

Cmdr. Arthur Anders' memories of China and the *Panay*

THE SINKING OF THE USS PANAY

As told by Commander Arthur F. (Tex) Anders
To Professor Marian Hamurg in 1999

This account of the sinking of the USS Panay, and of Commander Anders' service in Asia prior to the outbreak of WWII, has never before been published and is made available on the Panay Memorial website for the first time.

EARLY YEARS IN THE NAVY (1927 - 1937)

I was graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy on 2 June 1927 and ordered to the *USS Utah*. In the fall of 1928 I was transferred to the *USS Denver*, a ship in the Special Service Squadron (better known as the Banana Fleet). The squadron was based in the Panama Canal Zone. On the *Denver* we spent most of our time in Nicaraguan ports with occasional visits to Honduras.

In April 1931, after three years aboard the *Denver*, I was ordered to the Asiatic Station for a three-year tour of duty. The Second Sino-Japanese War began in September 1931 when the Japanese attacked the Chinese in Manchuria. They soon defeated the Chinese there and then fought them in Shanghai. In a very short time the Chinese surrendered and the war ended.

When the ship I was attached to, the *USS Pigeon*, a submarine rescue ship, was in the Philippines during the winter of 1932, I met Muriel Adams, the daughter of Thomas Adams, who was head of ship repair and overhaul at the U.S. Navy Yard in Cavite, a short distance from Manila. On January 20, 1933 Muriel and I were married in Manila, P.I. In the spring when the ships went to Tsingtao, China for the summer, Muriel, along with a few other wives, took up residence there. In the latter part of the summer, I received orders to report to the *USS Mindanao*, a South China Patrol river gunboat. Muriel left Tsingtao and moved to an apartment in Kowloon. On October 17, 1933 Bill was born in Hong Kong in the hospital on the Peak.

In April 1934 I returned to the U.S. and served one year on the *USS Chicago*, one year at the Post-Graduate School at Annapolis, and about a year at the Norfolk Naval Training Station where I was a math instructor for the Naval Academy Prep Class.

ASSIGNMENT TO THE USS PANAY (April 1937)

I returned to the Asiatic Station with my wife and son for my second tour and on 24 April 1937, in Hankow, China, I reported aboard the *USS Panay* and relieved Lt. R.J. Burke as executive officer and gunnery officer. Our home ashore in Hankow was an apartment in the Lutheran mission.

On 14 May 1937 the Panay left Hankow and arrived at Chungking on 22 May, anchoring in Liang To Lagoon. On 27 May we shifted berth and anchored in Upper Lung Men Hao Lagoon in 13 1/2 feet of water. On the Yangtze water levels can change greatly. At this same anchorage the depth on 8 July was 92.5 feet and by the time we left on 28 August, it was about 40 feet. Lung Men Hao is across the river from Chungking.

My wife Muriel and our son Bill, now three years old, traveled from Hankow on a British river passenger boat to join me in Chungking a couple of days after the *Panay's* arrival there. We rented an apartment in a house built by Sir Archibald Little who was the pioneer of steam navigation on the upper Yangtze. For years this house had been used by the Commanding Officer and Executive of the Yangtze River Patrol gunboats. The house had been divided into two quarters. There was a large entrance hall and then wide steps leading to the upper floor, which were the Captain's quarters. Our section on the ground floor actually surrounded this central hallway. There was a living room and one bedroom on the river side, and around the rooms a balcony, the front part screened, which is where we spent most of our time. Across the hall was a second bedroom. Adjoining this room was the bathroom - a large room with a big old-fashioned tub. There was no running water and the tub was filled by coolies bringing buckets of water, which was heated, in a big old-fashioned coal-burning stove in the kitchen. The lower floor had electricity, but the apartment above did not, and oil lamps were used.

Most of the foreigners lived on the Lung Men Hao side of the Yangtze in large houses along the river, surrounded by walled compounds.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN

The Third Sino-Japanese War began in July 1937. We were in Chungking at the time. After the Japanese defeated the Chinese in Manchuria, they fought them again in Shanghai. This time the Chinese army was better trained and equipped. Instead of surrendering, they began to fall back thus drawing the Japanese army inland toward Nanking. The Chinese also established a blockade across the Yangtze River at Kiaugyin 80 miles above Woosung that prevented the Japanese from supporting and supplying their troops by way of river transportation.

Whenever an air raid alarm was sounded ashore, or if we observed airplanes approaching, we would man our Air Defense stations. All watertight doors and ports would be closed and the eight 50 caliber Lewis machine-guns would be manned. Ammunition was always available at the machine guns. Steel helmets were worn during the alarm. Our orders were: Fire Only If Ship and Crew Were Endangered.

In early August the State Department recommended that all U.S. citizens leave China, except for men whose work required them to stay. Following that recommendation the Commander in Chief of the Asiatic Fleet ordered that all U.S. military dependents leave China.

On 28 August 1937 the *Panay* left Chungking and proceeded down river for Hankow. We did not cruise at night because of the lack of proper navigational lights. That evening we anchored in Wauhsien. The Commanding Officer, Lt. Commander J.J. Hughes, and I went ashore to locate a mission and to inform the missionaries of the State Department recommendation. We were accompanied by one of our Chinese mess attendants who served as our interpreter. Sedan chairs carried by two Chinese, with a third along as a relief, were our only means of transportation. We found the mission, carried out our orders and returned to the ship.

The next morning we got underway down river, completed our cruise through the gorges of the Upper Yangtze River and moored to the Socony-Vacuum Pontoon in Ichang, the beginning of the Middle River. We arrived in Hankow on 31 August 1937.

Muriel and Bill left Chungking for Hankow about 26 Aug., a couple of days before the *Panay* left, on a Yangtze River passenger ship. The ship remained in Ichang for several days because of the bombing down river. They arrived in Hankow about 2 Sept, a few days after the *Panay*.

The usual water transportation to Shanghai on the Yangtze was not possible because of the blockade. On about 8 September military dependents, including my wife and son and the Commanding Officer's wife, boarded a train in Hankow for Canton. They had to take their own food and water and they slept on train benches. On 11 September the evacuees arrived in Canton where they were met by Lt. Kemp Tolley, USN who had been a shipmate of mine in 1931 when I first reported to the Asiatic Station. (Tolley later wrote a book entitled, "Yangtze Patrol"). Tolley had made arrangements for them to stay at the Victoria Hotel on Shameen Island until transportation to Hong Kong was available.

While in Canton they witnessed a night bombing of the city by the Japanese and had to leave their room to go to a safer place. Bill still remembers "the red meat balls" (emblems) on the Japanese planes as they buzzed over the hotel on their bombing runs. In a day or two, Muriel and Bill were able to board a boat for Hong Kong. On 18 September they sailed from Hong Kong to Manila P.I. on the President Jackson where they stayed with Muriel's father.

On 24 September 1937 at 1657 the *Panay* log shows that seven Japanese bombers bombed the native quarters of Hankow. We secured from air defense stations at 1705. It was the first bombing we observed.

On 12 October we were ordered to leave Hankow for Changsha to get a list of all U.S. citizens in the area and inform them of the State Department recommendation. We arrived there on the 14th. After carrying out our orders in Changsha and Yochow we returned to Hankow, arriving there on 20 October 1937.

THE USS PANAY IN NANKING (October - December 1937)

We remained in Hankow until 24 October 1937 when we were ordered to Nanking to relieve the *USS Luzon* and serve as Station Ship. When the U.S. Ambassador and his staff, with the exception of a skeleton crew of four, left Nanking on the *Luzon* to be with Cbiang Kai Cbek who had moved the Capitol from Hankow, our immediate mission was:

1. Protect American Nationals.
2. Maintain communication between the U.S. Embassy, Nanking and the office of the Ambassador at Hankow.
3. Provide a temporary office for the U.S. Embassy staff during the time when Nanking was greatly endangered by military operations.
4. Afford a refuge for Americans and other nationals.

The skeleton crew of four remaining at the embassy were: Second Secretary of the Embassy, George Atcheson, Jr.; Second Secretary of the Embassy, J. Hall Paxton; Emile Gassie, Embassy Clerk, Capt. Frank N. Roberts, U.S. Army, Asst. Military Attache.

I have often been asked "Why were U.S. gunboats in China?" Patrol gunboats were maintained on the Yangtze River by the United States under the Sino-American Treaty of 1858 -- the Treaty conceded by China following the joint attack in 1857-58 by Britain and France. The U.S. did not join in the war, but insisted on sharing rights gained by the others. Among the rights was permission for foreigners to travel in China and the right for the entrance of Christian missionaries. Four ports were opened on the Yangtze and extraterritorial rights were granted to the nations concerned so that they could protect their nationals. In order to protect these foreigners and their trade and religious activities, the patrol of the river was established.

(The following account of the sinking of the Panay was prepared in the Department of State and appears in Foreign Relations of the U.S. - Diplomatic Papers, 1937, Japan, Vol. 1 on pages 517-519.)

SINKING OF THE USS PANAY, DECEMBER 12, 1937

Summary of Events at Nanking Between November 21 and December 10, 1937
On November 21, 1937, the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs at Nanking asked the American Ambassador to inform the latter's colleagues of the Minister's imminent departure from Nanking and of his desire that the foreign Chiefs of Mission leave Nanking as soon as possible. The American Ambassador communicated this information to his colleagues and it was agreed by the Chiefs of Mission that they would leave as nearly together as possible for Hankow at which place the Chinese Foreign Office would be established.

On November 22, the various foreign Ambassadors and Ministers, together with some of their nationals, boarded vessels to depart for Hankow, the American

Ambassador with part of his staff boarding the *USS Luzon*, flagship of the Yangtze Patrol of the United States Asiatic Fleet. Part of the staff of the American Embassy was left in Nanking to keep the Embassy functioning as long as possible in the light of the expected Japanese attack upon Nanking and to render assistance to Americans who, notwithstanding the urging of the Embassy, did not wish to leave on the *Luzon*. The *USS Panay* was instructed to remain at Nanking for the purpose of maintaining communications between the Embassy and other American diplomatic and consular officers and the Department of State and to take remaining Americans aboard when that action should appear necessary.

Upon departure from Nanking, the American Ambassador sent to the Japanese Ambassador at Shanghai by naval radio through the American Consulate General at Shanghai a message to the effect that, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Chinese Government had announced its removal to Hankow, the American Ambassador had likewise left Nanking for that city in order to perform his appropriate duties; that he had taken with him part of the Embassy staff, but the Embassy office at Nanking continued to function; and that the Embassy requested that "the Japanese military and civil authorities take note of the circumstances described above and should necessity arise accord full recognition to the diplomatic status of the Embassy personnel and premises and give them appropriate facilities and full protection."

In the light of the situation developing, which included continuous Japanese air raids on Nanking and steady progress by Japanese forces in their march against the capital, the Code Section of the American Embassy was removed to the *USS Panay* on December 2. By that date, all but a few British subjects were sleeping on board a merchant hulk upriver from Nanking under the protection of British gunboats, but due to the small size of the *Panay*, the Americans who planned to board that ship continued to remain temporarily on shore.

On December 7 the officer in charge of the American Embassy reported to the Department that he felt that everything possible had been done for the Americans in Nanking. He pointed out that since the middle of August they had been urged to withdraw and until recently the water route to Shanghai was safe and open and river steamers were operating to Hankow until a few days before; that on November 22 the *USS Luzon* had offered every American still in Nanking opportunity to proceed on that vessel to Hankow; and that the *USS Panay* had offered to take aboard every remaining American and the Embassy had urged those Americans to board the *Panay*. He stated that American property had been posted with proclamations issued by the Defense Commander's headquarters and the Embassy had issued identification cards and armbands to servants left in charge of American property. Ropes had been prepared for the use of the remaining Americans in case they later wished to escape from the city over the walls, and arrangements were being made with the military authorities to facilitate such departure. He also informed remaining Americans that his residence in the Embassy compound was at their disposal in case they were endangered in their

own dwellings and that this might provide a refuge from looting and street fighting, although probably not from artillery fire because of the situation of the Embassy on exposed elevated ground. To one of the Americans remaining for the purposes of the so-called safety zone, he had given the use of his motorcar for himself and other Americans, if needed, and to facilitate escape to the walls.

On December 7, Japanese forces marching on Nanking reached the outskirts of Tangshan, twenty miles east of Nanking. The officers in charge of the American, British and German Embassies decided that the remaining foreign Embassy staffs would go aboard various vessels on the following night, returning the succeeding day if that should be feasible (the officer in charge of the Italian Embassy was already aboard the *USS Panay*). In accordance with this decision, the American, British and German officials boarded ships on the night of December 8 and a temporary office of the American Embassy was established on the *Panay*. On that day, the Embassy received through the American Consulate General at Shanghai a communication, addressed by the Japanese Consul there to the Senior Consul, stating in substance that it was the earnest wish of the Japanese forces that all foreign nationals remaining in Nanking should stay away from that zone of actual fighting by evacuating from that city without delay. On the morning of December 9, the officer in charge of the American Embassy sent from the *Panay* a radio reply advising the Japanese Embassy of the names of the eighteen Americans planning to remain in Nanking indefinitely in connection with hospital, safety zone and newspaper work, stating that "the American Embassy requests that in case of need, the Japanese authorities give appropriate protection and facilities to these Americans" and giving notification that officers of the Embassy continued to be ashore during the daytime.

Also that morning, the officer in charge of the Embassy received a message on the *Panay* from an officer of the Defense Commander's headquarters stating that the situation was serious and advising that no one go ashore. As however, there were no other indications from the city of trouble within, three officers of the American Embassy proceeded to the Embassy buildings. Subsequently, Chinese reports indicated that Japanese units had reached the area of Molinglkuan, some seventeen miles southeast of Nanking. Also on that day, Japanese troops reached a point outside the Kwangsua gate of Nanking, near the military airfield, and began exchanging machine-gun fire with Chinese troops on the city wall. Cross artillery fire between the area outside the gate and Chinese batteries on Purple Mountain was proceeding and a column of Chinese soldiers near the National Government headquarters inside the city was bombed by planes. The waterfront area at Nanking was subsequently heavily bombed and, pursuant to telegraphic instructions from the Department and at the urgent request of the Chinese military authorities, the staff of the Embassy returned to the *Panay* at 3 p.m., accompanied by the First Secretary of the British Embassy, who was subsequently transferred to a British gunboat."

Below is a recounting of my actual experience before, during and after the bombing and sinking of the *Panay*. Unfortunately the loss of the *Panay's* November and December logs due to the sinking precluded their use for verification.

MY ACCOUNT OF THE BOMBING AND SINKING

Much happened on that Sunday afternoon, 12 December 1937 in a short period of about 2 1/2 hours. The bombing started at 1:35 PM; the order to abandon ship was given at about 2 PM; the bombing continued even while we were sending our survivors ashore, which was completed at about 3 PM; the ship sank at about 4 PM.

From the time we arrived in Nanking on 27 October 1937, Japanese planes had flown over us practically every day. As the Japanese Army slowly advanced toward the walled city, the bombing and shelling ashore increased. Since we were anchored near a gate to the city, we observed Chinese troops enter Nanking to defend it.

To carry out our function of providing a means of communication to the U.S. Embassy, we had arrangements to meet Embassy personnel ashore at designated times and places to deliver messages received for them and to collect messages they wanted us to transmit. In addition to our ship's compliment of 59 (54 enlisted men and 5 officers), we had thirteen refugees who had moved on board on 8 December: four Embassy members, four U.S. nationals and five foreign nationals. The Embassy had informed U.S. citizens that they could and should go aboard the *Panay* if they considered themselves to be in danger and did not want to stay ashore, and also offered the *Panay* as a refuge to foreigners who needed one.

We were anchored about 500 yards off the Bund at Hsiakuan. On 9 December the situation was serious and it was assumed that Japanese were about 15 miles southeast of Nanking. The Embassy members had gone ashore in the morning, but returned in the afternoon because of the continuing danger. Across the river from Nanking, the Pukow waterfront was heavily bombed, buildings were hit and set afire, several shells fell in the water about 200 feet from the *Panay*. We decided to move to a safer anchorage about 2 miles up river to Sanchiaho off the Asiatic Petroleum Company installation, where American refugees from inside the city were to proceed if they decided to leave. The Japanese authorities were immediately informed of our change of position.

On 11 December because of artillery shells dropping near us, we moved about 7 miles up river. The Japanese authorities were again informed of our change of position. About 0900 on Sunday morning 12 December 1937 shells were again dropping astern and near us. We formed a convoy of Socony-Vacuum Oil Co. river oil tankers, the *SS Meiping*, *Meishia* and *Meian*, and proceeded up river. The tankers carried fuel for the river gunboats. At 0940 while proceeding up river, we stopped in response to a signal from a Japanese landing boat. The boat came alongside. A Japanese army officer with guard came on board and said he wished to speak to the Commanding Officer. He was informed that we, along with the convoy, were proceeding to a safe anchorage about 28 miles above Nanking. He asked about Chinese troop positions. He was told that the U.S. was

friendly to Japan and China and could not give him information about the Chinese army. The Japanese officer was polite. He invited the Commanding Officer to repay IWI call ashore, but the Commanding Officer declined. At 0953 the Japanese boat cleared the side.

The *Panay* and convoy resumed her way up river, and at 1100 anchored at a point about 221 miles above Woosung and about 28 miles above Nanking. The river was about a mile wide at that point and we considered it a safe place. The Japanese were again informed of our position. After anchoring we followed a normal Sunday routine.

At about 1:38 P.M. on 12 December after we had our Sunday dinner, the men on watch sighted three twin-engine heavy bombers in V formation lying down river on a course taking them over the *Panay* and convoy. We had no reason to believe the Japanese would attack us; the U.S. was a neutral nation, and Japanese planes had been flying over us since 27 September on their way to bomb Chinese targets. The *Panay* was well marked with two large horizontal U.S. flags, one forward and one aft, and with large vertical flags. The Japanese were always informed when we changed anchorage. All of our gunboats were painted white with buff upper works. Nonetheless, the order to man our defense stations and to close water-tight doors and hatches was immediately given when the planes were sighted. We had ready ammunition at each of our guns.

The Commanding Officer's station was on the bridge; mine was on the upper deck between eight machine guns since I was the Gunnery Officer as well as the Executive Officer. When I reached the upper deck, the three bombers dropped their load of bombs concentrating on the *Panay* and continued down river. I immediately gave the order to commence firing. I have been told that I am the first U.S. Naval officer to give the order to commence firing on Japanese military forces. I did not know at the time that the Commanding Officer was disabled. The *Panay* received one or two direct hits and several near-misses from this attack. Then six dive-bombers immediately began to attack.

The bombs dropped by the heavy bombers disabled the forward three-inch gun, wrecked the pilot house and sick bay, disabled our steaming fire room and radio equipment, seriously injured the Captain and many others, and caused leaks in the hull. The ship began to settle down by the bow with a list to starboard.

Because many of our men were injured by the bombs dropped by the heavy bombers, not all of our guns were manned. I still remember Chief Boatswain's Mate Mahlman, who became known as "The Pantsless Gunner" because he did not take the time to complete dressing, firing one of the machine guns mounted in bulletproof shields, designed for use against river bandits and not against aircraft.

I attempted to load one of the unmanned guns, but as I was doing so, a bomb dropped by a dive-bomber exploded near me, sending fragments into both of my hands. I was soon informed that Captain Hughes had suffered a broken hip, that he was in shock and in great pain and incapacitated and that he was being taken to the main deck by Dr. Grazier and Chief Quartermaster Lang, who was also injured. I immediately proceeded on the

port side to the bridge, and saw the Captain being taken down on the starboard side. I did not take time to go to speak to the Captain. Since I was the Executive Officer and the Captain clearly was disabled, I took over command of the ship. The Captain was first taken to the galley and later to the engine room with the other seriously injured where they had better protection from bomb fragments.

I found the bridge in shambles, a wreck. Soon after I arrived on the bridge, I was hit in the neck by a bomb fragment that pierced my throat. From then on I was unable to speak above a whisper. I bled profusely. I had to give orders in writing. I wrote on charts that were strewn on the deck of the bridge.

My first reaction was to get the ship underway and beach it to prevent it from sinking to save the crew, the refugees and the many injured. After checking with the engine room, I was informed that the fire room had been damaged by the first bomb, and all propulsion and electrical power was lost. We could not report the attack to Commander Yangtze Patrol because our radio could not be used.

My next thought was to slip anchor, but I realized that the swift current of the river would take us helplessly down river toward the Japanese controlled area, and if we were drifting, we could not ferry the injured, remaining crew and refugees to a single haven ashore. Knowing that nothing further could be done on the bridge, I, with the men whose stations were with the Commanding Officer, went below to the quarterdeck (on the main deck) to survey the damage. I saw that the ship was slowly taking on water.

I sent several Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers to various parts of the ship to see if anything could be done to keep the ship afloat. Soon Lt. Geist came up from the engine room and told me that the Captain had said to abandon ship. I said, not now, because I was waiting for reports from the men I had sent out to check conditions, and if the reports were favorable, we would still try to save the ship. If they were unfavorable, we would have to leave the ship. In either event, I wanted all the facts before I gave the orders either way.

When the men returned from their inspection and gave me their reports, it was clear that nothing could be done. Part of the main deck was awash, the ship was slowly sinking and there were many injured aboard. It was on that basis that at about 2 PM, I gave the order to abandon ship by writing it with pencil on a bloodied chart. (This chart is on display at the U.S. Navy Gun Factory Museum in Washington, D.C.)

I directed that the injured be taken ashore first, but the ship had only two boats: a motor sampan (inboard motor) and a sampan with an outboard motor. We had no life rafts. The boats could not be fully loaded because of the many injured; we had thirteen stretcher cases. Because the Captain had a broken hip, he was placed on the only stretcher we had and put in the first boat that left the ship.

The dive-bombers were still bombing when we were taking survivors ashore. At least one plane strafed one boat carrying survivors, inflicting additional wounds. While our

sampans were taking our men and refugees ashore, the *Meiping* approached the *Panay* to help take off the survivors. The *Panay* and *Meiping* together would make a much larger target and realizing if she were hit, oil explosions and fire would occur, I motioned for her to move away, and she did. During the short interval when the *Meiping* touched alongside, Jim Marshall of *Colliers Magazine* managed to jump aboard her.

Our boats took the survivors to the left bank of the river where they hid on a swampy island in reeds about ten feet high. I do not know how many round trips were made by the two boats but I remained on my feet and in command until the abandoning of the ship was about to be completed. I had lost a lot of blood, especially from my neck and throat injury. I was beginning to feel very weak and was placed in the outboard sampan, the next to last to leave the ship. In the sampan I lost consciousness and became one of the stretcher cases. The motor sampan, the last to leave, was being loaded. I had told Ensign Biwerse, who was not injured, to leave in that last boat which left at about 3 PM just a few minutes after the boat I was in.

The sampan with the outboard motor that I was in had been strafed and hit on one of its many previous trips ashore with survivors. The bullet holes in the bottom were leaking water. As we neared the shore its engine overheated and failed. As a result our boatload did not land with the main body, but drifted down stream a few hundred yards landing in the reeds. I was so far gone from loss of blood that I do not remember much about the trip. I do remember being in the high reeds in the swamp and being carried out of the boat and placed on the wet ground among the reeds. Apparently I lapsed into unconsciousness, occasionally gaining consciousness and trying to walk.

There was no panic at any time on the *Panay*. The crew courageously fought the attackers with the World War I .50 caliber machine guns. There were, no doubt, many individual acts of heroism that went unnoticed. One that I learned about, but did not witness, was the courageous act of Fon Huffman. We had run short of life jackets, having lost some during the bombing, and needing additional ones for the thirteen refugees on board. After the order to abandon ship was given, Fon Huffman noticed that Norman Alley, the newsreel photographer who had taken refuge on the ship, was not wearing one. He took off his jacket and gave it to Alley to wear. I was proud to have served with men such as these. I will never forget their courageous action.

THE SURVIVORS ASHORE

After the ship had been abandoned Chief Boatswain's Mate Mahlman and Machinist Mate 1st Class Weimers returned to the *Panay* in the ship's motor sampan to obtain stores and medical supplies. While they were returning to the beach a Japanese powerboat filled with Japanese soldiers approached the *Panay* from the other side and opened fire on the *Panay* with a machine gun, went alongside, boarded her and left within five minutes. At 3:54 PM the *Panay* rolled over to starboard and sank with colors flying in from seven to ten fathoms of water.

Because of this attack and our complete lack of communication, we all thought that the United States and Japan were now at war. After we abandoned ship, we hid in the reeds until dark. Japanese dive bombers flew over, apparently searching for us, then bombed the *Meiping* and *Meisha*. Both were set on fire and destroyed. The *Meian* was disabled and beached. After our survivors reached shore, the Captain, because of his own injuries and those sustained by me and his remaining line officers and our general feeling that attempts would be made to exterminate the survivors, requested Captain Roberts, U.S. Army, who was not injured and who was familiar with land operations and the Chinese language to be his immediate representative.

Once darkness fell, the survivors under the direction of Captain Roberts went to a nearby farm house, improvised stretchers and proceeded to the village of Hoshien, about five miles away. The last men arrived there at 4:20 AM 13 December.

My vague recollection of that night is being put in a small Standard Oil boat which I understand members of the crew found somewhere along the shoreline. Next I remember lying on the ground in a farmyard and later being carried on an improvised stretcher by four Chinese coolies. I awakened several times as we were stopped by Chinese soldiers. Then I remember being on the floor of a building (hospital) in Hoshien. According to Dr. Grazier, the hospital had dirt floors, stone walls and no heat or operating room. It was an empty building and was very cold.

While in Hoshien the stretcher cases were put on the floor in their stretchers. The morning of 13 December, Chief Boatswain's Mate Mahlman, the pantsless gunner, managed to get a pair of coolie pants for himself. He knew that my uniform was wet, muddy and bloody and he also obtained coolie pants, jacket and knit cap for me. Dr. Grazier removed my clothes, got rid of the blood and mud, dressed my wounds and put me in the clean Chinese clothes.

Charles L. Ensminger, Storekeeper 1st Class, and Sandro Sandri, Italian reporter, died as a result of their wounds on 13 December. I was informed that Japanese planes flew over four times that day.

George Atcheson and J. Hall Paxton, refugees of the U.S. Embassy staff with the help of Chinese officials, got in touch with Dr. Taylor, an American missionary-physician in Nanking by telephone and asked him to notify the U.S. Ambassador in Hankow about the bombing and sinking of the *Panay* and our present location in Hoshien. It should be noted that the telephone system in China, our only way of communicating, was in a war zone and therefore not very efficient. Messages from our location had to be sent by relays through friends who finally relayed them to the intended recipient.

This is a look back at what was happening on board the *USS Luzon* in Hankow on Sunday, the 12th of December, 1937 when we were bombed. At 1:30 PM the radio of the *Panay* ceased operating in the midst of a message which was being received by the *USS Luzon* in Hankow. There was no further communication from the *Panay* nor any information concerning the ship until 0930 13 December. At that time the U.S.

Ambassador, Nelson Johnson, at Hankow received a telephone message from Dr. Taylor in Nanking stating that he had received a telephone message from George Acheson who was the senior American Embassy refugee aboard the *Panay* informing him that the *Panay* had been bombed and sunk by Japanese bombers, that two were killed and many injured. He had also been told that the three Socony Vacuum tankers had also been bombed and destroyed.

When the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, Admiral Yarnell, and Commander of the Yangtze River Patrol, Admiral Marquart, were informed of the bombing and sinking and knew our location they, with the British Naval Commanders, immediately communicated with the Japanese military commanders and told them to cease firing and bombing in and around the Hoshien area and to assist in the rescue of the survivors and their safe transportation to Shanghai. The Japanese complied.

FROM HOHSIEN TO HANSHAN

On the evening of 13 December, with Chinese soldiers carrying our stretchers, we were loaded in six junks to transport us up a narrow canal to Hanshan. We started up the canal at about 10 PM.

At 7:20 AM 14 December we were at the end of the canal. Chinese soldiers again carried the stretchers to the village of Haushan. When I was being carried to the village, the soldiers stopped at a small building, a room about 15 x 15 feet and helped me into the building and had me sit on a stool by an earthen stove. Chief Quartermaster Lang was already in the shack (thatched roof). An old Chinese woman was at the stove - smiling and seemingly glad to see us. There was a small fire in the stove with a water kettle on it. We found out that the reason we were put in the shack, a home, was because the Chinese thought Japanese planes were searching for us and they wanted to hide us. It was dark in the shack, but I saw an old Chinese man lying on a so-called bed. He said something and the woman got up and filled a Chinese type cup with warm water and the man took a drink of it. When he finished she added a little more water and gave it to me. I was thirsty and drank a good amount. She then took the cup and again added more water and offered it to Lang, whose cheek had been cut from his mouth to almost his ear and who had also received arm injuries during the bombing. He took the cup, looked at me and said, "Mr. Anders, if you can drink it, I can too", and he took a good drink.

Soon we were picked up and taken to a courtyard in the village where we had our first food, Chinese chow, and it was good.

The Magistrate of Hohsien, Waug Tien Caib, and the Magistrate of Hanshan, Kiq Jui Chuug, provided us with quarters for the wounded, food, stretcher carriers, etc. during the time we were in their respective villages.

In the afternoon of 14 December, we received word that the *USS Oahu*, the *HMS Ladybird* and *HMS Bee* with Admiral Holt were waiting for us in the Hoshien area where we were sunk and that Japanese war ships were there to escort us safely through the war

zone to Shanghai. That afternoon we again boarded the junks and went back to the place where we had started. I slept (or was unconscious) most of the way. It was dark when we arrived. I woke up, opened my eyes and saw someone standing over me. I must have been frightened because the first thing I heard was "Don't be afraid; you're amongst friends. I'm in the British Navy". He held out a canteen of water and said "have some good water". This was on the night of the 14th. The last good drink I had was on board the *Panay* on December 12 before we were bombed.

OUR RESCUE

On 14 Dec. the *USS Oahu* had arrived in the rescue area. Anchored was the *HMS Bee* flying the flag of Rear Admiral Holt, R.N. and the *HMS Ladybird*. Rear Admiral Holt, the senior officer of the rescue forces informed the Chinese forces in the area that Japanese planes and war ships would arrive on a mission of mercy bringing doctors, medication, assisting in treatment of the wounded and would later convoy the *Oahu* and *Ladybird* with the survivors to Shanghai. At 1:32 PM the Japanese warship *HIJMS Yaeyama*, arrived and, seeing the Admiral's flag on the *Bee*, fired a 13-gun salute. The *HMS Bee* returned the salute fired by the *Yaeyama*. The Chinese troops didn't understand that these firings were merely salutes, and they began firing at the Japanese. Admiral Holt explained to the Chinese who finally stopped firing.

I was then taken aboard the *Oahu* at about 1:30 AM Wed 15 December where, for the first time, we were given a most delicious meal, stew with everything in it - the first food since noon 12 December. About 4 AM I had a coughing spell and coughed up the bomb fragment that had been lodged in my throat. I was able to speak again.

Our doctor, Lt. Clark W. Grazier, MC, USN, with practically no rest and very few medical supplies worked continuously from the beginning of the bombing until we were rescued. We were very fortunate that he was not injured even though he worked in unprotected areas taking care of the many injured, including thirteen stretcher cases.

The three photographers who were aboard provided an unexpected, but enormously important, service in gathering evidence of the bombing on film. Norman Alley, the Universal Newsreel photographer took several reels during the bombing and while we were ashore until we were on board the *USS Augusta*. Alley was flown to Washington with the films as evidence.

All *Panay* refugees deserve credit for the way they helped move and care for the injured while on board ship and ashore.

On 15 December, with the survivors on board the *USS Oahu* and *HMS Ladybird*, the convoy got underway as follows: the *HIJMS Kawasaki* leading, followed by the *USS Oahu*, followed by the *HMS Ladybird* with the *HIJMS Otori* the last in the convoy. At 16:17 the convoy anchored in the Nanking area. There we observed an incident: several Japanese Army launches were proceeding upriver near right bank and machine gunned two Chinese refugees on a raft. The Chinese wounded were picked up by the *Ladybird*.

The *Kawasaki* warned *Ladybird* not to get involved in another such incident because the Japanese navy is not responsible for what the Japanese army might do.

At 17:15 the following American citizens came aboard from Japanese launches for transportation to Shanghai: F.T. Durdin, NY Times reporter; A.T. Steele, Chicago Daily News; A.V. Menken, Paramount Newsreel. Artillery fire was heard throughout that night. At 2100 *HIJMS Otori* fired at snipers on the north shore.

On 16 December 1937 at 0659 our convoy got underway downriver. Hsiakwan waterfront and Pukow showed much evidence of fires and destruction. At 1630 the convoy anchored at mileage 92 above Woosung with *Ladybird* moored to our portside.

Friday, 17 December at 0613 the convoy proceeded downriver. At 1643 the *Oahu* moored to port side of the *USS Augusta* at Garden Bend Shanghai. At 1810 we *Panay* survivors were transferred to the *USS Augusta*. On Monday 20 December 1937 I was transferred to the Second Marine Hospital, Shanghai.

Not until after we were rescued did we learn that on 12 Dec 1937, the same day that we were bombed, the Japanese Army under Colonel Kingoro Hashimoto entered the walled city of Nanking. It was reported that the troops were completely out of control, killing and committing atrocities. Iris Chang, in her 1997 best selling book, "The Rape of Nanking", writes about the siege she calls "The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II".

MY TRANSFER TO CANACAO NAVAL HOSPITAL, P.I.

On Friday 24 December 1937 I was placed on board a destroyer, the *USS Peary*, for transportation to Manila P.I. arriving there on 27 December. I was glad to be with my wife and son again. When we were bombed and sunk, I was first reported missing. The next report had me listed as dead, but on the second or third day my wife received word that I was alive and wounded. I entered the Canacao U.S. Naval hospital, which is near Manila, for treatment. My hands were both badly infected - middle finger of right hand broken and infected, left hand cut tendons and nerves with the wounds badly infected.

The doctors informed me that all they could do was to clear the infections and put a banjo splint on my right hand so that my finger would heal. After two or three days in the hospital they said that I could be an outpatient, and come in every day to have my bandages changed. The infections were mostly cleared in early March. While I was an outpatient, we lived with my wife's father whose home was near the hospital.

On 22 March 1938 after a week at Camp John Hay, my family and I sailed from Manila to San Francisco on the *President Cleveland* via Hong Kong, Japan and Honolulu. Rear Admiral E.J. Marquart, who was the Commander of the Yangtze River Patrol when we were bombed and sunk, was also a passenger aboard the *Cleveland*. Just before we left Manila, the Japanese Consul-general Kiyoshi Uchiyama came aboard, expressed his sorrow and bid us bon voyage.

It was very clear to us that Japanese officials were concerned not only about our welfare, but also about the reaction of the U.S. public to the bombing. In Japan we were met at every port by Japanese officials and journalists. On 31 March, when we arrived in Kobe, a Japanese passport official came aboard, came to our room, stamped our passports and asked questions about the bombing. He was very interested in Norman Alley's *LIFE* magazine pictures of the *Panay's* bombing and sinking.

On April 1 in Yokohama we were met by a contingent of Japanese including a man in tails. They presented cards, including one from Prince Iyesato Tokagawa, President of the America-Japan Society in Tokyo, who sent regrets about the bombing and sinking, expressed wishes for a quick recovery, and presented a potted plant for Mrs. Anders. There were cameramen and news reporters taking pictures. A card from Admiral Yonai, Minister of Marines of the Japanese Navy, expressed regrets. A party of Japanese girls presented flowers. Some geisha girls provided a little entertainment on board. One group of Japanese officials, upon learning that I was going on a thirty-day leave, invited me and my family to spend my leave in Japan, all expenses paid. We politely declined.

In Tokyo various Japanese officials and organizations sought to entertain us. The invitations which had been routed through the U.S. Embassy were far too many for us to attend. Therefore, the U.S. Ambassador hosted a tea and dinner in honor of Admiral Marquart, my wife Muriel and myself to which he invited these Japanese. The affair started out with a tea attended by a great number of people and ended up with a dinner for a smaller number of U.S. and Japanese officials. We met a wide array of Tokyo leaders.

On 2 April 1938 the ship sailed from Yokohama to San Francisco via Honolulu arriving on 15 April.

On 14 May after thirty days leave in Texas and California, I reported aboard the *USS Mississippi* for duty. Captain R.A. Spruance was the Commanding Officer.

IN CONCLUSION

The bombing and sinking of the *Panay* was not a mistake. It was a planned and deliberate attack which was ordered by Colonel Kingoro Hashimoto. He was one of the principal leaders in the Tokyo military revolt on February 26, 1936 when several members of the Japanese Cabinet were murdered. Tokyo was terrorized for several days. After the uprising (mutiny), Hashimoto, using his political influence, was cashiered and placed on the reserve list. He was recalled to active duty in 1937 when Japan invaded China.

The following news item dated June 24 (year unknown) appeared in U.S. newspapers during World War II:

PANAY ATTACK LEADER DECORATED

New York, Jan. 24 (AP.) - Back in 1937, Japan was "so sorry, please" because Col. Kingoro Hashimoto ordered attacks on all foreign ships in China's Yangtze

river, sinking the U.S. gunboat Panay and damaging the British gunboat Ladybird.

But today, Col. Hashimoto, who was cashiered after the attacks on Dec. 13, 1937. was awarded the "Kinshi Kinsho" medal for his audacity, the Berlin radio said in a broadcast heard by the Associated Press.

Japan swiftly paid indemnity for the Panay and apologized to Britain about the Ladybird.

ADDENDUM

In the years since the bombing and sinking of the *Panay*, several books and many articles and personal reports of the event have been published. As to be expected, there are a few discrepancies in the descriptions of certain details. These were not intentional, but were the result of differing perceptions of this surprise attack that was so intense that all involved were shocked with little time to think. The ship's crew had to go into immediate action. The first bombs left many, including the C.O., Lt. Cmdr J.J. Hughes, seriously injured.

I have been asked about the discrepancies among the published stories about the *Panay*. Three of them relate specifically to me: (1) my length of service with the Asiatic Fleet, (2) the wounds I sustained in the bombing and (3) when I gave the order to abandon ship.

It has been erroneously reported that the 1937 tour of duty was my first with the Asiatic Fleet. It was my second. My first tour was from April 1931 to April 1934.

It has also been reported that I sustained my first wound in the throat and later in my hands. It was just the opposite. I was injured first in both hands when I took up my station with the machine gun battery. Almost immediately it became necessary for me to take over the command of the ship since the injured Captain Hughes had been carried below. When I took up my station on the bridge, I was hit in the throat, making it impossible for me to speak above a whisper. That was the reason for writing out my orders on charts that were strewn on the deck.

The discrepancy in some reports about when the abandon ship order was given and by whom derived from the situation in which the Captain had been carried in an unconscious state to the engine room for protection. He was unaware of what the battle conditions were when he regained consciousness and informed Lt. Geist to pass the word to abandon ship. When Geist reported to me, I stated that I would give the order to abandon ship only after it was clear that the ship could not be saved. I had sent crew members to survey the ship for damage. When it was clear that the ship could not be saved, I wrote my order on the bloody chart. It can be seen in the Navy Yard Museum in Washington. The attack had begun about 1235 on Sunday 12 December 1937. I gave the order to abandon ship at about 2 pm and it was completed at about 3 pm. The ship sank at about 4.

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