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## The Fate of the Davao Penal Colony #502 "Branch" of the LDS Church, 1944

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FIGURE 1. The Philippine Islands and locations of prison camps, cities, and villages important for the story of the LDS POWs. Courtesy Bart J. Kowallis.

## The Fate of the Davao Penal Colony #502 “Branch” of the LDS Church, 1944

David L. Clark and Bart J. Kowallis

### The Sinking of the *Shinyo Maru*

At 4:37 p.m. on September 7, 1944, the USS *Paddle*, a submarine on its fifth war patrol, reached  $N 08^{\circ} 11'$ ,  $E 122^{\circ} 40'$ , just off Sindangan Point on the southwest coast of the Philippine island of Mindanao in the Sulu Sea, having sailed from Fremantle, Western Australia, on August 22; its mission was to attack Japanese shipping in the east Sulu Sea. On the morning of September 7, a Japanese convoy had left Zamboanga on the westernmost tip of Mindanao, sailing into the east Sulu Sea with Cebu as its destination<sup>1</sup> (fig. 1). Fourteen hours after the Japanese convoy left Zamboanga, it was seen by the *Paddle*.<sup>2</sup> After sighting smoke from the Japanese convoy



FIGURE 2. The USS *Paddle*, the submarine responsible for sinking the *Shinyo Maru*. Courtesy U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II.

## David L. Clark and Bart J. Kowallis

My interest in the Latter-day Saint POWs in the Davao penal colony began as a kid at the beginning of World War II. My family and the family of Lieutenant Bobby Brown were friends. We knew Bobby and considered him special because he was one of the first members of our ward to enter the military.

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, we came out of church and noticed a small crowd of members listening to a radio broadcast coming from a ward member's car. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was being described, and at the beginning of the war in the Pacific the safety of Bobby Brown, who had just arrived in the Philippines, was on everyone's mind. While nothing was learned concerning Bobby at that time, a year later, after my family had moved to Houston, we learned from Bobby's mother, Ruby, that Bobby was a prisoner of the Japanese. During the entire course of the war, the Japanese permitted the prisoners to send only a few postcards home, so little was known of their condition.

Late in 1944, Ruby Brown contacted my mother, asking for help in learning something more about her son. Ruby learned that Major Morris Shoss, of Houston, had just returned home after being rescued from the same Japanese penal colony where Bobby was held. Ruby asked my family to contact Shoss to see if he knew anything about Bobby. The information we learned from interviewing Shoss was then communicated in letters to the Browns. The letters, supplemented by publications and information from the Church's new FamilySearch website obtained by my coauthor, are the basis of our article.

—David L. Clark



David L. Clark



Bart J. Kowallis

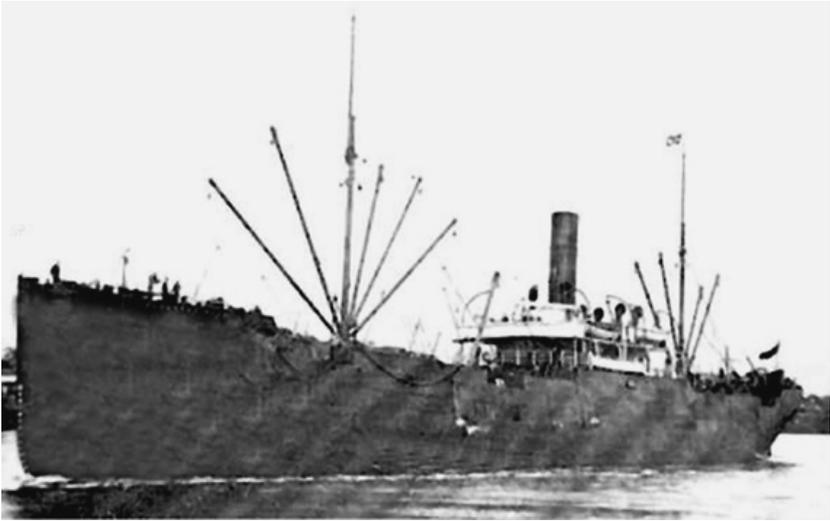


FIGURE 3. The *Shinyo Maru*, death ship for 668 POWs, including many of the LDS POWs of the Davao Penal Colony #502 "branch" of the Church. Courtesy Capt. John Bax.

at some distance, the *Paddle* (fig. 2), under the command of Lieutenant Commander B. H. Nowell, gained a favorable position and fired two torpedoes at the Japanese frigate *Shinyo Maru*<sup>3</sup> (fig. 3), one of the lead ships.<sup>4</sup> Moments after firing, the crew on the *Paddle* heard breaking-up noises and it was assumed that the *Shinyo Maru* was either damaged or sunk. Another ship in the convoy, the *Eiyo Maru* was also torpedoed and confirmed sunk by the *Paddle*,<sup>5</sup> although it actually became grounded near Sindangan Point (fig. 4). Following the attack, the *Paddle* dove deep to avoid forty-five depth charges dropped by the Japanese. The crew of the *Paddle* did not witness the fate of the two ships they had fired upon, nor were they aware that the cargo aboard the *Shinyo Maru* was a group of American POWs.

This mission concluded the fifth war patrol for the USS *Paddle*, but it was the ultimate tragedy for 668 of approximately 750 American POWs on board the unmarked *Shinyo Maru* who died when the ship sank. Those who died in the sinking included at least seventeen of the twenty-five Latter-day Saint POWs and friends who were members of an unofficial "branch" of the Church that held services regularly in a Mindanaoan prison camp before they were put aboard the *Shinyo Maru*.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, American deaths because of friendly fire were not unusual in the turbulent Pacific sector of World War II. Between January 1942 and December 1944, at least fourteen Japanese ships, unmarked and carrying no indication of their cargo of American POWs, were sunk by U.S.



FIGURE 4. Details of Sindangan Point and Bay where the *Shinyo Maru* (box) was sunk by the *USS Paddle* (star). Location is also indicated for ships in convoy (circles) as well as the village of Liloy and the city of Sindangan, home of many of the Filipinos who helped the survivors. Courtesy Bart J. Kowallis.

submarines.<sup>7</sup> It is assumed that between 18,000 and 19,000 Allied POWs died in these sinkings.<sup>8</sup> This is almost the same number of casualties the U.S. Marines suffered during the entire war in the Pacific.<sup>9</sup> However, one of the major objectives of the American war effort was the destruction of Japanese shipping. From the beginning of the war in December 1941 to the war's end in August 1945, more than 1,000 Japanese "merchant ships" with a total tonnage of about 5 million were sunk by U.S. submarines.<sup>10</sup> Sinking of Japanese merchant ships peaked in the fall of 1944, the same time that the *Shinyo Maru* became a target. While the tragic sinking of some POW ships might have been prevented, the Japanese military provided no identification for these ships, and the death of POWs by the U.S. submarines might be identified, in more current terminology, as "collateral damage."

There were undoubtedly other LDS servicemen who lost their lives on sunken ships, but the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru* may have been unique because it resulted in the death of a close-knit group of LDS servicemen and possible non-LDS friends who had been holding religious services and functioning like a branch of the Church in the Davao Penal Colony #502 on the southwest coast of Mindanao. The evidence of LDS religious services being

held in a Japanese prison camp has not been documented previously, although similar services are known to have been held in German prison camps.<sup>11</sup>

The complete personal story of the capture and imprisonment of each member of the small group of LDS POWs at Davao and their subsequent deaths in the Sulu Sea may never be known, but from both published and unpublished accounts, the general history shared by many of the POWs is well established.

### **War in the Pacific**

The story of the deaths of the LDS servicemen on the *Shinyo Maru* had its origins with the beginning of World War II. Poorly equipped and supplied, U.S. troops stationed in various parts of the Philippines were not prepared for war with Japan, which began on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked the Hawaiian Islands. Within nine hours of the Pearl Harbor disaster, the Philippines were also attacked. An assortment of 12,000 U.S. National Guard, regular Army, Air Force, and Marine personnel were stationed in the Philippines and included LDS members with roots in Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Texas, Oregon, and Canada. Together with Filipino soldiers, Allied forces numbered close to 80,000 and were deployed in several parts of the Philippines. These troops fought the Japanese with determination and even limited success from December 1941 to April 1942, but the outcome of this first battle for the Philippines was never in doubt. Hoped-for U.S. reinforcements never arrived, and the meager supply of food and supplies on hand was largely exhausted in the first few weeks of battle. Allied troops continued to fight until April 9, when 76,000 exhausted and weakened American and Filipino troops in the northern Philippines surrendered to the Japanese. On Corregidor and on the southern islands, fighting continued until May, when all troops were ordered to surrender. Even with almost nothing to fight with and in a weakened condition, the troops may still not have surrendered if the forthcoming treatment by their Japanese captors had been anticipated.<sup>12</sup> Because of inhumane treatment by the captors, within a few months more than 2,000 of those captured on Corregidor died.<sup>13</sup>

The large number of troops surrendering was not anticipated by the Japanese, who had expected fewer than half this number, and within a few days large numbers of the POWs, without food or water or any care for the sick and injured, died or were killed. Unfortunately, this was only the beginning of Allied deaths. The prisoners were rounded up and forced to march toward several prison camps; two to three hundred died nearly every day.<sup>14</sup> The brutal treatment of Allied troops is attributed to the Japanese idea that

surrender was a dishonorable act and those who surrendered were not eligible for humane consideration.<sup>15</sup> The largest contingent of surrendering troops were on the Island of Luzon, many on the Bataan Peninsula. There, Allied troops were taken prisoner and herded together for a march to hastily assembled prison camps, most located north of Manila.

### **The Bataan Death March and Prison Camps**

From survivors of the Bataan Death March, Americans learned of the atrocities committed by the Japanese military following the surrender of Allied troops in April 1942. Most of those on the forced march were captured in various parts of Luzon. Depending on the geography of their capture, the POWs walked from five to twelve days in the tropical sun for approximately sixty miles, from south of Manila to different camps north of the city of Luzon.<sup>16</sup> Beheadings, bayonetings, shootings, and beatings were the order of the day for many of the Allied POWs, who marched with little or no water or food during the ordeal. For their entertainment, the Japanese soldiers even forced the live burial of some Filipinos.<sup>17</sup> Fortunately, a large number of the future LDS "branch" were stationed on Mindanao and were not involved in the Bataan ordeal.

While precise figures may never be available, at least 500 American soldiers of the 12,000 thought to have been captured, and several times that number of Filipinos, died before the end of the march.<sup>18</sup> Survivors were placed in several prison camps north of Manila, where survival continued to be difficult.

Most of the Bataan POWs were interned in two general locations—Camp O'Donnell at Capas and three camps around Cabanatuan. At Camp O'Donnell, in the weeks after internment began, it is reported that fifty or more Americans died daily.<sup>19</sup> At Camp Cabanatuan, more than 1,200 died in the first two months.<sup>20</sup> Burying the dead became a daily problem for the survivors, who were existing with little or no food or water. In their sick and weakened condition, Allied POWs were required to dig trenches for the mass burials, carry the corpses to the burial site, and work at a variety of other tasks.

Approximately 2,000 of the 7,000 Americans who entered O'Donnell died in the first six weeks.<sup>21</sup> During the same time, almost 28,000 Filipino soldiers died—members of both the Philippine Army and the Philippine Scouts, a military organization under command of the U.S. Army.<sup>22</sup> Conditions were no better at the several Cabanatuan camps that held approximately the same number of Americans. Murray Sneddon, a survivor, described conditions at the camps:

O'Donnell and Cabanatuan were both the same. After two months at O'Donnell many of us were moved to Cabanatuan. It made no difference; each was a dying place.—There were only two types of work—to carry the dead away and to bury them. In the graveyard, men were packed into holes until they were almost to the surface and then a covering of dirt was heaped on. In the rainy season, with the ground saturated, blood seeped to the surface and it seemed as if the ground itself was bleeding.—At Cabanatuan there were 6,000 of us, and at the rate we were dying, I often felt there wouldn't be any of us left by the time the war ended. Every day long lines of men were taken from the hospital out to the burial sites.<sup>23</sup>

There were three camps within a few miles of the town of Cabanatuan, approximately 100 miles north of Manila, although most of the survivors of both the Death March and the Corregidor surrender were eventually held in Cabanatuan Camp #1.<sup>24</sup>

During the fall of 1942, prisoners began to be moved to other localities, such as Formosa, Japan, and other places in the Philippines, where, as slave laborers, they were forced to work in rice fields or Japanese factories or were used to repair and build airfields, all to support the Japanese war effort. On October 26, 1942, 1,000 of the 6,000 prisoners still alive at the main Cabanatuan camp were removed and sailed eleven days from Manila to the south end of Mindanao to a camp near the city of Davao. This transfer included a number of the LDS serviceman who would later be organized into the Davao LDS POW "branch." The ship was filthy and vermin-infested, but only two men died during the trip. After unloading at Davao, the Japanese soldiers enforced a two-hour "sun treatment," a common form of torture in which prisoners were exposed the tropical sun, and then the POWs were marched fifteen miles north to the prison camp.<sup>25</sup>

The transfer of prisoners from Cabanatuan to other places in the Japanese Empire to work as slave laborers continued throughout the war. As Japanese military deaths increased during the more intense fighting after 1942, more young men were pressed into service by Japan, and the POWs were forced to do work that had previously been done by Japanese soldiers and civilians. By January 1945, only 500 prisoners remained in the Cabanatuan camp, when they were rescued in a daring raid by a combined force of Filipinos and Americans.<sup>26</sup>

### **LDS "Branch" at Davao Penal Colony #502**

The 1,000 prisoners transferred from Cabanatuan spent the next year and a half at the Davao Penal Colony #502 (fig. 5), which was already filled with Americans. Unless the LDS POWs were able to organize at Cabanatuan,<sup>27</sup> it was probably during this time that the LDS "branch" was formed.



**FIGURE 5.** Part of the Davao Penal Colony as it looked ten years after the end of World War II. According to a typed roster found hidden at the camp after the war, more than 2,000 POWs were there in April 1944. Courtesy Al R. Young.

Information concerning this LDS group was first obtained from an interview with Major Morris L. Shoss in December 1944, in Houston, Texas. Additional information was given by survivors of the war who were associated with the LDS "branch" members at the Davao camp but were not on the *Shinyo Maru*. Shoss, a West Point graduate and one of the eighty-three survivors of the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru*, had a distinguished record and was one of the last defenders of Corregidor. After Corregidor was captured by the Japanese, Shoss became a prisoner in Cabanatuan and along with others was shipped to Davao in late 1942. After the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru*, he was one of the fortunate POWs who were able to make it to safety with the help of friendly Filipinos from the village of Liloy and the city of Sindangan. He returned to the United States only a few weeks following his rescue. In November and December of 1944, he was interviewed in Houston by Sadie O. Clark on behalf of the parents of First Lieutenant George Robin (Bobby) Brown of El Paso, Texas. Brown's parents were anxious to learn any details concerning the fate of their son, who eventually was listed as one of those on the *Shinyo Maru* at the time of its sinking, but whose status was still uncertain at the time of the interview. Shoss reported that he knew Brown very well and identified him as a Mormon and one of the leaders of a group of approximately twenty-five LDS prisoners in the Davao Penal Colony #502.<sup>28</sup>

The LDS group held services regularly, and Shoss, of Jewish faith, often participated in the services. The LDS prisoners sang songs and discussed gospel principles. In fact, Shoss reported that he and Brown had many discussions on different points of religion. Shoss praised the quality of the

character of the LDS group and reported that in spite of the horrible conditions in the prison camp, the LDS POWs were remarkable because they tried to live according to the principles of their religion. Shoss revealed that the LDS group had a set of scriptures (a triple combination) and a songbook that had been given to Brown by his parents prior to his departure for the Philippines. Brown's mother learned from survivors of the war who were not on the *Shinyo Maru* that many of the LDS POWs took turns reading the Book of Mormon during their imprisonment.

The only high priest among the LDS POWs was Sergeant Nels Hansen, who was not aboard the *Shinyo Maru* and survived the war. Although it was reported that Hansen assumed the ecclesiastical leadership, after the war he told Brown's mother that the leadership was actually shared with Brown. When Hansen was shipped to Japan in June 1944, Brown evidently became the leader of the "branch."<sup>29</sup> Brown, among other things, always led the singing during the services. Evidently, the services were spiritual, and testimony meeting was particularly moving for the LDS POWs.

Major Shoss reported that on one occasion he was asked by a non-LDS American superior officer to see that one of the ailing prisoners receive some help. When Shoss learned that the ill prisoner was one of the LDS group, he contacted Brown. As co-leader of the LDS group, Brown then contacted another of the group, Staff Sergeant Ernest R. Parry, and together they assumed care for the ill serviceman. Shoss was not certain of the nature of the care, since they did not have access to medicine of any kind, but his description suggests that they gave the serviceman a priesthood blessing. Shoss recalled that the ill LDS serviceman was soon feeling better.

Another member of the LDS group who was not on the *Shinyo Maru* was Captain Robert G. Davey. Davey survived the war and reported to Brown's mother that when he arrived at the camp, he was sick and starved. Lying down on his first day in camp, a Sunday, he heard singing. The song "An Angel from on High" rang a bell with Davey, and he immediately tried to find the source of the singing. When he found the LDS group, Bobby Brown was leading the singing. Davey was welcomed and became a member of the Davao "branch."<sup>30</sup>

Under the conditions of imprisonment, the possession of scriptures and a songbook was unusual. In fact, the Japanese had demanded that all Bibles in possession of the POWs were to be given to the captors.<sup>31</sup> The reason the scriptures and songbook were not confiscated is that Brown was driving a truck when he was captured and had the books with him. The Japanese wanted the truck, and evidently finding no drivers among their own soldiers, they forced Brown to drive (with the scriptures and songbook) to the Cabanatuan camp. Brown thus avoided the Death March

and was able to secure the books for the next two years. This proved to be a significant event and became a spiritual blessing for the LDS POWs after they organized at Davao.

Thus, this little group of LDS members and friends functioned as an unofficial "branch" of the Church during an unknown period of time in the Davao Penal Colony #502 on the south end of the Philippine Island of Mindanao. But who were the other members of this small LDS group? In addition to Brown, Ernest Parry, Davey, and Hansen, identified by Major Shoss and by survivors who contacted Brown's mother after the war, we have been able to identify other probable members of the group, many of whom perished in the sinking of the POW ship. We were able to identify several LDS POWs through the LDS Church's new FamilySearch website. Searching for names from the official list of *Shinyo Maru* POWs, we then confirmed their identity using the date of their death (September 7, 1944), which was the same for all of the men. We then checked to see which of these had been baptized as children.

### **LDS POWs Who Died in the Sinking of the *Shinyo Maru***

PFC William Murle Allred	born in Artesia, Arizona, October 31, 1916
PVT David Weston Balfour	born in Salt Lake City, Utah, November 17, 1920
PVT Jack Wells Bradley	born in Moroni, Utah, January 3, 1919
ILT George Robin (Bobby) Brown	born in Colonia Juarez, Mexico, August 16, 1915
CAPT Robert G. Davey	born in Salt Lake City, Utah, date unknown
PVT Mack King Davis	born in Lehi, Utah, April 2, 1916
PFC Woodrow Lowe Dunkley	born in Franklin, Idaho, June 27, 1918
SGT Nels Hansen	born in Weiser, Idaho, date unknown
2LT Richard Elmer Harris	born in Logan, Utah, May 10, 1912
PFC Theodore Jackson Hippler	born in Bloomfield, New Mexico, February 26, 1918
PFC Ferrin Carl Holjeson	born in Smithfield, Utah, September 21, 1917
PVT Russell Seymore Jensen	born in Centerfield, Utah, October 17, 1917
PFC Ronald Mortensen Landon	born in Kimball, Idaho, April 7, 1921
PVT Harry Orval Miller Jr.	born in Magrath, Alberta, Canada, November 29, 1915
S SGT Ernest Reynolds Parry	born in Provo, Utah, July 3, 1922
PFC Lamar Vincent Polve	born in Kenilworth, Utah, April 5, 1922

PVT Jesse Gordon Smurthwaite	born in Baker, Oregon, November 27, 1918
ILT Gerald Clifton Stillman	born in Salt Lake City, Utah, May 6, 1920
PVT Frederick (Fred) David Thomas	born in St. John, Idaho, December 29, 1918

Because Major Shoss remembered that there were at least twenty-five members of the LDS group, others prisoners who might have taken part in the religious services still need to be identified. An interview with a sibling of one of the prisoners who died revealed at least one other possible LDS POW who was not on board the fateful ship and survived the war, but we have not been able to confirm his identity.<sup>32</sup>

In the list of those who perished when the ship was sunk, it is possible to identify at least eight other men who might have been part of the LDS group. These are men for whom no record exists that they were LDS at the time of their captivity, but who were born in the western United States or likely had a previous acquaintance with LDS culture. Some connection to LDS members is further suggested by the fact that sometime after the war, all of these men had proxy temple ordinances performed on their behalf. However, we have no evidence that any of these men were involved with the LDS "branch" at Davao. In fact, a sister of one of these men, Private First Class Rosenvall, does not think that her brother would have been part of the LDS group.<sup>33</sup>

### **POWs Who Died in the Sinking of the *Shinyo Maru* Who May Have Met with the LDS "Branch"**

PFC Leroy Emil Christensen	born in Ogden, Utah, October 26, 1915 (grandparents were LDS)
PVT Cleve G. Clucas	born in Arco, Idaho, 1918 (grandparents lived in Rexburg, Idaho)
PFC Harold Dietzgen Dalton	born in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 28, 1921 (mother was LDS)
ILT Paul William Deason	born in Salt Lake City, Utah, November 2, 1918
PFC Lawrence L. Lamb	born in Salt Lake City, Utah, November 8, 1912
2LT James Emil Mackey	born in Belt, Montana, April 26, 1917 (mother joined the Church in 1958)
PFC Clay Lenno Rosenvall	born in Gunnison, Utah, July 26, 1920 (parents were LDS)
PFC Lawrence Edward West	born in Bingham Canyon, Utah, July 21, 1919

In the miserable conditions of the prison camp, it is possible that some of those on this list joined the LDS group because they sought companionship among those whose beliefs and culture stirred memories of home. The

number of known LDS members and these possible associates is approximately the size of the LDS group remembered by Major Shoss. There were likely other LDS POWs who met with the Davao group, such as Captain Robert Davey, Sergeant Nels Hansen, and Private First Class Lloyd Parry, but who did not sail to their death aboard the *Shinyo Maru*. Only 750 prisoners of several thousand at Davao left the camp to board the *Shinyo Maru*.

The LDS POWs had different stories related to their meeting at the Davao Camp. Brown and others were taken prisoner on Luzon and later transported to Mindanao. At least eleven of the LDS POWs (Bradley, Davis, Dunkley, Holjeson, Jensen, Landon, Miller, Lloyd Parry, Smurthwaite, Thomas), and four of those who may have been part of the LDS group (Christensen, Clucas, Rosenvall, West) were spared the horrors of the Bataan Death March and became prisoners on Mindanao. These men, part of the Fifth Airbase Group, were shipped out of Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City on October 20, 1941, arriving by train in San Francisco on October 23. After spending a few days at Fort McDowell on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, they were loaded onto the USS *Hugh L. Scott* on October 27, 1941, and headed out to sea. At this point, the men of the Fifth Airbase Group still did not know where they were going. After about four days at sea, the secret orders were opened and they learned that their destination was the Philippines.<sup>34</sup>

After a brief stay in Hawaii, the men continued on across the Pacific and arrived in Manila on November 20, 1941, Thanksgiving Day. However, they did not stay long in Manila. On November 29, most of the squadron left Manila on the MS *Legaspi* and traveled to Mindanao, where they arrived at Bugo, Misamis Oriental, on December 1, 1941. They were joined there by the 440th and 701st Ordnance Companies of the 19th Bombardment Group that included at least one additional LDS soldier (Hippler). Because the area was used by Del Monte to grow pineapples, the airfield built at this location on Mindanao was called Del Monte field. General Douglas MacArthur was a brief visitor to the field on his way to Australia before the surrender.<sup>35</sup>

On December 20, 1941, the Japanese landed forces at Davao, south of Del Monte, and on the December 21 the field suffered its first bombing raid. Two men were killed. The Japanese progressively tightened their grip on the area, and by the next spring Del Monte was abandoned and the remaining troops moved south into Maramag Forest. By May, the end was inevitable, and on May 10, 1942, the Allied troops on Mindanao surrendered to the Japanese. Those soldiers from Del Monte who had been hiding in Maramag Forest were told to surrender at Camp Casising outside of Malabalay, which

had been a training camp for the Philippine Constabulary. Within a week, there were approximately 1,100 American POWs in the camp.

Compared to other POW camps in the Philippines, Camp Casising was an improvement. Survivor Hayes Bolitho said of Camp Casising:

This was an easygoing camp so to speak and was by no means a maximum-security compound. Getting through the fence was not that difficult. It so happened that two of the Filipino prisoners had been caught sneaking into the camp early one morning. Their wives evidently lived close by and these two men would sneak out, spend most of the night with them, and sneak back in towards morning in time for roll call. They were summarily tried by the Japanese and sentenced to death. The accused men had to dig their own graves and the holes for the execution posts to be set in. In the late afternoon we were marched down to the execution site. The Filipino men were already lashed to the posts alongside their respective graves. The firing squad commander gave the order and the first volley was fired into the men causing them to slouch down. Immediately a strong voice from [the] Filipino compound, which was also forced to watch, shouted, "You are in the American Army—die like Americans. Attn-Hut." With that they jerked their heads up in an attempt to come to attention, just as the second volley hit them. There was no more movement. They were cut loose, rolled into the graves and covered with dirt. . . . The Japanese had made a point; any POW trying to leave the camp, if caught the penalty would be death. The atmosphere in the camp was more subdued after the execution.<sup>36</sup>

Toward the middle of October 1942, Camp Casising was closed and the men were trucked back to Bugo. They were then transported by ship to Davao, arriving there on October 20, 1942. According to Bolitho:

At high noon we disembarked and found ourselves faced with new guards. They were occupation troops composed of Japanese and Formosans, quite young and mean. They lined us up four abreast and we began to walk through the hot streets of Davao and on up the road to Davao Penal Colony, 20 miles or so in the hot sun.<sup>37</sup>

These men settled into their new quarters and were joined on November 14, 1942, by about a thousand POWs from Camp Cabanatuan. It is probable that this group included most of the rest of the LDS POWs.

At one point, ten American POWs escaped from the compound.<sup>38</sup> The other soldiers in their barracks were put into a disciplinary compound and meetings were banned throughout the entire camp. This undoubtedly affected the unofficial LDS branch and may have prevented them from meeting for some time. Eventually, the men who had been separated for discipline rejoined the rest of the group. Bolitho described life in the prison camp:

We were soon assigned to the rice detail to again plant the seedlings. At noon we received a healthy helping of rice, fish and two radishes. Things were looking up—then in the late afternoon the rains came. It was not a downpour but a steady cold rain with a slight cool breeze. Our only covering was a G-string and a woven hat and we were chilled almost immediately. We headed back to the assembly area in time to board the 5:00 p.m. train but it was late. Mechanical problems had developed and it was dark when the train arrived. Surprisingly there was no grumbling—we didn't have anything special to look forward to back at the compound. We were hungry but we had become used to that. The problem was with the guards who were trying to watch everyone. They were edgy and mean.

The return to the compound was a gradual uphill grade and because of the rain the wheels on the locomotive were slipping. Progress was practically nil so the guards began kicking us off the car to push. They were shouting and swearing at us, but we could have cared less. Walking barefooted on slippery wood railroad ties or alongside in the weeds and brush was miserable. We were no longer riding but certainly not pushing very much, so we weren't getting home very fast. It really became comical—the guards were screaming their heads off but beyond that they didn't know what to do. Over an hour passed and we were still at least two miles from camp. Someone started singing "God Bless America." It soon caught on and became louder and louder. It completely drowned out the screaming guards. The train was moving slowly, but with practically no help from us. By the time we were probably a mile from camp, men in their barracks could hear singing. Bear in mind that life in a prison camp was anything but boisterous. There were no radios, no record players, etc. so the sound of our "choir" was coming through loud and clear. As we finally approached the entrance gate all able-bodied men were standing and cheering wildly. The guards were horrified as we filed into the cheering group. Word quickly spread to gather near the assembly area. Completely hidden and surrounded by men, two of [the] fellows were holding a rolled up GI blanket. As it suddenly unfolded there sewn to the blanket was our American Flag. There was dead silence, tears streamed down everyone[s] cheeks and then in choked voices we softly sang "GOD BLESS AMERICA."<sup>39</sup>

In his excellent account of many of the same events, Carl Nordin reported that he had repeated contacts with several of the LDS group. Evidently, he was particularly friendly with Mack Davis and Ernest Parry.<sup>40</sup>

On March 2, 1944, 650 of the men at Davao were sent to a new camp near the village of Lasang, a few miles from their Davao camp. These were supposedly the healthiest men at Davao and were to be laborers building a new Japanese airfield.<sup>41</sup> All of these men would eventually be sent on the fateful *Shinyo Maru* sailing. It seems possible that regular religious services continued at the Lasang Camp. This would be the final prison camp for many of the LDS group and their fellow POWs.

Under only slightly better conditions than those at the other prison camps, the POWs worked on construction and repair of an airfield for the Japanese. Some details of the trials and tribulations of the prisoners at the Lasang Camp have been recorded by M. M. Sneddon in his book *Zero Ward*, published in 2000. During the next six months, all of the POWs worked on the Japanese airfield. Then on August 17, 1944, things changed. That night, the airfield was attacked by an American bombing mission. The prisoners were delighted. Without any information on the conduct of the war for more than two years, they now sensed that the tide of war had changed and help was getting close. For the next two days the Japanese, without any explanation, gave the POWs a "holiday" with no work on what probably was a damaged or destroyed airfield. Although the men were anxious to see the damage to the airfield, they accepted the holiday without complaint. However, on the third day following the American attack, all 650 of the prisoners were told to pick up whatever belongings they had; they were roped together and marched a short distance to the Tabunco pier on the Davao Gulf. What the POWs didn't know was that the return of the Americans to the Philippines was imminent and the Japanese didn't want their prisoners to be part of the coming struggle. Activity on the Tabunco pier was the beginning of what one survivor called the "Journey to Oblivion."<sup>42</sup>

### The Final Trip

The 650 POWs who had walked a few miles to the dock were joined by 100 POWs who had worked on another airfield south of Davao. These 100 men were transported by truck and, together with the Lansang group, composed the full complement of 750 men who would face the next three weeks living in the most miserable conditions humans could endure. While the final plans for the 750 men remain ambiguous, it is known that they were to be shipped first to Cebu and then to Manila. Most likely, Japan was the ultimate objective of transfer, but this destination was never realized. The 750 POWs included many of the LDS group who had been holding weekly services in the prison camps. On August 20, the men were loaded aboard an old freighter, the 3,801-ton Japanese Army Transport #86, *Tateishi Maru*, and sailed first for Zamboanga on the southwest tip of Mindanao on the Moro Gulf.<sup>43</sup>

They put us down in the hull of the ship. Packed like sardines down there. They had the guards fix bayonets, and they'd send a bunch down the hull, and they would lunge at us—packing until they got as many as they could get down in there. Then—they pulled the stairway up. They put timbers across the hull and rolled some canvas tarp over top of that. They just left one little hole open on the one end of it, one corner of it, where a guard

sat down [and] was looking down there laughing at us. It was like a furnace down there, no water no facilities at all, nothing—Guards used a rope to lower a five-gallon can of water and peeling of rotten tropical vegetables to the starving prisoners. Fights for the food and water followed.—They'd send a tin can down there for waste, and I believe it was the same can they put the food and water in. There was a lot of crying and praying going on. I thought it wouldn't have been but a matter of days before we would all be dead.<sup>44</sup>

While the Japanese claimed that the POWs were treated in the same way that they treated their own soldiers when being transported, this argument is difficult to believe. The POWs were “disgraced individuals, miserable objects,” and even if given the same one square yard per person in the deep hold of the ship as they gave their own troops, the food, sanitary conditions, and inhumane treatment differed from what their troops received.<sup>45</sup>

Confined to the bowels of the ship and wallowing in human filth, the POWs arrived on August 24 in Zamboanga, four days after leaving Davao. The POWs remained for ten days in Zamboanga Harbor, sweltering in the hot, filthy hold of the ship. Evidently, on two occasions the men were permitted on deck to run through a hose sprinkling ocean water, the first semi-bath in years for some of the men. Although the men didn't know it, they were waiting for a transfer to their final ship for their “journey to oblivion.”<sup>46</sup>

The disaster ship was the *Shinyo Maru*. The old freighter was having its cargo of rice and cement unloaded in Zamboanga. Once that was completed, the American POWs on the *Tateishi Maru* were transferred. The *Shinyo Maru* was built as the *Clan Mackay* in Glasgow in 1894. It was 312 feet long and 40.2 feet wide, displacing 2,600 tons. It had been captured by the Japanese at Shanghai in 1941.<sup>47</sup> Of interest is the fact that in Japanese naval history, there have been several ships named *Shinyo Maru*, including the ship that carried some of the Mormon missionaries home when the Japanese Mission was closed in 1924.<sup>48</sup> However, no other of the *Shinyo Maru* ships earned the title “Death Ship.”

The 750 POWs were transferred to the *Shinyo Maru* on September 4, and three days later, at approximately 2:00 a.m., the ship sailed for Cebu.<sup>49</sup> Conditions below deck were even worse than those aboard the *Tateishi Maru*, but when the ship finally left the harbor, the POWs must have thought the worst was over. However, fourteen hours later on September 7, it was sunk by the USS *Paddle* off Sindangan Point in the Sulu Sea (figure 4). Only 83 of the 750 POWs survived the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru*, and 82 of them lived to tell their stories, although the details of some of the stories differ.

The few survivors of the sinking recorded incredible accounts. According to stories told to Ruby Brown, the mother of Lieutenant Bobby Brown,

her son and the company doctor, identity unknown, were able to make it to the ship's deck following the torpedo attack. At that time, the Japanese soldiers were turning their machine guns on the POWs who had escaped the sinking ship and were in the water. Using as much Japanese as he had learned during his two and one half years' imprisonment, Bobby pleaded with the Japanese not to shoot the swimming POWs. Ignoring Brown, the soldiers continued shooting at the swimming POWs. Finally, Brown and his companion jumped in the water to help some of the wounded POWs and yelled to the swimmers to dive under the water before they were shot. The POWs, including Brown, dived, but Bobby did not surface following the firing. We assume that the unnamed companion survived and related this story to Brown's mother, but we are unable to identify the person.<sup>50</sup>

Equally dramatic stories have been told by other survivors. First Lieutenant John Morrett recalled hearing the Japanese guards racing across the deck above him just as an explosion tore open the cargo area that was his home for five days. "Bloody men, men with broken backs and ribs and jaws, littered the cargo area. Morrett . . . clambered up some luggage being stored in the hold and, through pure adrenaline, threw open the hatch." Seconds later he threw himself off the ship and grabbed chunks of wood to keep himself afloat. Japanese soldiers who survived the initial shock fired at the few escaping prisoners before the ship sank, as did other Japanese from the decks of sister ships in the convoy.<sup>51</sup>

Second Lieutenant Edward Treski remembered that following the torpedo strikes the Japanese guards unleashed a slaughter. "A guard just stuck his rifle down into the hole there and emptied it, and the bullets were whizzing all over the place. After emptying his rifle, he took a hand grenade and threw it down there. And I was sitting there where I could see it coming. It exploded. Knocked me unconscious." When he recovered, Treski was sitting in the water of the sinking ship with bodies and parts of bodies all around him. He escaped through the opening in the ship where the torpedo hit. Once out of the ship, he encountered Japanese guards in life rafts, who—with swords, bayonets, and guns—were attacking any POW survivors they could find in the water. Treski swam away from the Japanese and started toward the shore of Mindanao which he guessed was about three miles away. At that time he had lost 90 pounds from his prewar weight of 185 and was so weak that he joined another survivor clinging to a piece of wood, and together they paddled toward land. However, the *Eiyo Maru*, one of the convoy's damaged ships, which the crew of the USS *Paddle* thought had been sunk, managed to become grounded near shore, and the Japanese soldiers on board were shooting at the POW survivors who were trying to reach shore. Treski remembers swimming and praying, swimming and

praying, until he was ashore. He was later helped by Filipino guerrillas who had been fighting the Japanese.<sup>52</sup>

Sergeant Onnie Clem of the U.S. Marines remembered hand grenades being tossed into the throng of prisoners below deck and machine-gun fire at about the time the torpedoes hit the ship. He was briefly knocked out, but when he recovered he spotted the now-open hatch where a number of his fellow prisoners were trying to free themselves. He joined them and emerged with two others at the same time. Machine-gun fire from a Japanese guard sitting on the sinking ship hit him in his jaw, but somehow the Japanese shooter was killed, probably by friendly fire, and Clem was able to drop safely into the ocean. He avoided the Japanese lifeboats that were collecting Japanese survivors and shooting Americans. Also, a Japanese patrol plane strafed him, but he was able to swim to shore, where he was rescued by a Filipino. Clem had gone without anything to drink for days, so the Filipino rescuer climbed a coconut tree for coconuts to provide a drink.<sup>53</sup>

Second Lieutenant Murray Sneddon was knocked unconscious by the force of the torpedo. When he recovered, water was rushing in the opening and giant packing cases stored in the hold collapsed on many prisoners, killing them. He saw the open hatch, and, grabbing a pipe to steady himself against the rushing water, he waited for the sinking ship to fill with enough water to lift him to where he could pull himself through the hatch onto the deck. His ultimate survival, like that of the other eighty-three survivors, is an unbelievable story of endurance, courage, and luck.<sup>54</sup>

One of the eighty-three survivors died of punctured lungs a few days after reaching the safety of the shore. The other eighty-two were brought together by the friendly Filipino guerrillas who lived in and around the village of Liloy, and together they survived with the Filipinos for several weeks. Eventually, contact was made with Americans working with the Filipino guerrillas in the Sindangan area of Mindanao, and the existence and condition of the rescued POWs was radioed to U.S. forces. One of the largest U.S. submarines, the USS *Narwhal*, under the command of J. C. Titus, was sent to rescue the survivors, and eighty-one were taken on board.<sup>55</sup> Five days later the submarine unloaded the survivors in New Guinea. Using PT boats and then small passenger planes, the group traveled to Brisbane, Australia. After six days in the hospital, those who were able sailed for the United States. The survivors reached San Francisco fourteen days later, arriving on a cold day in November, approximately two months following the sinking of their Hell Ship.<sup>56</sup>

But the story of the LDS Davao "branch" ended before this spectacular rescue and homecoming. As far as is known, none of those thought to be members of the LDS group on the *Shinyo Maru* survived the sinking. Along

with more than 600 who had been fellow prisoners for more than two and half years, the LDS POWs from the Davao camp met their fate in the warm tropical waters of the Sulu Sea on September 7, 1944.

### The End

Major Morris Shoss, the survivor of the September sinking who provided much of the information concerning the LDS group's activities, was not aware of any members of the LDS "branch" who had survived the sinking. During his December 1944 interview, he commented that he did not see Lieutenant Brown after boarding the *Shinyo Maru*, but he assumed that Brown and other LDS POWs were on the ship, among the 750 packed in the ship's two holds. At the time of the interview in December 1944, the identity of the 668 POWs who died was still uncertain because the Japanese had not released the names of those aboard the sunken ship. It was not until February 14, 1945, that the official list of POWs on board the *Shinyo Maru* was received by the U.S. War Department from the Japanese. In a letter from the War Department to the Brown family, dated February 19, Lieutenant Brown, the leader of the LDS group, was officially declared dead. Similar letters were eventually sent to the families of all 688 men who perished in the sinking.

Because the Japanese reports were not always considered accurate, families of the LDS POWs held out hope that their sons were not on board the fateful ship. In the case of Lieutenant Brown, shortly after receiving the notice of his death, the Brown family received a post card from their son. The card, delivered by the Red Cross, had no date on it, but a greeting on the bottom of the card wished the family a Merry Christmas. Brown's mother's birthday was in November, and because Bobby always remembered her birthday and there was no mention of this on the card, only the Christmas greeting, the Browns supposed that it had been sent after November. If it had been sent after November 1944, then Lieutenant Brown could not have died on the *Shinyo Maru*, which sunk in September of that year. This interpretation was reinforced by the Red Cross, who told the Browns that it was unlikely that the card had taken more than a year to arrive and had been sent before the previous Christmas in 1943. Desperate to know if their son was still alive, the Browns contacted a number of men who had served in the Philippines, including Sergeant Calvin Graef, who had escaped from the Davao camp and who had known Brown. He told the family that he may have seen Brown in the prison camp in October 1944, giving the Browns renewed hope. When questioned further, Graef conceded that he could have been wrong about the date, but the Browns kept hoping, even though his fate along with others on

the *Shinyo Maru* was later confirmed.<sup>57</sup> Similar situations to that of the Brown family probably occurred with many of the families whose sons lost their lives in the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru*. The War Department's letter to the Browns was the final official news of their son. Posthumously, Lieutenant Brown was awarded the Bronze Star as well as the Purple Heart for an early injury.<sup>58</sup>

### Theological Considerations

The faith of the families of the LDS POWs who died in the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru* was severely tested. All 668 POWs who died had endured two and a half years of beatings, starvation, and brutal imprisonment. To survive all that they had been subjected to, and then to die because of an American torpedo, was an almost unbelievable tragedy. Certainly, viewed coldly, this is not the stuff of strong testimony building. Some parents expressed dismay that almost all of the members of the LDS Davao "branch" had died in the sinking. Writing before receiving official confirmation of the deaths, one parent commented, "If all of the boys were on this ship . . . it just does not seem possible that all of them would be killed, does it?"<sup>59</sup> "I believe that I have as much faith in my religion as any Latter Day Saint, but I will never be able to understand this. Certainly some of those boys were entitled to the blessings that are promised to those who obey the laws and keep the commandments of God. . . . I hope and pray that some of those boys are alive, otherwise I will have a hard time reconciling the fact they were all killed with what my faith has taught me to believe."<sup>60</sup>

A slightly different reaction was shown by Lieutenant Brown's mother, who wrote, "You know very well that there have been thousands of prayers offered for Bobby, both by his family and friends, and I feel that he was worthy of the protection of the Priesthood, but it must be that his work was finished . . . at least that is the most comforting thought to me and we had to have comfort from somewhere."<sup>61</sup>

While the siblings of the LDS POWs whom we interviewed reported that their parents probably never adjusted completely to the tragedy, the parents of Bobby Brown had a particularly difficult time. Brown's father was a U.S. Deputy Marshall who, among other duties, handled Japanese suspected of being spies. His feelings of hatred toward them were strong, and it took considerable time and effort to eliminate the hatred and bitterness that he held for the Japanese. However, he was finally able to embrace a spirit of forgiveness with the help of a wise stake president and other Church members.<sup>62</sup>

The loss of lives with the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru* is a classic example of the larger problem of maintaining faith in an omnipotent, loving God in

the face of wickedness, tragedy, and evil that his children experience daily. The problem appears even larger in scope when the tragedy affects those who appear to be most deserving of help. This concept has been addressed by theologians, philosophers, and people of all religious as well as nonreligious beliefs. Perhaps the most understandable explanation for Latter-day Saints is related to our unique concept of the plan of salvation, the eternal existence of intelligence, and the sacred agency of humans. John S. Welch summarized it succinctly, "God cannot both grant us our free agency and control our lives. God cannot, in our current world, both feed the lion and protect the lamb."<sup>63</sup> David L. Paulsen explained Joseph Smith's understanding of the dilemma when he wrote: "Joseph's way out of the conceptual incoherency generated by the traditional theological premises is not to go in. His revelations circumvent the theoretical problem of evil by denying the trouble-making postulate of absolute creation and, consequently, the classical definition of divine omnipotence. Contrary to classical Christian thought, Joseph explicitly affirmed that there are entities and structures which are coeternal with God himself."<sup>64</sup>

And for the father whose faith depended on the survival of at least a few of the LDS POWs, we can only answer that while we are not aware of any who survived the sinking, there were members of the Davao "branch" who were not on board but who did survive the war to tell their stories. Nonetheless, those who died in the sinking constituted most members of the Davao "branch," a tragic ending for this WWII group of LDS POWs.

## Epilogue

Survivors of the *Shinyo Maru* disaster held several reunions. They produced a plaque acknowledging, first, the crew of the USS *Paddle* for "liberating" them; second, the Filipinos in the Liloy-Sindangan area of Mindanao who rescued them; third, the American Brigadier General John H. McGee, who, working with the Filipino guerillas, arranged for their ultimate rescue; and, finally, the crew of the USS *Narwhal* for their final transportation to safety. At one of their reunions, the survivors were honored by Governor George W. Bush.<sup>65</sup> Some of those who did not survive have had proxy temple work done on their behalf.<sup>66</sup>

G. F. Michno succinctly summarized in his book *Death on the Hellships* what most Americans probably feel:

After all is said and done, we can only hope that the surviving former POWs of the Japanese will be able to live out their remaining years somewhat content with the knowledge that they fought for a just cause. . . . They took everything the enemy could throw at them. They survived the war

and they survived hell. We hope we will never have to face again what they went through, but should the need arise, we hope we will be blessed with another such generation of men.<sup>67</sup>

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Correspondence between Sadie O. Clark and Ruby Brown, mother of Lieutenant George Robin (Bobby) Brown, plus letters from parents of other LDS soldiers who lost their lives on the *Shinyo Maru*, are in our possession and motivated this study. We have had help in assembling additional material from Robin Brown, nephew of Bobby Brown; James Polve, brother of Lamar Polve; and Gerry Rosenvall Larson, sister of Clay Rosenvall. As recorded in this paper, Bobby Brown, Lamar Polve, and Clay Rosenvall all died at the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru*. Karen Clark, Regina Brown, and Ken White also assisted in different ways.

1. John. D. Alden, *U.S. Submarine Attacks during World War II: Including Allied Submarine Attacks in the Pacific Theater* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989), 130, includes both U.S. and Japanese data regarding the sinkings. For a more detailed description of the attack, see the USS *Paddle* logs, “WWII: 1935–1950, WWII Submarine Patrol Reports, USS *Paddle*, August-1944 to September-1944,” 7–14, <http://www.fold3.com/image/#29069298>; Murray M. Sneddon, *Zero Ward: A Survivor’s Nightmare* (New York: Writers Club Press, 2000), 97; Gregory F. Michno, *Death on the Hellships: Prisoners at Sea in the Pacific War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 227–30; and the often cited account by Eugene A. Mazza, “The American Prisoners of War Rescued after the Sinking of the Japanese Transport, *Shinyo Maru*, by the USS *Paddle*, SS 263, on 7 September 1944,” [www.submarinesailor.com/history/pow/paddlesinkshinyomaru](http://www.submarinesailor.com/history/pow/paddlesinkshinyomaru). According to these accounts, the number of ships in the convoy ranged from five to nine. For additional information on the USS *Paddle*, see “USS PADDLE (SS-263),” [http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS\\_PADDLE\\_\(SS-263\)](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_PADDLE_(SS-263)). The *Paddle* was honored with eight battle stars for eight war patrols and was decommissioned on January 18, 1957. The submarine was transferred to Brazil and sunk during target practice on June 30, 1968.

2. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 95.

3. The two names *Shinyo* and *Maru* can be translated as follows: *Shinyo* means “divine hawk” and is the immediate name for the ship. Most nonmilitary ships have a second name, *Maru*. *Maru* is translated as circle, round, or perfect and as a second name for a ship refers, according to one theory, to the hope that it can leave port,

travel, and return safely, thus completing a perfect circle or round of safety. Another theory is that a ship is a floating castle, and *Maru* refers to the defensive "circle" that protects a castle. See "Japanese Ship-naming Conventions," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese\\_ship\\_naming\\_conventions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_ship_naming_conventions).

4. Alden, *U.S. Submarine Attacks*, 130.

5. Alden, *U.S. Submarine Attacks*, 130, 253.

6. Information concerning the LDS POWs is based primarily on an interview with one of the survivors of the sinking, Major Morris L. Shoss, December 1944, in Houston, Texas. Details of the interview were documented in personal correspondence between Sadie O. Clark of Houston and George and Ruby Brown of El Paso, Texas, December 16, 1944, in the authors' possession.

7. Alden, *U.S. Submarine Attacks*, 12–146; see also "Japanese POW Transport Ships That Were Sunk in WWII," <http://www.members.iinet.net.au/~vanderkp/Shipstorped.htm>.

8. Donald L. Miller, *D-Days in the Pacific* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2005), 317; also see "List of Ships Sunk by Submarines with Death Toll Exceeding 300," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wike/List\\_by\\_death\\_toll\\_of\\_ships\\_sunk\\_by\\_submarines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wike/List_by_death_toll_of_ships_sunk_by_submarines).

9. Miller, *D-Days in the Pacific*, 317.

10. Clay Blair Jr., *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War against Japan* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 17, 878. This volume summarizes submarine warfare in the Pacific, including tables on top submarines in terms of number of ships sunk, tonnage of ships sunk, and top skippers of Pacific operation submarines. The USS *Paddle* and *Shinyo Maru* encounter is briefly mentioned (p. 737); also see "Monthly Totals of Ships and Tonnage Sunk," *Valor at Sea: The U.S. Submarine War in the Pacific 1941–1945*, <http://www.valoratsea.com/month1>.

11. Robert C. Freeman and Dennis A. Wright, *Saints at War: Experiences of Latter-day Saints in World War II* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2001), 46.

12. Miller, *D-Days in the Pacific*, 26.

13. Miller, *D-Days in the Pacific*, 25.

14. Miller, *D-Days in the Pacific*, 30.

15. "The ancient Japanese code of Bushido admonished warriors not to survive the 'dishonor of capture' but to fight to the last man." Miller, *D-Days in the Pacific*, 25. "The Japanese code of honor dictated that a soldier is honor-bound to fight to the death and that surrender was never an option—thus, we were not considered as prisoners but slaves to be abused in any way our masters saw fit." Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 23. "Although the Japanese were unprepared for the large number of prisoners in their care, the root of the brutality lay in the Japanese attitude that a soldier should die before surrender. A warrior's surrender meant the forfeiture of all rights to treatment as a human being." "The Bataan Death March, 1942," Eye Witness to History.com, <http://www.eyewitnesshistory.com/bataanddeathmarch.htm>.

16. There are a number of published accounts of the Bataan Death March. A few of the best are William E. Dyess, *Bataan Death March: A Survivor's Account* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 184; John D. Lukacs, *Escape from Davao* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 436; Gavan Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese: POWs of World War II in the Pacific* (New York: Quill, William Morrow, 1994), 73–83.

17. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 27.

18. Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 80. Accounts differ as to exactly how many prisoners died on the Bataan Death March. Some estimate it as high as 650. Because those who participated in the march were already malnourished and were suffering from jungle diseases, thousands died after they arrived at the prison camps.

19. Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, 79.

20. For the first several months at Camp Cabanatuan, food was scarce and dysentery was prevalent. Records kept by the prisoners at the camp indicate that 2,375 Americans were buried from June through November 1942. At this point, conditions seem to have improved somewhat. There were 136 deaths in December 1942, 73 in January 1943, and 10 in each of February and March 1943. On Memorial Day, May 30, 1944, prisoners in the camp prayed for the 2,645 Americans who had been buried there, so only 270 had died in the eighteen months between November 1942 and May 1944. John M. Wright Jr., *Captured on Corregidor: Diary of an American P.O.W. in World War II* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1988), 59. Wright also claims that 1,462 Americans died at Camp O'Donnell before prisoners were transferred to Cabanatuan and that 20,000 Filipinos died during that same time frame at O'Donnell. He had been captured on Corregidor and did not arrive at Camp Cabanatuan until June 30, 1943. He explains that the prisoners from Corregidor were in much better condition than those who had been subjected to the Bataan Death March.

21. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 33. Other accounts give different numbers. For instance, Col. John E. Olson, whose responsibility it was to prepare the strength report that Gen. Edward King had to give to the Japanese camp commander every day, reports that a total of 1,565 Americans died at Camp O'Donnell. His records also indicate that on May 5, 1942, there were 8,636 Americans being held at O'Donnell. John E. Olson, *O'Donnell: Andersonville of the Pacific* (n.p.: published by the author, 1985), excerpts available at <http://www.us-japandialogueonpows.org/Olson.htm>.

22. William B. Breuer, *The Great Raid on Cabanatuan: Rescuing the Doomed Ghosts of Bataan and Corregidor* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994), 56; see also Irving Alexander, "POW Camp O'Donnell and Camp Cabanatuan," <http://www.lindavdahl.com/Front%20Pages/O%27Donnell%20&%20Cabanatuan.htm>.

23. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 38.

24. Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, 95.

25. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 49.

26. The rescue of the remaining prisoners at the Cabanatuan Camp has been described by a number of writers including Breuer, *The Great Raid on Cabanatuan*, and Hampton Sides, *Ghost Soldiers: The Epic Account of World War II's Greatest Rescue Mission* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002).

27. Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 136. Daws reports that there were several religious "subtribes" that functioned in Cabanatuan: "Catholics and Protestants, and Mormons were particularly strong."

28. The interview of Major Shoss by Sadie O. Clark was initiated by Ruby Brown, mother of Lt. Bobby Brown. Ruby was anxious to learn whatever she could concerning her son a few months before she was notified that the "official" record was that Lt. Brown had died with the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru*. The Shoss interviews took place in November and early in December 1944, shortly after Shoss

returned to the U.S. following his rescue. Some details of the interview were published in *Church News*, January 20, 1945.

29. In June 1944, Hansen, along with approximately 1,000 others, were shipped from Mindanao to Japan. They eventually were imprisoned at the Nagoya Branch #5 Yokkaichi camp. Among other things, some of the POWs worked in a plant manufacturing sulfuric acid. Along with other survivors, Hansen was rescued in September 1945, just after the end of the war. Later, Hansen returned to Japan as a missionary. He "lost the use of his legs as a prisoner and, though rehabilitated before his mission, still struggled to walk." *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, May 6, 2006, <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48907/A-special-mission-softens-wars-blow.html>. Hansen died in 1981 and is buried in Weiser, Idaho. For additional details of the imprisonment of those who were sent to Japan, see Raymond C. Heimbuch, *I'm One of the Lucky Ones: I Came Home Alive* (Crete, Nebraska: Dageforde Publishing, 2003), 82–87, 146.

30. Personal communication, February 21, 2011, with Robin Brown, a nephew of Lt. Bobby Brown, who was told the story by his grandmother, Bobby Brown's mother. The same story was told to Elder Spencer Kimball, who was the Browns' stake president before Kimball's call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The story is included in Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 373–77. Additional details concerning the imprisonment of Bobby Brown are in papers in the possession of Robin Brown.

31. Carl S. Nordin, *We Were Next to Nothing: An American POW's Account of Japanese Prison Camps and Deliverance in World War II* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 1997), 79.

32. In an interview I conducted on June 22, 2011, with Clyde Polve, brother of Lamar Polve, one of the LDS POWs, Clyde expressed a recollection that a survivor of the sinking, a man he thought was named Peterson and was from Utah, gave him information concerning his brother. We have not been able to identify any survivor of the sinking who was named Peterson, but there were three men named Peterson or Petersen who were in the Davao camp with Lamar Polve. Most likely it was one of these who contacted the Polves. Clyde Polve was told that his brother was an excellent mechanic and the Japanese used him as a driver in the transportation of Japanese troops to various places in Mindanao. However, Lamar was a serious American POW, and on at least one occasion, Lamar Polve arranged a rendezvous with Filipino resistance fighters who eliminated the Japanese troops in the transport. Evidently, Polve grew a heavy beard, and with his "freedom" as a truck driver he was able to obtain and hide in the beard small contraband items, which he smuggled into camp for the benefit of his fellow POWs.

33. Personal communication with Gerry Rosenvall Larson, Clay Rosenvall's sister, June 23, 2011.

34. The story of the Fifth Airbase Group that left Salt Lake City for the Philippines has been told by a number of survivors of that group. One of the best accounts comes from Hayes Bolitho, "The Hayes Bolitho Japanese Story, Parts 1–6," *The Hawkins (Texas) Holly Lake Gazette*, a biweekly online newspaper, September 26, 2009–February 13, 2010), <http://www.hlr gazette.com>. Other excellent accounts include Nordin, *We Were Next to Nothing*, and Heimbuch, *I'm One of the Lucky Ones*.

35. Nordin, *We Were Next to Nothing*, 44.

36. Bolitho, "The Hayes Bolitho Japanese Story," part 3, October 24, 2009.

37. Bolitho, "The Hayes Bolitho Japanese Story," part 3, October 24, 2009.

38. Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, ch. 13–17.

39. Bolitho, "The Hayes Bolitho Japanese Story," part 3, October 24, 2009.

40. According to Nordin, in *We Were Next to Nothing*, Mack Davis became an effective liaison with Japanese guards who secured items wanted by the POWs by trading the few valuables still in their possession. Davis also visited Nordin when he was hospitalized in March 1944 (112, 125). Ernest Parry also helped Nordin with documenting the imprisonment (64–65).

41. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 53.

42. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, ch. 9.

43. Of the various references that document the initial departure of the POWs from southern Mindanao, both Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 75–80, and Gregory F. Michno, *Death on the Hellships: Prisoners at Sea in the Pacific War* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2001), 226, indicate that the name of their transport ship is unknown. However, according to "Hellship Information and Photographs," <http://www.west-point.org/family/japanese-pow/photos.htm>, the ship is identified as the *Tateishi Maru*.

44. Edward L. Pitts, "To Hell and Back," *World Magazine* 24, no 10 (May 23, 2009), [www.worldmag.com/articles/15395](http://www.worldmag.com/articles/15395).

45. Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 283–85.

46. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 71. An intriguing account is found in Lee A. Gladwin, "American POWs on Japanese Ships Take a Voyage into Hell," *Prologue Magazine* 35, no. 4 (winter 2003), <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2003/winter/hell-ships-1.html>.

47. "Hellship Information and Photographs," <http://www.west-point.org/family/japanese-pow/photos.htm>.

48. R. Lanier Britsch, "The Closing of the Early Japan Mission," *BYU Studies* 15, no 2 (1975): 189.

49. Gladwin, "American POWs on Japanese Ships."

50. Personal communication with Robin Brown, a nephew of Lt. Bobby Brown, who was told the story by his grandmother, Bobby Brown's mother.

51. Lindsay Tozer, "POW Survivors Come Together," (*Jacksonville*) *Florida Times-Union*, September 7, 2000, [http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/090700/met\\_3997987.html](http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/090700/met_3997987.html).

52. Pitts, "To Hell and Back," 23.

53. Eugene A. Mazza, "The American Prisoners of War Rescued after the Sinking of the Japanese Transport, *Shinyo Maru*, by the USS *Paddle*, SS263, on 7 September 1944," <http://www.submarinesailor.com/history>. This is a brief summary of the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru* and the subsequent rescue effort. The article also indicates that the survivors were honored by Governor George W. Bush of Texas in 1998.

54. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 99–107. Additional personal accounts of the sinking and final rescue of the survivors have been published in Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, 226–32. A few minor details in Michno's volume concerning the sinking and rescue of the *Shinyo Maru* differ from those reported here.

55. Brief accounts of the rescue by the USS *Narwhal* are found in Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 122; Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 296; and Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, 231. However, the best record is "USS *Narwhal* (SS-167)" in Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS\\_Narwhal\\_\(SS-167\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Narwhal_(SS-167)). While there were eighty-two survivors at the time of the arrival of the USS *Narwhal* for their final rescue, evidently only eighty-one were taken by the submarine because one man decided to remain on Mindanao with the Filipino fighters. The USS *Narwhal* had a distinguished record in WWII. It was one of five docked submarines when Pearl Harbor was attacked and was credited with shooting down two Japanese planes. It received fifteen battle stars for its service on fifteen war patrols and was decommissioned in April 1945.

56. Sneddon, *Zero Ward*, 140.

57. Personal correspondence between Sadie O. Clark and Ruby Brown, February 26, 1945, in the possession of the authors.

58. Freeman and Wright, *Saints at War*, 274.

59. Personal correspondence between the father of one of those who died in the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru* and Sadie O. Clark, January 26, 1945, in possession of the authors.

60. Personal correspondence between the father of one of those who died in the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru* and Sadie O. Clark, March 10, 1945, in possession of the authors.

61. Personal correspondence between Ruby Brown and Sadie O. Clark, March 31, 1945, in possession of the authors.

62. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, 377.

63. John S. Welch, "Why Bad Things Happen at All," *BYU Studies* 42, no. 2 (2003): 82.

64. David L. Paulsen, "Joseph Smith and the Problem of Evil," *BYU Studies* 39, no. 1 (2000): 58.

65. Pitts, "To Hell and Back," 23.

66. In addition to verified proxy work done for the known LDS members as well as the eight from the western U.S. who may have been part of the LDS POW "branch," it is of some interest that another 58 of the 668 who were lost in the sinking of the *Shinyo Maru* have had proxy temple ordinances performed for them since 1944.

67. Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, 307.