed the Chindwin.

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The other name Miss Kelly gave me from her encounters at a dinner party was that of Mrs. James Doherty of Doubleview, Western Australia. Through Mrs. Doherty, in November and December 1973 I entered into correspondence with someone with the beguiling name of Winsome Nicholas in Nollamara, West Australia.

I gathered from her letters that Winsome was a little girl at the time of the evacuation of Rangoon, probably ten or twelve. She starts in without any preliminaries as follows:

"I was on the last troop train, as a civilian, on a stretcher, and was dumped on the verandah of the Hospital in Myitkyina. Because it was late at night, an Indian doctor had told the orderlies I couldn't be admitted to the military hospital where the troops were taken.

"I was in pyjamas and penniless, so next morning I crawled to the railings and called out to Dr. McRobert who heard me and looked after me. Then I was looked after by the Roman Catholic nuns who found me back in the hospital after the Japanese raid.

"Being Church of England, I didn't know them but my grandmother had befriended them in Rangoon and was well-known and active in 'good works,' so they were determined to care for me. I might add that the Irish nuns all took it in turn to look after me and I was even given lessons, sitting amongst all the laundry.

"On the 8th of May, the Japs took us prisoners and after a lot of 'pow-wow' with the Japs, the nuns arranged for me to be released to my parents. The interpreter felt sorry for me and presented me with \$5.00! At the time I had no idea that it must have been quite a sacrifice for him. But after the 8th of May things were grim and the soldiers watched us, even when we slept.

"My parents were in a Party who met up with the front line Japanese troops in the hills outside Sahman on their way to India, travelling in ox-carts. My grandmother and aunt died in Sahman after I joined them and my little sister died next and was buried next to Reverend

Higginbotham. It was a sugar factory town and we were given jute bags to sleep on and allowed to live in the very large empty houses that had belonged to the staff.

"My aunt Lena--we call her 'Dollie'--trekked out and reached India with her three children. She trekked out over the same route as the Stilwell party. As she was a Perth girl, her picture appeared in the newspapers here in 1942. She was always very interested about the ordeals people went through, and being an Aussie, felt very lonely among the British.

"Her eldest son, who wasn't even sixteen years old, ran away and joined the Army and had to swim the Sittang and the family were reunited in India.

"When she was here in '47, 'Dollie' was full of stories. But when I showed your letter to her, no names on the list sounded familiar to her and all she had to say was that it was all so long ago. She didn't think people could remember events clearly and there'd be no end of exaggeration. She is widowed now and has become a saddened person, so I dropped the matter.

"Her daughter recalled that there had been an 'Army Party' ahead of them all the way. As I said before, they did feel discriminated against at the time, there being very few Aussies in Burma and Aunt Lena's accent sounded like a cockney's in those parts."

Appendix I

Eric Sevareid's Walk Out of Burma

During the course of researching my own search of twenty years ago, Professor Smith mentioned to me that Eric Sevareid, the author and political commentator, had also walked out of Burma, and that Sevareid had written about that experience in a book titled Not So Wild A Dream. I knew that Sevareid had not been in the Stilwell group, but I immediately found a copy of his book in the Fogler Library and read it. It is a superb narrative of his experiences during World War II in which in Chapter Ten he describes how he happened to walk out of Burma. Although this event took place in 1943 and the circumstances which precipitated it were quite different from those that precipitated the Stilwell Walkout, there were so many parallels between the two events, that I felt that I had made the same journey before. What is more, there was a coincidence for which my mind was totally unprepared.⁶⁶

I promptly wrote Sevareid describing the work in which I was engaged and asking his permission to include extracts from his book in my thesis. A few months before his death, Mr. Sevareid graciously replied that I had his permission to include in my thesis whatever I chose to use from his book.

The background for his having to walk out begins when he was a passenger on an American military plane flying the usual route over the Hump from Chabua in Assam to Chungking on August 3, 1943. On board were the crew of American officers and men, two Chinese officers,--Captain Kwoh Li and Lieutenant Wang--and three civilians, among them Sevareid.

About an hour into the flight, one of the plane's motors failed. With very little warning, all but the co-pilot were able to bail out. The radio operator, whose name was Oswald, was able to send several messages back to the base giving their position before he jumped. The plane crashed in a remote area of the Patkai Range in northern Burma, the Naga "hills," the same jungle area through which the Stilwell party had walked out of Burma the year before. Because it was an unusually clear day for that season of the year when the monsoon season rains were at their worst, and because of Oswald's messages sent back to the base, the smoke from the burning plane was sighted within an hour.

When the dazed and bruised passengers disentangled themselves and their parachutes from the trees, by shouting to one another and by hacking their way through the dense jungle undergrowth, they gathered together close to a small Naga village perched on the crest of a mountain. Only one of them was seriously injured. Oswald, the radio operator, had a broken leg.

They were soon spotted by the search plane and bales of supplies were dropped to them all that day.

A note included in one of the drops told them to stay where they were. A rescue team was being organized by the British District officer, but it would take two weeks to get to them and get them out.

As the exhausted men lay about on the ground, discussing this alarming information, Severeid describes what happened next: "Suddenly there was the sound of many men chanting and shouting, and a group of fifteen or twenty men appeared trotting out of the jungle. "They were short men, coffee brown in color and quite naked except for a narrow black breechcloth pulled tightly under the crotch. They had straight black hair, cut short around the head. All carried long spears with splayed metal points, and some also held wide-bladed knives a couple of feet long, almost like a butcher's cleaver. They had to continue their trotting advance or halt. The leaders slowed up, the chanting yell ceased. Some instinct, born no doubt of the Wild West novels of childhood, prompted me to step a pace forward, raise my palm, and say "How!" However comical, it seemed to be taken as a clear gesture of friendship. They stuck their spears into the ground, and their knives into sheathes on their backs. One of them offered us a closed section of bamboo from which a hollow pipe extruded. I sucked, and the liquid tasted like a very raw, very alcoholic wine." They had been befriended by a hill tribe, just as the Stilwell group had been befriended many times.

Though this colorful little vignette has no exact parallel in the Stilwell story, I could not resist including it. I was quite taken with the picture of the world traveller, Eric Severeid--well over six feet tall--facing the short stocky brown "savages" in one of the remotest parts of the world, instinctively coming up with exactly the right gesture that perhaps saved him and his group from suddenly and literally losing their heads.

From that point on the tribesmen were friendly. They brought in bales of supplies that were air-dropped and bartered food for the empty C-Ration cans which they prized above everything else.

Severeid's entries in the short-hand kind of journal he kept while they waited for their rescuers are reminiscent of those of the Walkout participants. At one point he writes: "Stars, full moon at night. We sang for hours. At such moments I love it here. I wouldn't be elsewhere." This reminded me of Belden and the romance of floating down the Uyu, and of Hla Sein singing in the early morning before the moon had set. It is another instance of how singing lifted up the spirits of these men just as the nurses' singing did for everyone on the Walkout.

On another occasion Severeid mentions that Kwoh Li, the Chinese Captain, surprisingly volunteered to cook for the group. Just as Tun Shein had done on the Walkout, Kwoh performed miracles with rice mixed with the greens and fruits found in the forests.

After ten days or so the rescue team arrived and the long arduous trek back to India began. In charge was the local British District Officer named Philip Adams, whose job was similar to Sharpe's. Though he had no ponies, he was accompanied by about eighty coolies. The coolies built a sedan chair in which to carry Oswalt. When Wang, the second Chinese officer saw it, he paid the

coolies to build one for him, and to carry him in it for the entire journey. I was reminded here of the Indian Lieutenant Singh. He was such a moaner that when Sharpe met the Stilwell party with ponies, Singh managed to acquire one, and *he* rode it all the way to Imphal.

Sevareid writes: "Notes written at moments of paralyzing exhaustion. Sheets soiled and sweatstained," much as I had observed General Stilwell's "War Diary" to be. He writes about drenching downpours that left him shivering with cold; days when he was cruelly sunburned; even his eyes were burned. A nail in one of his boots worked its way into the sole of his foot; blisters as big as half dollars appeared on both feet; his legs were bloody and swollen from leeches and tick bites. There were times when he felt that he could not go on, yet he commented on the beauty of his surroundings, the marvellous cascades, the view of the Brahmaputra river in the distance that never seemed to get any closer, not unlike the Chindwin river which seemed to be visible for days to the Stilwell group.

Sevareid describes the villages along the trail where the Naga headmen who looked like American Indians in their red blankets ceremoniously offered them ZU. This was the heady rice wine from which Sevareid got a bit of a jag, just as had Grindlay and Belden and Chow had done before them.

They climbed up and down the muddy and slippery trails, one so steep that the coolies pulled the men along on a vine tied to their bodies. After a night in one of the familiar bashas shaped like Indian teepees and with a hole at the top for the smoke, Sevareid writes: "Horrible night, fleas were maddening, pigs rooting and hens squawking. Rat runs over my face." How reminiscent those comments were of the "Flea Stop" on the Walkout.

These were the conditions the party met as they too struggled up and down the mountains for a week. On August 25th they reached their destination in Assam where a plane was waiting to fly them back to Chabua. Sevareid concludes the walk with these words: "I looked back many times at the jagged blue lines of the mysterious mountains in which we had lived, felt a pang of regret, and said to myself as men do: 'I will go back one day,' knowing as men do that I never would."

How familiar his words were!

There is another ironic parallel in the stories of the two arduous treks out of Burma. Jack Belden was scooped on the story of the Stilwell Walkout because he did not accompany Stilwell to Delhi where other reporters were waiting for him. His story was held up and censored. Sevareid's story was stopped by the War Department and not released until many weeks later when he returned to America.

Although I found the similarities and dissimilarities in the two stories absolutely rivetting, what really caught my attention and made me want to shout with excitastonishment, were two short sentences about halfway through Sevareid's story. Sevareid writes casually that, unlike Wang, "Kwoh was a grand soldier. Made retreat out of Burma with Stilwell." I wanted to dash to the telephone

and call Eric Sevareid immediately and ask him more about Captain Kwoh Li. I feel sure that he was the Chinese Captain referred to in one of my interviews whose name was not given, but who must have been with the group of Chinese troopers under General Tseng.

Even twenty years after I began my search for the Stilwell Walkout participants, I felt the thrill of discovery, once again chance had favored me. Here was someone about whom after all these years I had found out *something*. I doubt if I could find out anything more about him now, but I wish I had read Sevareid's book years ago. I might have been able to find Kwoh Li and hear about both of his experiences. Having made it safely out of Burma little more than a year before, how dismayed he must have been to have to make the same arduous journey again!

World War II's 'Forgotten Forgotten' Gather

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 11 — In this year of 40th anniversary commemorations of the end of World War II, several hundred of the self-described "forgotten forgotten" gathered here recently to reminisce about a part of the war they feel has been neglected: the China-Burma-India theater.

"History does not know what happened over there," said Pauline Hendershot Reece, a nurse, who at the age 20 followed Gen. Joseph Stilwell's troops in and out of the jungles of China and Burma. "We were at the forgotten center of the world."

But although Mrs. Reece and 300 other veterans at a reunion of the

China-Burma-India Veterans Association grumbled a bit at the lack of recognition, they did so with humor and pride.

"When you saw the old newsreels of the war, they showed how the war was going in Europe and in the Pacific," said Ludwig Baumgarten, last year's national commander of the association. "Then they would have a little flash of something about the C.B.I. It was at the end of the supply line, and there was not too much news about us back in the Land of the Big PX."

Mr. Baumgarten, who also served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, went to China as a medic but ended up carrying supplies through mountains on pack

horses and training Chinese to use and conserve ammunition.

General Stilwell's troops, together with Chinese, British and Indian forces, first fought a losing campaign against the Japanese in Burma in 1942, and then counterattacked in 1943-44 to drive the Japanese out. American activities in the region included the construction of the Ledo Road, a military highway from Assam into northern Burma, and a supply airlift over "the Hump," the southeast ranges of the Himalaya Mountains.

According to the the Army, 7,000 Americans were killed or wounded in the China-Burma-India theater, 3,700 of whom were fliers.

"One of my proudest memories is my 10-man crew who flew over 50 bombing missions together," said Charles F. Linamen, current national commander of the association. Other veterans surrounded him to hear, one more time, the story of the man who "blew up the bridge over the River Kwai."

Mr. Linamen, a first lieutenant in the United States Army Air Force, was 19 years old when he flew one of six bombers in a mission that destroyed the Kan-cha-naburi bridge in Thailand, west of Bangkok.

The bridge was used by a Japanese supply railroad from Thailand into Burma, built in 1943 by Allied prisoners of war along a river called the Khwae Noi, the Lesser Khwae. It became popularized through the book and movie "Bridge Over the River Kwai."

"The author of the book claims the book is fictional," Mr. Linamen said. "Well, we claim that over 95 percent of it is fact. The only difference is, in real life, that bridge was not destroyed by a British colonel, or by Allied forces. The bridge was actually destroyed by B-24 bombers."

Lieutenant Linamen's own plane was badly damaged by antiaircraft fire, and he had to land on a beach after flying 600 miles with a clipped wing.

"That was a rocky ride," he said.

He left China at the age of 21, having flown more than 50 bombing missions and more than 30 supply trips over the Himalayas.

During the war, several Americans from the Middle West traded addresses and telephone numbers, promising to reunite at home if they made it out. To-

day, the China-Burma-India Veterans Association has 7,000 members. It will hold its annual dinner in Boston in July.

Alice Todd Lambert, a wartime nurse who says she was the first American woman in uniform to set foot in China, said she had not missed the dinner since 1959.

"We were a team, and we had a great feeling of unity," she said, noting there were other nurses at the party that evening whom she had met on the ship to India in 1942. "Sometimes we thought we were the forgotten theater, but we kind of laughed and joked about it. This is why our organization is so tight and loving today."

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Biography

Henrietta Thompson was born near Princess Anne, Somerset County, Maryland, U.S.A. on July 6, 1913. She received her high school education at the Ethel Walker School, Simsbury, Connecticut.

She entered Barnard College in New York City in 1932, where she completed her Sophomore year. She was married in 1934, lived with her husband in the Philippines for three years, then made her home in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania until 1975, with the exception of five years during World War II when she lived with her husband at his Army Air Force bases in Florida and California.

She had three children and engaged in numerous volunteer activities. Upon her husband's retirement in 1975, she made her home at Hancock Point, Maine. She and her husband were divorced in 1977. In 1980 she was a founding member of Hospice of Hancock County and she became a Hospice volunteer.

In January 1983 she entered the Continuing Education School of Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, attending evening classes. She was a volunteer at Hospice of Central Florida in Winter Park and was hired as their part-time Clerk Receptionist. She graduated with High Honors in the Humanities from Rollins College in 1987.

In September 1989 she was enrolled for graduate study in history at the University of Maine. In 1991 she became a member of Phi Alpha Theta. She is a candidate for the Master of Arts degree in history from the University of Maine, Orono, in December 1992.